

Syncing in Montreal

Pandelela-Jun Hoong's trust in each other leads to stunning gold

By LIM TEIK HUAT

PETALING JAYA: It was a wonderful day for Malaysian sports in Montreal as divers Pandelela Rinong-Cheong Jun Hoong registered an upset win in the third leg of the FINA Diving World Series.

Pandelela-Jun Hoong became the first Malaysian divers to triumph in the prestigious series after winning the women's 10m platform synchro event on Friday.

Lew Yi Ying brought more cheers by taking bronze in the women's individual epee (limb impairment) for Malaysia in the Wheelchair Fencing World Cup on the same day in the same city.

The Chinese team arrived in Montreal with a record of having won every single event of the 2018 FINA Diving World Series, securing 20 golds in Beijing, China, and Fuji, Japan.

But the 21st gold medal went to Pandelela-Jun Hoong, who maintained their consistent form so far this year.

The competition was so close that the top three finishers were separated by less than two points.

Pandelela-Jun Hoong, who bagged the Commonwealth Games gold medal in Gold Coast, Australia, two weeks ago, took over the lead from 2017 world champions silver medallists Kim Mi-rae-Kim Kuk-hyang of North Korea with two dives to go to nail a breakthrough win with 322.74 points.

RESULTS

All finals

Men 10m platform synchro: 1. Qiu Bo-Yang Jian (Chn) 472.11, 2. Aleksandr Bondar-Viktor Minibaev (Rus) 425.28, 3. Steele Johnson-Brandon Loschiavo (US) 420.66.

3m springboard synchro: 1. Cao Yuan-Xie Siyi (Chn) 463.38, 2. Evgenii Kuznetsov-Ilia Zakharov (Rus) 425.10, 3. Sam Dorman- Mike Hixon (US) 410.13.

Women 10m platform synchro: 1. Cheong Jun Hoong-Pandelela Rinong (Mas) 322.74, 2. Kim Mi-rae-Kim Kuk-hyang (Dpr) 321.90, 3. Si Yajie-Lin Shan (Chn) 320.82.

3m springboard synchro: 1. Chang Yani-Shi Tingmao (Chn) 313.50, 2. Jennifer Abel-Melissa Citrini Beaulieu (Can) 304.83, 3. Esther Qin-Anabelle Smith (Aus) 295.80.

Selected: 6. Nur Dhabitah Sabri-Leong Mun Yee (Mas) 256.20.

The North Korean pair held on for the silver with 321.90 points.

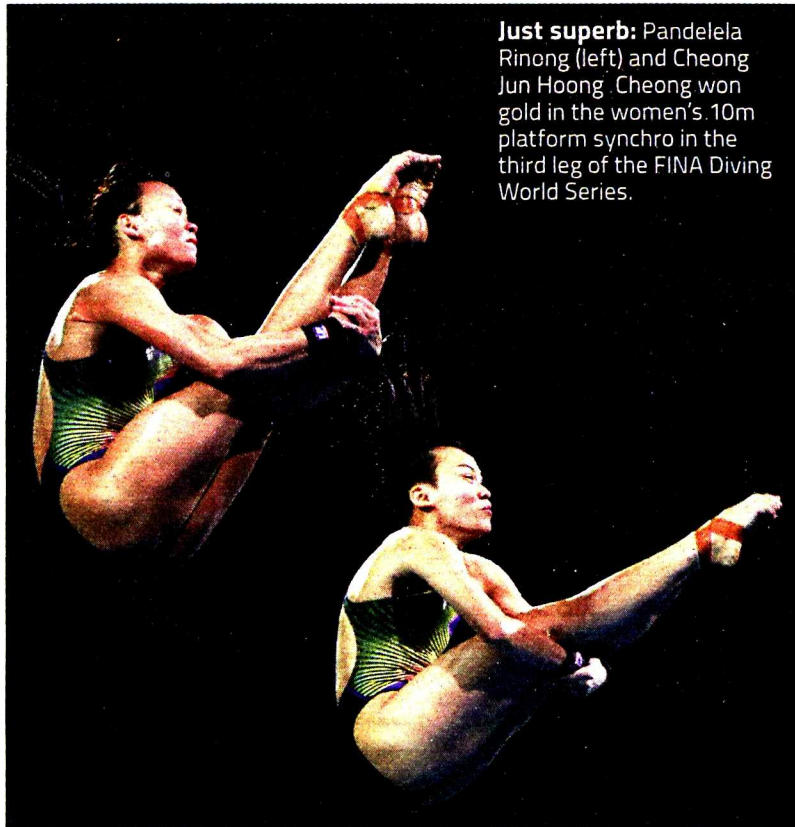
China's scratch pairing of Si Yajie-Lin Shan, the replacements for teenage duo Zhang Minjie-Zhang Jiaqi, surprisingly never led the competition and settled for bronze with 320.82 points.

Pandelela was elated with the achievement, especially as they also had to cope with jetlag after arriving in Montreal on Monday.

"This is my first gold at the Diving World Series since 2010 (her first outing).

"I feel very grateful. We trust each other and this partnership works.

"Also, thanks to my coach Zhang Yukun for boosting our confidence. I hope to stay injury free after this," said Pandelela, who also partnered Jun Hoong to take silver in the Rio



Just superb: Pandelela Rinong (left) and Cheong Jun Hoong. Cheong won gold in the women's 10m platform synchro in the third leg of the FINA Diving World Series.

Olympics two years ago.

Pandelela-Jun Hoong have enjoyed a hot streak so far this year, having taken silver in the opening leg in Beijing before finishing with a bronze the following week in Fuji last month.

Zhang Minjie-Zhang Jiaqi won

the first two legs.

Malaysia's Nur Dhabitah Sabri-Leong Mun Yee finished sixth in the women's 3m springboard synchro event with 256.20 points.

Dhabitah-Mun Yee took bronze in the same event at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games.