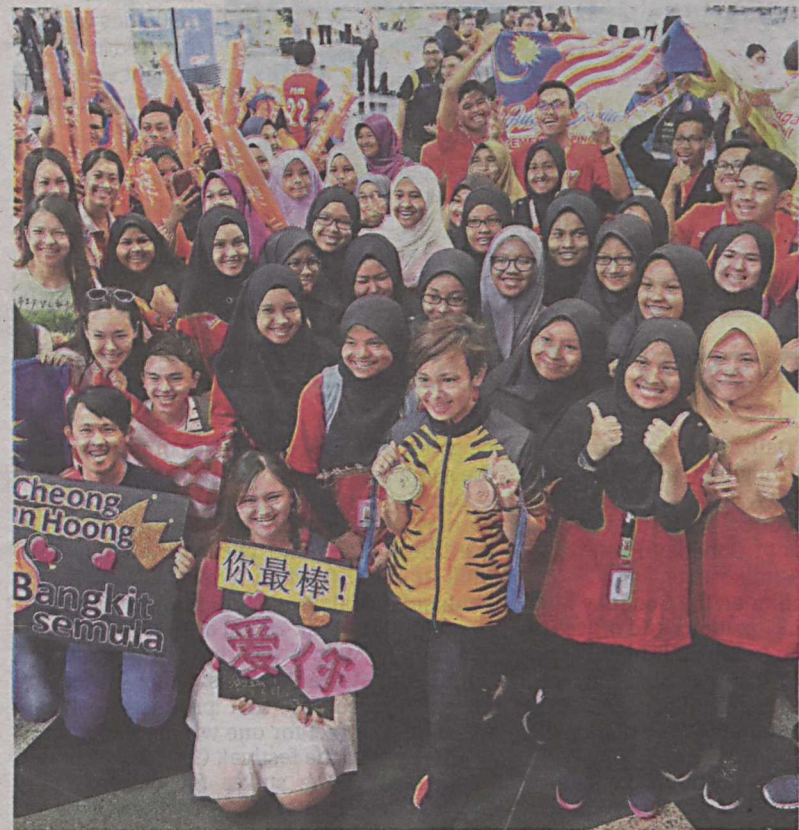


'This is just one, more to come'

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World champ Jun Hoong wants to keep on winning titles



Popular champion: Jun Hoong with her fans at the airport.

By **TAN MING WAI**
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SEPANG: Moments after touching down here, newly-crowned world diving champion Cheong Jun Hoong declared that she aims to "keep winning".

Saying that her feat in clinching the 10m platform title at the World Aquatics Championships in Budapest last Wednesday was now "history", the 27-year-old said she was ready to start all over again.

"My victory in Budapest will count for nothing. It's in the past," she said. "Being champion once doesn't mean you are the winner forever."

"It will take a lot more hard work to become a champion again. It's back to zero but I hope to continue winning," she told a press conference after returning to a hero's welcome yesterday at the KL International Airport.

Jun Hoong, a springboard specialist, was entered for the platform individual event because she was undergoing rehabilitation for a back injury. Platform diving does not put as much stress on the joints

and back as the springboard.

The switch in events worked wonders when the unranked Jun Hoong notched a sensational upset against the world No. 1 and No. 2 divers, China's Si Yajie and Ren Qian, for the gold medal, making her way up from fourth in the first dive to champion just before the final dive.

Jun Hoong also hinted that she may continue with the platform discipline, given her circumstances.

"It's going to be difficult for me to recover 100%," she said.

Jun Hoong is not entirely unfamiliar with diving from the 10m platform. Since 2014, she has regularly partnered either Pandelega Rinong or Leong Mun Yee in platform synchro events and earned multiple podium finishes on the international stage.

With Pandelega, she claimed the country's first silver in diving at the Rio Olympics last year before going on to win a record-equalling bronze at the Budapest world meet last week.

Yesterday, Jun Hoong returned home to a rousing reception from sports fans and top officials, inclu-



Name: **Cheong Jun Hoong**
Date of birth: **April 16, 1990**
Place of birth: **Batu Gajah, Perak**
Weight: **46kg**
Height: **153cm**
Coach: **Yang Zhuliang**



ACHIEVEMENTS

World Championships

> **Budapest 2017** - Gold in 10m platform individual; bronze in 10m platform synchro (with Pandelega Rinong)

Olympics

> **Rio de Janeiro 2016** - Silver in 10m platform synchro (with Pandelega)

FINA Diving World Cup

> **Shanghai 2014** - Silver in 10m platform synchro (with Leong Mun Yee)
> **Rio de Janeiro 2016** - Silver in 10m platform synchro (with Pandelega)

FINA Diving World Series

> **Dubai 2013** - Bronze in 3m springboard synchro (with Wendy Ng Yan Yee)

> **Edinburgh 2013** - Bronze in 3m springboard synchro (with Wendy)

> **Moscow 2013** - Bronze in 3m springboard synchro (with Wendy)

> **Guadalajara 2013** - Bronze in 3m springboard synchro (with Wendy)

> **Moscow 2014** - Bronze in 3m springboard synchro (with Wendy)

> **Monterrey 2014** - Silver in 3m springboard synchro (with Pandelega)

> **Beijing 2015** - Silver in 10m platform synchro (with Mun Yee)

> **Dubai 2015** - Bronze in 10m platform synchro (with Mun Yee)

> **London 2015** - Silver in 10m platform synchro (with Mun Yee)

> **Merida 2015** - Bronze in 10m platform synchro (with Mun Yee)

> **Beijing 2017** - Silver in 10m platform synchro (with Pandelega)

> **Guangzhou 2017** - Bronze in 10m platform synchro (with Pandelega)

FINA Diving Grand Prix

> **Gold Coast 2015** - Silver in 10m platform synchro (with Pandelega); Silver in mixed 10m platform synchro (with Chew Yiwei); Bronze in 3m springboard individual.

> **Kuala Lumpur 2015** - Gold in 10m platform synchro (with Nur Dhabitah Sabri); Silver in 3m springboard synchro (with Dhabitah)

> **Singapore 2014** - Gold in 3m springboard individual and synchro (with Wendy)

> **Kuala Lumpur 2014** - Silver in 10m platform synchro (with Pandelega)

> **Fort Lauderdale 2013** - Bronze in 3m springboard synchro (with Wendy)

Asian Games

> **Guangzhou 2010** - Bronze in 1m springboard individual

> **Incheon 2014** - Silver in 3m

springboard synchro (with Wendy); Bronze in 3m springboard individual

SEA Games

> **Korat 2007** - Gold in 10m platform synchro (with Mun Yee)

> **Palembang 2011** - Gold in 3m springboard individual

> **Naypyidaw 2013** - Gold in 3m springboard individual and synchro (with Wendy)

> **Singapore 2015** - Gold in 3m springboard individual

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ding Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin, at KLIA.

Also present were her family members - father Cheong Sun Meng, mother Leow Lai Kun and sisters Jun Nie and Jun Yeng.

Jun Hoong was clearly touched by the reception.

"I want to thank everyone for coming today. Your presence really

means so much to me," she said, close to tears.

At the airport, Jun Hoong was also inducted into the Malaysia Book of Records for her achievement.

Watch the video
thestartv.com



Coach: Jun Hoong will get better but beware the Chinese

SEPANG: National diving head coach Yang Zhuliang (pic) believes world 10m platform champion Cheong Jun Hoong can only get better.

The 53-year-old well-known and experienced coach, who has been instrumental in transforming Malaysia into a major diving force over the past decade, wants Jun Hoong to keep her feet firmly on the ground following her triumph at the World Championships in Budapest, Hungary, last Wednesday.

"Jun Hoong has come a long way," said Zhuliang.

"I still remember clearly the day Jun Hoong belly-flopped in one of her dives during her debut at the 2005 world meet (in Montreal, Canada), earning her zero points.

"I have not lost faith in her. Twelve years later, she beat two of China's top divers (Si Yajie and Ren Qian) to become Malaysia's world champion ... how remarkable.

"It's surely a win to cherish for Jun Hoong, but I think she has so much more potential and can achieve more international success.

"All the while, she was struggling to get her technique right but in Budapest, she did it all right.

"So, I hope she will continue to continue work hard on her technique and stay consistent.

"But I know her well enough, she's someone who will not be satisfied with just one win and will strive for more success in the future," said Zhuliang.

However, he warned of a strong backlash from the Chinese now that they have failed to win the women's platform individual gold for a second successive year.

China won the title through Chen Ruolin and Si Yajie at Shanghai 2011 and Barcelona 2013 before North Korea's Kim Kuk-hyang sprung a surprise in Kazan, Russia, two years ago.

"Let's not get carried away. China lost this time but their divers will be back to redeem themselves at future high-level competitions," said Zhuliang.

"China has depth in ranks and can produce many talents unlike Malaysia where we have to depend only on a few."

