

Nation's three Olympians from UPM

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THEY made the country and their university proud when they circled the Maracanã Stadium, Rio de Janeiro during the opening ceremony of the 2016 Olympic Games.

Three Malaysian national athletes who are students of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) were picked to represent Malaysia at the games last month.

They are Jonathan Wong Guanjie, a Bachelor of Engineering (Aerospace) student from the Faculty of Engineering, Zaidatul Husniah Zulkifli, who is pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Education (Physical Education) and Cheong Jun Hoong, a Bachelor of Communication student from the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication.

Wong, 24, represented Malaysia in the shooting events.

He had taken part in the 10m and Men's 50m air pistol slots.

Zaidatul Husniah showcased her skills in the athletics 100m event and Cheong took part in diving.

She also partnered Pandelega Rinong to win a silver medal for Malaysia in the women's synchronised 10m platform event.

For Jonathan, his selection to the Olympic Games in Rio, Brazil, is an achievement beyond his expectation.

Before leaving for the South American country, the Malaccan said he was practising much more than before since he was chosen to

represent the country in the most prestigious sports event.

"I did intensive training so that I would be more focused," he added.

He added that he used to train at least five or six hours per session.

Unfortunately, he could not qualify for the finals of both events.

Malaysians poured their praises for him on social media.

Even Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak took to Twitter to offer his words of support and encouragement.

"Keep your chin up and look forward to the future. Don't be discouraged. It was a good performance and we are proud of you!" he tweeted.

Zaidatul Husniah, 23, said that initially she hadn't raised her hopes of representing the country in the 100-metre event at the Olympics because of the stiff competition.

"I had to compete with my peers at the university to pass the eligible time of 11.6 seconds which is a condition set by the Malaysian Athletic Union (MAU) in order to qualify for the Olympics," she said.

The Alor Setar-born athlete, recently won a gold medal in the 100-meter event at the Asean University Games (AUG) 2016 in Singapore

Cheong, 26, who hails from Ipoh, Perak had competed in three events – 3m Synchronized Spring Board, 3m springboard and 10m platform individual rhythmic.



Varsity stars: Zaidatul Husniah (left) and Wong Guanjie (right) with UPM vice-chancellor Prof Datin Paduka Dr Aini Ideris at the varsity before leaving for Rio.