

To:
cc: (bcc: NHB NASReg/NHB/SINGOV)
Subject: Embargoed Speech by Mr Chan Soo Sen, 21 May 2000, 12noon

Singapore Government

MEDIA RELEASE

Media Division, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 140 Hill Street #02-02 MITA Building Singapore 179369. Tel: 837 9666

EMBARGO INSTRUCTIONS

The attached press release/speech is **EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY**.
Please check against delivery.
For assistance call 837 9666

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 CHAN SOO SEN, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(PRIME MINISTER' S OFFICE & MINISTRY OF HEALTH) AND
MP FOR EAST COAST GRC (JOO CHIAT), AT THE LAUNCH OF
THE RENEWAL AND REBUILDING OF SRI SENPAGA
VINAYAGAR TEMPLE ON SUNDAY, 21 MAY 2000
AT 12.00 NOON AT 19 CEYLON ROAD**

National Archives of Singapore

Mr R Theyvendran
President
Sri Senpaga Vinayagar Temple

Excellencies

Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very happy, and feel very honoured, to join you here today at the Launch of the Renewal and Rebuilding of the Sri Senpaga Vinayagar Temple. I have known the Singapore Ceylon Tamils' Association and the Trustees and the Management Committee of the Sri Senpaga Vinayagar Temple for some years now. Every year, on 9 August, you would invite me and my grassroots leaders to the Temple to pray for our Nation's fortune and prosperity. The prayer has become an important annual event for me and my grassroots leaders.

2 The Ceylonese community has been an important member in the Singapore Nation. Our Senior Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, once said that "In terms of numbers the Ceylonese, like the Eurasians, are among the smallest of our various communities. Yet in terms of achievements and contributions to the growth and development of modern Singapore and Malaysia they have done more than warranted by their numbers."

3 The Ceylonese community has produced excellent political leaders, professionals and community activists. You are active players in Singapore's modern history, and will continue to be active players in Singapore's future.

At the same time, you are proud of your heritage and culture. You aim to preserve your tradition, and keep up with the time. You have been renewing your community leadership, bringing young and dynamic activists forward. I wish you all the best, and am confident that your community will continue to do well in the new millennium.

4 The Sri Senpaga Vinayagar Temple is a legacy of the Ceylonese community in Singapore. Initially constructed in the 1850s, it is one of the oldest temples in Singapore. Over the years, the Temple has been expanded.

This latest effort to rebuild the Temple must have been one of the biggest endeavours. I understand the rebuilding will cost more than S\$5 million. The vision of the project is for a world-class centre for worship, family prayers, social activities and religious studies. While the essence and heart will be Hinduism, the Temple will be open to all, and will invite devotees, pilgrims and visitors of all races and creeds. You would like the spiritual light and power of the Temple to reach many lands and places. I salute this spirit, rooted in Singapore's firm belief in multi-racialism.

5 A project of this nature is a test of the community's unity and cohesion. It is also an opportunity for everyone to work towards a worthy project which will become the pride of the community. I am sure the Ceylonese community will stand up to the challenge, do well, and emerge stronger.

6 Joo Chiat has been proud in hosting the Sri Senpaga Vinayagar Temple. As I have mentioned before, as your Member of Parliament, I shall try my best to help facilitate the project. Do let me know if you feel I can be of help. Like you, I look forward to the successful and early completion of the rebuilding.

7 "Balasthapanam" is a very significant stage of the rebuilding process. After the "Balasthapanam", the actual laying of the foundation and construction work begins. I am most honoured to launch this Renewal and Rebuilding of the Sri Senpaga Vinayagar Temple. May your excellent work be blessed by its spirit and power.

Thank you.

.....

National Archives of Singapore