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Day 11: Big Day for RP - Nine Golds!

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Palembang—The Philippines saved the best for last in the 26th Southeast Asian Games claiming nine gold medals on the final day of competitions.

Grandmaster Wesley So laced the end of the 11-day campaign perfectly with a perfect score in the 9-round blitz of chess as an adjunct to what was the best daily performance of Filipino athletes. GM Mark Paragua landed the bronze in the event.

Earlier, wushu warriors Edward Folayang and Mark Ediva flashed world-class skills in nailing their gold medals, cyclist John Rene Mier maximized use of his young legs to keep pace and equestrian Diego Lorenzo mesmerized the crowd of show jumping in an equally error-free run.

Amid intermittent rains, Threat Huey and Denise Dy finished off Indonesia's Jessy Priskila Rompies and Christopher Benjamin Rungkat, 10-6 in the super tie-break to add tennis to gold medal achievers.

In the relatively new sport of fin swimming, 15-year-old Danielle Faith Sanglap Flores quietly emerged from the waters with a gold at hand to add to the bronze of 4X100m bi fins team Franz Garrett Baa, Leonard Angelo Matthew Earl Rodriguez and Mike Godoy won last Sunday.

In the evening, RP turned to its fists as lightweight Charly Suarez showered Indonesian Matius Mandiangan for two standing eight counts en route to a lopsided 26-7 win while light welter Dennis Galvan escaped a close shave beating Indonesian Afdan Bachtla, 14-12 for two more gold medals that went with an equal number from the distaff side courtesy of Kate Appari and Josie Gabuco.

The nine gold medals on Monday raised the country's total to 36, a number that may yet increase depending on the final outcome in paragliding which has been affected by the uncooperative weather in Palembang. The sports offer 12 gold medals.

Filipino-Australian cyclist Apryl Eppinger, the 20-man crew of traditional boat racing, sanda fighters Marianne Mariano and Benjie Rivera, chess players Rulp Ylem Jose, So, the duo of tennis stars Huey and Cecil Mamiit

and equestrienne Toni Leviste all contributed silver medals in the last day blitz that will likely place the Philippines sixth overall in the medal race among 11 countries. Eppinger also added a bronze from the 5km scratch race.

Wushu's duilian team of John Keithly Chan, Eleazar Jacob and Engelbert Addogan likewise delivered a silver medal while the women's team of Kariza Kris Chan, Kathlyn Sabalburo and Nastasha Enriquez chipped in a bronze.

Indonesia awaits only the formal closing ceremony before being declared champion with 165-142-131, Thailand is a far second with 104-90-115 and Vietnam third at 94-89-99.

Malaysia (54-45-74) was fourth, a position the Philippines had eyed before the start of the 11-day sports meet and Singapore was fifth with 42-45-73.

In wushu, Folayang was simply devastating against Udon Khankay of Laos in a win that somehow redeemed him from a second round exit in the world championships while cousin Ediva was masterful in whipping Youne Victorio Senduk of Indonesia.

"Una po nagpapasalamat kami sa Diyos at sa ating mga kababayan na nagdasal para sa amin," Folayang and Ediva said.

Equally imposing was Lorenzoin equestrian, who treated the course perfect and with no penalty points to improve his silver medal finish in 2007 in Thailand. Leviste, on the other hand, was credited with four penalty points for the silver medal.

Mier, only 19 and following the footsteps of illustrious farther Renato, a veteran of the national cycling tour, gained 57 points in the 30 km points race for the team's second gold medal.

The long wait did not take away the grit in Huey and Dy, who managed to produce one gold medal for tennis, a team that had been frustrated twice by the Indonesians, in the men's team and men's doubles final.