

Singapore Government

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SPEECH BY MR WONG KAN SENG, MINISTER FOR
HOME AFFAIRS AT THE POLICE DAY PARADE ON THU,
3 JUNE 1999 AT 5: 30 PM AT THE POLICE ACADEMY

Commissioner of Police,
Officers of the Singapore Police Force,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Evening.

Police Day is an annual occasion for our police officers to reaffirm their loyalty to the Singapore Police Force and to pledge their service to the nation. It is also a time to celebrate achievements and reflect on future challenges.

steady growth, our economy contracted in the second half of 1998, bringing down our economic growth for 1998 to 1.5 percent, the lowest since 1985. 1998 was also a tough year for the Police, with crime rates rising for the first time, after 9 consecutive years of decline.

Falling Crime Rate

3 However, Police measures taken to combat the increase in crime rates have begun to work. The measures include stepped-up enforcement in crime-prone areas, proactive deployment of Police intelligence to identify crime threats, and joint efforts with the community and agencies to spread crime prevention messages.

4 Crime in the first four months of this year fell by 22 percent compared to last year. Nearly 12,400 seizeable offences were recorded in first four months of this year, compared to 15,900 in the same period last year. Offences such as robbery, housebreaking, motor vehicle theft and snatch theft also fell significantly. Last year's uptrend in crime rates is not likely to be repeated.

Police-Community Bond

5 However, the Police cannot fight crime alone. Community support is critical and instrumental in putting a lid on crime. Although the Community-Police bond has grown stronger over the years through community policing, community support must not be taken for granted. Hence I am pleased to see that the Police and grassroots organisations have made considerable progress through recent efforts to strengthen this bond. These efforts include the Neighbourhood Police Centres and Community Safety and Security Programme, or CSSP.

Neighbourhood Police Centres

6 The four pilot Neighbourhood Police Centres, or NPCs, in Clementi Police Division have been a success. Crime in Clementi Police Division fell last year, bucking the nationwide uptrend. Better manpower deployment enabled enhanced police patrol coverage during crime-prone hours of darkness. The enhanced police presence deterred potential criminals and improved response time to assistance calls.

7 In addition, service standards have also improved because the NPC is a convenient one-stop service point. Community-police liaison has strengthened with NPC teams taking ownership of the precincts under their charge. In short, residents have benefited from the NPC system.

8 From 30 June, the NPC system will be implemented in Jurong Police Division with the opening of six new NPCs. Residents in Jurong, Choa Chu Kang, Bukit Panjang, Bukit Batok and Woodlands will have NPCs in their neighbourhood. The

islandwide implementation of NPCs is on track.

Community Safety and Security Programme

9 The Community Safety and Security Programme (CSSP) is a major initiative of the People's Association, Community Development Councils (CDCs) and the Home Team to jointly engage and mobilise the community to share responsibility for its safety and security needs. The CSSP's proactive self-help approach allows the community to address the safety and security concerns of the neighbourhood in a more structured, focused and co-ordinated manner. Grassroots organisations, residents and the Home Team can working together, make the neighbourhood safer and more secure.

10 The CSSP approach is very much in line with one of the key principles of the Singapore 21 vision – that of 'Active Citizenship'. To realise the Singapore 21 vision, Singaporeans are encouraged to actively contribute their ideas, time and energy to build a better Singapore. Through the CSSP, residents have the opportunity to take an active lead in driving programmes and activities to improve the safety and security of their neighbourhood.

Drum Errant Officers Out of the Force

11 The NPC and the CSSP are two of the major areas the Police and the Home Team will put more effort to make Singapore a safe and secure best home for our people. However, for these efforts to be successful, we need capable and committed officers to implement them, officers like you who have pledged to serve the nation.

12 A critical foundation of community support is the confidence of the public in the Police. The exemplary conduct and behaviour of Police officers contribute to this confidence. But a single act by one errant officer can tarnish the good image of the Force. I note the firm stand that the Police have taken on the recent cases of corruption and criminal acts. The Commissioner has assured me that officers who abuse their powers will be systematically weeded out, charged in court and will be held fully accountable for their misdeeds. This tough stand demonstrates the determination and resolve to eradicate such unacceptable behaviour. The public expect no less.

13 Recent publicity on errant officers must be viewed in perspective. Errant officers form a small minority of the Police Force. The vast majority of officers are committed to serving the public with honesty and integrity. Recent examples are the Traffic Police who turned down bribes, one amounting to \$10,000.

14 On this celebratory occasion, I remind all police officers that you must be exemplary in behaviour and conduct at all times. A single errant act can tarnish the good name that the Force has painstakingly built up over many years. Continue to work with dedication and professionalism, to keep the trust and respect of the people you have promised to serve and protect. Keep up your good work of

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ensuring the security, survival and success of our nation.

15 I wish you a fruitful year ahead.

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