

Silat fighters won't relax despite good show

By DEEPANRAJ GANESAN

IT WAS a test run before a bigger battle in June and the Singapore silat team passed the assessments with flying colours.

Yesterday's occasion was the 5th South-east Asian Pencak Silat Championship 2015 at the Toa Payoh Sports Hall, and Singapore bagged the overall champions' trophy with seven golds, two silvers and 10 bronzes.

Teams from around the region had fielded their strongest available squads in a bid to test the waters ahead of the Games in Singapore from June 5 to 16.

Malaysia and Vietnam finished second and third with six and five gold medals respectively.

The result will serve as a big boost for the local exponents' hopes after disappointing results at the Games' last two editions.

In 2011 in Jakarta and Palembang, Singapore bagged only three bronzes while the 2013 edition in Naypyitaw, Myanmar saw Singapore net one gold and two bronze medals.



Singapore's Shakir Juanda (left) aiming a kick at Malaysia's Robial Sobri in the final of the Class H category, which he narrowly won. ST PHOTO: DANIEL NEO

Since the end of last month, the athletes have been involved in a special training camp to prepare for the meet.

The Singapore Sports Institute also provided support in the areas of physiology, sports psychology and nutrition in the lead-up to

the championship.

Singapore Silat Federation (Persisi) chief, Sheik Alau'ddin, though pleased with yesterday's outcome, was careful not to get carried away.

He said: "This was a test to see if we were ready. We have ex-

ceeded expectations but that does not mean we should be happy and relax. Now, we need to work harder and make sure that we replicate the same success at the SEA Games."

Shakir Juanda, bronze medalist at the last SEA Games, is one man who is eyeing gold on home soil in June.

Yesterday, he secured a 2-1 triumph over Malaysian Robial Sobri in the Class H (80-85kg) category final. The 27-year-old admitted that while the win boosted his confidence, "I need to be more brave in the matches.

"I will do my best to perform as well in the SEA Games and win the gold."

Elsewhere, Sheik Ferdous claimed victory in Class E (65-70kg) after his opponent, Vietnamese Nguyen Van Curong, was disqualified for throwing illegal blows to the head. And 2013 SEA Games Class F (70-75kg) champion, Alfian Juma'en, was also victorious, with a 5-0 win over Ryan Sazali of Indonesia.

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