

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

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Speech by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Finance, Mr. S. Ponnaswamy at the opening ceremony of the Seletar Young Indian Sports Club at Sri Narayana Mission on Saturday 28th May, 1966 at 6.30 p.m.

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I am happy to be associated with the inauguration of the Seletar Young Indian Sports Club and the variety show to celebrate the auspicious occasion.

The enthusiasm with which you have founded this Club augure well for the future of sports and physical culture in our Republic. People have come to realise the value of sports in cultivating a sound body and a sound mind. Sports and games help us acquire some of the basic qualities essential for modern community living such as training in discipline, team-work, the spirit of competition and playing according to the rules. In short, sports and games are essential for national development.

There was a time when our people gave scant attention to games and sports. This was due to the fact that sporting endeavour was confined to a privileged few. Now the condition has changed. We are an independent nation, with the responsibility of defending and developing our country with our own resources. To carry out these objectives, we need to breed a generation of healthy people with vigour and stamina. This is the only way to hold this place - an island of only 225 square miles in area.

In this context, the Government has put the stress on sports and games. On one front, the Government is setting up a Department of Sports within the Ministry of Social Affairs to promote increased sporting endeavour among our people. The Ministry of Education has already taken measures to give credit to school pupils' interests and participation in sports and other extra-mural activities. The "Daily Dozen" programme over Radio and Television aims at teaching all Singaporeans to keep fit.

A Tamil proverb goes like this: 'you can put a morsel of food in one's mouth but the swallowing will have to be done by that person alone'. In the same way, the Government is only able to give all possible assistance and encouragement to sports, but these will be fruitful only with the active participation of the people through organisations like the Seletar Young Indian Sports Club and others.

I have no doubt that your Club will fulfil a very important function now and in the years ahead.

May 28, 1966.