

SWIMMING ASSOCIATION HOPING FOR 4 MEDALS

# SIX FOR A SHOT AT GLORY

S'pore divers on track for return to SEA Games after 10-year absence

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**SINGAPORE** – Swimming and water-polo have traditionally been Singapore's powerhouses in the pool at the South-east Asian (SEA) Games, reaping multiple medals since the inaugural edition in Bangkok in 1959.

However, it looks like diving — their poor cousin — could soon be joining that category.

The sport has not delivered a medal for Singapore since Samantha Lee's bronze (women's springboard) at the 1985 SEA Games.

However, for the Dec 11-22 SEA Games in Myanmar, the Singapore Swimming Association (SSA) are targeting four medals in the men's and women's 3-metre synchronised springboard (two silvers), and the men's and women's 10m synchronised platform (two bronzes).

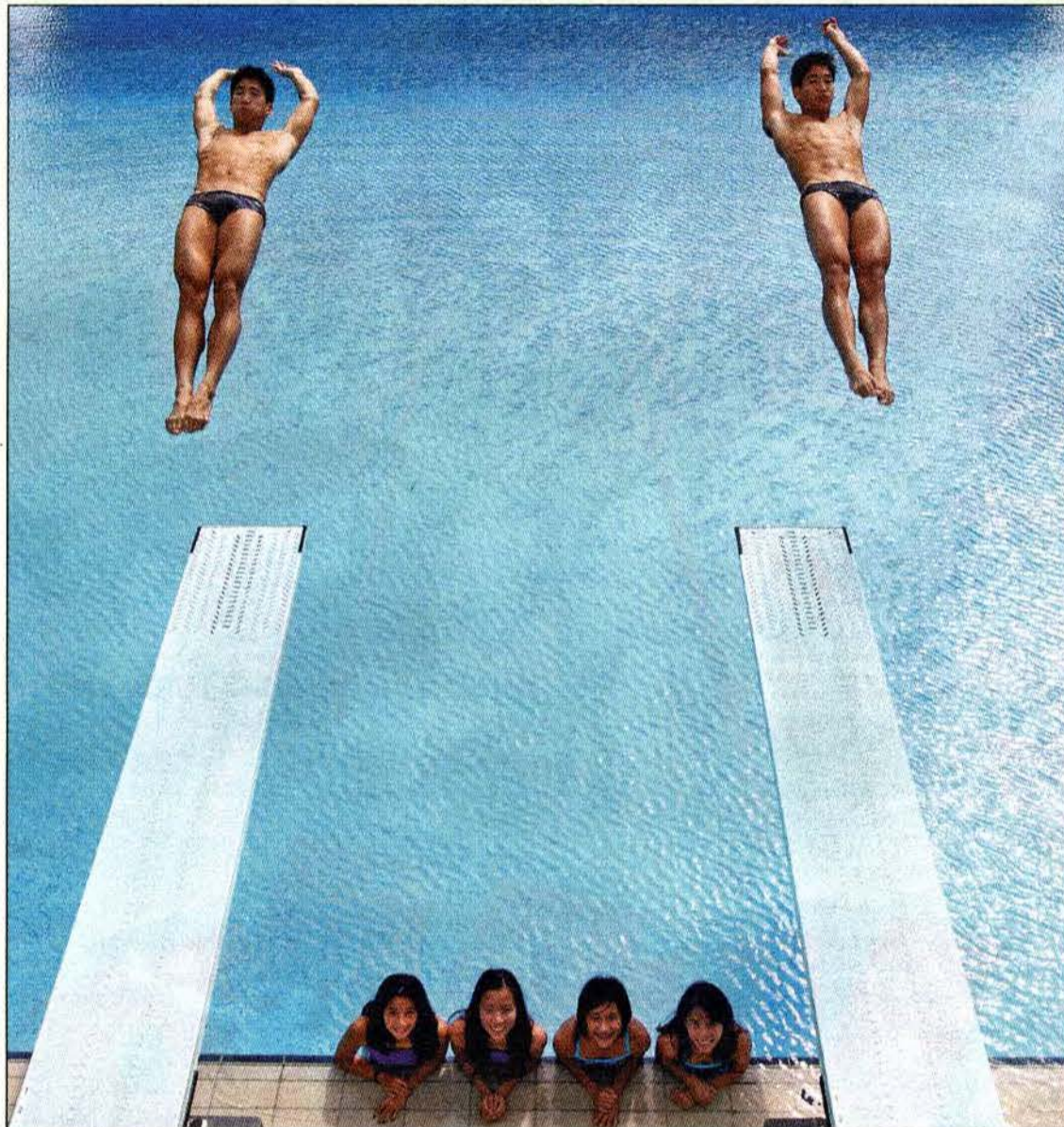
This new air of confidence comes about after six national divers — twins Timothy and Mark Lee, Myra Lee, Fong Kay Yian, Arizir Fong and Kimberly Chan — met the SEA Games qualifying mark at the Singapore National Open Championship and Singapore Diving Invitational in May and June respectively. The qualifying mark is the bronze medal score from the 2011 SEA Games in Indonesia.

If their nominations are approved by the Singapore National Olympic Council, they will be the first Singapore divers at the SEA Games since 2003.

So serious about their craft are Timothy and Mark that the 19-year-olds — Timothy is a third-year aeronautical engineering student at Singapore Polytechnic and Mark studies sports science at Republic Polytechnic — decided to halve their school workload this year to commit to a full-time training schedule of about 36 hours weekly.

Both plan to graduate a year later in April 2015, just before the SEA Games are held here in June that year.

Timothy and Mark are expected to compete in the men's 3m springboard (synchronised) and 10m platform (synchronised) in their SEA Games debut in Myanmar, and the



Timothy Lee (left, diving), Mark Lee and the four girls in the team — (from left) Kimberly Chan, Arizir Fong, Fong Kay Yian and Myra Lee — have met the SEA Games qualifying mark. PHOTO: WEE TECK HIAN

duo can hardly wait.

"It's the first time that someone in our family is going to the SEA Games," said Timothy after training at the Toa Payoh Swimming Complex last Friday.

"We trained with the Malaysians in Guangzhou recently and it was an eye-opener. They are definitely considered one of the world's top diving nations and will be strong at the SEA Games."

Added Mark: "Diving is an obsession for us, as we watch diving videos and talk about it every day. We also motivate each other and when one of us feels down, the other will smack him on the back! Ultimately, our dream is to reach the 2016 Olympics."

To prepare for the December SEA Games, the divers will compete in the 5th Asian Cup in September, the Asia Pacific Diving Championships in New Zealand in October, and the Macau Invitational in November.

They will also attend a six-



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**William Lee**  
 SSA VICE-PRESIDENT (DIVING)

week centralised training camp in Guangzhou in November.

Myra, 19, and Kay Yian, 17, will also feature in the women's 3m springboard (synchronised), while 18-year-olds Arizir and Kimberly will compete in the 10m platform (synchronised). Kay Yian also took a year off from her studies at the Singapore Sports School and will compete at next month's Asian Youth Games in Nanjing.

Malaysia won their first Olympic diving medal at last year's London Games when Pandelega Rinong Pamg took the women's 10m platform bronze and the SSA hopes to follow suit soon.

"It took Malaysia about 10 years to come up with an Olympic medal," said SSA Vice-President (Diving) William Lee. "We are on that same track ... the SEA Games is significant and it is not a one-time thing as we have not only a dream, but a programme to support that dream. We

THE SUPER SIX

● **Timothy Lee, 19**  
 School: Singapore Polytechnic, aeronautical engineering (Year 3)  
 Events: 3m springboard (sync), 10m platform (sync) with twin Mark  
 Experience: Competed at 2010 Youth Olympic Games (YOG); bronze at 4th Asian Diving Cup 2011; silver at 7th Asian Age Group C'ships; two golds at 2013 National Diving Invitational (NDI)



● **Mark Lee, 19**  
 School: Republic Polytechnic, sports science (Year 3)  
 Events: 3m springboard (sync), 10m platform (sync) with twin Timothy  
 Experience: Bronze at 4th Asian Diving Cup 2011; silver at 7th Asian Age Group C'ships; two golds at 2013 NDI



● **Myra Lee, 19**  
 School: Enrolling in Singapore Management University (social sciences) in August  
 Event: 3m springboard (sync) with Fong Kay Yian  
 Experience: Competed in 10m platform at the YOG; gold at Singapore National Open C'ships (SNOG); silver at NDI; silver at 2012 SEA C'ships



● **Fong Kay Yian, 17**  
 School: Singapore Sports School, Sec 5  
 Event: 3m springboard (sync) with Myra Lee  
 Experience: 3m springboard (sync) gold at SNOG; 3m springboard (sync) silver at NDI; 1m springboard bronze at 2012 SEA C'ships; competing at this year's Asian Youth Games



● **Arizir Fong, 18**  
 School: St Andrew's Junior College, JC 2  
 Event: 10m platform (sync) with Kimberly Chan  
 Experience: 10m platform (individual) silver at NDI; 10m platform (sync) gold at NDI; 10m platform (sync) gold at SNOG



● **Kimberly Chan, 18**  
 School: Will enrol in SMU (economics) in August  
 Event: 10m platform (sync) with Arizir Fong  
 Experience: 10m platform (individual) gold at NDI, bronze at 49th Malaysia National Age Group C'ships 2013; 10m platform (sync) gold at NDI; 10m platform (sync) gold at SNOG



started four years ago, so in five or six years, we should have a good chance at having divers at Olympic level."

Arizir added: "Her (Pandelega's) bronze medal was surprising but it shows that smaller countries can break the domination by the United States and China. If she can do it, we stand a chance."