

Top gong for Rio heroes

Chong Wei, Pandelega-Jun Hoong are OCM's Olympians of the Year



Top of their class: (From left) Olympic silver medallists Pandelega Rinong, Cheong Jun Hoong and Lee Chong Wei.

By RAJES PAUL

PETALING JAYA: No one batted an eyelid when shuttler Lee Chong Wei and the dynamic diving duo of Pandelega Rinong-Cheong Jun Hoong were named as the male and female recipients of the Olympic Council of Malaysia (OCM) Coca-Cola Olympian of the Year award.

The shuttler and divers were outstanding at the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro in August and were chosen for the awards by the OCM board, led by chairman Tunku Tan Sri Imran Tuanku Ja'afar, yesterday.

The date for the award ceremony will be announced soon.

Tunku Imran said that Chong Wei was chosen ahead of first-time Olympic silver medallists Goh V Shem-Tan Wee Kiong because "he (Chong Wei) managed to win a silver medal in three consecutive Games".

"He has remained there (as a medallist) for a third time (in a period spanning 12 years) and he defeated the defending champion (China's Lin Dan in the semi-finals) ... that was a huge effort," said Tunku Imran.

The selection of Pandelega-Jun Hoong for

the award needs no justification judging from their amazing performance in nicking the silver medal in an event dominated by China.

Tunku Imran also announced that none of the Malaysian athletes who competed in the Rio Olympics were tested positive for drugs.

"The results are out and all our athletes were cleared.

"In fact, we conducted a test before they went for the Rio Games," he said, adding that OCM would hold a workshop on career opportunities for athletes from Dec 6-7.

"National athletes can find out about the job opportunities available out there for them after their retirement.

"Many government and private agencies will be there," he added.

Tunku Imran also said that they've also increased the sponsorship for athletes under the Tan Sri Alex Athletes' Education Fund from RM3,000 to RM5,000.

As for next year's KL SEA Games, he said that the first cut-off for the selection of athletes will be in March.