

DIVING

TWO MALAYSIANS ON PODIUM

Dhabitah and Jun Hoong finish second and third in Asian meet

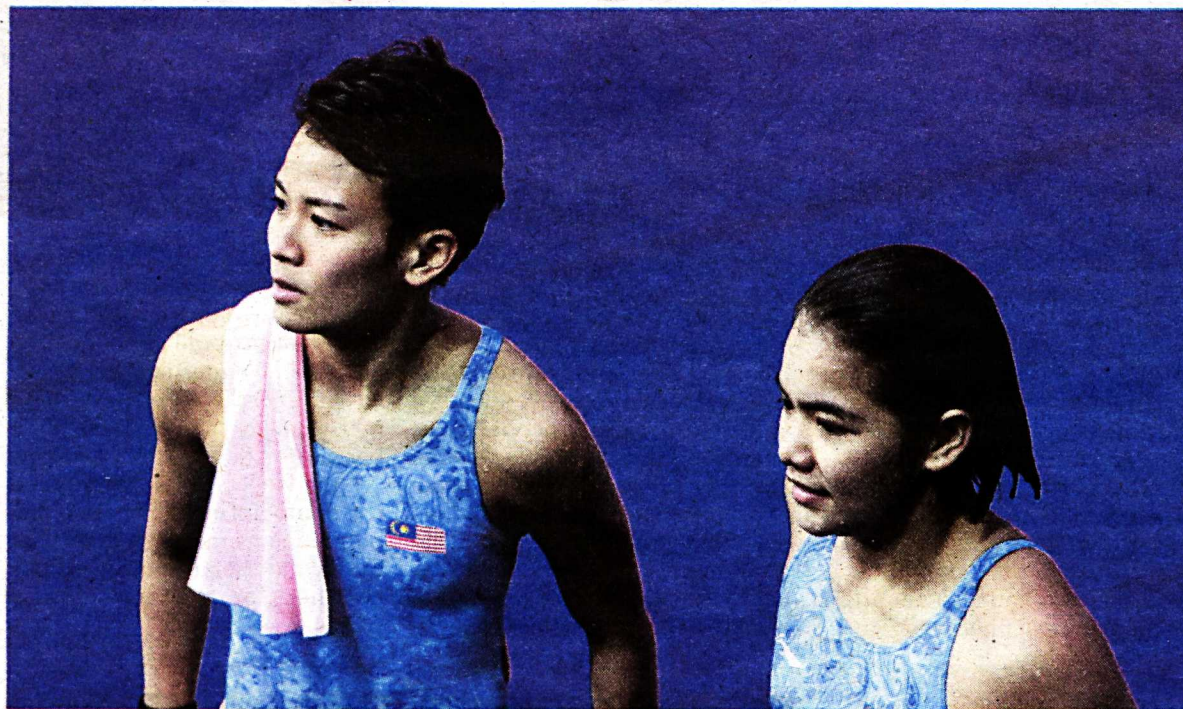
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OLYMPIC silver medalist Cheong Jun Hoong produced a creditable performance on her return from a back injury in the Asian Diving Cup in Macau yesterday.

Jun Hoong, who withdrew from the Kazan and Windsor legs of the World Series in April, finished third in the women's 1m springboard event on the opening day of the championships.

The 27-year-old, who won the 10m platform synchro with Pandeleda Rinong at last year's Rio Olympics, posted a five-dive total of 267.25 points.

Compatriot and rising star Nur Dhabitah Sabri, however, did better by taking the silver with a 278.35 series while China's two-



Cheong Jun Hoong (left) and Nur Dhabitah Sabri.

time world champion (in synchro) Liu Huixia won the title on 279.60.

It was a commendable effort by Nur Dhabitah considering that she lost the title by only 1.25

points.

Both Nur Dhabitah and Jun Hoong finished ahead of China's Xu Zhihuan, who took fourth position with a 265.05 series.

Jun Hoong has participated in

the non-Olympic 1m springboard event in the past. Her best result was taking bronze in the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games.

National coach Yang Zhuliang was delighted with the progress made by Jun Hoong and he also praised Nur Dhabitah for her effort.

"Jun Hoong performed quite

well today. It is a commendable effort to finish top three in her first event after injuring her back," said Yang Zhuliang in Macau yesterday.

"Her degree of difficulty in the event, however, is low. It is a non-Olympic event and so the focus is a little less compared to other disciplines in training.

"I am very happy with Nur Dhabitah as she only lost by 1.25 points to Liu Huixia for the title. It shows that the gap between Malaysia and China is small in this discipline.

"Frankly, I thought only one Malaysian will be on the podium today as China had two divers in the event. It is always tough to be China divers.

"Both Nur Dhabitah and Jun Hoong managed to deny Xu Zhihuan a podium finish and this is a momentous effort."

In the men's 3m springboard preliminary round, Syaifq Puteh took third place with 380.50 points to finish one rung above compatriot Ooi Tze Liang, who posted a 376.70 series. Both Malaysians qualified for the final, which was held late yesterday.

China's Chen Linhai topped the standings on 447.20, followed by Diao Zhiguang with 428.35 in the preliminary round.

Nur Dhabitah-Jun Hoong and Jellson Jabillin and Hanis Nazirul Jayasurya competed in the women's 3m springboard synchro and men's 10m synchro events late yesterday.