

Top 12, but it's alright mate

Now, it's time to focus on Asian Games



No easy feat: Zaidatul Husniah Zulkifli (centre) became the second Malaysian woman sprinter after G. Shanti to reach the 100m semi-finals at the Commonwealth Games.

By RAJES PAUL

PETALING JAYA: A top 10 finish is not possible for Malaysia.

But that's alright mate, as the athletes showed many positives at the 28th Commonwealth in Gold Coast.

Malaysia finished 12th with a medal haul of 7-5-12 – that's one gold medal more than the Glasgow Games four years ago.

The seven golds came from weightlifting (2), badminton (2), diving (1), lawn bowls (1) and rhythmic gymnastics (1).

A total of 99 men and 76 women competed but none were hauled up for keeping late nights in the land of Surfers Paradise on their event days.

None broke the rules or showed poor sportsmanship – and let's hope that none of the random dope tests carried out during the Games will

be positive.

These athletes instead were breaking records, upsetting world beaters, winning respect and setting new personal best – at least a handful of them.

Special mention must go to 22-year-old cyclist Muhd Shah Firdaus Sahrom, squash player Mohd Nafizwan Adnan, sprinter Zaidatul Husniah Zulkifli, paddlers Ho Ying-Karen Lyne and swimmer Tern Jian Han for making heads turn with their unexpected show of class in their respective fields.

Nafizwan and Ho Ying-Karen bagged their sports first individual medal in squash (men's singles) and table tennis (women's doubles) respectively while Jian Han broke former top backstroker Alex Lim Keng Liat's long standing record in the men's 50m backstroke to reach

the final.

Zaidatul followed in G. Shanti's footsteps by reaching the women's 100m semi-finals.

Shah Firdaus defeated Australia's king of sprint Matt Glaetzer in his own backyard. The Aussies could not accept it – as they had their eyes set on Azizulhasni Awang but Shah Firdaus came from nowhere to steal the show.

The Melbourne-based Shah Firdaus eventually finished fourth – but what he learnt from the Games was invaluable.

"It showed that even a kampung boy like me can stand tall against the giants of cycling. It will only spur me to achieve greater success," said Shah Firdaus.

Podium Programme athletes did better but the Kita Juara and back-up team should not be ignored as

MALAYSIA WON 7 GOLDS, 5 SILVERS AND 12 BRONZES IN GOLD COAST

GOLD

BADMINTON

- > Lee Chong Wei (men's singles)
- > Vivian Hoo-Chow Mei Kuan (women's doubles)

DIVING

- > Pandelega Rinong-Cheong Jun Hoong (women's synchronised 10m platform)

RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS

- > Amy Kwan Dict Weng (ribbon)

WEIGHTLIFTING

- > Muhd Azroy Hazalwafie Izhar Ahmad (men's below 56kg)
- > Muhd Aznil Bidin (men's below 62kg)



LAWN BOWLS

- > Emma Firvana Saroji-Siti Zalina Ahmad (women's pairs)

SILVER

BADMINTON

- > Lee Chong Wei, Tan Wee Kiong, Goh V Shem, Chan Peng Soon, Goh Liu Ying, Goh Soon Huat, Shevon Lai Jemie, Chow Mei Kuan, Vivian Hoo, Soniia Cheah (mixed team)

RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS

- > Koi Sie Yan (ball)
- > Koi Sie Yan (clubs)
- > Koi Sie Yan, Amy Kwan Dict Weng, Izzah Amzan (team)



PARA POWERLIFTING

- > Jong Yee Khie (men's above 77kg)

BRONZE

ATHLETICS

- > Muhd Afiq Mohamad Ali Hanafiah (men's 100m T12, visual impairment)

BADMINTON

- > Goh V Shem-Tan Wee Kiong (men's doubles)
- > Chan Peng Soon-Goh Liu Ying (mixed doubles)

DIVING

- > Leong Mun Yee-Nur Dhabitah Sabri (women's synchronised 3m springboard)
- > Leong Mun Yee-Nur Dhabitah Sabri (women's synchronised 10m platform)

RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS

- > Amy Kwan Dict Weng (hoop)
- > Amy Kwan Dict Weng (individual all-around)
- > Koi Sie Yan (ribbon)

SHOOTING

- > Alia Sazana Azahari (women's 25m pistol)

SQUASH

- > Mohd Nafizwan Adnan (men's singles)

TABLE TENNIS

- > Ho Ying-Karen Lyne (women's doubles)

WEIGHTLIFTING

- > Muhd Fazrul Azrie Mohdad (men's below 85kg)



Amy Kwan Dict Weng and Koi Sie Yan

out of 81 representatives, seven won medals and three – Jian Han and weightlifters Mohd Fazrul Azrie Mohdad and Siti Aisyah Rosli – set new national records.

Inspired by some of these strong showing, including Lee Chong Wei's gold-medal feat in ruthless fashion on Sunday, many athletes have returned home with renewed confidence and determined to come back for another shot at stardom at the 2022 Birmingham Games.

But there have been bitter disappointments and near misses too.

And there are athletes who were just completely out of depth.

Sports such as badminton, shooting, diving and athletics should be on the lookout for new stars to take over from some of their seasoned campaigners.

There are just four more months before the Indonesia Asian Games.

It's not too far away and all sports need to make quick reviews, adjustments, self-checks and improvement to put another solid showing to underline progress. Only then, they can nail a perfect 10 for good effort.