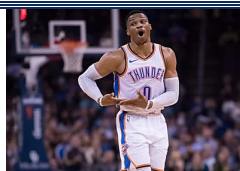


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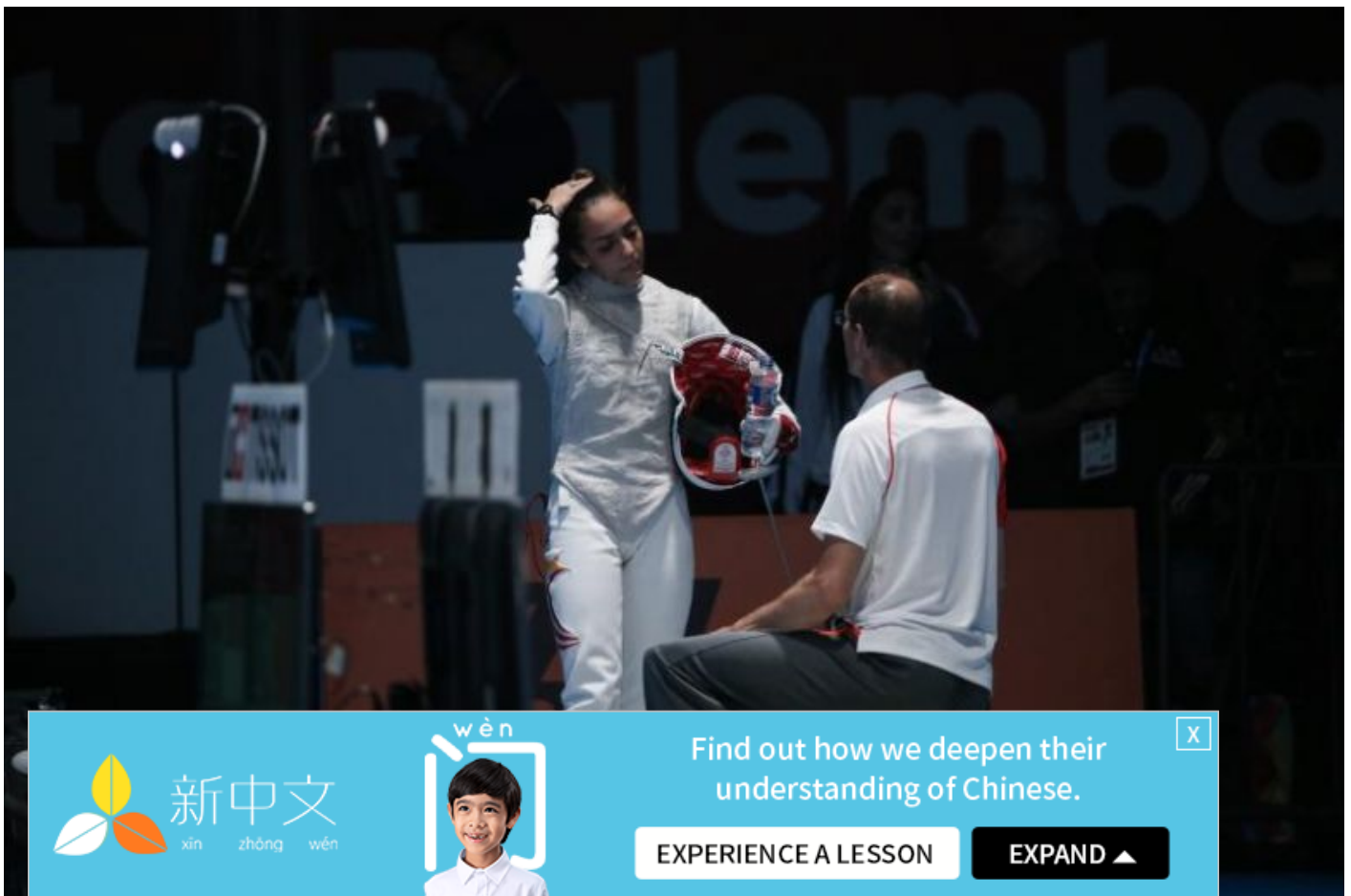
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## Fencing: It's all in the mind, says teenage fencer Amita Berthier as she wins second Junior World Cup title



Fencer Berthier Amita at the 18th Asian Games in Jakarta, on Aug 20, 2018. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

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SINGAPORE - Singapore fencer Amita Berthier pointed to improved mental strength as key to her second Junior World Cup title on Sunday (Nov 18).

The teenager, who started school at the University of Notre Dame in September, beat Hanna Andreyenka of Belarus 15-3 in the women's foil final of the Guatemala leg. She had finished second last year. Her first title came in December last year in Havana, Cuba.

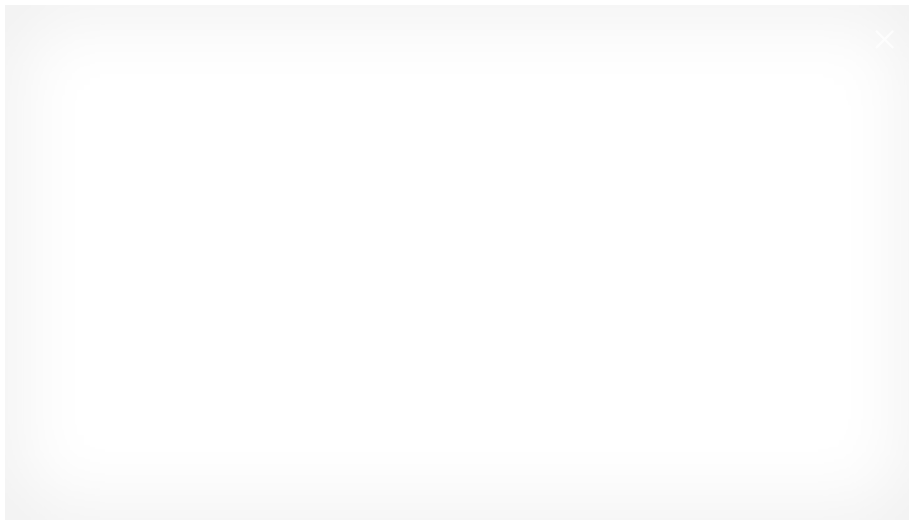
When asked what helped her to go one better than last year's silver, Amita told The Straits Times: "Just having a stronger mindset, and maintaining mental stamina, especially with balancing university studies and fencing training."

She also enjoyed the intriguing challenges posed by different fencers in Guatemala, where there were 17 competitors from 12 countries across four continents.

She was in dominant form in the knockout stages, beating United States' Christina Gong 15-5 in the quarter-finals, outclassing Maxine Esteban of the Philippines 15-4 in the semi-finals, before making light work of Andreyenka.

"It is always interesting to be in Guatemala because you have the opportunity to meet fencers from different regions whom you normally don't meet frequently at other World Cup (legs)," said Amita, who turns 18 next month.

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"A variety of fencing skills are at play, and I find every bout exciting."

Her triumph in Central America follows a couple of breakthroughs on the international stage this year.

In April, she was part of the foil team - along with Maxine Wong, Tatiana Wong and Nicole Wong - who won a silver at the World Junior and Cadet Fencing Championships in Verona, Italy, despite being ranked 13th out of 26 teams.

In February, she reached a career-high No. 2 in the junior rankings. Last year, she won the individual gold on her SEA Games debut.

Fencing Singapore vice-president Yau Wee Sian said Amita's win "once again proved her mettle".

"Her sacrifice and commitment to fencing are most admirable despite having a heavy school workload," said Yau. "She had to rush back from the (Aug 18 to Sept 2) Asian Games to start her first day at school in the US.

"With the recent launch of the Fencing Singapore Olympic Pathway Programme, it is in our hope to help inspire and bring out the best in our athletes who are committed to the next level.

"Amita's results are a constant encouragement that Singaporeans can make it on the podium."



