

Bright spark for Games torch

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SHE will not feature in the Kuala Lumpur Sea Games next week, but 10-year-old Nurfazrina Razif was a symbol of hope, when she handed the Jalur Gemilang to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the Prime Minister of Malaysia at Putrajaya yesterday.

The 10-year-old artistic gymnast, who is part of the National Sports Council (NSC) junior programme, is a bright spark who has all the makings of becoming Malaysia's next Au Li Yen. Or even better

The KL Games will be Li Yen's final competition, and with the dearth of top level gymnasts the NSC are grooming her for the 2003 Vietnam Sea Games.

Being a Level Six gymnast, she is already qualified to compete in international level competitions.

"I plan to represent the country in future, and my target is to compete in the Vietnam Games," said Nurfazrina in Putrajaya yesterday.

This year, Nurfazrina was crowned the Under-12 Kuala Lumpur School Sports Council champion after winning four gold and one silver medals, including the coveted individual all-around final gold.

She trains six times a week at the National Sports Institute (NSI) in Bukit Jalil after school hours, and just like most sportsmen and women, she endures a lot of hardship.

"Sometimes, she comes home feeling tired and disheartened, especially after a hard session in school or training, but she knows that she will have to train hard if she is to achieve her goal," said Nurfazrina's mother, Khalida Khalid.

Her main source of inspiration is her father, former national badminton player Razif Sidek, who just like her, was an under-12 champion. — GLEN PETERS