



## Time for back-ups to stand up and be counted at KL Games

**KUALA LUMPUR:** This is your time to shine.

Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin may have aimed this at young shuttler Goh Jin Wei (*pic*), but it clearly applies to every back-up athlete from every sport who will be competing at the KL SEA Games from Aug 19-30.

Seventeen-year-old women's singles player Jin Wei will lead the badminton team at the KL Games.

The 2015 world junior champion was not chosen for the World Championships because it will be held at almost the same time (Aug 21-27) in Glasgow, Scotland.

"We won't have our top badminton players at the SEA Games because the majority are going to the world meet. It's the same with the other countries, like Indonesia and Thailand. This is the opportunity for the back-ups to shine," said Khairy after handing over the national flag to the Sudirman Cup squad at the Academy Badminton Malaysia (ABM) in Bukit Kiara yesterday.

In the absence of senior shuttlers at the Singapore Games in 2015, Chong Wei Feng defeated Mohd Arif Abdul Latif for the men's singles gold while Jin Wei clinched a bronze in the women's singles.

"I believe that the SEA Games is Jin Wei's best platform to prove herself. We've held her back because of her age, but this is her time to step

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up," said Khairy.

"There are badminton champions at 17 or 18 years old. She is grown up now and my message to Jin Wei is to not hold back during the SEA Games.

"This is the same message to all the national back-up athletes from other sports. What better place to step out of the shadows of their seniors than the SEA Games."

Khairy was also pleased with the progress of all the venues for the SEA Games.

"It's all under control. The one that we're monitoring closely is the ice hockey (and figure skating) venue at the Empire City Mall (in Damansara Perdana). Even then, I believe it'll be completed in time ... it's not an issue," said Khairy.

"We'll take possession of some of the venues closer to the Games. These venues must comply with the sports' regulations and, at the same time, we want it to be exciting for the spectators ... this is crucial."

Khairy said that there would be test runs at the main venues in Bukit Jalil.

"We'll conduct stress tests to assess the durability of the venues. The fields at the main stadium are being tested. The courts at the Axiata Arena will be experimented. It will be done in July," he said.