

# SWEET SUCCESS FOR FARHAN

He beats Viet nemesis, who deprived him of gold medal at last Asiad, in Asian C'ships

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RIVALSBEEFING UP

The Vietnamese are putting in new fighters. Thailand is pushing a lot and Malaysia is also putting in good athletes.



**SHEIK ALAU'DDIN**, Singapore Silat Federation chief executive, on tougher competition at the next World Championships.

After missing out on a gold medal at the Asian Games last year, silat exponent Sheik Farhan Sheik Alau'ddin exacted sweet revenge at the 5th Asian Pencak Silat Championships yesterday, as the two-time world champion defeated arch-rival Nguyen Van Tri of Vietnam to claim the men's Class J (90-95kg) title.

Tri had beaten Farhan in the semi-finals in Jakarta in August last year before going on to win the Asian Games gold.

The Singaporean was awarded the joint-bronze with Thailand's Tachin Pokjay.

But Farhan was not about to let the Vietnamese get the better of him again, winning his final bout 5-0 to claim the gold. He was also named the best male athlete of the

championships in Yanji, China.

He told The Straits Times: "It felt a bit weird because I haven't been overseas since the Asian Games, but I felt confident for the actual fight. The coaches had a great tactic for that game and I was able to execute it perfectly."

Victory at the Asian tournament was also extra sweet for the 22-year-old as he had missed out on the opportunity to defend his SEA Games gold in the Philippines earlier this month as his weight class was not contested.

Nine events were held in Subic Bay with only the lighter weight classes for tanding - the heaviest being 50-55kg for women and 60-65kg for men - included in the competition schedule.

The Asian championships were also the 22-year-old's first international competition since the Asian Games, as he had enlisted for National Service in April. He was not able to train as frequently as before, cutting his training sessions from 15 to eight sessions a week.

Focusing on recovery was key to

ensuring that he could stay fit throughout this period, he added.

"I'm happy that I'm able to be better even though the training was not as much," he said.

Farhan's victory also capped a successful campaign for Singapore's silat exponents, who took home seven gold, two silver and seven bronze medals at the Asian Championships to nearly match their 7-7-8 haul from last year.

They finished second behind Vietnam, who topped the medal tally with 12 golds.

Singapore Silat Federation chief executive Sheik Alau'ddin Yacoob Marican was pleased with how his athletes have performed this year, as the achievement in China came just two weeks after their two-gold haul at the Nov 30-Dec 11 SEA Games.

He said: "Earlier in the year, we did well in a few championships.

"Though I still feel that we should have won one more gold at the SEA Games and one or two more at the Asian Championships, overall, I'm happy with what has

happened in 2019."

Farhan is already looking forward to 2020 as he makes a bid for a third world title at July's World Pencak Silat Championships in Sarawak, Malaysia.

He said: "This has given me and my coaches a gauge of what I can do to make me better and I hope to perform even better than I did in this competition."

While 2019 has been a successful year for silat, Sheik acknowledged that the competition will be tough at the world championships.

He added: "The athletes can see that the Vietnamese are putting in new fighters and are strong, and they have shown that they are aggressive. Thailand is pushing a lot and Malaysia is also putting in good athletes.

"We are gearing up for the next one (World Championships) after they enjoy the new year, settle down, do their therapy and all that, come February, we will push towards that."

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Sheik Farhan Sheik Alau'ddin (far left) won one of Singapore's seven gold medals at the Asian Pencak Silat Championships in Yanji, China last week. PHOTO: SINGAPORE SILAT FEDERATION