

# SHANTI REDISCOVERING

Sprinter earns double at Asean University Games, meets 100m SEA Games qualifying mark

David Lee

Singapore sprint queen Shanti Pereira has banished her injury demons in style by winning the 100m and 200m double at the Asean University Games (AUG) in Myanmar.

The 2015 SEA Games 200m champion took the 100m crown yesterday when she clocked 11.74sec at the Wunna Theikdi Stadium in Naypyitaw.

In doing so, the second-year Singapore Management University accountancy undergraduate has also qualified for next year's edition in the Philippines as she bettered the 2017 SEA Games bronze-medal mark of 11.76 which she had set.

On Friday, Pereira had won the 200m in 24.12, which is about half a second behind her own 2017 SEA Games bronze-medal mark of 23.68. She also ran in the 4x100m relay and finished fourth.

The 22-year-old declared herself "very happy" with the results and her times, after being sidelined by a grade two hamstring tear at the Singapore Open Track and Field Championships in April and a recurrence of the injury in June.

A lack of preparations meant she did not get past the Asian Games 100m heats after posting 12.01. She then placed 12th in the 200m semi-finals in 24.33.

Pereira told The Straits Times in a phone interview: "I didn't really participate in many competitions this year because of the injury, so I'm very happy with my performance here, especially with the SEA Games 100m qualification as it was my target.

"I had recovered fully just before the Asian Games, but did not have enough time to prepare.

"But, for this AUG, I started preparing two weeks after the Asian Games and I'm happy that I can bounce back and show the same form I had before the injury.

"I still need to work on my endurance for the 200m and I will try to qualify at next year's Singapore Open in March, but I'm very excited about what's to come."

Her coach Margaret Oh backed her athlete to improve on her double-bronze showing at last year's SEA Games as she noted that Pereira had beaten Malaysia's Zaidatul Husniah Zulkifli, who won



two silvers on home soil last year, at this AUG in the Myanmar capital.

She added: "Shanti looks to have recovered what she lost since her injury, and she is also sprinting more confidently now. We aim to go to Kyoto, Japan in the middle of the year to train and compete with Asian universities runners who are around her standard.

"We hope she can improve on her 2017 results with the help of Sport Singapore's expertise in biome-

chanics, and strength and conditioning, which she has been getting over the past few months."

On the back of Pereira's two gold medals, Singapore's athletics team achieved their best AUG haul with another four silvers and five bronzes.

While the track and field events ended yesterday, the AUG officially closes on Wednesday.

davidlee@sph.com.sg

# BEST FORM



SLOWLY BUT SURELY

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MARGARET OH, athletics coach, on her protege Shanti Pereira.

National sprinter Shanti Pereira on her way to winning the 200m final at the Wunna Theikdi Stadium in Myanmar. She attributed her two golds, having also won the 100m final, at the Asean University Games to better preparations following August's Asian Games. She was sidelined by a grade two hamstring tear at the Singapore Open Track and Field Championships in April and a recurrence in June. PHOTO: SINGAPORE UNIVERSITY SPORTS COUNCIL