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| Headline: | Four golds the target for Amirah | | | | |
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| Description: | Feature on CHIJ (Toa Payoh) Secondary 4 student, Amirah Aljunied. The 15-year-old champion of this year's B Division 200m and 400m Schools National Track and Field Championship events is still gunning for more golds in the 4x100m and 4x400m relays with her team-mates. | | | | |

SCHOOL SPORTS

FOUR GOLDS THE TARGET FOR AMIRAH

Dedicated athlete hopes to win two more national titles to join elite group

By ISAAC NEO

HAVING caught the eye of the athletics fraternity with victories in both the B Division 200m and 400m, Amirah Aljunied, 15, is gunning for two more golds today at the Schools National Track and Field Championships.

Should the CHIJ (Toa Payoh) Secondary 4 student win both her 4x100m and 4x400m relays with her team-mates, she will join an elite group of school athletes who have won four golds in a single national meet.

SEA Games runner Eugenia Tan was the last athlete to manage this feat in 2012.

For Amirah, the granddaughter of former national football team coach Hussein Aljunied, it has been a month of stellar performances, beginning at the Singapore Open when she finished fifth in the 200m, ahead of SEA Games athlete Kugapriya Chandran.

Yet her newfound success is the culmination of hard work put in since she was young.

Having discovered her passion for athletics when she was in Primary 3, she has remained dedicated to the sport ever since.

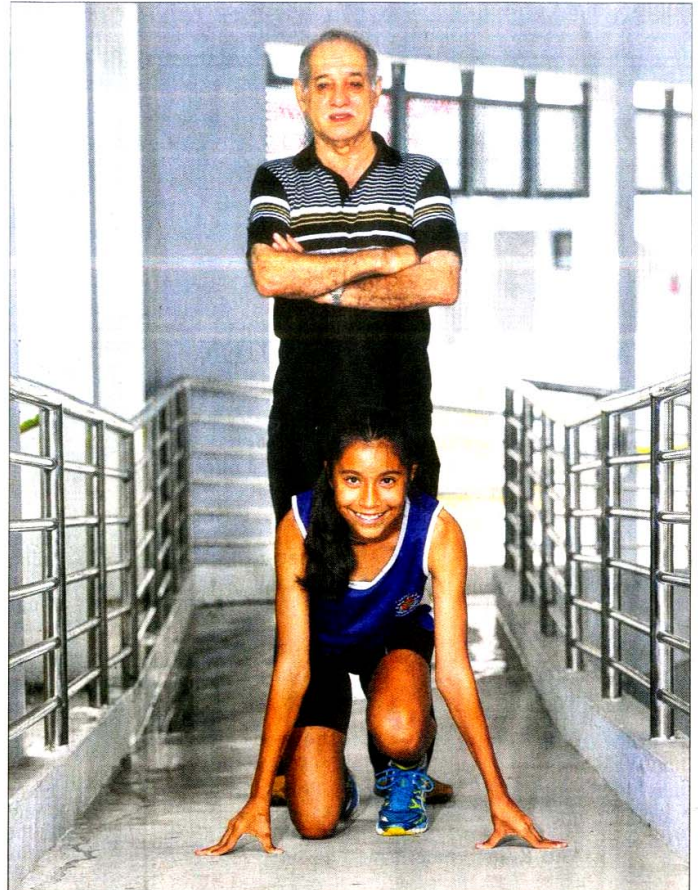
After coming second in the 400m and third in the 200m last year, she increased her training schedule from three sessions a week to five.

A typical school day for her starts at 5am, as she has to travel from her Changi home to her school at Toa Payoh.

After finishing school at 2.30pm, she trains from 3-6pm. By the time she makes her long journey back home, it is often as late as about 7.30pm before she even gets to start on her homework.

Nevertheless, she remains unwavering in her dedication to her sport, saying it is something that her grandfather instilled in her when she was younger.

Said Hussein: "I told her, whatever you like to do, you have to have your own discipline. You have to train hard, you cannot take things easy."



Amirah Aljunied, 15, has already won the B Division 200m and 400m titles. Her grandfather, former national football team coach Hussein Aljunied (standing), first spotted her talent. PHOTO: DIOS VINCOY JR FOR THE STRAITS TIMES

The 73-year-old, who coached the national football team from 1984-1986, was the one who saw the potential in Amirah, and referred her to his friend, athletics coach Loh Chan Pew.

Loh, now the vice-president of Singapore Athletics, was confident she would be "a future sprint queen".

"I want her to continue training and aim for the highest," said the 70-year-old.

Although happy with her success this year, Amirah hopes to reach even greater heights.

"My ultimate aim is to represent the country in any meet," she said.

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