

Hopes plummet

THE STAR
26/10/2017 p. 43

Divers face tough test against Chinese counterparts

THE MALAYSIAN ENTRIES

■ MEN

3m springboard individual: Ooi Tze Liang, Ahmad Amsyar Azman.

3m springboard synchro: Ooi Tze Liang-Ahmad Amsyar Azman.

10m platform individual: Chew Yiwei, Ooi Tze Liang.

10m platform synchro: Jellson Jabillin-Hanis Nazirul Jayasurya.

■ WOMEN

3m springboard individual: Nur Dhabitah Sabri, Jasmine Lai Pui Yee.

3m springboard synchro: Nur Dhabitah Sabri-Kimberly Bong.

10m platform individual: Pandelega Rinong, Cheong Jun Hoong.

10m platform synchro: Cheong Jun Hoong-Leong Mun Yee.

■ MIXED

3m springboard synchro: Muhd Syafiq Puteh-Kimberly Bong.

10m platform synchro: Muhd Syahmi Mohd Rezal-Kimberly Bong.

By LIM TEIK HUAT

KUALA LUMPUR: China, led by world champions Peng Jianfeng and Wang Han, will be the team to beat in the Diving Grand Prix Kuala Lumpur, which starts at the National Aquatic Centre in Bukit Jalil tomorrow.

The 23-year-old Jianfeng, who won gold in the men's 1m springboard at the World Aquatics Championships in Budapest, Hungary, in July, is the favourite to win the 3m springboard individual.

He will also combine with Liu Chengming in the men's 3m springboard synchro event, which will see Ahmad Amsyar-Ooi Tze Liang carrying the flag for Malaysia.

The 26-year-old Wang Han will be out to rule the women's 3m springboard event.

Wang Han took gold with Li Zheng in the mixed 3m synchro springboard and silver in the women's 3m springboard behind compatriot Shi Tingmao at the world meet in Budapest.

The Malaysian challenge in women's 3m springboard individual will be led by Nur Dhabitah Sabri and



Hopes take a dive: Cheong Jun Hoong (left) and Pandelega Rinong will find it difficult to upstage the divers from China.

Jasmine Lai Pui Yee.

Dhabitah will also combine with newcomer Kimberly Bong for the 3m springboard synchro.

All eyes will also be on our reigning world champion Cheong Jun Hoong as she has been entered for the women's 10m platform individual together with two-time Olympic medallist Pandelega Rinong.

However, Jun Hoong and Pandelega will find it tough to get on the podium as they'll have to contend with Chinese teens Zhang Jiaqi and Zhang Minjie.

These two youngsters will also

combine for the women's 10m platform synchro, where they will pit their skills against the experienced pairing of Pandelega-Leong Mun Yee.

"Zhang Jiaqi and Zhang Minjie are only 13 and will be the divers to watch in the future," said Malaysian diving coach Yang Zhuliang.

Zhang Jiaqi beat the Olympic and world champion divers to win the women's 10m platform individual title at the Chinese National Games in Beijing in May.

"Their women platform divers are already very strong although they are only 13.

"The reason they cannot compete in the world meet is because of the age limit set by FINA (minimum age of 14)."

Youngsters Hanis Nazirul Jayasurya, Jellson Jabillin and Muhd Syahmi Mohd Rezal will also be fielded for the Diving GP leg to get more international experience ahead of the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games and Indonesia Asian Games next year.

The other countries competing are South Korea, Japan, Britain, Australia, Switzerland, Belarus, Ukraine and Russia.