

Don't just dive in

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Senior divers must watch their step as they prepare for two major events

By LIM TEIK HUAT

PETALING JAYA: Senior divers Pandelega Rinong, Cheong Jun Hoong and Wendy Ng Yan Yee will have to tread with caution in the coming weeks as they get ready for two major assignments – the World Aquatics Championships in Budapest, Hungary (July 14-22) and the Kuala Lumpur SEA Games (Aug 19-30).

Pandelega is still bothered by an old right shoulder injury which flared up at the final leg of the Diving World Series in Windsor, Canada, in April.

It's the same with Wendy and Jun Hoong, who are coping with the rehabilitation process after suffering back injuries during their Diving World Series campaigns this year.

Pandelega (examinations) and Wendy (rehabilitation) skipped the just-concluded Asian Diving Cup in Macau.

Jun Hoong took part and managed to win a silver with Nur Dhabitah Sabri in the 3m springboard synchro and a bronze in the 3m springboard individual.

Malaysia can't afford to miss the trio's services as it could wipe out their chances of a podium



They won't push it: Cheong Jun Hoong (left) and Wendy Ng Yan Yee are coping with the rehabilitation process after suffering back injuries during their Diving World Series campaigns this year.

finish at the world meet.

Pandelega-Jun Hoong took a historic silver for Malaysia in the 10m platform synchro final at the Rio Olympics last year and should be serious contenders for the podium in Budapest.

Wendy also had an outstanding campaign in Rio – reaching the 3m springboard final. She will be looking to repeat that in Budapest.

Jun Hoong also has a realistic chance for a medal with Dhabitah in the women's 3m springboard synchro after finishing fifth in the Rio Olympics.

National head coach Yang Zhuliang could field veteran Leong Mun Yee if Pandelega or Jun Hoong is unfit to start in Budapest.

"All eight divers under the Podium Programme, including Nur Dhabitah, Ooi Tze Liang, Chew Yiwei and Ahmad Amsyar Azman, are going for the world meet.

"Pandelega has been entered for the wom-

en's 10m platform individual and synchro with Jun Hoong.

"She had a recurrence of a shoulder injury in April. She consulted the doctor and was told she doesn't need to go for surgery. Her shoulder is much better now but we still need to evaluate her situation.

"If I need to make any changes to the women's 10m platform synchro, I have Mun Yee on standby," said Zhuliang.

Mun Yee is slated to compete in the team event.

Zhuliang can draw on Mun Yee's experience as she had partnered Pandelega before. Mun Yee bagged two World Championships bronze medals with Pandelega in Rome (2009) and Barcelona (2013).

At the last world meet in Kazan, Russia, two years ago, Pandelega delivered the nation's only medal – a bronze – in the women's 10m platform individual.