

# Pak Ngah spins new life into gasing

**KUANTAN:** Sensing that the traditional gasing (spinning top) game is slowly losing its popularity, an air force retiree decided to give it a new lease of life.

Mohd Jais Rozali, 60, or fondly known as Pak Ngah from Kampung Sanggang, Temerloh, decided to make colourful synthetic polymer tops, which are popular now among gasing fans and players from all races.

The traditional gasing maker acknowledged that it was difficult to find suitable hardwood to produce the tops and decided to team up with researchers from Universiti Putra Malaysia, led by Professor Dr Shamsuddin Sulaiman, to create synthetic tops in June last year.

Jais, who is also a coach and umpire for gasing competitions, said the limited raw material for hardwood gasing prompted him to look for other alternatives.

"Since schools had included the game in their extra-curricular activities, I realised that some 100,000 tops will be required to cater for all the students.

"I tried making tops from sawdust and aluminium, but nothing came close to the original wooden ones.

"Luckily in 2010, I met Shamsuddin, who later sent his students to conduct research at my workshop in

Kampung Sanggang.

"We decided the polymer-moulded ones were a suitable replacement."

The father of three said the polymer gasing won him the National Grassroots Innovator Award (open category) at the World Innovation Forum Kuala Lumpur Awards Night held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre in November last year, which saw him take home RM10,000.

He said orders had been pouring in for the polymer tops, which came in various colours, as many people were impressed with its shape and ability to spin for nearly 30 minutes.

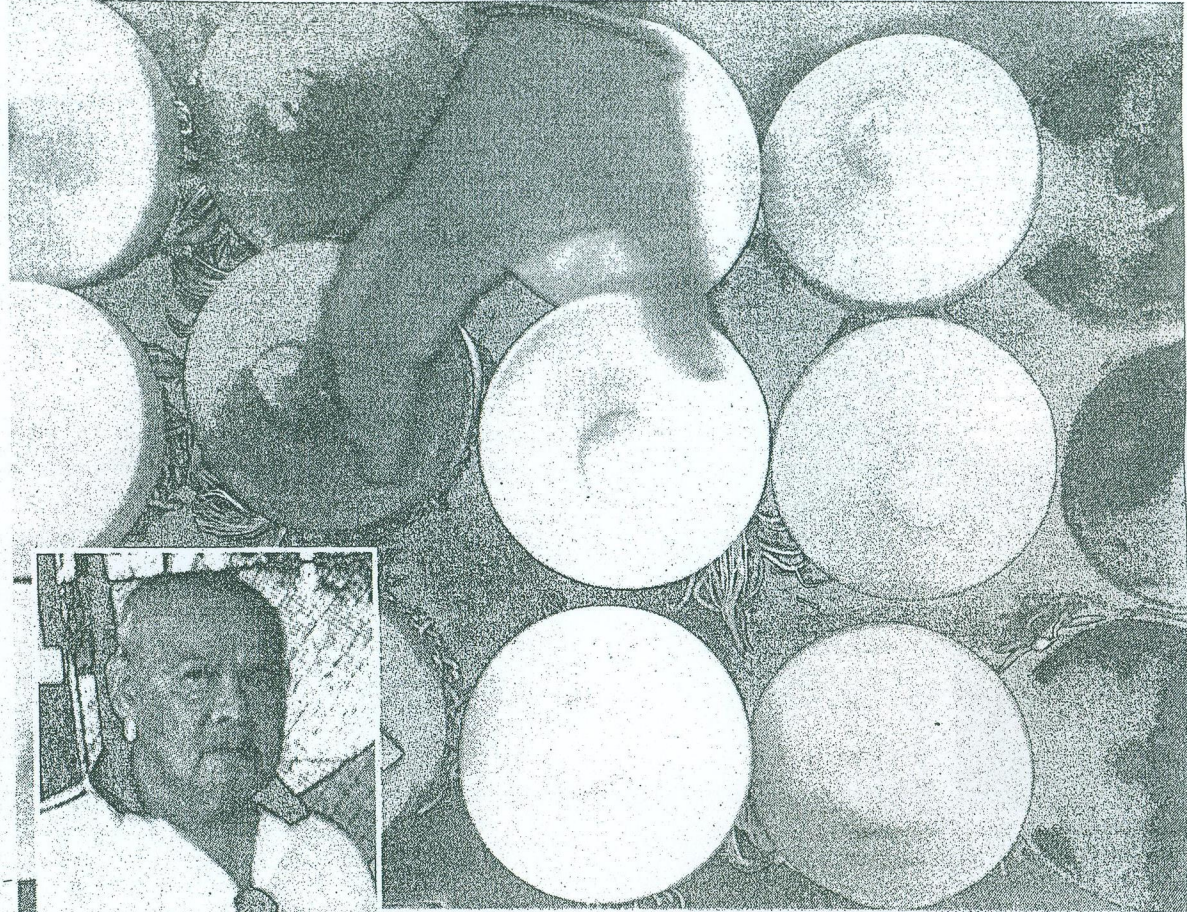
"One polymer top can be produced in three minutes.

"For the traditional ones, four to six years were required to find the suitable wood.

"Youngsters nowadays do not know much about gasing as they prefer more appealing modern games.

"However, with the polymer tops now being sold at below RM50 per unit, I feel this game, which is suitable for both adults and children, will be back in fashion," he said.

Pak Ngah also helped to promote the game by setting up a court near his workshop here for competitions and lessons.



*The colourful array of polymer spinning tops priced at RM35 each. (Inset) Mohd Jais Rozali. Pix by Luqman Hakim Zubir*