

Pandelela does nation proud with medal win

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THAT'S OUR GIRL: PM, DPM and Sarawak CM congratulate national diver

KUALA LUMPUR: PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak congratulated national diver, Pandelela Rinong, for winning the bronze medal in the Women's 10m Platform event final of the 2012 London Olympics, hence becoming the country's first female Olympian to ever win an Olympic medal.

"This morning (yesterday) I received the good news from the Olympic Games. Our national sportswoman, Pandelela Rinong anak Pamg, has won the bronze medal in the Women's 10m Platform event.

"Well done Pandelela!" Najib said in his latest status update on Facebook yesterday, which had garnered over 18,000 likes as at 2pm.

Najib also said that he believed after winning the medal at such a young age, Pandelela would continue to shine in the coming years.

Bernama reported that Najib also congratulated the 19-year-old diver via Twitter.

"Great performance by Pandelela. First Malaysian woman to win an Olympic medal. Well done and congratulation!" he tweeted.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin tweeted congratulating Pandelela for winning the bronze medal.

"Well done. You have done us proud."

Pandelela collected 359.20 points to settle at third place behind defending champion Chen Ruolin from China (422.30 points) and silver medallist Brittany Broben from Australia (366.50 points).

This is the second medal for Malaysia from the London edition of the Olympics after national badminton ace Datuk Lee Chong Wei won the silver medal in the men's singles final last Sunday.

In Kuching, Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud was among the millions of Malaysians beaming with pride after Pandelela's historic win in London.

For Taib, the pride was extra special as Pandelela is from Sarawak.

"I feel very proud that a Sarawakian has won a medal at the Olympics, a bronze medal," Taib said after opening the Performance Management and Delivery Unit's (Pemandu) GTP (government transformation plan) Roadmap 2.0 Open Day here.

Taib said Pandelela's achievement would be an inspiration to other athletes in the state, especially to the young and upcoming athletes who would want to emulate her feat.

Taib also said Sarawak in future could probably produce more Pandelelas once a system to spot, nurture, groom and train young athletes is in place.

"We (Sarawak) have a lot of potential athletes among young rural children."

Taib also said Sarawak would reward Pandelega, a petite 19 year-old whose home village is in Bau.

He, however, would not disclose what the reward would be , saying: "I will announce it after I've met her."

Pandelega's father Pamg Joheng, wept as he watched his daughter going up the podium to receive the medal.

"I wished I was there to hug her," he said.

The 46-year old contract worker stayed up late to watch her go through her events.

He was the only one who stayed up all through the game, while his two other daughters Pici Parnia, 14 and Parcelia Renyelia, 12 fell asleep halfway through the live telecast.

"I could not believe it when the commentator announced that Pandelega had won the bronze medal. It took awhile to sink in. Then I woke both my girls up as I didn't want them to miss this.

"It was when she got up the podium I cried. I am very proud of her," said Pamg when met at their humble home.

Last Saturday, Pandelega's mother, Hartini Lamim, 44 was sponsored by Dutch Lady to be with her in London.

Pamg had dedicated his life in making sure Pandelega's training went smoothly at the Bukit Jalil Sports School.

"We rarely have time together as a family. We don't see her during Hari Gawai and even Christmas. But when she comes home for a special occasion, that would be the best time for us, even it was less than a day," said Pamg.

When Pandelega was 7, she was picked to be one of the state divers.

"She called me from London, telling me that she was nervous as she would be competing with the best divers in the world. I told her I would pray for her every hour and to cry out my name," he added.

It could have been all those wise words from her father that kept her head steady during the final moments on the platform that led her to win the medal for the country.

Having won the bronze Pandelega would receive RM150,000 from the National Sports Council and a lifetime pension of RM2,000 monthly.

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