

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR ZAINUL ABIDIN RASHEED, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (FOREIGN AFFAIRS)  
AT THE LAUNCH OF

'IT COACH GOES TO MOSQUES',

THURSDAY, 21 OCTOBER 1999, 9 A.M.,

KAMPUNG SIGLAP MOSQUE, MARINE PARADE ROAD

First, allow me to thank Yayasan MENDAKI and the Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura for inviting me on this IT coach tour of some of the main mosques in Singapore.

Masjid Kampung Siglap is the first stop. The coach will be parked here for two days. On behalf of the joint organisers, I am happy to invite all of you as well as all those who do their daily prayers here for their ibadah to come on board. After all, the seeking of knowledge is a religious duty for all Muslims.

Find out for yourself what this IT coach is all about. Like all coaches, it will bring you on a journey. But this one is "with a difference" because it takes you to discover the world of IT. In this world of KBE, the message is: Have IT will travel. Indeed, with IT skills, one can travel far on the road towards preparing for the challenges of KBE.

Familiarise yourself with what IT is all about and what you can do to make it a part of your life. You are never too young or too old to start to learn how to operate a computer.

IT or Information technology will increasingly play a vital role in our knowledge-based economy. Together with science, technology, mathematics and English, they will determine how competitive a society or a country can be in facing globalisation.

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For many years, MENDAKI has been promoting IT among Malays with some degree of success. Many of the younger and school going children have taken to it like ducks to water.

But IT has spread so fast and become so pervasive that housewives, retirees and even middle-aged workers have to familiarise themselves with the basics or risk being left behind.

As some of you will probably realise, MUIS has also wired up many of the mosques and introduced IT in a big way. Mosques are now linked with each other through the intranet as well as to the outside world through the internet.

MUIS has spent a lot of money in bringing IT to the mosques. They will only reap in the returns if members of Mosques' management committees and the Malay/Muslim community become IT literate. Otherwise the computers are going to become little white elephants, under-utilised, gathering dust.

Instead, let your computers and IT skills be your kancils (mousedeeers). Like in the legendary kancil stories, we must also work smart and be nimble in facing the era of KBE and globalisation.

This IT coach programme is a conscious effort by both MENDAKI and MUIS to join hands to reach out to those who still get the shivers when they hear the word IT.

Both MUIS and MENDAKI must be given credit for trying to bring IT literally to your doorsteps. So, bapa-bapa dan ibu-ibu, saudara dan saudari sekalian, come on board for a journey to get to know IT in person. You may just love IT.

Let this joining of hands between MENDAKI and MUIS also remind us of the need for all of us to work together to make a success of this KBE movement in front of us. All the talk, discussions and conventions will not do us any good if we are not prepared to put our shoulders to the wheel to push the community ahead. We have to continue to work together to prepare for the follow-up programmes right into the next century. We must persevere as the road is still far ahead.

On this note, I am happy to launch this IT coach programme and wish all a pleasant journey of self-discovery. Thank you.