



Wushu exponent Zeanne Law (left) is one of the 12 athletes who received the new spexEducation Undergraduate Scholarship. The others include recently retired badminton star Jessica Tan, swimmer Teong Tzen Wei, silat's Sheik Farhan Sheik Alau'ddin and shooter Fernel Tan. Boxer Danisha Mathialagan (right) is among 26 new recipients of the spexPotential programme. ST PHOTOS: ARIFFIN JAMAR

# LAW AMONG 12 TO GET NEW AWARD

## Taijiquan world champ to start uni in 2026, with help from spexEducation scholarship

Melvyn Teoh

With her sights set on a SEA Games gold medal in Thailand in December, wushu exponent Zeanne Law has taken a gap year from her studies to focus on her preparations.

When she resumes her academic pursuits in 2026, she will be doing so with a boost from Sport Singapore.

Law, 19, was among the inaugural

batch of 12 athletes who received the spexEducation Undergraduate Scholarship from the national sports agency at the Singapore Sport Excellence (spex) Athletes Investiture at Singapore Sports School (SSP) on April 15.

The scholarship is aimed at supporting athletes in universities who are pursuing their studies while training and competing, as well as those who are seeking sponsorship of their undergrad-

uate studies after their sporting careers.

Seven new athletes, including golfer Shannon Tan, were also inducted into the spexScholarship programme which supports athletes to excel at the Asian and world stage.

There were 26 new athletes in the spexPotential programme, which aims to prepare them to succeed at the SEA Games level before transitioning to the bigger stage.

Law, who had attained an international baccalaureate diploma with SSP, is hoping to pursue a bachelor's degree in speech and language therapy at the Singapore

Institute of Technology (SIT).

The bemedalled athlete, who was also awarded the spexScholarship in 2024 after being crowned the women's taijiquan world champion at the 2023 World Wushu Championships, said: "I'm planning to start university next year with this scholarship and I think it will better support me in both my education and sport."

"Last year, when I received the spexScholarship, my priorities definitely shifted towards sport and sometimes my teachers will call me in to have extra consultations."

"But with the spexEducation Undergraduate Scholarship, I hope

that I can make better arrangements to better support the education and sporting areas and relieve the financial burden on my family."

The spexEducation scholarship was first announced by Prime Minister Lawrence Wong at SSP's 20th anniversary in April 2024.

Recipients must also be under the spexScholarship or spexPotential programme and supported by their national sports associations at the point of application.

The other recipients of this new scholarship include recently retired badminton star Jessica Tan, swimmer Teong Tzen Wei, silat's Sheik Farhan Sheik Alau'ddin and shooter Fernel Tan.

Former mixed doubles badminton player Jessica Tan, who announced her retirement on April 11, had withdrawn from the Nanyang Technological University's (NTU) sports science and management programme in 2011 to pursue her badminton dream full-time.

She went on to achieve a historic 2022 Commonwealth Games mixed doubles gold and three wins on the Badminton World Federation World Tour with her partner and husband Terry Hee.

The 31-year-old, who has received four offers to pursue a sports management degree in the

DUAL BENEFIT

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**ZEANNE LAW**, 2023 women's taijiquan world champion, on what the spexEducation Undergraduate Scholarship means to her.

UK, said: "It is very meaningful for me to get the opportunity to return to university... something that I had put aside before to pursue my sporting dreams."

She hailed the new initiative as it not only provides athletes with the confidence to pursue their sporting goals, but also opens up opportunities for them after they retire from sport.

Shooter Fernel Tan, a third-year business management student at the Singapore Management University (SMU), said: "Apart from helping with my finances in school, which really reduces a lot of stress, I see that more as a motivation because a few of my juniors had also received the spexScholarship."

"So I see it as an honour getting this scholarship and being a good role model for them."

One of the new spexPotential award recipients is boxer Danisha Mathialagan, who is also eyeing a SEA Games gold medal. To focus on her preparations, she recently broke a four-year bond with a hospital after graduating with a degree in diagnostic radiography last October.

The 27-year-old, who is working as a freelance embalmer, added: "The thing that I'm looking forward to the most is the financial relief, so I can go for a lot more overseas competitions without the financial burden. (This comes) with expectations and that's something that's inevitable."

"Different people have defined success differently and, if people have expectations of me, I see that as they truly believe that I have a potential to achieve something."

At the investiture, which was graced by Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Edwin Tong, SSP also signed a memorandum of understanding with six universities to facilitate athlete-friendly practices, including aptitude-based admissions or support to swap class groups to accommodate their training and competitions.

The six universities are NTU, SIT, SMU, National University of Singapore, Singapore University of Social Sciences and Singapore University of Technology and Design.

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