

## Singapore up against top marksmen

SINGAPORE will be up against stiff competition in the Asian Clay Shooting Championships, starting today at the National Shooting Centre at Choa Chu Kang.

Among the 240 marksmen from 17 countries are trap world champion Sandhu Manavjit Singh (India), Commonwealth Games double trap gold medalist Rathore Rajyavardhan (India) and 2002 Asian Games trap winner Li Hui (China).

Singapore will be represented by nine men and six women in the trap, double trap and skeet events.

Soo Kwok Seng, Singapore Shooting Association's high performance manager, singled out veteran trap shooter Lee Wung Yew and the men's trap team as having "realistic medal chances".

The trap team comprise Choo Choon Seng, Mohamed Zain Amat and Lee.

"Our local shooters will have no excuse if they don't perform," said Soo.

"Other countries have to adapt to our weather, but we don't need to worry about it. We just have to go out there and shoot."

Multiple South-east Asia (SEA) Games gold medalist Lee, 40, feels having the event on home soil is a double-edged sword.

Said the teacher: "We may be familiar with the weather, but



HOPING TO PROMOTE THE SPORT FURTHER, Defence Minister Teo Chee Hean (left) wishes veteran trap shooter Lee Wung Yew good luck.

PHOTO: ALBERT SIM

there is more pressure to perform at home."

Indeed, Singapore will have to be at their best to subdue India's world-class shooters.

Said SEA Games trap champion Choo, 34: "I saw the Indians in practice and they were consistent."

The Republic came up empty-handed at last year's championships in Bangkok.

Then, Lee was Singapore's best finisher in eighth spot. He hopes to break into the top six this time around.

"I feel pretty good," he said. "Once you make the cut for the six-man final, it's anyone's game."

Nanyang Technological University executive officer Choo, who was 18th last year, added: "I'm feeling good about my shooting style and technique,

and my confidence level is high. With homeground advantage, I hope to squeeze into the top six."

Soo said the team's performance will be an indication of their showing at December's Asian Games in Doha.

He added: "This is not the time to peak, but of course they can't fare too badly. Besides, it'll be a good morale-booster if they do well."

Minister for Defence and Singapore National Olympic Council president Teo Chee Hean hopes the championships will help promote the sport further in Singapore.

He said: "The competition will generate greater interest and let many of our budding, younger shooters watch some of the top shooters in Asia, learn from them and be inspired by them."

Jeanette Wang