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Headline: Returning Paralympians make a splash at airport



(From left) Paralympic medallists Theresa Goh and Yip Pin Xiu speaking to the media at Changi Airport after their return from Rio yesterday morning. On Saturday, a celebratory parade will mark the achievements of all 13 athletes who represented Singapore at the Games. ST PHOTO: SEAH KWANG PENG

## Returning Paralympians make a splash at airport

### AMAZING FEATS

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**COMPANY EXECUTIVE FOO WAH JONG**, who had taken leave from work so that she could be at the airport.

### Nicole Chia

While most of the country was still asleep yesterday morning, a group of about 200 people waited patiently at Changi Airport's Terminal 3.

It was not for Hollywood stars or top English Premier League footballers. These Singaporeans were waiting for nine of their own – the Paralympians who represented the Republic at the recently concluded Rio Games.

Among the first to arrive was company executive Foo Wah Jong, 50, who reached the airport at 5am. She had taken leave from work for the day, and was at the airport with her sister and nephew.

She said: "People don't treat disability sports that seriously, but I think what they have accomplished is even more amazing than (what) able-bodied athletes (have done). I want to be here to support them, en-

courage them because I admire their spirit. I woke up to watch Pin Xiu (race in Rio) and I cried when she won."

The nine athletes who emerged from the luggage collection area to a blinding series of camera flashes and cheers included swimming medallists Yip Pin Xiu and Theresa Goh.

Yip, who came home with two golds, thanked the crowd for the warm homecoming reception.

The 24-year-old added: "We're so grateful to everyone who supported us during the two weeks of the Games or way before that, and we'll continue to strive harder."

Touching on the issue of support, including calls for Paralympians and Olympians to receive equal cash prizes, Singapore National Paralympic Council chairman Teo-Koh Sock Miang noted that "at all levels of development, support is needed", not just in terms of monetary rewards.

A celebratory parade to mark the

achievements of all 13 Paralympians will be held on Saturday morning and start at ActiveSG Sengkang Sports Centre in Anchorvale Road. The athletes will be driven in a convoy of cars, which will make a pit stop at the National Library before making its way to VivoCity.

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