

Martial arts exponents hope for a golden outing at Asiad

By RAJES PAUL

SEMENYIH: Kuala Lumpur SEA Games martial arts gold medallists – Loh Jack Chang (wushu); M. Mathivani and Syakilla Salni Jefry Krisnan (karate) – are hoping to get a chance to shine at the Jakarta Asian Games next August.

The 30-year-old Jack Chang, who won two golds at the SEA Games for the first time – in taijijian (taiji sword) and compulsory taijiquan – hopes to get his act right in his third Asiad outing.

“I’ve returned home empty-handed from two Asian Games. I want to end my medal drought,” said the Master in Business Administration graduate from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM).

“It’s been a year of mixed fortunes for me. I did well to win two gold medals at the KL Games but none at the World Championships.

“My knee injury has flared up again, but I am recovering. I hope to win my first Asiad medal.”

For Syakilla, however, it’s about winning a second Asiad gold. This time it’s in a lower weight category.

“I won the 2014 Asian Games gold (in the Under-65kg) in Incheon. It’ll be quite competitive at the Jakarta Asiad because I’ll be fighting in the below 55kg category. That’s going to be challenging,” said the 25-year-old.

“It’s been an interesting year for me. I started poorly after undergoing an elbow surgery. I missed many competitions. I returned and won a bronze at the Asian Championships and then came the KL Games success.

“I also have another goal next year – the World Championships. No one from Malaysia has won a world title in karate. I also want to qualify for the 2020 Olympic Games.”

As for teacher Mathivani, she is dreaming of a golden Asian debut after helping Malaysia beat Vietnam 2-1 to clinch the women’s team kumite gold at the KL Games.

“It’s been a year of blessing for me. It’s hard to juggle between teaching and sports, but my success at the KL Games showed me that I can do it,” said the 26-year-old, who has been with the national team



Doing their part: Loh Jack Chang and M. Mathivani at the Desa Amal Jireh charity home in Semenyih yesterday.

since 2007.

“I’m all fired up to qualify for my first Asian Games.”

All three – Syakilla, Mathivani and Jack Chang – joined hands to make a difference for underprivileged children at the Desa Amal Jireh in Semenyih yesterday.

They were joined by other national athletes – Amy Kwan (rhythmic gymnasts), R. Sharmendran (karate), Ng Sock Khim (table tennis),

Ilyas Chang (ice hockey) and footballers K. Gurusamy, K. Reuben and J. Christie.

Said Syakilla: “It was a joy to help others in need. I come from a poor family and I know how difficult it can be.

“I know how it feels when someone out there cares and is willing to give you a hand. It’s great that all the athletes can play their part for the needy children here.”