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**SPEECH BY DR AHMAD MATTAR, ACTING MINISTER FOR
SOCIAL AFFAIRS, AT THE SECOND SINGAPORE INVITATION
GASING COMPETITION ORGANISED BY THE SINGAPORE GASING
FEDERATION AT BLOCK 67/68 KALLANG BAHRU
ON WEDNESDAY, 1 JUNE 1983 AT 7.30 PM**

It is my pleasure to officiate at the opening of the Teratai Gasing Court and the Second Singapore Invitation "Gasing" Competition which will last for five days till 5 June.

Gasing is one of the traditional sports played by the Malays. It was a very popular pastime among the dwellers in kampungs before rapid urbanisation in Singapore took place. Its popularity began to decline as a result of rapid social changes and the emergence of different lifestyles of today. It is indeed unfortunate that traditional games such as gasing, silat, kite-flying and sepaktakraw, very popular among our older generations, cannot hold their positions against the competition of the new games and pastimes. I do not see why we should abandon the traditional for the new games. While electronic games such as video and computer games offer excitement and fun, traditional games require skills, perseverance and enhance one's appreciation of one's tradition and culture. Both have an equal place in our society.

I am indeed pleased to note that, in the midst of modernisation and urbanisation, there are still individuals and organisations who show enthusiasm to preserve and promote our rich cultural heritage. The Singapore Gasing Federation (FEDEGASI), the Singapore Silat Federation (PERSISI) and the Singapore Sepaktakraw Association (PERSES)

are some such organisations which have been doing good work in this area. Their efforts in reviving traditional past-times deserve the support of not only the Malay community, but of the other communities as well. These should form part of our national cultural heritage.

4 Since its formation in late 1979, FEDEGASI has been very active in promoting gasing at the community, the national and regional levels. Its activities include the organisation of exhibitions, demonstrations and competitions. The latest exhibition, which was called the Singapore Gasing Festival was held for nine days at the Singapore Conference Hall from 2 April '83. FEDEGASI also sends teams to participate in competitions such as the Pan-Malaysian Championship, friendly matches in Malacca and Johore besides organising regular local gasing competitions in which foreign teams are invited to take part. Tireless efforts were also made to collect gasing of various shapes and sizes from neighbouring countries, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and as far as India. It has a collection of books and literature/research materials on gasing and its development as well as slides, films and video tapes on the game. These materials will be useful in arousing interest especially among the young in the game. FEDEGASI should make them easily accessible to those who are interested.

5 The provision of proper facility, such as gasing courts, is an integral part of promotional effort. The Teratai Gasing Court is the third of its kind in the Republic. The other two are the Sri Temasek Court and the Saujana Court. I am confident that under the able leadership of FEDEGASI and other interested parties, these courts would be fully utilised by players and residents. More training sessions to teach people how to play the game could be organised.

6 On this note, it is now my pleasure to declare the Teratai Gasing Court and the Second Singapore Invitation Gasing Competition open.

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