



SPEECH

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Speech By Minister Of State For Defence, Mr Matthias Yao Chih, At The Ground Breaking Ceremony For The SAF Yacht Club

31 Aug 1997

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

Today, we are here to witness the ground breaking ceremony for the redevelopment of the Sembawang camp wing of the SAF Yacht Club. This is the SAF Yacht Club's first step towards providing a comprehensive range of sea-sports facilities and activities for its members. When completed, the SAF Yacht Club will be the first yacht club in Singapore to operate two clubhouses; one in Sembawang and the other in Changi.

The SAF Yacht Club has come a long way since its humble beginnings as the SAF Boat Club back in 1967, at Sentosa. Formed with the objective of promoting sailing and other sea related activities amongst SAF servicemen, the boat club initially started off with only a dozen boats which were mostly left over by the British. It only had a handful of members, made up of regulars and British servicemen. In 1969, it was re-located to the Seletar Airbase and re-named the SAF Yacht Club. A decade later, the SAF Yacht Club moved to Sembawang and began operating from old buildings left behind by the British. Over the years, both the club's popularity and interest in sea-sports amongst members have grown.

It was timely that in 1996, the Second Committee to Recognise the Contribution of Operationally National Servicemen to Total Defence (RECORD II Committee) recommended that the SAF Yacht Club be redeveloped to recognize and appreciate the contributions of NSmen towards National Defence. It would also cater to the growing demand for sea-sports facilities amongst NSmen. MINDEF accepted the recommendations and decided to help fund the SAF Yacht Club's redevelopment. The new SAF Yacht Club would allow NSmen and their families to pursue various sea-sports activities like the teaching and promotion of sailing, canoeing, power boating, water skiing and scuba diving. Today, the SAF Yacht Club has close to 2000 members, two-thirds of whom are Operationally Ready NSmen. Membership is expected to increase to 4000 by the year 2000. It is therefore necessary to expand the SAF Yacht Club and upgrade its facilities and activities. Membership to the SAF Yacht Club would also be open to NSmen from Police and SCDF on the same basis as for SAFRA Resort.

When the redevelopment of the Sembawang wing is completed, members can look forward to a comprehensive range of marina facilities. There will be walk on slips, fuel and water dispensers, and on-land covered boat sheds. The new clubhouse will be equipped with the full range of recreational and dining facilities as well. There will be out-door jacuzzis, children playground, gymnasium, video, karaoke and game rooms; and a restaurant and wine and coffee bar.

The Sembawang marina, with its sheltered waters will emphasise on training sea-sports novices and junior sailors. It will also cater to the power- boaters and the water skiers because of its proximity to the seletar water channel. Another wing will be developed later at Changi to cater to the needs of the more experienced sailors.

The redevelopment of the SAF Yacht Club will offer a wide range of facilities and activities to servicemen and will provide greater opportunities for family interaction at very affordable prices. It will foster greater cohesion and esprit de corps amongst our servicemen, and will encourage more Singaporeans to take up sea-sports. I wish the SAF Yacht Club every success in its redevelopment.

Thank you.

News Release:

- Making Sea Sports Affordable and Accessible The SAF Way (MINDEF_19970831001.pdf)

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