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Silat storm abates

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Silat storm abates

LOW LIN FHOONG SINGAPORE SPORTS

SSC step in to resolve boardroom crisis while athletes eye Beach Games prize

ALL was calm at the Singapore Silat Federation's (SSF) Bedok centre of excellence yesterday evening, the same day news broke of a shake up in the national sports association's (NSA) committee.

The SSF's 10-strong silat contingent was given a Team Singapore send-off in a flag-raising ceremony for the 1st Asian Beach Games, which will be held in Bali from Oct 18-26.

Guest-of-honour Lim Biow Chuan, MP for Marine Parade GRC, presented the national flag to Singapore's 10 silat representatives, who depart today for a one-week training camp in Bintan.

But on the sidelines, another battle was taking shape in the silat federation's boardroom.

On Tuesday, TODAY reported exclusively that the SSF's newly appointed president Johari Mokti and secretary general Saiful Nizam Subari had been told to take a break from their duties, after the two allegedly failed to perform up to scratch.

Former president Abdullah Shafie Sidik, now a member of SSF's management committee, has been called to take over as interim head and put the house in order, and an Extraordinary General Meeting (EOGM) was

scheduled for next Thursday.

But the Singapore Sports Council (SSC) yesterday stepped in to bring the matter to a close.

"We have received an invitation to resolve the matter with SSC on Oct 11, 2pm, and all 18 members of the management committee will be there," SSF chief executive director Sheik

Alau'ddin Yacoob Marican told TODAY. "I hope the matter will be resolved soon."

The association's committee will meet with SSC's director of NSA management, Ng Eng Soon, on Saturday, with Sheik and three SSF staff members also in attendance. Management committee members TODAY spoke to

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"I'm confident of winning the gold at the Asian Beach Games, but I have to try not to be over confident," said 2007 world champion Muhammad Razif Mokhlas, who will contest the men's tanding class H (80-85kg) category in Bali.

"Fighting on the sand can be unpredictable, but I'll have to adapt my stances to make them stronger and put in more practice on the sand."

Eight silat medals are on offer at the world's first Asian Beach Games, and Singapore's 36-strong contingent will feature in six other sports at the Games: Beach basketball, bodybuilding, sailing, triathlon, windsurfing and woodball.

The SSF have targeted two gold medals for the 10 athletes.

"We're targeting one gold medal in match class, and one in artistic," said SSF deputy president Dzulkarnain Noordin.

"The team were training throughout the fasting month and I really think they're ready for the challenge ahead."

Added Razif, 23: "The Asian Beach Games will also help me prepare for next year's events — the Sea Games, World Championships and Asian Indoor Games.

"This will be a stepping stone to help me get match experience and know my opponents' fighting technique."

declined to comment, saying that the matter would be resolved on Saturday.

NO WORRIES, SAY ATHLETES
But for Singapore's silat exponents, it was all systems go yesterday evening, and it appeared that the squad were unaffected by the boardroom trouble.



(From left) SSF committee member Shafie, MP for Marine Parade GRC Lim, and SSF chief Sheik give the silat team a rousing send-off. ERNEST CHUA

F. ERNEST CHUA