

TRIBUTE TO OUR CHAMPIONS

It's so sweet for Hanis



First strike: Hanis Onn (left) celebrating her first goal against Thailand during the Women's Hockey final at the National Hockey Stadium, Bukit Jalil.

HANIS Nadiah Onn is on cloud nine. She was named as the most promising woman hockey player based on her excellent performance in the tournaments last year.

She scored four goals in the SEA Games to help Malaysia to win the gold for the seventh consecutive time since the 1997 Chiang Mai Games.

The Malaysian women's team scored a total of 32 goals in the five round robin matches and they did not concede a single goal.

Malaysia outplayed Indonesia and Myanmar with identical scores of 11-0. They defeated Singapore 5-0 and Thailand 3-0 in the preliminary round matches before they beat Thailand 2-0 in the final.

The 21-year-old Mass Communication student at the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) said that her mission is to be one of the

top strikers in Asia.

"I believe that I should have netted more goals in the SEA Games. And I will train harder to achieve it in the Asian Cup (in Kakamigahara, Japan from Oct 28-Nov 5)," said the Johorean, who also was the member of the team that won gold in the Singapore SEA Games in 2015.

It was the double glory for Malaysia in hockey as the men's team had no problem beating Myanmar 14-0 in the final.

The men's team were far too good for their opponents and won their 17th consecutive hockey title in the SEA Games.

It has been a goal rush for Malaysia in the Games. They defeated Myanmar and Thailand with identical score of 6-0, outplayed Singapore 9-1 and thrashed Indonesia 18-1 before going into the final.



Stripes of gold: Malaysia's women hockey players posing for a photograph with their gold medals at National Hockey Stadium, Bukit Jalil.



From the inside: Malaysia playing against Indonesia in the Indoor Hockey final at the Malaysian International Trade and Exhibition Centre. — Bernama

Just as good indoors, too

THERE was a lot of trepidation and doubts over their abilities but the men's indoor hockey team proved the naysayers wrong by clinching the gold medal.

Malaysia, who are ranked 12th in field hockey and have no peers in the region in the outdoor game, do not have a history in the indoor event.

In the past, the Armed Forces has represented Malaysia in international matches. Thus, forming a national indoor team was seen as a monumental task given that the national association had just over four months to achieve their goal.

But once the team played their opening game, which they won 19-0

against the Philippines, the gold medal was theirs for the taking.

They easily defeated all teams in the preliminary round and then dispatched of Indonesia 5-2 in the final.

National coach Mohamed Amin Rahim pointed out that Malaysia had the potential and the players to form a good team.

"The problem was that indoor hockey is not popular in Malaysia and all development efforts have been on field hockey.

Naturally, there was much ado about the team's ability to perform especially when we heard stories of how teams like Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore were putting greater efforts in the indoor game.

"But all those fears went away after the first game," he said.

The team was skippered by 22-year-old Mohamed Najib Abu Hassan and he played a good leadership role to lead the team.

"Our players are good and have the necessary skill. But we are not used to playing this game. The good thing was that they learn from their mistakes and kept a consistent game plan.

"I should credit them for good team work and understanding. I see this as an important gold medal as its future depends on it.

"We can build on it and keep an indoor national team going," said Mohamed Najib.