

Singapore bags 3 golds

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Minister Teo calls for Asian sports to be on world stage *By*

ASIAN sports such as pencak silat should be encouraged to take their places on the world stage, including the Olympics.

The call was made by Minister for Education and Second Minister for Defence Rear Admiral (NS) Teo Chee Hean at last night's closing ceremony of the 1st Asian Pacific Pencak Silat Championship.

Speaking at the Silat Centre of Excellence, Mr Teo said: "For decades, we in Asia have been picking up sports and games from the West, ranging from the ever popular soccer to more recent American imports like basketball.

"It is timely that we encourage our own Asian sports to take their place on the world stage."

Mr Teo, who is also president of the Singapore National Olympic Council, included Chinese wushu and kalaripayattu (a form of martial art in the southern Indian state of Kerala) as the sports that deserve more international spotlight.

He also noted that the number of member countries in the International Pencak Silat Federation (Persilat) has been steadily increasing not just in the Asia Pacific region but also in Europe and North America.

Looking ahead, Mr Teo said: "I hope that pencak silat will gain in popularity around the world and eventually

Adam Hashidy

become a competitive sport in the Asian Games and the Olympics."

He commended Asia Pacific Persilat for initiating an exhibition game at the 14th Asian Games in Busan in October.

He added: "But remember that establishing pencak silat as an international sport must be an on-going effort, and I

did not turn up.

In the 75-80kg division, Imran Abdul Rahman beat Vietnam's Dau Duy Hoa 5-0.

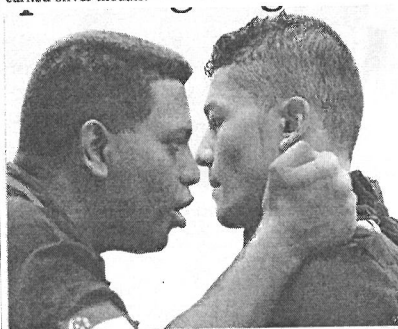
Noor Rafili Ramli added the third gold when he overcame Vietnam's Le Tuan Anh 5-0 in the 65-70kg division.

Saiedah Said, Singapore's sole woman finalist, and Yusoff Shah Kamarudin both earned silver medals.

encourage you to find innovative methods to interest and enthuse others in the sport."

On the court, Singapore did well at the championship when its fighters fought their way to three gold medals.

Singapore's South-east Asian gold medallist Zulfakar Ramli earned a walkover in the 55-60kg division when Vietnam's Ngu Nen Buy Biey



Coach Sheikh Alaudin (left) giving tips to Imran Abdul Rahman last night

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