

CONTRASTING FORTUNES AT THE POOL

Divers deliver, swimmers struggle

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NATIONAL swimmers and divers experienced contrasting fortunes in a mixed year for aquatic sports in Malaysia.

The divers continued to reach great heights with both the seniors and juniors impressing in a number of international competitions.

Cheong Jun Hoong was the undoubted star of the season as she delivered the nation's first ever gold at the World Championships in Budapest.

Having spent much of the past decade in the shadow of Pandeleda Rinong, her victory in the 10m platform individual event was largely unexpected except to those who have closely followed the Perak-born.

It was a well deserved victory for the hard working Jun Hoong who, at 27, is at the peak of her powers.

Jun Hoong later teamed up with Pandeleda in the 10m platform synchronised to deliver a bronze for Malaysia at the World Championships.

More than a decade of tough training and pushing themselves to the limit in competition has seen both Pandeleda, 24, and Jun Hoong battling a series of injuries in recent seasons and how long they can continue to perform at the highest level remains

to be seen.

The future, nonetheless, appears bright with teenagers Nur Dhabitah Sabri, Kimberly Bong and on the men's side, Hanis Nazirul Jaya Surya and Jellson Jabillin all winning medals at the Kuala Lumpur Sea Games (KL2017), where Malaysia amassed 13 gold, four silver and one bronze in the sport.

Jellson and Hanis had also done well to win medals at the recent Australian Grand Prix.

Wendy Ng, however, tested positive for the appetite suppressant sibutramine at KL2017 and she had to return both the gold medals she won at the games.

Sibutramine, commonly found in diet pills, is not a performance-enhancing substance.

The Amateur Swimming Union of Malaysia (ASUM) have yet to announce a suspension for Wendy but it is not expected to be more than a year.

In swimming, double gold medallist Welson Sim and Phee Jinq En delivered Malaysia's only three gold medals from the pool at KL2017 in what was largely expected to be a tough competition.

Malaysia also won two gold through Kevin Yeap and Heidi Gan in the open water swimming events.

Singapore, enjoying a golden era in the sport, dominated KL2017.

Led by Olympic champion, Joseph Schooling, the republic swept 19 gold, six silver and 11 bronze.

CHEONG JUN HOONG

Age: 27

Birthplace: Batu Gajah, Perak

Height: 1.59m

Discipline: Diving, platform specialist

Major achievements:

- 2017 Hungary World Championships — 10m platform individual gold, 10m platform synchronised bronze (with Pandeleda Rinong),
- 2016 Rio Olympics — 10m platform synchronised bronze (with Pandeleda Rinong),
- 2014 Incheon Asian Games — 3m springboard synchronised individual bronze, 3m springboard synchronised silver (with Wendy Ng),
- 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games — 1m springboard individual bronze



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NATIONAL SWIMMERS PROGRESS AT THE PAST FIVE EDITIONS OF THE SEA GAMES

	G	S	B
2017 MALAYSIA	*5	3	3
2015 SINGAPORE	3	4	4
2013 MYANMAR	4	4	4
2011 INDONESIA	5	10	3
2009 LAOS	9	5	6

*2017 KL addition saw two gold won via the option open water swimming events.

NATIONAL DIVERS PROGRESS AT THE PAST FIVE EDITIONS OF THE WORLD AQUATICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

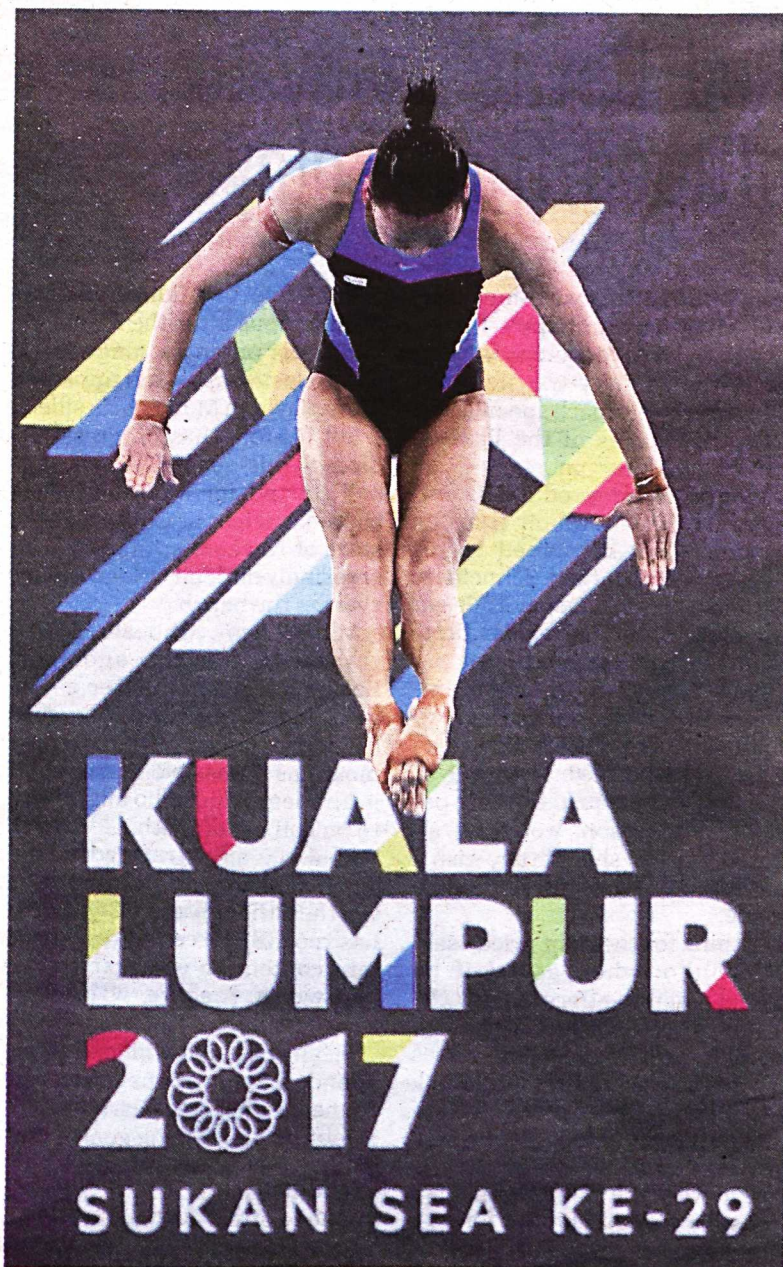
	G	S	B
2017 HUNGARY	1	0	1
2015 RUSSIA	0	0	1
2013 SPAIN	0	0	1
2011 CHINA	0	0	0
2009 ITALY	0	0	1

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Malaysia lack the depth to come anywhere near challenging Singapore in the near future but on the bright side, Welson has shown the potential to become the first Malaysia to win a medal at the Asian Games since Alex Lim Keng Liat last did it at the 2002 edition.

Welson's national records in the 200m and 400m freestyle events are within the bronze medal times of the 2014 games, which should give him a crack at the podium in Indonesia next year.

ASUM will need to take a look at boosting grassroots development to ensure Malaysia do not continue to fall behind our neighbours.



Pandeleda Rinong led Malaysia to winning 13 gold, four silver and one bronze at the Kuala Lumpur Sea Games.

WELSON SIM

Age: 20

Birthplace: Kuching, Sarawak

Height: 1.81m

Discipline: Swimming, middle distance freestyle specialist

Major achievements

- 2017 KL Sea Games — 2 gold
- 2015 Singapore Sea Games — 1 gold, 2 silver, 1 bronze
- 2013 Myanmar Sea Games — 2 silver, 1 bronze

National records

200m, 400m, 800m freestyle (long course), 200m, 400m freestyle (short course)



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