

# Mind over matter



**Worthy podium finishers:** Muhd Shah Firdaus Sahrom (left) and Azizulhasni Awang posing with their silver and bronze medal in the China Track Cup II in Taiyuan. China's Xu Chao won the gold medal.

## Shah Firdaus overcomes pain to take sprint silver in China

By LIM TEIK HUAT

**PETALING JAYA:** Muhd Shah Firdaus Sahrom displayed sheer grit with a gutsy ride to bag a silver medal in the sprint at the China Track Cup II in Taiyuan.

The 22-year-old had crashed in the keirin semi-finals in the China Track Cup I on Thursday but fought against the pain to go all the way to the sprint final at the Taiyuan Velodrome.

Shah Firdaus put up a good fight to take China's Xu Chao to three heats before conceding defeat in the sprint final.

He earlier posted a personal best time of

9.867 seconds to finish second fastest in qualifying for the sprint behind Xu Chao (9.697).

There were more cheers as Azizulhasni Awang beat China's Wang Tianqi to take bronze for Malaysia in the sprint event.

Azizul claimed a double sweep of the sprint and keirin at the China Track Cup I two days ago.

Shah Firdaus was delighted to be on a strong pace despite still feeling the effects of his crash in the keirin event.

"I clocked 9.867 seconds, which is my current best here (he clocked 9.977 at the Asian Cycling Championships in Nilai in February this year).

— "A bit unlucky as I was involved in a crash while racing in the final lap in keirin.

"I lost significant skin and had thigh inflammation. Tough to ride in pain but I got my mental game one step up.

"Now, I will focus on my recovery and shape up for the Asian Games in Indonesia next month," said Shah Firdaus, who will shoulder the challenge for Malaysia in keirin and sprint at the Asian Games alongside Azizul.

Both Azizul and Shah Firdaus were rested from the keirin event in the China Track Cup II yesterday but Muhd Fadhil Zonis stepped up to take bronze.