

**SPEECH FOR MR CHEE HONG TAT, SENIOR MINISTER OF  
STATE, MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY, AT THE 5<sup>TH</sup>  
LITTLE INDIA SHOPKEEPER AND HERITAGE  
ASSOCIATION (LISHA) BUSINESS FORUM  
(BIZ CONNEXION) ON SATURDAY, 1 SEP 2018, 7.00PM**

---

His Excellency Mr Jawed Ashraf, High Commissioner of India,

Mr Rajakuma Chandra, Chairman of LISHA,

Ms Joyce Kingsly, Organising Chair of Biz Connexion,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Good evening. I am pleased to join you this evening at Biz  
Connexion.

2. Singaporeans are proud of our multi-cultural heritage. Little India is an important part of this. Every year, LISHA organises three key cultural events to celebrate Little India's identity and promote the precinct's culture and heritage. These events are the Pongal Festival Celebrations, the Indian Cultural Fiesta and the Deepavali Light-up and Celebrations.

3. The duration of the Indian Cultural Fiesta has doubled since 2014. This year's Fiesta features a month-long series of festivals, which will allow more visitors to experience Little India amidst the vibrant celebrations. Likewise, the Deepavali street light-up and festivities, which is a signature event in Little India, offers a colourful display of multi-hued lights and cultural programmes over a two-month period.

National Archives of Singapore

4. As the precinct's place manager, LISHA has been working hard to enhance its programming with new initiatives beyond these three cultural events. Project Oasis in Little India is one such example. With the support of STB, LISHA transformed two vacant land parcels at Hindoo Road and Clive Street into attractive public spaces featuring curated art installations and cultural programming. These hidden gems within Little India have helped to add another dimension of enjoyment for visitors. LISHA also supports Artwalk Little India by leveraging its ties and familiarity with the precinct community, to secure spaces for this annual public arts initiative. This in turn helps to draw new visitor segments to Little India.

National Archives of Singapore

5. All of these efforts have created a strong heritage brand for Little India. With over 2.8 million foreign visitors in 2017, it ranks amongst the top five non-gated attractions in Singapore.

6. As Ms Kingsly highlighted earlier in her speech, digitalisation is one important avenue for businesses to improve productivity, reduce operating costs and capture new opportunities. Through e-commerce for example, businesses in Little India can reach out to a wider market in Singapore through platforms such as the dedicated Little India website called “Daily Everything Indian” (dei.com.sg) which was launched in 2016.

7. The use of digital technologies can also enhance visitor experiences, allowing them to have a deeper appreciation of the heritage of Little India. For example, Artwalk Little India uses augmented reality for visitors to learn more about the heritage of Little India during the interactive walking tour. LISHA can consider using new digital lighting technology to curate a multimedia night walk of Little India.

8. The Government is here to help our businesses. We have put in place various programmes and schemes to support you in your journeys.

9. Under the SMEs Go Digital programme, IMDA has developed the Retail Industry Digital Plan to help SME retailers to tap on pre-approved digital solutions to automate your operations, enhance customer experience, and facilitate in-store shopping and e-commerce. Our businesses can also use the Productivity Solutions Grant for ready-to-adopt digital solutions, and receive up to 70% funding from government. There are currently more than 150 supportable solutions under the Productivity Solutions Grant.

National Archives of Singapore

## Conclusion

10. I look forward to seeing Little India flourish in the digital era, while preserving its heritage. As the Tamil saying goes, முயன்றால் முடியாதது ஒன்றும் இல்லை, nothing is impossible for one who keeps trying.

11. Thank you and have a pleasant evening ahead.

National Archives of Singapore