

pc19991120g

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

Media Division, Ministry of Information and the Arts, #36-00 PSA Building, 460
Alexandra Road, Singapore 119963. Tel: 3757794/5

=====

EMBARGO INSTRUCTIONS

The attached press release/speech is EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY.

Please check against delivery.

For assistance call 3757795

=====

SPRINTER 4.0, Singapore's Press Releases on the Internet, is located at:

<http://www.gov.sg/sprinter/>

=====

EMBARGOED TILL AFTER DELIVERY

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

SPEECH BY MR PETER CHEN, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND MP FOR HONG KAH
GRC,

AT THE GRADUATION CEREMONY OF THE MAJAPAHIT MOSQUE'S MORAL EDUCATION CENTRE ON
SATURDAY 20TH NOVEMBER 1999 AT 11.00AM AT THE
MAJAPAHIT MOSQUE, 151-A UPPER JURONG ROAD

Encik Ismail, Chairman Majapahit Mosque Committee

Teachers and Parents

Honoured Guests and

Students

Good morning. Let me first thank the Mosque Committee for inviting me to the
Page 1

pc19991120g

graduation ceremony of your Moral Education Classes. I am very honoured, as this is the first time I have been invited to such a function. This graduation ceremony is significant because it will be your last graduation ceremony to be held in these premises. It is also the last time for classes to be held in the Mosque. By early next year, the land on which your premises now stand will have to be returned to HDB for our housing needs. This is part of development in our Singapore landscape as we move into the next millennium.

It is not just modern housing and other economic infrastructure that we have to provide for as we enter the next century. In order to progress and continue in our economic development, Singapore will have to become an advanced cosmopolitan city state where knowledge and modern technology will be the key to our future success – indeed survival.

To prepare for the new knowledge based economy, we have to ensure that all our citizens are educated and equipped with an appropriate foundation of knowledge so that we can acquire the skills necessary to function and thrive in the new economy. Our national school system provides this very foundation in English, Mathematics and the Sciences. Of equal importance, is the bonding of our people with each other and with the country. Again, our national school system provides the environment for students of all ethnic groups to share a common experience through a uniform curriculum and many activities together in school.

Singapore provides the opportunity for an education that is the envy of many countries. Every citizen, irrespective of ethnic origin, has the duty to use the opportunity given to develop himself or herself to the fullest potential. I believe the Malay/Muslim community is able to take up such challenges.

I must commend the parents here whose children are in our national school system so that they are well prepared for their role in the society of the new century. However, without the love and moral guidance of parents for their children, not even the best education system in the world is sufficient for their complete development and preparation. With the imminent return of the present premises to the HDB, I can understand the concern of the parents here who are anxious for the continuation of their children's moral education.

National Archives of Singapore

I have therefore made arrangements that will enable your Moral Education classes to be held at our PAP Community Foundation (PCF) Education Centre at Block 953 on Saturdays and Sundays as from the beginning of next year. In order to accommodate your Moral Education classes, PCF will have to re-schedule and re-locate some of its own enrichment and tuition classes that are normally held during the weekend. The Centre at Block 953 is equipped with air conditioning and is the most recently renovated and modern of all our PCF centres. With appropriate scheduling, it should be able to take in at least all the students that you now have. I am confident that MUIS will give you all the help possible as they have been most supportive of these arrangements for the continuation of your Moral Education classes.

I sincerely hope that parents will take this opportunity to send their children to the centre and provide full cooperation with the centre's operators so that the classes can be conducted smoothly. It is never easy for two organisations

pc19991120g

to share the same premises. But I hope that both organisations will co-operate and treat each other with understanding and due courtesy.

Moreover, we should all remember that Singapore is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society. Singapore's past economic success has in part been due to the harmony and tolerance between our communities of different ethnic and religious origins. Whilst each community imparts the right moral values to its children, we must also teach mutual tolerance, respect and sensitivity to the values and practices of other Singaporeans.

Virtually all the students of your Moral Education Classes are from our constituency, It is also my hope that your new committee that will oversee these classes next year will continue to comprise our grassroots leaders and work closely with our Residents Committees and Malay Activities Executive Committee of Nanyang Community Club, especially in the promotion and sharing of Malay culture.

And finally, I would like to close by offering my heartiest congratulations to the successful students and their parents on their achievements. I hope their success will inspire and motivate them and others to excel further in their educational pursuit.

Thank you.

National Archives of Singapore