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Subject: (EMBARGOED) SPEECH BY MR DAVID LIM, 14 NOV 99, 3.00 P.M.

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR DAVID T E LIM, MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE AND INFORMATION & THE ARTS
AND PRESIDENT, SAFRA AT THE 26TH SAFRA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON SUN, 14 NOV 99
AT 3PM, SAFRA TAMPINES

National Archives of Singapore
Review of FY 1998/99

1. I wish to thank all of you for making the effort to turn up this afternoon to support this AGM.

2. I am glad to report that SAFRA has generally performed well in the last financial year, despite the economic slowdown. Membership saw a 7% growth to 193,000. Corporate sponsorship, also increased from \$1.3 million to about \$2.2 million. Overall, SAFRA registered a healthy budget surplus of about \$10 million.

3. In response to the regional economic crisis last year, SAFRA granted a waiver of 3 months of annual membership fees for two years. Members will therefore

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enjoy the same waiver next year. SAFRA also reduced facilities charges by up to 50% till end March 2000. These measures will cost SAFRA some \$2 million in revenue foregone. SAFRA was also glad that it could help anxious NSmen seeking employment by offering some 1,300 jobs through the 6th SAF / SAFRA annual Job Fair, which took on particular significance last year. Members can be assured that SAFRA will always be helpful and keep costs low and fees affordable.

Major Events & Achievements

4. But despite the economic downturn, SAFRA continued to attract greater participation for its activities. We organised some 640 activities, which attracted more than 230,000 Participants.

5. Our signature events continued to be well supported. The annual Sheares Bridge Run and Army Half-Marathon saw a record 60,000 people taking part, up from 50,000 last year, and successfully raised \$272,000 for charity. 5,000 cyclists took part in the Runway Cycling at Paya Lebar Airbase. The National Sport and Speed Climbing Championship attracted 800 local and foreign climbers.

6. Other noteworthy activities like the SAFRA Lifestyle Shopping Carnival at Suntec City attracted some 60,000 NSmen while the premiere of an award-winning combat movie, "The Thin Red Line", was attended by some 1,400 members.

7. I am also glad to say that a number of SAFRA volunteers and sportsmen won national recognition. LTC (NS) Wee Leong How, Chairman of Tampines Club's Executive Committee, became the first SAFRA volunteer to receive the prestigious Public Service Medal for his significant contributions to SAFRA. SAFRA's shooting, bowling, squash and table tennis teams continued to excel, winning medals in local and regional competitions.

New Facilities & Upgrading Efforts

8. As we look ahead, SAFRA will move in tandem with members' changing lifestyles to stay relevant. It will cater to the expectations of a growing membership which will surpass 200,000 by next year.

9. We continue to invest in new clubs, facilities and infrastructure. SAFRA Tampines' \$6 million Annexe was recently opened for members' use. Amenities at our various clubhouses are being continually upgraded whilst SAFRA's 4th Clubhouse at Yishun will be completed next year.

10. Members can also look forward to a permanent Town Club at Carpenter Street. SAFRA will invest \$6 million to make this club a recreation-cum-entertainment hub. We welcome members' ideas and suggestions on how to make the Club more relevant and attractive to our NSmen.

11. SAFRA will continue to improve its service quality and set high performance standards in activities management, and vendors and jointly-managed operations, amongst others. We will work towards SAFRA achieving ISO 9002 Certification by mid 2001 in line with internationally recognised quality standards.

12. Steps have also been taken to upgrade our computer system for greater efficiency as well as to ensure that it is Y2K ready. SAFRA's website will progressively introduce new services, like booking of facilities and registration for courses, to provide greater convenience for our members.

Into The New Millennium

13. Ladies and gentlemen: the new millennium is just round the corner. To usher in the new era, SAFRA will jointly organise a mega street party with STB and TCS at Orchard Road on New Year's Eve for an anticipated 500,000 participants. The countdown to the new millennium will be beamed live to an audience of one billion worldwide. I would like to encourage members and families to join in this once-in-a-lifetime party.

14. In the new millennium, SAFRA can and should find new ways to contribute to the wider community. SAFRA is not just a recreation club. As a prominent social institution with a large membership base, SAFRA should play a leading role to help strengthen our key values.

15. For a start, we can play a part in strengthening family ties. Strong families form the basis of healthy lives and wholesome communities. SAFRA can play a role in affirming the family through activities like parenting workshops, annual Family Day carnivals, and family holiday packages. Our Sheares Bridge Run and Runway Cycling can be organized to encourage greater family participation.

16. We will also look for ways to enable our members to be active in the community. We will provide more opportunities for members to be involved in managing SAFRA clubhouses and interest groups, and organising popular activities for the benefit of fellow members and families.

17. I would like to urge members to take part in social service activities organized by SAFRA's Community Services Club. It takes only a little effort to make a big difference to the lives of the less fortunate and underprivileged. Get involved, and encourage your family and friends to do so as well.

18. For Singapore to grow and continue to succeed, Singaporeans must feel a strong sense of belonging, pride and commitment to our country. SAFRA will help to reinforce these values amongst members, NSmen and our young. The SAF Veterans' League and SAFRA's Current Affairs Group will take the lead to achieve this, by

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offering various interesting and educational activities to members and their families.

Conclusion

19. Ladies and gentlemen: As a country, we can look forward to brighter prospects in the new millennium. As a club, SAFRA members and their families can look forward to better facilities and a wider range of activities and services. We are fortunate and blessed to be able to enjoy, year after year, a higher standard of living and quality of life.

20. The challenge for us, as SAFRA members, and as Singaporeans, is to become a more gracious and caring society, and a more tightly bonded people. I urge all members to join in this quest. Let us all play our part – as organizer, helper, participant, supporter. Together, we can make SAFRA not just an outstanding club for members, but a club that has outstanding members who are active, and involved in helping to build a better future.

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