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SPEECH BY TUAN HAJI YA'ACOB MOHAMED, MINISTER OF STATE FOR
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, AT THE INTRODUCTION CEREMONY OF THE
INDIAN CULTURAL WEEK HELD AT THE JALAN BESAR STADIUM ON
TUESDAY 11 JULY 1972 AT 6.30 P.M.

1. It is gratifying to find such a huge gathering this evening to receive the guest film artistes from India, who have responded to our call for participation in the Indian Cultural Week which is organised to instil greater awareness of the richness of the Indian culture as part of our national culture and to raise funds for national sports.

2. Situated as we are at the confluence of 4 great cultures, we are naturally benefiting from the cultural experiences of countries like India. We in Singapore are making a determined effort to forge our national culture through the amalgam of the 4 strands of cultural elements derived from the multi racial composition of our population. In order to do so, we have to expose ourselves selectively to the rich cultural stimuli from both East and West. Culture is more than just music, dance and the fine arts. It is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities acquired by man, as a member of society. In essence, it is through culture that we acquaint ourselves with the best that has been known and said in the world and thus with the history of the human spirit. Being an open society, we are also exposed to the more deleterious cultural influences from the West, and we have to take active measures to ensure that our young do not succumb to undesirable influences which will make them effete and soft and ultimately take our people down the slippery path of decadence and backwardness. Societies forge ahead when they are culturally stimulated and when they manage to develop the right responses to the challenge of the times. It is thus vital to enrich our cultural experiences by exposing our people to rich and meaningful cultural stimuli and also to motivate the younger generation to respond individually and collectively to the challenges posed by the need to modernise and industrialise rapidly and to secure a good life for our people.