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## Nurul set to make mark on world stage

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# Nurul set to make mark on world stage

ALVIN FOO » SILAT

By A

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FOR the last two years, Nurul Shafiqah, 13, has been fighting with boys.

She spars with the opposite sex twice a week during silat training.

She said: "The first time I had to fight a boy, I was so scared my heart started beating extra fast.

"But I'm used to it now. It toughens me and gives me more confidence.

"Sometimes, I get bruises on my hands and legs because they kick too hard."

The knocks have paid off.

The Singapore Sports School Secondary One student will make her world debut at next week's Pre-Junior International Championships here.

The event will make its debut at the Pencak Silat Championship, to be staged at the Bedok Sports Hall from Friday to Sunday.

It is for those aged between 12 and 14, and she is aiming for gold in the girls' Match Class F (38-40kg) category.

She is one of the 12 silat exponents at the sports school.

Away from the sport, she is pretty much your average teenager.

The 1.57m-tall athlete likes taking neo prints with her

Her ambition is backed by dedication.

For example, she wakes up at 5.30am from Monday to Friday to prepare for a 6.15am training session.

After school lessons, she trains from 3.30pm to 6pm.

Said Singapore Silat Federation's chief executive director Sheik Alauddin: "She is ready, hungry for success, and is even able to hold her own against boys of her age.

"Her main weapon is her left kick."

It was a boy who inspired Nurul to pick up the sport when she was six.

That was none other than her brother Mohd Nur Shafiq, 15, who is in the national junior team.

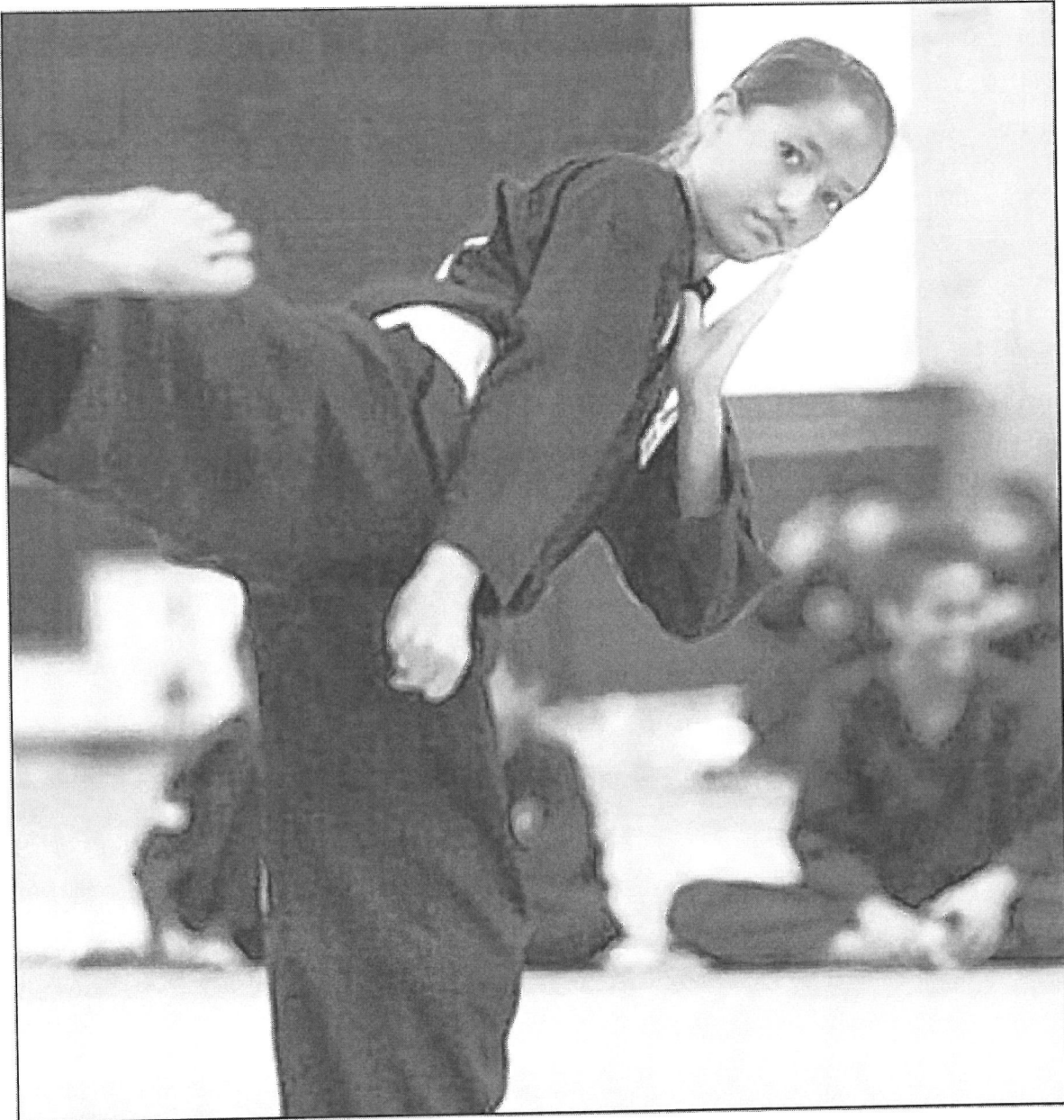
She said: "I was impressed with the cool fighting moves and graceful artistic routine."

Nurul, whose dad is Malay and mum is from New Zealand, burst into prominence when she won a silver at last year's National Silat Championships in the pre-junior Class F division.

friends and counts Harry Potter as her favourite movie character.

But thrust her into the competition arena, and she has only one thing on her mind.

"To be a world champion," she said.



**FIGHTING FIT:** Nurul Shafiqah, one of the 12 silat exponents at the sports school, has been sparring with boys for the past two years.

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