

# To mum with love

## Sharmini to give RM20,000 incentive reward to doting mother

S. SHREE Sharmini was only seven year's old when her father passed away.

She was the only child and to teach her to protect herself, her mum forced Sharmini to take up martial arts.

And it paid off handsomely as she surprised Malaysian officials and herself to land the gold medal in the women's kumite below 68kg category at the Wunna Theikdi Indoor Stadium yesterday.

The 21-year-old Sharmini of Kulim, who took up karate at the age of 13, had no problem disposing of Laos' Bounleud Sengtavanh 8-0 in the quarter-finals.

In the semi-finals, she beat Joanna Mae Ylana of the Philippines 5-0.

And in the final, she chalked up 2-0 against Vietnam's Pham Thi Tien with 20 seconds remaining on the clock.

But the Vietnamese managed to land a kick on Sharmini to level the score 2-2 with just five seconds to go. With the score tied at full-time, the judges deliberated for a while before awarding the gold to Sharmini.

She could not believe it as she jumped for joy.

"I was confident of winning the gold after scoring two points and with 20 seconds left for the bout to finish. But I made a silly error and allowed the Vietnamese exponent to level the score.

"I was nervous when the bout ended in a tie as it was then up to the judges to decide. And I was really happy when they awarded the gold to me," said Sharmini, who is featuring in her second SEA Games.



**Ouch:** Malaysia's S. Shree Sharmini's (left) punch sends Vietnam's Pham Thi Tien's mouthguard flying during their individual kumite final bout yesterday.

She did not compete in Jakarta two years ago as she was a reserve for the team event.

Sharmini is dedicating the gold to her mother M. Selvarani, who works as a kindergarten teacher.

"If not for my mother, I would not have taken up the sport in the first place.

"I am happy she made me take up karate as it has helped me become more disciplined,"

said Sharmini, who is pursuing a degree in Mass Communications at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM).

"The incentive of RM20,000 (from the National Sports Council), which I will get for winning this SEA Games gold, will go to my mother," said Sharmini, who thanked her mother, coaches and officials for helping her win the gold.