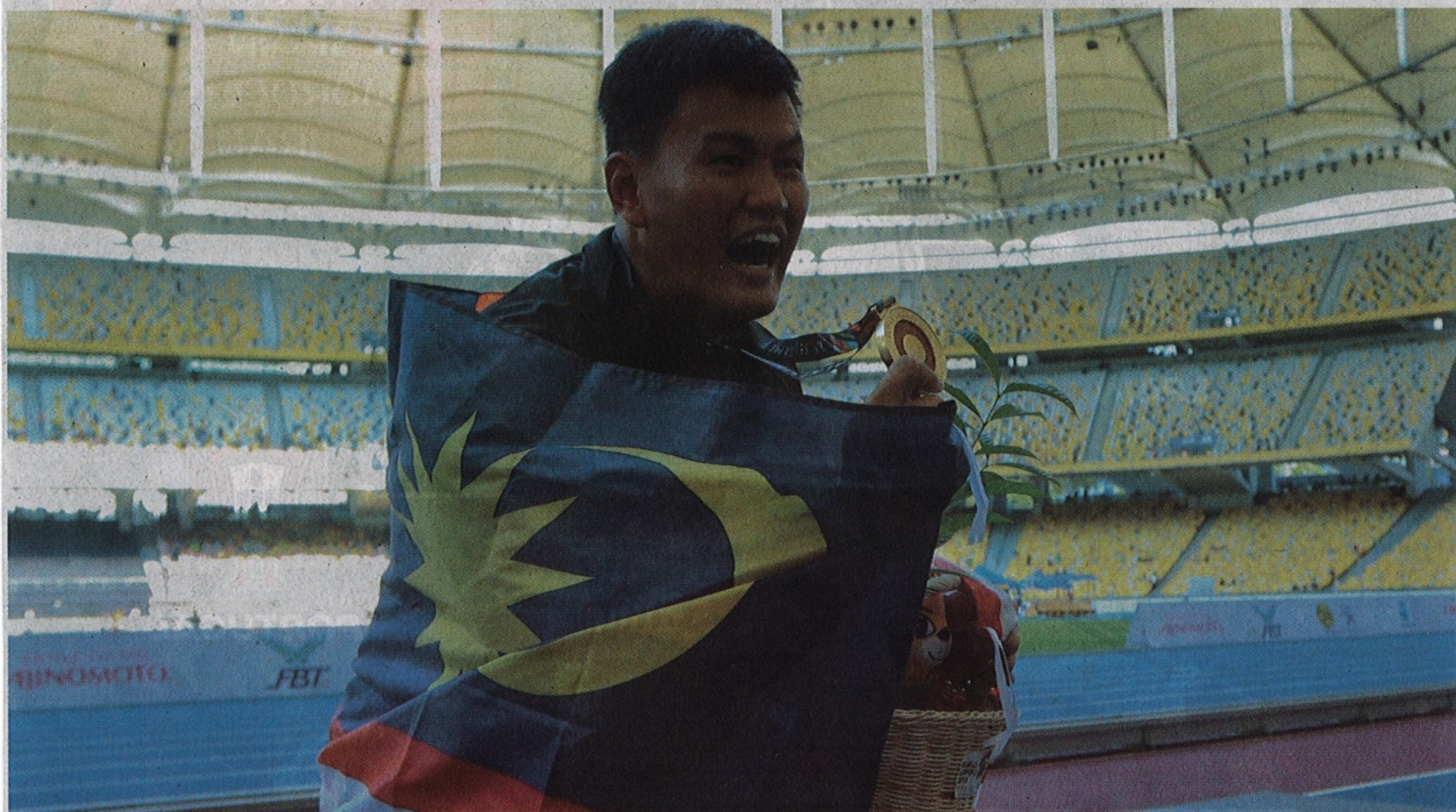


SPORTS

ATHLETICS

Jackie staking out 67 metres on Gold Coast



Jackie finds gold medal fame after breaking the Sea Games record for men's hammer throw at 65.90m on Aug 23. – Picture by Azneal Ishak

By R. Loheswar

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KUALA LUMPUR — Jackie Wong Siew Cheer may not be a household name quite yet but he is undeniably the best hammer thrower Malaysia has ever produced.

He has laid his hands on a SEA Games gold medal and took time off after the Games before heading back to classes, where the 25-year-old is studying Agriculture Business at University Putra Malaysia (UPM).

With the Commonwealth Games looming in months, Jackie has set his sights on hitting 67 metres, a realistic goal — when the record is held by Australian Stuart Rendell, at 77.53 metres.

Before that, has life changed with his new found fame?

“I’ve been quite busy to the point I can’t seem to assimilate back to a normal life,” quipped Jackie.

“It’s funny though. Despite the win, some people realise I’ve won the gold while others in my class aren’t aware at all of who I am,” he laughed.

“I am a different person outside the stadium,” added the Sarawakian who holds the SEA Games record with a hurl of 65.90m at Bukit Jalil Stadium and which also stands as the national record.

His effort erased the previous record of 65.63m set by Filipino Caleb Stuart at the 2015 Singapore SEA Games.

“I’m also proud and grateful to the dean of my agriculture faculty who gave me a special award as recognition for what I have done for the country. It’s the first time such an award was handed out from my faculty.”

Not one to rest on his laurels, Jackie

and coach Gu Yuan work closely where he consults his charge on his university schedule.

“I try to take the subjects from 11am to 4pm so I can train in the morning and afternoon,” revealed Jackie.

“I check with the coach before I register for classes. We have just four months to train for the Commonwealth Games. I’ve started my training and am doing my best now to aim for 67 metres and a top six finish at the Commonwealth Games.”

The Commonwealth Games will be held from April 4-15 on Australia’s Gold Coast.