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## No world title for Zulfakar, S'pore

Straits Times (Overseas ed), 25 November 2000, Page 9

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*No world title for Zulfakar, S'pore*

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**SINGAPORE** will have to wait another year for the projected silat world title.

On Sunday, its dream of a gold medal was dashed as World Championships debutant Mohammad Zulfakar Ramli faltered in the competition hall in Jakarta.

A subdued performance cost him the final, 2-3 to Thailand's Nakim Kamsri — an opponent he beat at last year's South-east Asia Games in Brunei.

## **SILAT**

Zulfakar, a reigning SEA Games champion and Sports-boy of the Year, was not in good form — a fact which baffles him and his coach, former two-time world champion Sheikh Alaud-din.

Said Sheik: "He looked like a zombie out there. All his moves were so soft. He had enough rest and he certainly

wasn't sick.

“He just couldn't perform. He can't explain it himself. It is very disappointing. I thought we would have at least one title.”

Just as disappointed, Zulfakar, 19, said: “I keep asking myself why I could not perform today. I really don't know. My speed, everything was just not there.”

Perhaps the pressure of being Singapore's only title hope

— after his elder brother Rafli Ramli and former world champion Abdul Kadir Ibrahim were booted out of the competition — got to him.

He admitted: “It was quite pressuring. I was a little bit nervous, and being the only Singaporean left in competition, I think it got to me. But with more experience, it will not happen again.

“There is a winner and loser in every meet. Maybe today was

my turn to lose. I will try again at next year's World Championships and SEA Games."

The teenager had turned in sterling performances against Malaysia and Indonesia in earlier rounds.

To fall at the last hurdle was particularly painful. But he added: "It's okay. I am young and I will try again."

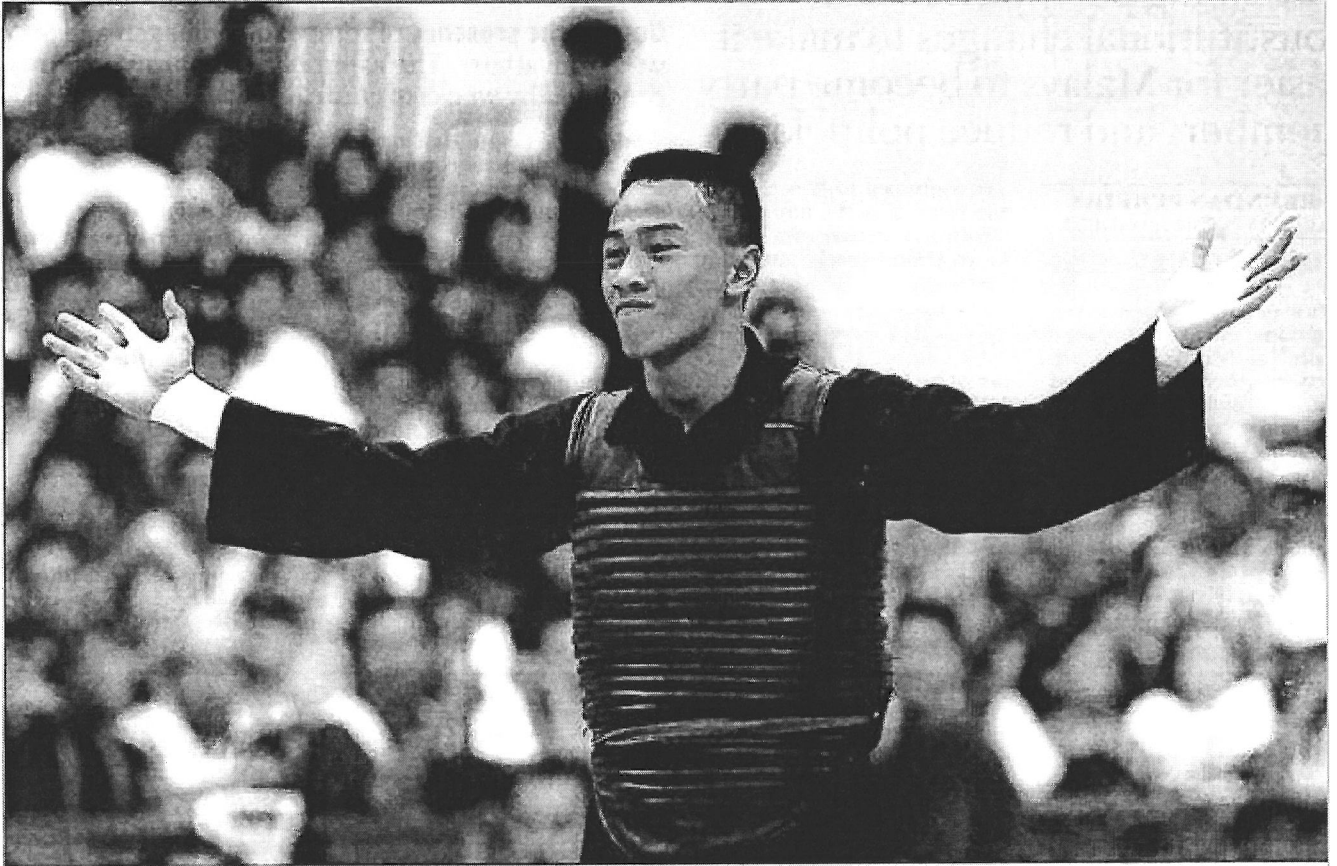
Overall, Singapore won one silver and six bronze medals, falling short of Sheik's target of three titles.

The national coach said: "I am very down. Kadir and Zul could have done better. And Rafili should have won his match but the decision was given to the opponent.

"But the rest of the team performed well, even though we had a tough draw."

*'I keep asking myself why I could not perform today. I really don't know. My speed, everything was just not there.'*

— **Mohammad Zulfakar Ramli**



**Despite having beaten his Thai opponent** in the SEA Games last year, Zulfakar (above) was a lost figure in the final on Sunday, going down tamely to Nakim Kamsri.