

Latif aims for quantum leap

CONFIDENT: Paralympian wants to test himself against able-bodied athletes

FADHLI ISHAK

fadhli_ishak@nst.com.my

PARALYMPIC gold medallist Abdul Latif Romly is looking to stamp his mark at the regional level in competition for able bodied athletes by winning gold at the Malaysia Sea Games next year.

The long jumper is no stranger to normal tournaments, having won the gold at the Sarawak Malaysia Games in July but is aware he will need to produce something special to win the Sea Games gold.

Latif broke the para world record three times en route to winning the T20 (intellectual disability) gold in Rio last month with a final effort of 7.60m, which would have won him the silver at the Singapore Sea Game last year.

"I have always wanted to compete in the Sea Games, I want to test myself against able bodied athletes," said the 19-year-old, when met at the Naza Corporation Holdings incentive presentation for Paralympic medallists in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

"I am aware that my record would have seen me finish second in Singapore and my goal is to win it next year.

"I know it will not be easy but it is possible if I continue to push myself in training."

His 7.60m is not far from the long standing national record for able bodied athletes of 7.88m set by Sabahan Josbert Tinus in 2007, which Latif is also eyeing.

"It is possible (to break the record), I believe I can do it within the next two years."

Naza delivered on their promise to Malaysian Paralympic medallists and presented RM1.5 million in rewards to them at the Naza Tower yesterday.

Latif and fellow Rio gold medallists Ridzuan Mohamad Puzi (sprinter) and Ziyad Zolkefli (shot put) received a residential suite at

Trion 888 worth RM350,000 and a brand new Kia Sportage (worth RM121,888) each.

Bronze winner Siti Noor Radiah Ismail received a brand new Kia Rio sedan worth RM72,888.

Naza chief executive officer SM Nasarudin SM Nasimuddin said the athletes deserved to be rewarded.

"This is our best ever performance at the Paralympics. I was there in Rio when the Negaraku was played and it was definitely a special moment for our country," said Nasarudin.

Nasarudin is also the president of the Malaysian Paralympic Council.

Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin officiated the event.



(From left) Siti Noor Radiah Ismail, Ziyad Zolkefli, Abdul Latif Romly and Ridzuan Mohamad Puzi with a Kia Sportage car at the Naza Corporation Holdings incentive presentation for Paralympic medallists yesterday. Pic by Hasriyasyah Sabudin