

# 4-PILLAR PLAN TO TAKE SILAT FORWARD

Persisi CEO Sheik is also working with world body to get sport included at the Olympics

Sazali Abdul Aziz

The Singapore Silat Federation (Persisi) last night unveiled a four-step plan to grow the sport here, as it works towards the ultimate goal of having a Singaporean compete in pencak silat at the Olympics, should it be included as a medal sport one day.

Persisi chief executive officer Sheik Alau'ddin, 51, revealed four key performance indicators (KPIs) which he wants the local governing body to meet in the coming years during a sharing session at the OCBC Arena with over 300 parents and young athletes from the local community.

First, the two-time world champion wants the national sports association to groom non-Malay athletes for the national team, and hire non-Malay staff in its management, in a bid to make the sport more inclusive.

Second, he wants to produce a national syllabus and grading system, so that there is a standardised training programme from grassroots to the elite level. He also aims to increase the number of national training squad members from about 120 to 300 by early next year.

Finally, the federation will ramp up fund-raising efforts to beef up its reserves.

Said Sheik: "We have been working very closely with (national sports agency) Sport Singapore, the Singapore Sports Institute, and I feel we have to make a big change to get even better. I am confident we can meet the KPIs.

"For participation, for example,



Singapore Silat Federation chief executive officer Sheik Alau'ddin addressing over 300 parents and young athletes at a sharing session at the OCBC Arena last night on how to bring more success to the sport. PHOTO: THE NEW PAPER

we are likely to have an ActiveSG programme by next year, and we will engage the tertiary institutions, and societies like Jamiyah to find talent."

Sheik said that 2018 is an important year for Persisi as there are two major competitions – the Asian Games and the World Pencak Silat Championships – both in Jakarta.

Pencak silat will make its debut as a medal sport at the Asiad next August in the Indonesian capital, where the world championships will be held four months later.

Said Sheik: "For the Asian Games, our target will be two gold medals – one in the tanding (match) category and one in the artistic category. We hope to hit more but the target is a minimum of two golds."

The ultimate target is to get the sport included at the Olympics.

Sheik said that he has been working with international silat body

Persilat and its president Prabowo Subianto, a prominent Indonesian businessman, politician and former lieutenant-general in the Indonesian army, to realise the dream.

"Realistically, we are looking at the 2032 Olympics," said Sheik, who is the president of the Asian Pencak Silat Federation and also the chairman of public relations at Persilat.

"In 2025, we have to put in a formal bid for silat's inclusion, and Persilat has targeted a budget of US\$54 million (S\$74.5 million) to make it happen.

"Persilat is serious, and has allocated US\$6 million from the budget, for rebranding."

Last night, Persisi invited parents and young athletes from the local community to a sharing session at its training base at OCBC Arena Hall 4 to share information about the association and its future plans.

Said Persisi president Mohd Yusrin Mohd Yasil: "The reason we are all here is that we want to develop a close relationship among Persisi, athletes and parents."

One parent, Muhammad Razak, 41, was impressed with the sharing session. The former silat exponent, who was in the national squad from 1993 to 1997, has two sons – Muhammad Rizqan, 19, and Muhammad Rizuan, 14 – who both recently joined the national age-group training squads.

Said Razak: "This meeting is really good for parents to learn more about what is going on."

Persisi will hold an open selection for next year's major Games – which include the World Junior Pencak Silat Championships – on Dec 9, and its annual registration will be on Jan 6, both at the OCBC Arena.

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## SportsWorld

### Paddler Koen wins Cadet title in India

Young Singapore paddler Koen Pang won the Cadet boys' singles title at the ITTF India Junior and Cadet Open in India's Greater Noida yesterday after beating Indian Alberto Lairemurua 3-1 (8-11, 11-3, 11-4, 11-6) in the final.

The 16-year-old Koen, however, lost to another Indian Manav Vikash Thakkar 4-1 (11-8, 11-7, 8-11, 11-6, 11-6) in his second final in the Junior boys' singles.

Koen's teammate Zhang Wanling, 17, earned a joint-bronze with Thailand's Jinnipa Sawettabut in the Junior girls' team event after their 3-0 loss to India's Archana Girish Kamath and Selena Selvakumar in the semi-finals. Koen and Wanling will compete in the 2018 Youth Olympic Games continental qualifiers in Greater Noida from tomorrow to Sunday.

### Deschamps signs new deal till 2020

PARIS • France coach Didier Deschamps has signed a new contract to stay on until 2020, the French Football Federation said on Tuesday.

France qualified for the 2018 World Cup in Russia under Deschamps with a 2-1 victory over Belarus earlier this month. His side finished the campaign with just one defeat in 10 qualifying games.

REUTERS

### Tennis Australia offers help to Tomic

MELBOURNE • Tennis Australia has reached out to Bernard Tomic out of concern for his "health and well being" during a steep rankings slide but has offered no guarantees of a wildcard to the Australian Open in January.

The former world No. 17's ranking has plunged to No. 145 and he will not have enough points to qualify directly for Melbourne Park. REUTERS

AIMING HIGH

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SHEIK ALAU'DDIN, on the federation's expectations for next year's Asian Games when silat makes its debut.