

29TH SEA GAMES
(AUGUST 19 - 30)

KUALA LUMPUR 2017

MUAY
THE Thais showed their might in Muay by having five exponents in the final. But they could only manage a 2-3-0 medal haul. Malaysia did well to win two gold medals through Ain Kamaruddin (57kg) and Mohd Ali Yaakub (54kg). Ain stole the lime-light when he upstaged world champion Thachtana Luangphon in the final. Tengku Shahrizal Abdul Rahman managed a silver in the 67kg event.

NETBALL
THE rivalry between Malaysia and Singapore was obvious at the Kuala Lumpur SEA Games with the hosts emerging champions.

This is the third time that netball was staged. Malaysia won by beating Singapore when the sport made its debut at the 2001 KL Games. And hosts Singapore were the gold medallists when they edged Malaysia at Singapore 2015.

But Thailand and Brunei are fast catching up if their performances at the KL Games are anything to go by.

Thailand gave Singapore a hard time before losing 41-59 in the round-robin competition. And in the semi-finals, the Thais pushed them even harder before losing 43-55.

The Philippines were the whipping girls but they've promised to put up a stronger team in the future. Hopefully, the Philippines will include netball when they host the 2019 Games.

PETANQUE
THAILAND maintained their stranglehold by emerging as the overall champions. This time though they were challenged quite closely by Malaysia. Thailand ended the campaign with a 2-4-1 haul while Malaysia were second on 2-1-3. Overall, it was a good showing by Malaysia.

RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS
GROUP exercise could be a permanent event in the SEA Games rhythmic gymnastics. It was introduced at the 2015 Singapore Games with just one event. But Malaysia increased to two and won both the golds. The other countries – Singapore, the Philippines and Vietnam – showed plenty of potential by winning medals.

In the other rhythmic events, Malaysia reigned supreme and are set to dominate at the next Games in the Philippines in 2019.

RUGBY SEVENS
MALAYSIA proved to be a powerhouse in the men's competition, beating Singapore 22-7 in the final. There was also joy for the Malaysian women. They clinched their first-ever medal – a bronze. Rugby will be in the programme of the next Games in the Philippines in 2019. The Malaysian Rugby Union should continue their training programmes to make sure of success in two years' time.

SAILING
MOST of the races were an open affair this year following the



Perfect 10: The silat exponents are all smiles after picking up 10 golds to become the overall champions.

retirement of some of the sailors from Thailand and Singapore. But expect the two strong sailing nations to bounce back stronger at the next SEA Games in the Philippines with the experienced gained in Langkawi.

Malaysia, powered by a few seasoned campaigners, did well to win six gold medals out of the 14 offered to emerge as the overall champions for the first time.

They surpassed the five-gold target set by the Malaysian Sailing Association (MSA).

SEPAKTAKRAW
CHINLONE delivered Malaysia's first gold medal of the 29th Kuala Lumpur SEA Games at the Titiwangsa Indoor Stadium on the first day (Aug 16) but the sepak-takraw team could only add on another gold medal on the penultimate day of the competition winning the men's regu event.

The national team ended their poor campaign with a disappointing haul of 2-3-6.

SHOOTING
THAILAND flexed their muscles to emerge over-all champions with five golds. Malaysia also enjoyed one of their best outings in recent years with a 4-5-3 haul. Olympian Johnathan Wong Guanjie contributed a gold (10m air pistol) and a silver (50m pistol). Vietnam were a big flop as they only managed a poor 1-3-0 haul.

SILAT
VIETNAM gave Malaysia a run for their money by reaching 10 finals, but ended up with only three golds. It was also a rather disappointing outing for powerhouse Indonesia as they could manage only two golds. Malaysia were the overall champions with 10 golds. The Philippines surprised the "Big Three" by winning one. As hosts of the 2019 Games, they are expected to retain the sport by a reduced number of events.

SQUASH
SINGAPORE benefited most from Malaysia's blunder to steal the men's team gold. The island



Golden girls: The gymnasts celebrating after winning the team event in rhythmic gymnastics.

republic also took both the jumbo doubles golds. The Philippines also enjoyed an impressive campaign with Jemyca Aribado winning medals in all her five events. With such an impressive haul of medals, the Philippines are likely to include the sport at the 2019 Games. Malaysia were the biggest winners with six golds. They could have won a seventh gold if they had not been over-confident in the line-up for the men's team final.

SYNCHRONISED SWIMMING
IT was once again a two-horse contest between Singapore and Malaysia. Singapore emerged overall champions, winning three golds compared to two for Malaysia. Led by veterans Miya Yong and Debbie Soh, Singapore pipped Malaysia to the team gold. Malaysia will be looking to break Singapore's stranglehold at the next Games in the Philippines in 2019.

SWIMMING
SINGAPORE are still a dominant force as shown by their ability to make a clean sweep of all six relay golds at stake for the second straight SEA Games.

Led by Olympic butterfly champion Joseph Schooling, Singapore raked in 19 golds. It was four short of their previous best of 23 golds at Singapore 2015. But the star was Nguyen Thi Anh Vien. The Vietnamese bagged eight golds to emerge as the best in the pool.

Indonesia also did well to claim a 4-11-10 haul and their young group of swimmers will be hoping to build on the confidence when they host the Asian Games next year.

TABLE TENNIS
AS expected, Singapore powered by naturalised players from China ruled again by winning five out of the seven gold medals on offer. To underline their domination, they even made it a 1-2 finish in the men and women's singles and men and women's doubles.

Thailand and Vietnam managed to prevent a clean sweep by beating Singaporean opponents in the mixed doubles and men's team events respectively.

Malaysia settled for two bronze medals in the men's team (Muhd Shakirin Ibrahim, Leong Chee Feng, Muhd Ashraf Haiqal Rizal, Wong Chun Cheun, Choong Javen) and women's team (Ng Sock Khim, Lee Rou You, Ho Ying, Ting Hie Phin, Alice Chang Li Sian).

TAEKWONDO
IT was a good outing for Malaysia after failing to win medals in the last three SEA Games. They did well to deliver three golds – two in poomsae (pattern) and one in kyorugi (combat) – to finish overall second. It augurs well for the next Games in the Philippines in 2019. But the Malaysians need more international exposure before they can match overall champions

Thailand, who have world-class exponents.

TENNIS
THAILAND are a class above the rest in South-East Asia, bagging four of the five titles. The Ratiwatana brothers – Sanchai and Sonchat – successfully defended the men's doubles crown to make it their sixth win in seven editions. Indonesia's Christopher Rungkat denied a clean sweep by the Thais when he overcame Jirat Navasirisomboon in the men's singles final to reclaim the title he last won in 2011.

TRIATHLON
THE Philippines showed their might, winning both the golds. Nikko Huelgas retained his gold in the men's category, leading compatriot John Chicano to a 1-2 finish. For the women's event, Kim Mangrobang dominated the field with compatriot Claire Adorna in second place. Malaysia only managed a bronze through Irene Chong See Win and a lot of work is needed to break the Filipino dominance at the 2019 Games in the Philippines.

VOLLEYBALL
BOTH the Malaysian teams – men and women – failed to get on the podium. But coach Tay Yeu Siong, who led Malaysia to the silver at the 2001 Kuala Lumpur SEA Games, believes all is not lost for the young men's team, comprising mostly of Under-21 players. The Malaysian Volleyball Association (Mava) need to have the right structure and development plans if they want to produce better and stronger teams. Thailand, who have a professional league, swept both the golds.

WATER SKI AND WAKE BOARDING
DESPITE fielding the youngest team, Malaysia were the dominant force. Fourteen-year-old Aaliyah Yoong Hanifah delivered a top-notch performance with three golds and a silver. Nine-year-old Adam Yoong also showed his prowess, winning the men's tricks gold. It is unsure if the Philippines will stage water skiing in the 2019 Games. If there is no water skiing, then Malaysia will be deprived of several assured golds.

WEIGHTLIFTING
ONE of the few sports in which Malaysia failed to win a gold. Five golds were offered in the men's category and Indonesia and Vietnam won two golds each while Thailand bagged one. Malaysia won one silver and one bronze. It has been 12 years since Malaysia last won a gold.

WUSHU
IT'S no secret the hosts usually do well in subjective sports and wushu is no exception. Malaysia finished as overall champions after achieving their best ever SEA Games outing with a 6-5-3 haul. Malaysia's previous high was 6-2-5 when they hosted the 2001 Games. The challenge for the national exponents is to repeat the performance in two years' time at the Philippines Games.