



## Don't Play Play: NHB's New Travelling Exhibition on Singapore's Board Game Heritage

### Description

Whether it was a fierce game of carrom at the void deck, mahjong during Chinese New Year, or Snakes and Ladders on a rainy afternoon – board games have long been woven into the fabric of everyday life in Singapore. Now, the National Heritage Board (NHB) is celebrating this shared legacy with its new travelling exhibition, ***Don't Play Play – The Games That Shape Us***.

Hosted at One Punggol as its first stop, the free exhibition runs from **13 June to 30 June 2026** and spotlights both classic and contemporary board games – from Xiangqi to the homegrown card game *Kopi King* – that have entertained generations of Singaporeans.

Organised by



**EXHIBITION ON DISPLAY  
FROM 14 JUNE TO 30 JUNE**

# COOL Play PL

**ONE PUNGGOL  
CELEBRATION SQUARE**

## **EXHIBITION LAUNCH!**

**13 JUNE - 11 AM TO 5 PM**

**14 JUNE - 11 AM TO 4 PM**



**JOIN OUR EVENTS  
ON BOTH WEEKENDS  
TO CELEBRATE THE  
LAUNCH OF OUR  
NEW EXHIBITION!**

## **COMMUNITY TAKEOVER!**

**20 - 21 JUNE**

**11 AM TO 2 PM**



Source: National Heritage Board

## Five Themes, One Common Thread

The exhibition explores how board games have served as a tool for connection across different communities and eras, organised around five themes:

- **Why We Are All Gamers** – How games have journeyed across cultures and time to bring diverse communities together in Singapore.
- **All Aboard! How Games Arrived in Singapore** – Tracing the roots of Congkak, Xiangqi, Weiqi, Carrom, and Dum through an interactive quiz.
- **The Games We Grew Up With** – Familiar childhood favourites like Mahjong, Monopoly, Scrabble, and Snakes and Ladders.
- **Homegrown Games** – Celebrating locally designed games such as Kopi King and *The Singaporean Dream*, and the growth of Singapore’s board game industry since 1984.

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Ministry of Information and the Arts (MITA)'s Carrom Competition at Government Press Centre, 26 August 1997. Ministry of Information and the Arts Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore



Playing Dum along the pavement, c. 1970s. Ronni Pinsler Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore

## Games Still Bringing People Together

The exhibition isn't just about nostalgia – it also shows how the spirit of play is very much alive today. Octogenarian Sylvia Lee still plays Mahjong with friends every week. Seniors still gather at community pavilions for a game of Dum. And new generations are discovering locally designed games at events like those organised by tabletop community #LaiPlayLeow.



Seniors gathered at Kreta Ayer pavilion on a weekday to play and watch games of Dum, April 2026. Courtesy of National Heritage Board

## Community Weekends with Hands-On Activities

Beyond the displays, the exhibition features vibrant programming across two weekends in June:

**Weekend 1 (13-14 June):** Drop in to try 15 locally designed games with the designers themselves, courtesy of tabletop community #LaiPlayLeow. Also on offer are hands-on craft workshops by local artist collective PLAY! including making your own Monopoly-inspired clay tokens and screen-printing activities suitable for all ages.

**Weekend 2 (20-21 June - Community Takeover, 11am-2pm):** Three local gaming communities take over the Damai Board Games Community, Singapore Scrabble Association, and Singapore Weiqi Association hosting booths where visitors can learn to play and even challenge a robot at Weiqi.

## Plan Your Visit

**Exhibition:** *Don't Play Play - The Games That Shape Us*

**Dates:** 13 June - 30 June 2026

**Venue:** One Punggol, Level 1 Celebration Square Zone 2, 1 Punggol Dr., Singapore 828629

**Admission:** Free

**Launch Weekend Hours:** 13 June 11am-5pm, 14 June 11am-4pm

**Community Takeover:** 20-21 June, 11am-2pm

### Date Created

13/06/2026

### Author

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