

145 golds for Merdeka joy

> Best ever SEA Games campaign by the Malaysian contingent

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian athletes fought with grit to the very end to wrap up their best ever SEA Games to emerge overall champions and presented a euphoric gift of 145 gold medals to the nation, which celebrates its 60th anniversary today.

In the final push yesterday, Malaysia whacked five of the last seven golds at stake – two from diving as expected and three from the ice skating – to bring the curtains down on 12 days of competition.

This is the second time Malaysia has topped the Games after their first in 2001 when they won 111 golds on home soil. Setting a similar target this time and to its utter delight, the national athletes

responded with high fighting spirit and comradeship to surpass the mark.

Taking top spot on the medals board with 145 golds, 92 silvers and 86 bronzes, the host nation towers over Thailand, which is going home with 72 golds including the prized men's football title for the third time in a row, a sharp drop from their 95-gold domination of the Singapore Games two years ago.

Vietnam finished third by a whisker with 58 golds, just one ahead of Singapore, which is followed by Indonesia with 38, the Philippines 24, Myanmar seven, Cambodia three and Laos two. Rounding up the 11 participating nations are Brunei, which has five silvers and eight bronzes and

Timor-Leste with three bronzes.

National divers signed off with the men's and women's titles in synchronised 10m platform to sweep all 13 gold offered in the sport at the National Aquatic Centre.

Leong Mun Yee and Traisy Vivien Tukiet faced no threat at all in retaining the women's gold while in the men's event, promising 16-year-old Jellson Jabillin and Hanis Nazirul Jaya Surya did not squander the opportunity in nailing the men's title for their first time.

The men's gold was won two years ago by the more experienced Ooi Tze Liang and Chew Yiwei, who are still in the team but are taking a back seat to give the youngsters a chance to prove themselves.

In the hotly contested final day of speed skating, Malaysia's 500m gold medallist Anya Chong kept

her cool to win a second Games medal from the 1,000m short track event with Ashley Chin taking the bronze.

The two girls came back to pick up a fourth gold medal for Malaysia in the 3,000m relay with Nor Marissa Ahmad Lokman and See Wan Ni in tow before the men's team took the 3,000m relay gold.

The first gold was won by figure skater Julian Yee.

In weightlifting, Malaysia's best show was a silver from Mohamad Fazrul Azrie in the men's 85kg with a 323kg total including 182kg in the clean and jerk that smashed his own national record of 181kg set in May this year.

The gold was won by Thailand's Pornchai Lobsi with 337kg and the bronze went to Vietnamese Hoang Tan Tai on 322kg.

The next Games will be hosted by the Philippines. — Bernama

Class act by our divers

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia divers of Leong Mun Yee and Traisy Vivien Tukiet claimed the women's 10m synchronised platform gold medal on the final day of the SEA Games yesterday to give the host nation a clean sweep of 13 golds in diving.

It was Malaysia's third straight win with a clean sweep in gold medals in diving, after its eight-gold feat in both Myanmar (2013) and Singapore (2015).

World champion Cheong Jun Hoong braved a back injury to claim gold in 1m springboard category and nudged teammate Jasmine Lai into second place on Aug 26. The 27-year-old competed on painkillers.

Pandelela Rinong amassed three golds yesterday with almost flawless attempts in the women's individual 10m platform, mixed team event and the 3m springboard women's team event.



Khairul outpaced Eric Shaun Cray of the Philippines and Jirapong Meenaprafom of Thailand in the 100m dash.

Speedy Jantan toast of the nation

PETALING JAYA: Khairul Hafiz Jantan became the toast of the country when he won the 100m gold to end Malaysia's 14-year wait for gold in the blue-ribbon event at the SEA Games.

His 10.38sec sprint to glory on Aug 22 was the cherry on top for track and field athletes from Malaysia who grabbed 25 medals overall, of which eight were gold, eight silver and nine bronze medals from the 45 events contested.

Khairul, dubbed Speedy Jantan, is the first Malaysian to win the race since Nazmizan Muhammad's 10.47sec effort at the 2003 Games in Hanoi.

He is also the fourth

Malaysian sprinter to win the 100m crown, after Nazmizan, Gunaratnam Rajalingam (Bangkok 1967) and M. Jegathesan (Kuala Lumpur 1965).

However, Khairul limped out of the 200m race with hamstring injury.

He also had to pull out of the 4x100m, putting paid to his triple-goal hope.

Pocket Rocket takes host to magical 111

PETALING JAYA: "Pocket Rocket Man" Azizulhasni Awang provided Malaysia its targeted 111th gold, making it a key moment in the host's SEA Games campaign.

Azizulhasni rode to gold in the men's individual sprint on Monday.

Malaysians watched with bated breath as the countdown to the target got hyped up right after Malaysian rhythmic

gymnast Amy Kwan Dict Weng delivered the 100th gold medal in style by winning the ribbon apparatus final earlier.

The tally rose via gymnastics, diving, silat, squash, and hockey respectively, before the cycling team delivered the 109th, 110th and 111th golds.

Azizulhasni screams in delight after winning the men's sprint individual gold.

Sultan Mizan sparks off dream start

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia's dream start to the 29th SEA Games came with a golden royal touch as the Sultan of Terengganu galloped to the first triumph of the day in the 80km equestrian race.

Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin led the country to a majestic start on Aug 20 with a double-gold feat in the individual endurance event and the team endurance event. The team gold was won with Mohd Faris Syafiq and

Mohammad Fuad Hashim.

Sultan Mizan, who is the first sultan to participate in the SEA Games, credited team effort for Malaysia's success. He is ranked fourth in the world in this discipline.



National gymnasts show off the gold medals in team rhythmic gymnastics at the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre yesterday.

Clean sweep reaffirms M'sia as rhythmic gymnastics powerhouse

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia cemented its position as the rhythmic gymnastics powerhouse in the region by making a clean sweep of eight gold medals at stake in the sport at the SEA Games.

They stole the show by clinching four gold medals in the hoop, ball, clubs and ribbon finals through Koi Sie Yan (hoop and clubs), Izzah Amzan (ball) and Amy Kwan Dict Weng (ribbon)

on Aug 27.

The national gymnasts added four more the next day, with the icing on the cake coming from the group exercise mixed apparatus final yesterday through Amira Sofiya Amirul Fares, Chan Mei Thung, Koh Jei Yi, Tee Wei Qi, Tee Wei Wen and Thew Yue Jia who collectively scored 15,350 points, ahead of Vietnam (13,650 points) and Singapore (11,450 points).