

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

Media Division, Ministry of Information and the Arts, #36-00 PSA Building, 460
Alexandra Road, Singapore 119963. Tel: 3757794/5

=====

EMBARGO INSTRUCTIONS

The attached press release/speech is EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY.

Please check against delivery.

For assistance call 3757795

=====

SPRINTER 3.0, Singapore's Press Releases on the Internet, is located at:

<http://www.gov.sg/sprinter/>

=====

EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

SPEECH BY MR SIDEK SANIFF

SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENVIRONMENT

ON THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE JOINT COLLABORATION

BETWEEN ABDUL GAFOOR MOSQUE AND AMP

ON WED, 28 JUL 99, 11 AM

AT ABDUL GAFOOR MOSQUE, 41 DUNLOP STREET

Mr Haji Maarof Salleh,

Mr Syed Isa Semait,

Mr Haji Mohamad Mustapha,

Mr Mohd Alami Musa,

Guests,

Assalamualaikum wr. wb.

1 I am happy to be here and officiate the new initiative by the Abdul Gafoor Mosque Board to raise a sum of \$4 million dollars in its effort to preserve and restore a national monument.

2 The new millennium is less than 6 months away before we close a historic chapter on the Malay/Muslims in Singapore. The last decade of the 20th century will always be remembered as the period when the Malay/Muslims in Singapore demonstrated their commitment and optimism to achieve greater success in many fields including that of education and economics. The spirit of helping each other especially for the less privileged in the community had also grown significantly.

3 It is especially a sweet memory for me to be involved in charitable causes such as the Tabung Amal Adilfitri (TAA) charity collection which started in 1992. From a total collection of only \$260,000 then, its collection last year reached almost \$2 million dollars. Another milestone in the spirit of giving help is the Madrasah Aljunied Redevelopment Project, where some \$15 million dollars were raised to rebuild this institution that has an excellent record for Islamic studies. In fact, this project will go down as one of the largest ever fund raising efforts that involved almost the entire community and in raising a large sum of money within a short period of time.

4 Abdul Gafoor Mosque stands today as one of the five historic mosques gazetted as a national monument. The mosque itself has a glorious history of helping the community. Its pioneers assisted Indian Muslim immigrants who came to Singapore in the early 1900s. Today, this tradition of help is still alive. The Management Board of Abdul Gafoor Mosque conducts religious classes and other activities to benefit the Muslim community in this area. It is commendable to note that the committee has also been active to ensure that Abdul Gafoor Mosque keeps pace with the changing role of mosques today. For example, the restoration of the old shophouses and turning them into a madrasah is one excellent initiative. Another is the plan to run computer classes and early education for young children in the future.

5 Abdul Gafoor Mosque needs to be physically sound before it can reinvigorate its glamorous past. The mosque is almost 100 years old. Its architectural structure, the unique Arabic calligraphy and the hexagonal dome which houses beautifully carved circular calligraphic panels are now in danger of collapsing. The aesthetic beauty of the mosque will soon fade unless we do something to preserve this monument.

6 I am pleased to note that a total of \$2.3 million dollars has been raised over the last 4 years for the restoration of the mosque and its surroundings. I believe that the remaining amount of \$4 million dollars to complete the restoration work can be achieved with the support of all our communities for this national project.

7 Once again, I would like to commend the efforts of the Abdul Gafoor Management Board for its effort to preserve this beautiful mosque. I hope that with the joint collaboration with the Association of Muslim Professionals, support from other Malay/Muslim organisations and contributions from our generous community, the restoration of Abdul Gafoor Mosque will be completed on schedule.

ss19990728c

8 On that note, I am pleased to officially launch the joint collaboration between Abdul Gafoor Mosque and AMP with the verse Bismillah-hi rrahman-ni rrahim.

Wassalamualaikum wr. wb.

National Archives of Singapore