

HUNDREDS OF YOUTHS EXPECTED AT SPECIAL EVENT FOR PANDELELA

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Divers Cheong Jun Hoong and Pandelega Rinong won Malaysia's first medal at the Rio Olympic Games after clinching silver in the women's 10m platform synchronised on Tuesday. -AFP photo

KUCHING: Hundreds of youths in Kota Samarahan, including university students from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) and Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Sarawak are expected to gather at Summer Mall there this Sunday (Sept 4) for a special event to honour national diving queen Pandelega Rinong.

Walikota of Samarahan Datuk Peter Minos said this event is jointly organised by Samarahan District Council and Summermall Group due to the fact that Pandelega's parents reside at a residential area in Kota Samarahan.

"We organised this special event following requests by the youths to meet their idol Pandelega, who won silver in the just-concluded Rio Olympics. Pandelega's parents reside in Kota Samarahan though they go back to Kampung Jugan in Bau during weekends and holidays," he said.

Minos, who is Bung Bratak Heritage Association chairman, also said the community was very pleased to note that the Sarawak government would give Pandelega a special reception tomorrow (Sept 3).

He said he was hopeful the Chief Minister would announce an award for Pandelega to recognise her achievement, apart from giving incentives and other rewards.

“This is how we Sarawakians honour our heroine, who is a world class sporting act. I am sure Sarawakians are very pleased with the state government’s gestures. Pandelega has not only brought respect and honour to Sarawak but is also a great inspiration to our youngsters everywhere. She has sent a message that grit and determination as well as patience and perseverance will and can get you to the very top,” he said.

Pandelega, with diving partner Cheong Jun Hoong, bagged the country’s first medal at the Rio Olympics after winning silver, finishing behind the pair from China.

For their feat, they received a RM300,000 cash incentive under the National Sports Council incentive scheme for the Olympics while each of them will be getting a monthly pension of RM3,000 for life.

Malaysia concluded the Olympics with four silver medals and one bronze, and it has been reported that all Malaysian Olympic medalists (including Pandelega) will be rewarded with an extra RM200,000 cash incentive.

Four years ago, when she became the country’s first female Olympic medalist after winning the bronze medal in the women’s individual 10m platform in London, the state government announced a cash reward of RM60,000 and a scholarship for her tertiary education.

She was also conferred the Johan Bintang Kenyalang award by the then Head of State Tun Datuk Patinggi Abang Muhammad Salahuddin.