

Hoping for gold in Year of the Rat

Ministry says full support will be given to athletes to win coveted medal at Tokyo Olympics



Mohd Azizulhasni also brought glory to the country at the Rio Olympics in 2016.
— Filepic

THE Youth and Sports Ministry hopes the Year of the Rat will bring the country luck to win its first Olympic gold, its deputy minister Steven Sim Chee Keong said.

He said it was the hope of all Malaysians that the wait for the country's first Olympic gold medal would end this year.

"I am confident that all athletes, sports officials, the Olympic Council of Malaysia and national sports associations are working hard to fulfil the people's aspiration. We will continue to give our support to the athletes in their pursuit of glory.

"We hope this year will bring more *ong* (luck) to our athletes at the international level.

"I urge Malaysians to continue supporting them," he told reporters after recording his Chinese New Year message together with National Sports Council director-general Datuk Ahmad Shapawi Ismail and national athletes.

Since making its debut in the 1956 Olympics, Malaysia has been chasing after the elusive gold. The closest any athlete has come to realising that dream was badminton legend Datuk Lee Chong Wei, who won three silver medals, in 2008, 2012 and 2016.

At Rio 2016, apart from Chong Wei in men's singles, men's doubles pair Goh V Shem-Tan Wee Kiong and mixed-doubles pair Chan Peng Soon-Goh Liu Ying, and Cheong Jun Hoong-Pandelela Rinong (women's 10m platform synchronised diving) also won silver while Mohd



Jun Hoong (left) and Pandelela after winning the silver medal at the Rio Olympics in 2016. — Filepic

Azizulhasni Awang (keirin cycling) won bronze.

Athletes who have qualified for the Tokyo Olympics are gymnast Farah Ann Abdul Hadi (individual all-around), sailor Khairulnizam Mohd Afendy (men's laser), Nur Shazrin Mohd Latif (women's laser radial), Nuraisyah Jamil and Juni Karimah Noor Jamali (women's international 470) and archer Khairul Anuar Mohamad (men's recurve).

In diving, Nur Dhabitah Sabri, Wendy Ng Yan Yee (women's 3m springboard) and Pandelela (women's 10m platform) and Pandelela-Leong Mun Yee (women's 10m platform synchro) have also confirmed their Olympic slots.

With the Olympic qualification

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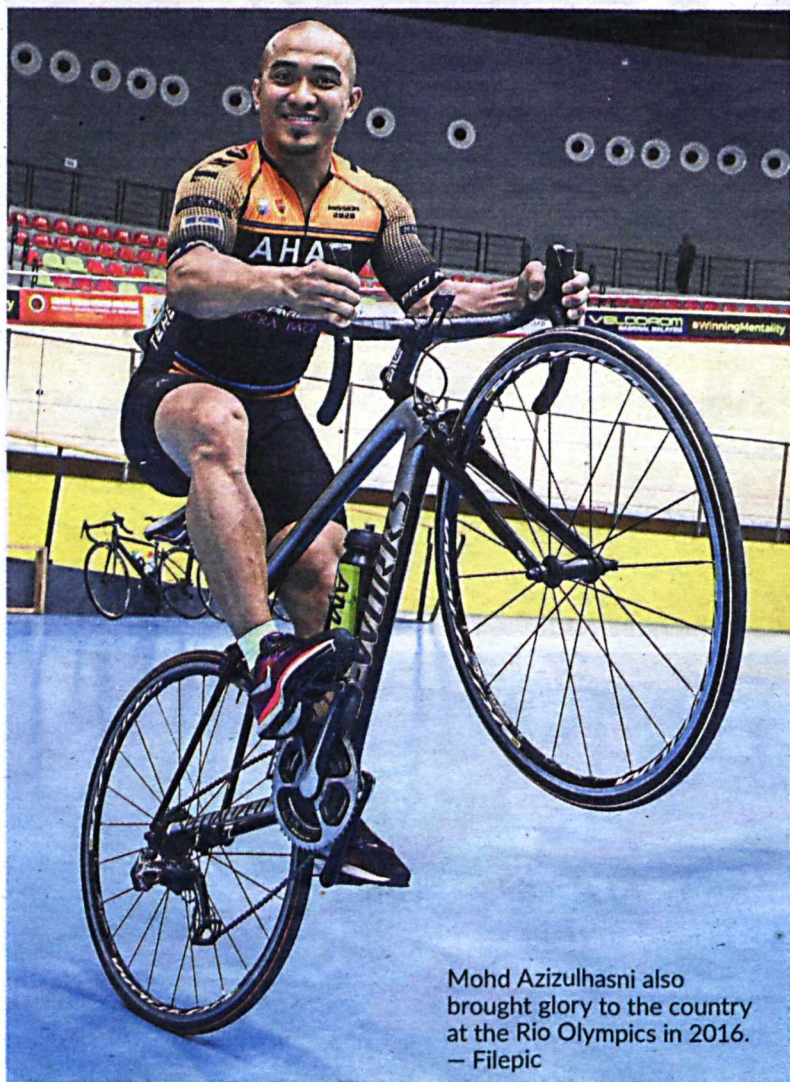
Steven Sim Chee Keong

period for several sports still open, more Malaysian athletes, especially badminton players and cyclists, are expected to qualify for Tokyo.

— Bernama

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Since making its debut at the 1956 Olympics, Malaysia has been chasing after the elusive Olympic gold, with the closest any athlete has come being that dream was won by legend Datuk Lee Chai Seng, who won three silver medals in 2012 and 2016.

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