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Games-Shooting (Malaysia)

NURUL HUDA DELIVERS EXPECTED GOLD

By: Noor Hammad Wariman

LANGKAWI, Sept 18 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's expected gold medal in the 16th Commonwealth Games shooting competition came through Nurul Huda Baharin who shot 494.8 points to break the women's individual air rifle record at the Langkawi International Shooting Range today.

The new record is 6.1 points higher than the previous mark of 488.7 points set by Fani Theofanus of Cyprus four years ago in Victoria, Canada.

This is the first shooting gold medal won by Malaysia in the Games 64 years history.

Malaysia's gold hope appeared to be in tatters when Nurul Huda, 25, suffered a fractured right arm in a motorcycle accident in Kuala Lumpur on Aug 10.

Nurul Huda said she was under no pressure despite the tough competition since she did not expect to win due to her injury.

It was another happy outing for the hosts as the shooting competition entered its sixth day when Zainal Abidin Md Zain, 36, delivered another silver for Malaysia when he finished second in the fullbore rifle event on 400 points.

Zainal Abidin shot two points lower than gold medal winner James Paton of Canada who is also the world champion in the event.

Zainal Abidin claimed that the wind had cost him the gold medal.

"I was distracted by the wind when I was about to pull the trigger," he said.

The unexpected silver is a special gift for Zainal Abidin and his family as well as Malaysia since the fullbore rifle is a new event for the Malaysian team.

National team manager Musa Omar said: "I did not expect the Malaysian shooters to win a medal as they were participating in the event for the first time".

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who visited the Langkawi International Shooting Range today congratulated both shooters for their outstanding performance.

Meanwhile in the men's individual rapid fire pistol Malaysia's Hasli Amir Hassan missed the bronze medal when he finished fourth, 0.9 points behind third placed Bhanwar Dhaka of India who fired 668.9 points.

However Hasli still has a chance of being awarded the bronze pending the outcome from the protest lodged by South Africa against gold medallist Metodi Igorov's of Canada regarding his citizenship status.

South Africa protested after the official result was announced as they questioned Igorov's citizenship status since he is from Bulgaria and travelling on a Canadian passport.

Igorov shot 674.8 points to rewrite the event's record.

In the men's individual free rifle prone event, veteran national shooter Mej Jasni Shaari was unable to shoot down any medals after coming out 32nd.

Another Malaysian Mohd Sabki Md Din finished 18th.

Malaysia's medal haul now stands at one gold, four silvers and two bronzes.

-- BERNAMA

NH ZUL