

jc19990526a

To:

cc: (bcc: NHB NASReg/NHB/SINGOV)

Subject: (Embargoed) Speech by Dr John Chen, 26 May 99, 10am

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

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

=====

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

SPEECH BY DR JOHN CHEN, MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS, AT THE LAUNCHING OF
SINGAPORE YOUTH SCIENCE FESTIVAL '99 AT PEIXIN PRIMARY SCHOOL ON 26 MAY '99 AT 10.00
AM

1. The pursuit of enriching experiences outside the boundaries of the school curricula is an integral part in the holistic development of a student. Classroom activities provide students the foundation in the learning of languages, arts and sciences. However, it is the participation in extracurricular activities, competitions and other real-life events that sharpens the analytical power, increases the sense of reality and broadens the horizons of a student.

2. It is against this backdrop that it gives me immense satisfaction to note that the Singapore Youth Science Festival continues to enthuse students through its wide range of programmes and activities. More than any other event in the past twenty-two years, the Singapore Youth Science Festival can take the credit for galvanizing students to participate in mass-based science activities geared towards

enrichment of experiences outside the formal science curriculum.

3. Creativity and innovation are two buzz words that have become very prevalent in our education parlance in more recent times. Not surprisingly, since the coming millennium will belong to nations whose economies are predominantly knowledge-based and technology-driven. It is, therefore, extremely important that the attributes of creativity and innovation find resonance in the minds of our students, who are going to constitute our future leaders and workforce. It should not be difficult for such attributes to be entrenched among students because, as their minds are relatively unconditioned, they can think outside the parameters of traditional thought processes when given suitable opportunities. In this context, I am pleased to note that the Science Fair continues to be a regular event of the Singapore Youth Science Festival. It provides students excellent opportunities to engage in project-based investigations of a scientific nature, and is a natural platform to gain valuable experience in exercising one's creative and innovative abilities.

4. At this juncture, let me throw a challenge to our students. You may have read newspaper reports of young American students cashing in on their creative and innovative ideas and products by setting up corporations or licensing these ideas to others. I hope to see this being replicated in our own Singapore. This will open up another tributary to the evolution of an entrepreneurial culture in Singapore.

5. The importance of Information Technology (IT) in the knowledge-based economy cannot be overemphasized. With this in mind, I am particularly pleased to see that this year the organizers have incorporated an IT-based activity related to e-commerce – Our e-Shop. E-commerce has become another buzz word in today's society. With the onslaught from globalization continuing unabated, traditional methods of conducting business and trade are undergoing a paradigm shift. The internet is providing the impetus for the rapid growth of e-commerce. Singapore has to position itself as an important node in this global network because we derive our economic well-being from the global economic grid. E-commerce is something that Singaporeans have to come to terms with sooner than they think. With so much emphasis on the use of IT in our schools, I am sure the present generation of students will have no problem dealing with e-commerce as they grow up. It is timely that e-commerce is featured in an inaugural activity in this year's Singapore Youth Science Festival. I hope e-commerce and IT will continue to grow in importance in your future events.

National Archives of Singapore

6. I am also happy to note that the synergistic collaboration among the three co-organizers has resulted in the Singapore Youth Science Festival reaching out to over 100,000 students and educators annually, and that this collaboration is continuing into its 22nd year. The three co-organizers each have their own niche. The Singapore Science Centre is an institution for the promotion of non-formal science education, the Science Teachers Association is a professional society for science teachers, and the Shell Companies in Singapore is a multinational company known to be a good corporate citizen and for its excellent corporate practices. By coming together, they are pooling resources and expertise, and leveraging on each other's strengths for a noble cause. Indeed, I would like to see more of such collaborations involving government agencies, professional societies and private sector organizations. This has the effect of strengthening existing institutions and optimizing institutional resources.

7. As we move into the third millennium, it is important that we brace

jc19990526a

ourselves to face new challenges ahead. In this regard, I am confident that the Singapore Youth Science Festival, with its farsightedness, will continue to be the premiere science festival and play a pivotal role in preparing our young for the know-based society of the 21st century.

8. On that note, it gives me great pleasure to launch the Singapore Youth Science Festival '99.

National Archives of Singapore