

jom! tell



My fellow supporters singing Negaraku during the victory ceremony.

Sports unites us

The 29th SEA Games held in KL, especially the athletic events, hold memorable moments for the writer

WE are not east Asians, we are not central Asians. Nor are we west Asians and south Asians. We are Southeast Asian. That was the spirit the Southeast Asian delegates attending the Asian Games 1958 in Tokyo wanted to inculcate after the meeting in which they had agreed to establish a sport organisation — the Southeast Asian Games Federation.

The following year, the region had its first games — the South East Asian Peninsula Games or SEAP Games, in Bangkok, Thailand, with founding countries Burma (now Myanmar), Kampuchea (now Cambodia), Laos, Malaya (now Malaysia), Thailand and Vietnam.

Then, in 1977, the federation changed the games' name to the SEA Games with the inclusion of Brunei, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Malaysia was the first country to host the first SEA Games.

Twenty-eight games later, Malaysia once again — after taking on the hosting task for five times — took on the responsible to host the 29th SEA Games from Aug 19-30.



TELL
ADVENTUROUS,
QUIRKY AND
ENTHUSIASTIC
GLOBAL
MARATHONER,
KKYUM TRAVELS
AROUND THE
WORLD TO RUN
WITH JOY, FUN AND
LOVE.

The first event of the 29th edition was the 42km marathon event, held at 6am on the main boulevard of Putrajaya.

Also happening on the same day was a fun run organised by the Malaysia Organising Committee KL 2017 which saw 15,000 runners gather for a run and subsequently, to cheer the marathoners during the SEA Games event.

Singaporean Guillaume Soh Rui Yong defended his SEA Games marathon title that he won in Singapore 2015.

Indonesian Agus Prayogo, who is a 10,000m and 5,000m specialist, made his SEA Games Marathon debut. Malaysian marathoners Muhaizar Mohamad and Leo Tan Hong Leong represented the country for the first time.

The favourites for the event were Soh Rui Yong, Agus Prayogo and Boonthung Srising of Thailand. Soh Rui Yong and Boonthung were the gold and silver medallist respectively from the Singapore 2015 SEA Games.

The race started with Agus leading the front pack. At 30km, Boonthung dropped out of the race leaving Muhaizar and Leo Tan in the third and fourth position, who kept pace with each other from the 30km mark onwards. We got excited that a Malaysian was in contention to the podium.

Soh overtook Agus at the final 2km and finished in a time of 2:29:27 while Agus finished in 2:31:20. Muhaizar made the final push and came in third with the time of 2:31:52. Leo Tan completed in fourth position with a time of 2:32:11.

Other than the 30km mark onwards, we got excited that a Malaysian was in contention to the podium.



Rimau, the mascot of the KL 2017 29th SEA Games.



Malaysia flag hoisted high during the victory ceremony.



Norasheela Khalid, the Malaysian record holder for the 400m hurdles and four SEA Games gold medallist and Asian Games bronze medallist.



Triyaningsih from Indonesia won her 11th SEA Games gold medal and the Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon 2010.



Zaidatul Husniah, the double silver medallist of the 100m and 200m.



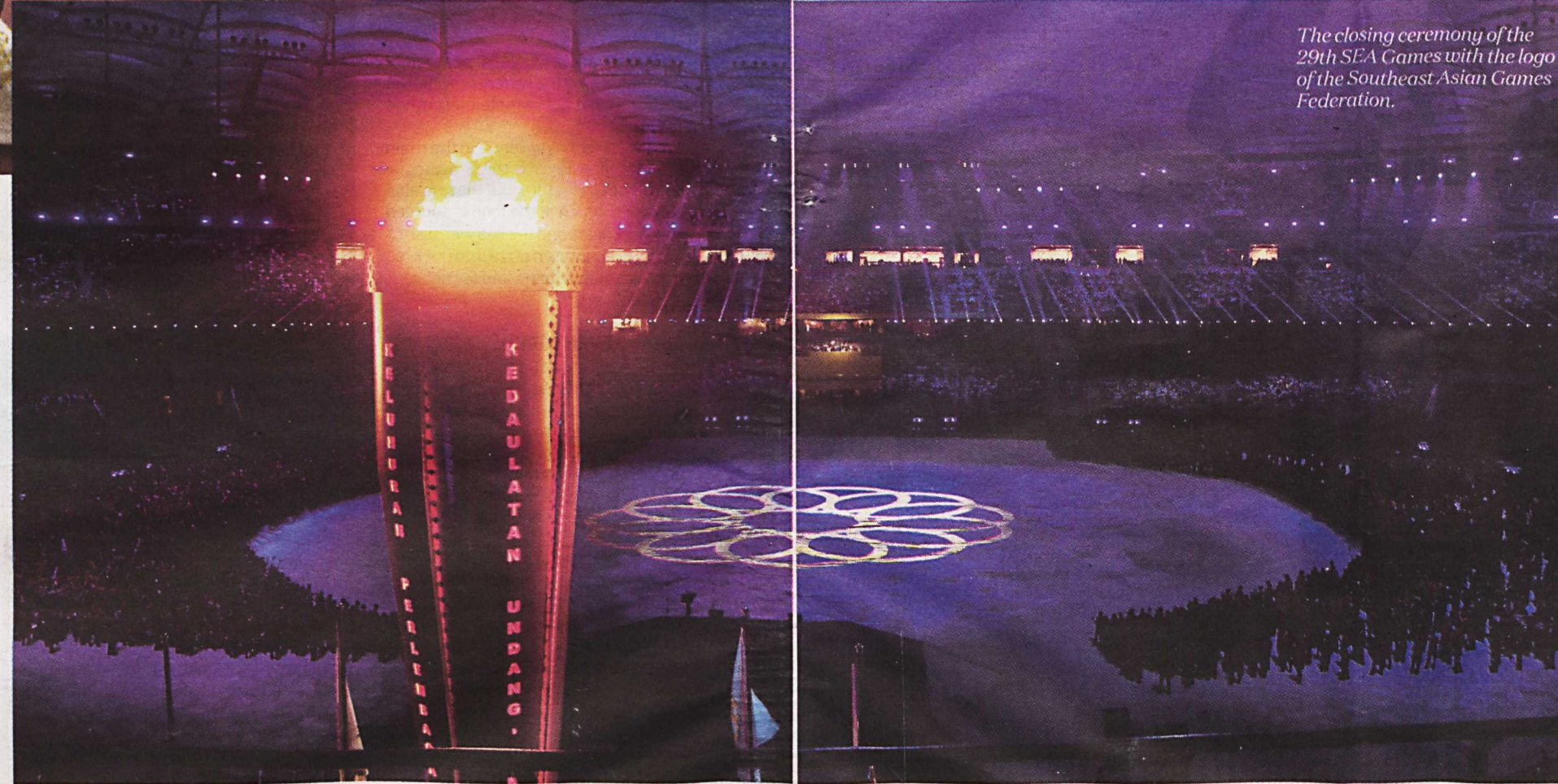
V Angamah, part of the two time SEA Games 4 x 400m with her team mates including Datuk Marina Chin, Datuk Zaiton Othman, Datuk Mumtaz Jaafar, Saik Ooi Cum and the late Rabia Abdul Salam.



Muhaizar Mohamad, the winner of three Standard Chartered KL Marathons and SEA Games marathon bronze medallist.



Soh Rui Yong, gold medallist marathon, and Agus Prayogo, gold medallist 10,000m, silver medallist marathon and bronze medallist 5,000m.



The closing ceremony of the 29th SEA Games with the logo of the Southeast Asian Games Federation.



Tanalaksiumy Rayzer was the Bronze medallist 4 X 400m KL 2017 29th SEA Games.

won the Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon 2010, won the 10,000m by a huge lead. That was her 11th SEA Games gold medal.

At high jump event, Yap Sean Yee broke the national record at 1.83m. It was a controversial event as all the three girls from Vietnam, Singapore and Malaysia equalled at that height. However, the Vietnamese girl won on a countback jump after the referee allowed a joint gold.

Then, there was an appeal from the Singapore team and the victory ceremony was postponed to the next day. Eventually, Michelle Sng was declared joint gold winner with Doung The Viet Anh. I was happy to help Yap take a photo of her, her family and friends at the podium that night.

On Friday, I missed the men and women 4 x 100m because I was busy making a placard for Agus in the office. I only managed to catch Triyaningsih at the 5,000m. She couldn't defend her title but got bronze. Probably she was drained from yesterday's 10,000m event. After that, I caught up with her at the spectators stand and she autographed my first marathon finisher medal

for me which is the SCHKM 2010.

Later that evening, we cheered Agus since there were Malaysians competing in that event. [Agus defended his gold medal]. We were interviewed by Bernama, our local news agency. I told the reporter that "sports unites us".

On the final day of the athletics event, our three favourite athletes in the 5,000m — Soh, Agus and local boy Prabudass Krishnan whom we always meet in the local running events — were in action. It was a nail-biting race. The lead switched between all of them, including the winner from Vietnam. In the final lap, Prabudass overtook Agus. He was also close to the Vietnamese winner. We are so proud of Prabudass.

Later Rayzam Shah, who won the 110m hurdles, came to take pictures with us in the spectators stand. He shaved his hair immediately after the race.

I also had the opportunity to take some photographs with Malaysian athletic legends who came to witness the 4 x 400m. Among them were V. Angamah and Josephine Mary. Josephine was the coach for the 4x400m women's team and her daughter Shereen is a member. Congratulations to them for winning the bronze medal. Miss Malaysia Universe 2017 Top 10 Tanalaksiumy Rayzer was also in that team and of course, I wouldn't miss the opportunity to take a photo with her.

After the final victory ceremony, most of the athletic team members from all the countries posed for group photos. We managed to take photos with many winners.

Later on, we sat on the tracks and watched the football semifinals where Malaysia beat Indonesia. It was a perfect way to end a week of athletic events. It has been my most memorable SEA Games too.

In the women's marathon event, Filipina Mary Joy Tabal clocked 2:48:22 almost seven minutes clear of silver winner Vietnamese Hoang Thi Thanh. Mary Joy and Hoang were the silver and bronze medallist medallists of the Singapore 2015 SEA Games. Natthaya Thanaronnawatt from Thailand, who was the defending champion, came in third. Mary Joy Tabal also delivered the first gold medal of the 29th SEA Games for Team Philippines.

That evening, the 29th SEA Games was officially, and grandly, opened at the newly refurbished Bukit Jalil National Stadium.

The impressive opening ceremony was put together by the renowned Malaysian film director Saw Teong Hin, who directed *Puteri Gunung Ledang* and *You Mean The World to Me*.

There were LED lights in front of each seat at the second and upper tiers. These gave a spectacular display with the countries' names flashed throughout the stadium during the parade of the nations and the athletes.

I also liked the self-penned 29th SEA Games theme titled *So Many Hands* by Sabahan Mia Palencia. Her live performance was as good as her recording.

Dayang Nurfaizah and MonoloQue also performed original numbers specially written for the occasion.

Then, when Datuk Soh Chin Aun, Datuk Santokh Singh and Datuk James Wong, the three football players from the team that qualified Malaysia for the 1980 Olympics, marched into the arena, I got goosebumps.

BLUE RIBBON

Athletics is the blue ribbon event of any

games. The games' track and field events started on Aug 22 and were for six days.

I did a short training run from the Runners Cafe near Awan Besar LRT to the stadium. I bumped into marathon silver medallist Agus in the spectators stand and got my first KL2017 selfie with him.

He was there to witness his team mate Hendro winning the 20km walk event. Agus would be in action again for 10,000m on Friday and 5,000m on Saturday. I could not fathom how anyone could run a high level 10k and 5k in the same week of his marathon recovery. So I waited for the events in anticipation.

In the same evening, I witnessed Khairul Hafiz Jantan winning the fastest man in Southeast Asia title in the 100m blue ribbon event. That almost brought the stadium's roof down. I also have utmost respect for the 100m defending champion,

Eric Shawn Cray, who had just won gold in the 400m hurdles event at 8.10pm and competed again in the 100m less than an hour later, winning the silver medal.

I also watched how Zaidatul Husniah won the silver in the 100m, losing to Le Tu Chinh of Vietnam. Both retained the same position for the 200m. Le, the speed queen of KL 2017, also won the women 200m with Zaidatul Husniah breaking her own Personal Best. Singaporean Veronica Shanti was in the third position.

The following day, I watched Elena Goh, from Melaka, winning the gold in the 10,000m walk. She was fourth in the last SEA Games. The star of the evening was Filipino Anthony Beram who won the 200m.

On the third of the track and field events, Beram sealed his position as the Michael Johnson of Southeast Asia when he won the 400m. Triyaningsih, the woman who