

# Difficult in Dubai

**ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIPS:** Squad will be without some top stars

**AJITPAL SINGH**

ajitpalsingh@nst.com.my

**M**ALAYSIA will send a depleted squad to the Asian Diving Championships after national coach Yang Zhuliang (*pic*) decided to leave out Olympic bronze medallist Pandeleda Rinong, Leong Mun Yee and Bryan Nickson Lomas from the Nov 22-25 event in Dubai.

Pandeleda, 19, who injured her left ankle in training three weeks ago, has yet to recover while Mun Yee and Lomas, students of Universiti Putra Malaysia and Universiti Malaya respectively, are sitting for exams.

Olympian Traisy Vivien Tukiet, together with upcoming divers Jasmine Lai and Kam Ling Kar, are currently sitting for their Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia exam.

Cheong Jun Hoong, gold medallist at last year's Indonesia Sea Games, and Wendy Ng are the only Olympians in the five-member squad for the Asian meet, held every four years.

Also in the team are 15-year-old Loh Zhiayi, Ooi Tze Liang and Chew Yiwei.

Jun Hoong and Wendy will compete in the women's 3-metre



springboard while Jiayi is down for the 10m platform.

Jun Hoong and Yiwei will be in action in the men's 3m springboard individual and synchro.

With a depleted side, Zhuliang said except for the women's springboard, it will be tough to win medals.

"Jun Hoong and Wendy are experienced divers who have competed in several priority competitions and I believe they have a chance in the springboard," said Zhuliang yesterday.

"I am, however, confident the rest will make an impression as they have improved a lot from recent exposure.

"We are sending a depleted

squad while world champions China and Japan are sending their best divers."

On whether Pandeleda's injury was serious, he felt it was better for the diver to rest.

"I do not want her to aggravate it (the injury) as she has already proved herself in so many tournaments for the last 11 months.

"She may return to competition in the Asean University Games in December," Zhuliang added.

Meanwhile, Khoo Cai Lin, Kevin Yeap and Yap See Tuan will represent Malaysia in the Asian Swimming Championships, also in Dubai.

Cai Lin, an Olympian who holds four individual national records, will compete in the women's 400m and 800m freestyle while Kevin Yeap, a Sea Games champion, in the men's 400m and 1,500 freestyle.

See Tuan will make his debut in the men's 100m and 200m breaststroke.

Coach Paul Birmingham hopes his swimmers will at least break national records.

"The swimmers are doing well in training. I hope the expected tough field in Dubai will spur them to make an impression," said Birmingham.