

# Guanjie the top gunman

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THE expectations weren't high on Johnathan Wong Guanjie, what with the Vietnamese hotshot in the SEA Games.

They have in their ranks Hoang Xuan Vinh, who won gold at the 10m air pistol and silver in the 50m pistol at the Rio Olympics last year.

The other Vietnamese shooter Tran Quoc Cuong is also no pushover, having won gold in the 10m air pistol at the 2015 Singapore Games.

Yet it was the 25-year-old aerospace engineering student from the University Putra Malaysia (UPM) who finished as Malaysia's best shooter, winning a gold (10m air pistol) and a silver (50m pistol) after six days of competition.

It is Johnathan's first ever gold medal after competing in four editions of the Games and doing it in front of the home crowd was certainly the icing on the cake.

In doing so, Johnathan, who finished 28th at the Rio Olympics in the 10m air pistol event, got the better of the 42-year-old Xuan Vinh, not just once, but twice.

And Johnathan credits the solid programme under South Korean coach – Park Sang-soon – and the ability to stay focused under pressure for his success.

“The training programme by my



## Worthy aim:

Wong hugging his mother after winning the gold medal in the final 10m air pistol event during the SEA Games at the National Shooting Range in Subang on Saturday. — Photo: IZZRAFIQ ALIAS / The Star.

coaches has made me a more confident shooter,” said the Melakan.

“I still feel nervous before competitions but I grew in confidence after firing every shot. I believe the most important thing is to stay focused and be as confident as I can.

“To be honest, I wasn't so sure I could have beaten the Olympic champion. Even in the 50m event, I was surprised when both Vietnamese shooters were eliminated early.

“In my mind, Xuan Vinh is one of the best shooters in the region and I'll always be going up against him.

“Given that I wasn't in good shape heading into this Games, I certainly

surprised even myself. All the hard work during training and with sports psychologists certainly paid off.

“It also taught me that a big reputation doesn't necessarily guarantee success and I'll be more confident heading into future events,” added Johnathan.

Besides Johnathan, Malaysia also claimed gold through Muhd Ezuan Nasir Khan (men's 50m rifle prone), Benjamin Khor (men's double trap) and Alia Sazana Azahari (women's 25m pistol).

In total they finished with a 4-5-3 tally, which is an improvement from the 2-8-6 haul at the Singapore 2015 Games.