

\$250,000 payout for Asian Para Games

Wang Meng Meng

A record \$250,000 was handed out to Singapore's medallists at the 3rd Asian Para Games during the Athletes' Achievement Awards yesterday evening.

While the cash rewards were considerable, it also marked the emergence of a bigger and stronger contingent of athletes that will stand the nation in good stead ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics.

For veteran swimmer Yip Pin Xiu, who won a gold and two bronzes, the bigger haul is the sign that para sport in Singapore is on the right track.

"This year, more of our athletes are winning and this shows that our team is getting stronger. We are winning across various sports," said the 26-year-old at the awards ceremony at the Andaz Singapore Hotel.

"Seeing this gives me a lot of hope for the future. There are more youngsters who are up and coming. The support given is good and, if the athletes are committed and work hard, they can possibly get somewhere."

Last month in Jakarta, Singapore won a record 10 medals (three golds, two silvers and five bronzes) to finish 16th out of 43 countries – eclipsing the one gold, one silver and four bronzes in Incheon 2014.

Individual athletes received \$35,000 for a gold medal, \$25,000 for a silver and \$15,000 for a bronze. Swimmer Toh Wei Soong, who won two golds and a bronze, received the highest amount of \$85,000. The boccia team got \$40,000 for a silver while the cy-



cling duo of Emily Lee and Sarah Tan got \$20,000 for their bronze.

Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Grace Fu said: "You (the athletes) have shown commitment to your sport, your determination to excel, and the pride you feel in representing Singapore. You have inspired all of us to rise to our challenges, and pursue our dreams."

She added that the Government is committed to allow Singaporeans of all abilities to fully participate in society. Such support includes the establishment of four Centres of Expertise for Disability Sports (Heartbeat@Bedok, Toa Payoh, Jurong West and Sengkang) and five Inclusive Gyms over the last two years.

She said: "There is still more that



we can do to encourage persons with disabilities to participate in sport. In the coming years, we will concentrate on growing participation in our inclusive sports programmes, build up and enhance infrastructure, as well as develop capabilities for the disability sports eco-system.”

Yip, also a Nominated Member of

Parliament, hopes more Singaporeans will appreciate the effort made to promote sports.

She said: “We need a bigger base of athletes and I hope through all this awareness, more people will start doing sports and engage in an active lifestyle.”

meng@sph.com.sg

Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Grace Fu with swimmer Yip Pin Xiu (right) and boccia player Faye Lim at last night’s awards ceremony.
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