

# *Singapore Government*

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### **SPEECH BY MR DAVID T E LIM, MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE AND INFORMATION AND THE ARTS AT THE SINGAPORE INDIAN FINE ARTS SOCIETY'S ACADEMY DAY ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2000, 7.30 PM AT THE WORLD TRADE CENTRE**

#### **Introduction**

1 It gives me great pleasure to be here this evening for SIFAS' Academy Day, and to share the joy of celebrating your graduates' achievements. Congratulations to all graduates!

#### **Society's achievements**

2 When SIFAS first started off in 1949, there were only 12 students. Today, the Society has expanded into an establishment of 800 students, and a teaching staff of 15.

3. I am happy to see a sustained interest in Indian Fine Arts in our community. The Arts constantly evolve in tandem with the changing nature of our society. Today's contemporary arts reflect the growing interest of artists to experience and experiment with art forms from various cultures of the world. But even in

the midst of change and new creations, there is still a place for traditional art forms. Indeed, the mastery of such forms, which have been refined through many hundreds and thousands of years, can be a useful first step towards developing new forms of music and art.

### **Challenges ahead**

4. The success in sustaining interest in Indian Fine Arts is founded on a good team of knowledgeable, highly skilled teachers. I commend the SIFAS teachers for their passion and commitment. I know that with your energy, SIFAS will continue to do well.

5. As you venture forward, I would like to take this opportunity to offer a few suggestions how you can contribute even more to the rapidly growing interest in the Arts in Singapore.

6. Firstly, reach out to a larger audience to raise awareness and appreciation beyond the Indian community. While you have to compete against other forms of traditional and contemporary arts, what is on your side is the curiosity and energy of younger arts audiences that are attracted to all kinds of arts. Tap into this enthusiasm, and I'm sure you will find many who share your love and interest for Indian Fine Arts.

7. I encourage SIFAS to work more closely with organisations such as the National Arts Council and the People's Association to expand your outreach. Leverage on their resources. Be creative in your approach. For example, SIFAS' experimentation with the fusion arts programmes is a good way to reach out to a wider audience.

8. Secondly, renew and raise your standards to even greater heights. In our busy society, what attracts a following and what stands out from the crowd, is quality. Build this up, by tapping talents wherever you find them. Maximise your resources, by sharing and pooling them with other arts groups. Stay in touch with the latest arts developments around the world through inter and cross-cultural, regional and international collaborations. In short, seek out new talents and new partners to constantly bring fresh ideas and capabilities to your community and audiences.

9. Thirdly, create opportunities for your graduates to perform and practice their art forms. You train them well. You can help them further, by using your

organizational contacts and ties to create performance opportunities for your graduates to showcase their talents. This can be a good way to motivate your graduates to continue to develop their art. Indeed, through your nurturing and encouragement, some of these talent artists may eventually join the family of Singapore's full-fledged arts practitioners.

## **Conclusion**

10. Ladies and gentlemen: Let me end by once again expressing my best wishes to the staff, graduates and supporters of SIFAS. I hope that you will continue your fine efforts, and make SIFAS one of the dynamic arts institutions that will lead Arts in Singapore into the new Millennium.

11 I wish all of you a happy and enjoyable evening.

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