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SEA Games champion Mohd Zulfakar Mohd Ramli will lead the gold medal charge at next month's inaugural Asia-Pacific Pencak Silat Championships hosted by Singapore.

- Kelvin Phang

The tournament will feature 14 Wiralaga (combat) and Ganda (artistic) categories. It will be held at the newly completed Pencak Silat Centre of Excellence at Bedok North from

Aug 10 to 13.

Fourteen countries – Indonesia, Australia, Brunei, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Myannar, Laos, Vietnam, Pakistan, Japan, South Korea, Qatar and host Singapore – have confirmed their participation.

Said Singapore Silat Federation (SSF)'s technical director and two-time world champion Sheikh Alau'ddin yes-

Out of 21 golds, Indonesia won nine, Vietnam got six and Malaysia won five.

Added Sheikh: "Our men recently won the overall title at the Bali Cultural and Artistic Competition last month.

"If we perform well on home soil, it will give the team confidence for next year's SEA Games in Hanoi."

terday: "We hope to get five gold medals from the men's team.

"They did well in April's Belgium Open, winning four golds as well as the overall team title.

"I think our boys have improved this year and hopefully it will show."

At last year's SEA Games, Zulfakar (Wiralaga Class C) was Singapore's only gold medallist.