



Shakir Juanda is confident of getting on the podium because he and Sheik Ferdous are a tested pair. ST FILE PHOTO

# SHAKIR FLOORED BY KNEE INJURY

He will now compete in men's artistic doubles with Ferdous in SEA Games

By JEREMY LIM

HE WAS the world champion in 2013 but Shakir Juanda has yet to tick a SEA Games gold medal off his checklist.

That dream suffered a blow yesterday when Singapore's silat title hopeful withdrew from the men's class H (80-85kg) match event owing to injury.

Shakir hurt his left knee during last month's South-east Asian Pencak Silat Championship in Singapore.

Scans showed that he sprained his anterior cruciate ligament and had a Grade 2 tear to his medial collateral ligament.

The 26-year-old will now focus on the men's artistic doubles with Sheik Ferdous at the Games.

The Singapore Silat Federation (Persisi) announced that reigning world champion Sheik Farhan will replace Shakir in the Class H match event.

Even though Farhan weighs 84kg, he won Class J (90-95kg) titles in January's world championships and the South-east Asian Championships last month.

While disappointed, Shakir is consoled that he can still compete on home soil. "I am quite relieved because I am not 100 per cent fit and I think a better person should replace me to fight for the gold medal," he said.

"But I will train with my partner Sheik Ferdous and come back stronger in the SEA Games."

Next month's Games will be the fifth for Shakir but it will be the first time that he competes in the artistic event at the biennial meet. And he is determined to win that elusive gold medal after a

haul of one silver and two bronzes from previous editions.

He said: "Artistic is not my forte but Ferdous and I won silver and bronze from the world championships and South-east Asian Championship so we will work hard to perform well in the Games."

"I hope the extra energy from the home crowd will spur us to be at our best and make our fellow Singaporeans proud."

Persisi chief Sheik Alau'ddin is optimistic that the Republic can

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**NOT FIGHTING FIT**

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still put up a strong showing at the Games.

He said medal hopes for silat are not doomed and expected the lesser-known faces to step up to the challenge, most notably his son Sheik Farhan.

He said: "We are always prepared for unpredictable circumstances and we have (Muhammad Nur) Alfian, (Muhammad) Iqbal and (Sheik) Farhan who will perform well as long as they work hard and are not complacent."

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