

# Show me your fire and hunger: Sheik



Singapore Silat Federation chief executive officer Sheik Alau'ddin wants his athletes to show at the SEA Pencak Silat Championships that they deserve a spot at the Hanoi SEA Games.

**Jeremiah Ong**

The long wait for competition is over and it is show time for Singapore's silat exponents at the Southeast Asia (SEA) Pencak Silat Championships at the OCBC Arena Hall One from tomorrow to Sunday.

Having pulled off hosting the meet during the pandemic, Singapore Silat Federation chief executive officer Sheik Alau'ddin wants his exponents to prove that they are worthy of a ticket to the Hanoi SEA Games in May.

Most of the Republic's 30 silat exponents taking part in the SEA Championships will be staking their claim for a Games spot when they pit themselves against 61 of their counterparts from Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand.

Sheik said at a press conference yesterday that officials will be looking more at the performance than the results, as it "will show if the athletes have the fire in them, if they are hungry to be the first choice to represent Singapore in the SEA Games".

He added that they would review the athletes' performance after the competition and submit a list to the Singapore National Olympic Council to consider for SEA Games inclusion when its appeals committee meets on March 8.

The SEA Championships will see a change in rules in the tanding (match) category passed last February and Sheik believes that it "will make for a level playing field for all the athletes".

The new rules, which reflect the development of martial arts around the world, allow exponents more leniency in tugging at their opponents' uniforms as they look to land punches and kicks to score points. There are also fewer stoppages in each match.

Three-time world champion Sheik Farhan, who has already earned his SEA Games spot, believes that the new rules will benefit exponents who are less "artistic".

"These changes are not so major that you will lose your advantage, but at the same time not too small that they can be ignored," said the 24-year-old.

Strict protocols are in place at the meet, with all personnel having to undergo daily testing. Athletes and officials will have to remain in a competition "bubble", moving only between assigned hotels, training and match venues. The event is open only to invited guests, with a maximum of 300 per session.

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