



President Halimah Yacob and Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Grace Fu taking a selfie with a group of athletes during a dinner reception at the Istana last night. ST PHOTO: TIMOTHY DAVID

Athletes' 'incredible' feats feted at Istana reception

Nicole Chia

Some may view the number 13 as unlucky, but Singapore's athletes and sports officials are hoping for a year of good fortune ahead on the 13th day of the Chinese New Year, which was spent at the Istana.

President Halimah Yacob hosted a reception yesterday in appreciation of their efforts at last year's SEA Games, Asean Para Games and Special Olympics World Winter Games, as well as last month's Winter Olympic Games.

The Republic's athletes recorded their best away haul at the August SEA Games with 58 golds, 58 silvers and 72 bronzes. A month later, the Asean Para Games contingent returned home with nine golds, 17 silvers and 24 bronzes – their biggest away medal haul.

At the Special Olympics World

Winter Games last March, Singapore won three golds, five silvers and three bronzes.

On Feb 17, short track speed skater Cheyenne Goh also made history by becoming the first Singaporean to compete at the Winter Olympics, which took place in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

Madam Halimah lauded these as "incredible achievements" in her speech, and thanked coaches, officials and medical personnel for the support rendered to athletes.

She then mingled and took photos with various groups of athletes, speaking to the netball team about the height needed throughout the court and to the squash players of a possible revival of the glory days.

Said squash player Sneha Sivakumar, who won one silver and two bronzes on her SEA Games debut last year: "It's my first time being in the President's house and it looks

really grand – I'm honoured to be invited and to see the President. I even got a chance to talk to her and take a selfie."

Netball captain Vanessa Lee, also on her first visit to the Istana, agreed, adding that she would return during the Istana Open House "to explore the grounds a bit".

The wonder of visiting the Istana aside, athletes and officials were determined to maintain and build on the momentum of last year as they prepare for various competitions this year.

Cyclist Luo Yiwei, who capped off her SEA Games debut last year by winning Singapore's first women's track cycling medal (a silver), has been nominated by the Singapore National Olympic Council for next month's Commonwealth Games.

The 28-year-old, who is also gunning for Asian Games qualification, said: "It's just about carrying on the

momentum – going to the Commonwealth Games and trying to perform well at the Asian Games (if I qualify)."

Singapore Disability Sports Council president Kevin Wong added: "We are also looking to have greater depth in the squad, which means being able to participate in more events and more categories.

"I think we have a lot more athletes who have the potential to do well, and we also want those doing well to maintain."

Singapore Sailing CEO Lim Han Ee noted of his association's four golds, three silvers and five bronzes from the SEA Games: "A lot has been accomplished last year and we just want to be careful we're not resting on our laurels – there's always ways to improve, to train smarter and to deliver better results."

nicole@sph.com.sg

SPORTS FIXTURES HIGHLIGHTS

Event	Home	Away	Timing	Venue
Thu, 1 Mar 2018				
K League	Jeju	Seoul	3.00pm	LW
Fri, 2 Mar 2018				
English Premier	Arsenal	Manchester City	3.45am	LW*
Spanish League	UD Las Palmas	Barcelona	4.00am	LW*

LW* : Telecast not available at Livewire (Singapore Pools)
Visit singaporepools.com for the latest 'Live' telecast listing.

LOTTERY

TOTO

Fri, 2 Mar 2018 Draw No. 3349/2018

Group 1 Prize **\$12,000,000** est.

Draw Venue: Singapore Pools (Private) Limited, 210 Middle Road, #01-01, Singapore 188994

SINGAPORE SWEEP

Wed, 7 Mar 2018 Draw No. 03/2018

First Prize **\$2,300,000**

9 sets of 2D winning numbers (315,000 prizes, each \$6)

No person under the age of 18 years shall be allowed to purchase a ticket or to claim any prize.

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