

## Fighting **Fit**

# A peek into **fight club**

Since last year, a group of elite Oyama Karate fighters has been training for one aim: A champion cup for Singapore at the 11<sup>th</sup> Asia Full Contact Karate Championship 2008.



**Setting their eyes on the trophy:** Three of the 10 fighters representing Singapore at the 11<sup>th</sup> Asia Full Contact Karate Championship 2008 are (from left) Ritubartan Rai, 28, Tham Boon Kit, 31, and Barja Kumar Rai, 26.



Ritubartan (left) and Barja Kumar of the Gurkha Contingent, who have been serving the Singapore Police Force since 2000 and 2004 respectively, picked up Oyama Karate as part of their Gurkha police training.



**T**ham Boon Kit has his eyes set on the trophy. So determined is he to win Singapore the champion cup at the 11<sup>th</sup> Asia Full Contact Karate Championship that he has been training twice a day for the past two years. Twice weekly, the 31-year-old karate instructor also trains with his nine other team mates from the Singapore Oyama Karate-Do Kyokushinkai-ka.

The 10 fighters were selected by the association to represent Singapore because of their exceptional skills and tournament-fighting experience. Each member, including men from the Gurkha Contingent of the Singapore Police Force, has fought no less than 12 regional and international tournaments.

### Keeping in contact

The Asia Full Contact Karate Championship, organized by

the Singapore Oyama Karate-Do Kyokushinkai-Kan, is a bi-annual event that was started in 1982.

This year, fifteen countries, including Japan, China, Nepal, and the Philippines, are expected to send their top fighters to Singapore this October, for the 11<sup>th</sup> Championship.

### Gruelling training

As Oyama Karate is a full contact sport, Boon Kit and team train realistically. They take turns to rain blows on each other – continuously punching and kicking the, chest, ribs, shin and inner thighs – for some 15 minutes, to condition their body.

“But that is just one small part of Oyama training,” Boon Kit says. “Karate is about life-long learning so the most essential part of it is in learning the philosophy behind Oyama Karate.”

### What

Oyama Karate, one of various forms of Karate, is a full contact sparring sport that originated in Japan in 1964.

### When

The sport was introduced in Singapore by Shihan (master instructor) Peter Chong in 1969, after he spent two-and-a-half years training under Sosai Masutatsu Oyama, founder of the art.

### Rules

In Oyama Karate, a fighter doesn't win just by scoring 'hit' points for techniques. Instead, he trounces on a knock-out basis. Apart from punches to the face and attacks to the groin, body contact is allowed anywhere when sparring.

### Where:

Jurong East Sports Hall

### When:

Oct 25, 2008

### Time:

2 pm – 9 pm

### Tickets:

\$80 (ringside); \$35 (adults) and \$10 (students and NSF)  
[www.ikosingapore.com](http://www.ikosingapore.com)