

Yip breaks world, Asian record on 'home ground'

Touching home first in the 200m freestyle multi-class, para-swimmer Yip Pin Xiu could not see the crowd at the OCBC Aquatic Centre as her goggles were fogged up.

But she certainly heard them loud and clear. The screams and cheers that reverberated around the arena

were for her, as she had just broken the world and Asian record (200m freestyle S2) after clocking 4min 41.46 sec in her first event at the Citi Para Swimming World Series on Saturday.

The previous record was set by China's Feng Yazhu, who timed

4:47.10 in 2015.

Singapore's Yip claimed the gold in the multi-class finals, with Thailand's Nattharinee Khajhonmatha (2:14.93) and Hong Kong's Chan Yui Lam (2:16.06) taking the silver and bronze respectively. Teammate Toh Wei Soong won a silver in the men's 50m butterfly S7 after clocking 29.99 seconds to finish between Colombia's Carlos Zarate (29.70) and Nelson Corzo (31.14).

Five-time Paralympic gold medalist Yip was delighted with her unexpected new world mark.

She said: "I am really happy to be

able to do it on home ground... I am also relieved that everything we have done so far is showing in the swims. It is just a really good sign towards the Para Swimming World Championships in July."

Her victory also comes a day after she was named The Straits Times Athlete of the Year 2022 on Friday.

"It has been an amazing few days for me," she added.

"Just this morning, (ST) wrote an article that really resonated with me, about me being at the top for so many years. Everything cannot be taken for granted, it is about put-

ting in hard work and consistent effort throughout the year.

"To still be able to do this after so many years, I am just grateful for all the support that I have received."

Her achievement also comes after a tough period in 2022, when her training was disrupted after she broke her left wrist in September. Her return to the pool after six weeks felt like she was "starting from scratch again".

"All the way until today, we have covered two cycles, so to see that aerobically I am improving... My team and I are just really pleased.

My 100m swim is still not the best time, but it is the best I have done this season," she said.

While she does not usually compete in the 200m free, she has been training for it from 2022 as it "helps with the 100m swim", noting that she may add the distance to her competition schedule in the future if it is contested.

Yip, who is aiming for more golds, with the 50m and 100m backstroke still to come, said: "Hopefully, it can be my season's best (timing), I will be happy with that."

Lin Tianbao