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Subject: (EMBARGOED) Speech by Mr Abdullah Tarmugi, 9 Jan 2000, 8.00pm

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY MR ABDULLAH TARMUGI
MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND MINISTER-IN-CHARGE OF MUSLIM AFFAIRS
AT KILAKKARAI WELFARE ASSOCIATION HARI RAYA DINNER
SUNDAY 9 JAN 2000, 8.00 PM
AT FOO CHOW BUILDING, 21 TRYWHITT ROAD**

Assalamualaikum wr wb

Good evening

National Archives of Singapore

Haji Sathak Abdul Kader, President, Kilakkarai Welfare Association

Ladies and gentlemen

Thank you for inviting me to join you at this Kilakkarai Welfare Association's Hari Raya Dinner this evening. Let me first wish each and everyone here Eid Mubarrak.

2 I was informed that Kilakkarai Welfare Association (Singapore) is a newly formed Indian Muslim association, set up by mainly businessmen originating from Kilakkarai, a town in India. Associations such as yours have an important place in the community as they are a vital platform for interaction as well as strengthening kinship in the community. This spirit of self-help and goodwill must be nurtured so that it continues to flourish as it enriches and benefit not only the Kilakkarai community but also Singapore as a whole.

3 As we move into the new millennium, let us examine the challenges that we will have to face individually and as a community. The advent of the knowledge-based economy (KBE) has far-reaching implications beyond economic realities. It will shape the way we live, learn, interact and even spend our leisure. In the economic arena, products and services that command a premium in the world market will mainly be those with high knowledge content. The whole world will be one big market; so will competition be a global one.

4 Businessmen from the Indian Muslim community has carved its own distinctive niche in Singapore and has played an active role in Singapore's economy as money-changers, merchants and various entrepreneurs. Names such as Naina Mohd & Sons, Oli Mohammad, S S Mubarrak and Ghulam were no strangers to us in 60s and 70s. Businesses from now on will have to capitalise on the potential of the KBE to remain relevant and to compete successfully.

5 A knowledge-based economy means that businesses can now transcend racial and national boundaries to global possibilities and magnitudes.

As businessmen, you will have to adapt your operations or even the nature of your enterprise to the knowledge economy. As an Association you have the opportunity to discuss these issues among yourselves and how you can, as a group, help each other.

6 This evening, I also want to take this opportunity to commend the Kilakkarai Welfare Association for its enlightened stand on self-renewal. I am told that it actively attracts young blood into the organisation and puts attention to leadership renewal. Young leaders and members can bring in new developments, new ideas, energy and be more in tune with the contemporary environment and changing aspirations of the coming generations. Older leaders can share their experience and wisdom and provide guidance and advice to the younger ones. But, ultimately, leadership must be renewed for the interest of the community.

7 I would also like to urge the Association to interact with and work with other organisations and communities on projects or programmes which could benefit its members and the Indian-Muslim community. As businessmen I think you would agree that contacts and networking are important not only in the conduct of your business but also in the appreciation and understanding of the social and economic environment around you.

8 In conclusion, I would like to congratulate you on the formation of this new Association. I hope that apart from serving its members, it will also contribute to the development of the Indian Muslim community and, at a higher level, of the nation. I wish you a pleasant evening.
