

Training base switch

SEA Games-bound women footballers to get familiarised with competition venues

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RISING TOGETHER

KOTA KINABALU: The 2017 SEA Games-bound national women's football team will switch training base from University Malaysia Sabah (UMS), to Jeonsa in Kg Pandan Sports Complex, in Kuala Lumpur from July 2.

Head coach Mohd Asyraaf Fong Abdullah said the move is necessary in order for his side to familiarise themselves with the Games venues, which are the UiTM Stadium and UM Stadium.

"It would have been great to remain here because we have everything here from facilities and so on. We also have good contacts to play against local clubs here.

"However, we need to get the team or the players familiarised with the Games venues so that when the time comes, they will be more comfortable, and this will give us a slight advantage over our opponents," said Asyraaf.

He said they are also planning to play two friendly matches against

the current South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) champions India on July 29 and 31.

"Talks are ongoing, but verbally, India have agreed to come and play two games against our team. We will play one game each at the Games venues," said Asyraaf.

In a related development, Asyraaf said he has called up two players to attend the ongoing third phase of centralised training, which is ongoing at the UMS Sports Complex.

"I have decided to call on Penang-born teenager Nur Shahira Suhaimi from Malaysia Sports School Sabah to join the squad. She is only 16 years old and can play in midfield as well



ASYRAAF ... is hoping for the best from his young squad.

as in defence.

"I also recalled Ranau lass Marcella Angela Parais to train with the team. She is 19 and was initially with the squad before being dropped after the second phase of centralised training.

"Since our player Siti Nur Azzati Shaik Maznan

is nursing a knee injury, we need to bring in more players.

"So with the two new players coming in, we have a squad of 25 players for the Games, excluding Siti," said Asyraaf, adding that Siti is still with the team for treatment.

Women's football is among the 37 sports to be competed in the 29th edition of the Games that will be participated by 11 members of the Southeast Asian Games Federation that include Malaysia, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, the Philip-

ines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam.

For the record, the Games will officially begin on August 19 and end on August 30.

However, women's football will be among the few sports that will kick off early from August 14.