

Headline	All geared up for Turkey task		
MediaTitle	The Star (Metro South and East)		
Date	22 Jun 2017	Language	English
Circulation	250,667	Readership	752,000
Section	News	Page No	8
ArticleSize	531 cm ²	Journalist	PETALING JAYA
PR Value	RM 22,269		



All geared up for Turkey task

MSDeaf athletes eager to make country proud at summer games

PETALING JAYA

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THE Malaysian Deaf Sports Association (MSDeaf) athletes are in good shape for the run-up to the 23rd Summer Deaflympics in Samsun, Turkey from July 18 to 30 whereby 4,500 participants from 109 countries will gather.

With less than a month before heading off to what is the pinnacle of sporting events for deaf sportsmen and sportswomen, all 15 of them training in Kedah (athletics) and Selangor (badminton and bowling) have shifted into high gear with their eyes on the highest rung of the winner's podium.

On top of multiple podium finishes from the three sports, MSDeaf president Kamarzaman Harun said chances of securing gold are high with this year's badminton team.

"We are sending teams for only three sports because these are the games that our athletes can do well in, especially badminton, whereby even with just four, we have one of the better teams."

Kamarzaman added that Malaysia refrained from taking part in the last Deaflympics in Sofia, Bulgaria, four years ago, as MSDeaf felt the athletes were not ready at the time.

Malaysia's only gold medal, so far, came from Zana Azizul Ujang in the 110m hurdles at the 2001 Deaflympics in Rome, Italy.

By starting training earlier this time around, Kamarzaman believes the athletes, who have performed well at the national, Asean and Asia Pacific levels, are capable of getting the results.

"Besides badminton, we also have high hopes for those taking

part in athletics and bowling.

"Through them, we are aiming for four medals – three from the athletics team (eight participants) and at least one silver from the three bowlers."

Kamarzaman said the association was happy with the training progress despite the lack of funds.

"The total expenses will cost MSDeaf about RM740,000, from funding the training sessions to

sending the 30-odd contingent to Turkey for two weeks," MSDeaf secretary general Ong Shin Ruenn explained.

"After receiving sponsorships for apparel (Yang Yang), dropping two players from the contingent and exemptions of costs from the track and badminton court operators, we were able to reduce our expenses to RM540,000.

"So far, the National Sports Council has provided RM200,000 in funding, while TNB has sponsored RM30,000, so we are still in need of RM310,000 to complete our preparations for the games," Shin Ruenn added.

When asked why they were still going ahead, Kamarzaman said, "Because we have a real shot at those medals and we are confident that Malaysians can help us achieve our goal."

MSDeaf is the body responsible for developing talents as well as regulating and organising sports events among the deaf community. For details, visit msdeaf.org.my or email info@msdeaf.org.my

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MSDeaf athletics team coach Mohd Amiluddin Mohd Amin (right) addressing the team during a night training session in Kedah.



(From left) Shin Ruenn and Kamarzaman say the association is happy with the training progress despite the lack of funds.

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(From left) MSDeaf bowlers Mohd Firdaus Mohamad, 35, and Mohd Zaidi Awang, 45, at their training ground in Sunway Mega Lanes, Sunway Pyramid shopping centre, Petaling Jaya.