

NEWS

Where do we go from here?

CONSISTENCY:

Malaysia needs to build on best-ever showing in Rio if it wants to win gold at Tokyo 2020

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MALAYSIA ended its Rio Olympic campaign with a haul of four silver and one bronze yesterday.

It is the nation's best-ever finish at the Olympics since Malaya first competed in the 1956 Games.

The wait for gold, however, continues after Datuk Lee Chong Wei — Malaysia's best bet coming into the Rio Games — was denied in the final for the third consecutive time.

The question now is, what lies ahead for Malaysia?

The Rio achievement is the best ever, but where do we go from here?

Chong Wei will be hurting after a third silver, but this is it for him, for at 34, the Tokyo Olympics is beyond his reach.

Cyclist Azizulhasni Awang, also targeted to deliver gold, did well to win the keirin bronze, but his is an event that is hard to predict as anything can happen on race day.

Yes, Malaysia also won another two silver medals in badminton and one in diving, but looking ahead to the 2020 Games, we can't say for sure they will be retained.

The badminton silver medals were unexpected as men's doubles Goh V Shem-Tan Wee Kiong and mixed doubles Chan Peng Soon-Goh Liu Ying came into the Olympics with more hope than conviction.

Yes, the Badminton Association of Malaysia felt the shuttlers were good for three medals — which they delivered — but it cannot be denied that the doubles pairs punched above their weight to win the silver.

Their form on the Super Series circuit is highly inconsistent and



Divers **Pandelega Rinong** (left) and **Cheong Jun Hoong** competing in the women's synchronised 10m platform at the Rio Olympics last week. Pix by Rosli Rahmat

both pairs need to address this if they are to win honours regularly.

Diving, as Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said, has to start delivering more medals as it can't just be one in every Olympics.

The talent pool has to be increased

and this applies to all the sports that enjoy elite status in Malaysia.

Khairy had said midway through the Games that Rio was Malaysia's best chance to win gold, but it has gone unrealised.

The wait for gold can't go on for-

ever and it has to end in Tokyo, but it won't if work doesn't start now.

In terms of medals won, Rio was a success, but as far as gold is concerned, it wasn't and this will hurt even more if Malaysia doesn't learn and improve.



Cyclist **Azizulhasni Awang** celebrating after winning the **keirin bronze** at the Rio Olympics.



Chan Peng Soon and **Goh Liu Ying** during a match against Chinese pair **Xu Chen** and **Ma Jin** at the Rio Olympics.



Goh V Shem (right) and **Tan Wee Kiong** competing in the **men's doubles final** against China's **Zhang Nan** and **Fu Haifeng** on Friday.