

PRESIDENT GIVES KL CONTENDERS WELCOME BOOST

Dr Tan monitors training sessions, praises the Team Singapore approach to SEA Games

May Chen

Away from the creature comforts of home and in the backyard of their fierce rivals across the Causeway, Team Singapore athletes will be vying for glory at this year's SEA Games in a foreign and, for some, a rather intimidating environment.

But the nation's sporting best can count on a vote of confidence from the country's head of state, who

after visiting some training sessions, said the athletes have shown that they do not let up despite some stellar results in the last two years.

President Tony Tan Keng Yam, who dropped in on the silat exponents, fencers, volleyballers and netballers last night, said what he saw looked promising.

"(The athletes) are quietly confident, working very hard," Dr Tan said after visiting the athletes at OCBC Arena.

"They know that the competition has increased... so they have to work doubly hard. From what I've seen today, I'm confident they will do well in Kuala Lumpur and do Singapore proud."

The SEA Games will be held from Aug 19-30.

Dr Tan made special mention of 2016 silat world champions Sheik Farhan Sheik Alau'ddin (90-95kg) and Shakir Juanda (85-90kg), as well as fencer Lau Ywen, who won the Republic's first cadet world title in the sabre last year.

These came on top of Joseph Schooling's historic first gold at the Olympics as well as two golds and a



bronze by para-swimmers Yip Pin Xiu and Theresa Goh respectively at the Paralympics.

Dr Tan said he has high hopes for the sportsmen who will fly Singapore's flag in Malaysia.

The Republic hosted both the 2015 SEA Games and 2015 Asean Para Games, finishing with a record number of gold medals - 84 and 24 respectively.

He lauded athletes for the work

they put in, and for embodying a Singapore spirit that strives for progress.

Said Dr Tan: "What is important is (that) the attributes our athletes show in preparing for these Games reflect what Singapore is as a people - how we try, work hard, have discipline, and work together to keep Singapore going."

"We can show the same spirit and perseverance which our athletes

have shown - keep at it (and) we can continue to progress and be successful as a country and nation. I look forward to the forthcoming (SEA Games) and (Asean Para Games).

"We wish Singapore well. All of Singapore will be supporting Team Singapore and I'm sure we'll have a very good result."

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