

## Silat targets Asian Games

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- TAN YO-HINN

THE Singapore Silat Federation (Persisi) are embarking on a drive that they hope will eventually see the martial art included in the 2014 Asian Games in Incheon, South Korea.

Silat was an exhibition sport at the 2002 Asian Games in Busan and is set to be included in the 2009 Asian Indoor Games in Vietnam. But it is not among the 41 sports slated for the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou.

For it to be included in the Games, more countries need to be actively involved in the sport.

Announced yesterday at the Bedok headquarters, Persisi's

"Silat Goes Global" mission — which has the backing of the sport's world body, the International Pencak Silat Federation (Persilat) — aims to help Middle East countries and African nations set up their own national silat associations.

Persisi's target is at least 30 national silat associations throughout Asia by 2009.

Currently, there are 26 countries affiliated to Persilat and 10 are from Asia.

"Silat is practiced in clubs in Middle Eastern countries, but many don't have a national association," said Persisi president Abdullah Shafie, who is also a Persilat deputy president.

In May, Sheik Alau'ddin (picture), Persisi chief executive director and a former world champion, led a four-man delegation on a month-long trip to 17 countries in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia, where they conducted clinics and demonstrations to help promote the sport and lobby for its inclusion at the Games. — TAN YO-HINN

