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SPEECH BY MR. S. RAJARATNAM, SECOND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER  
(FOREIGN AFFAIRS) ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF  
THE GAMES VILLAGE AND FLAME LIGHTING CEREMONY,  
12TH SEA GAMES, AT THE NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL INSTITUTE  
ON WEDNESDAY, 25TH MAY, 1983, AT 5.30 P.M.

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At an informal meeting on May 22, 1958, at Tokyo, during the Third Asian Games, sports delegates from Burma, Laos, Malaya and Thailand decided that the youth of the South East Asia Peninsula countries should have a Games of their own, patterned along the lines of the Asian and Olympic Games. The aim was to provide an avenue to test and improve sports skills, and to prepare South East Asian sportsmen for the greater challenges at Asian and Olympic Games. This resulted in the founding of the South East Asia Peninsula Games Federation. When the First SEAP Games were held in Bangkok, in December 1959, 500 athletes from Burma, Laos, the then Malaya, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam participated.

The SEAP Games was subsequently opened to participation by Brunei, Indonesia and Philippines, and so the word 'Peninsula' was dropped. The Games have now become an established sporting event in the region. Now we have over 2,000 athletes competing in 18 sports disciplines. Sports performance has significantly improved. Athletes like Anat Ratanapol, Rabuan Pit, Lydia de Vega, Liem Swie King, Junie Sng and Ang Peng Siong have become household names in the Asian sports fraternity. My congratulations to them and others. Their discipline and dedication are a source of inspiration for others to emulate.

The excellence these sportsmen have achieved was the result of regular training and competition. Competition at a level which was practical, realistic and enjoyable. The gradual build-up for high performance, understanding between coach, participant and management; all working as a team is the formula for success.

Besides the friendly rivalry in competition, the Games Village of the 12th SEA Games will help the participants foster friendship and understanding for the true spirit of sportsmanship extends far beyond the breaking of records and the winning of events.

Finally we have tried to the best of our ability to make your stay in the Games Village as pleasant and as memorable as possible and if there are any shortcomings they will, I hope, be lost in the warmth of our hospitality extended to you.

And now I have great pleasure in declaring the Games Village officially open.

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