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**SPEECH BY DR SEET AI MEE, MINISTER OF STATE
(COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT) AND (EDUCATION),
AT THE FIFTH INDIAN CULTURAL NITE ORGANISED BY
BUKIT GOMBAK COMMUNITY CENTRE INDIAN CULTURAL GROUP
AT THE BUKIT GOMBAK COMMUNITY CENTRE
ON SATURDAY, 10 JUNE 1989 AT 8.00 PM**

It is indeed a pleasure for me to be with all of you this evening to celebrate the 5th Indian Cultural Nite organised by the Bukit Gombak Community Centre Indian Cultural Group.

I congratulate the organisers for putting together this evening's Cultural Show for the enjoyment of residents in Bukit Gombak Constituency.

The Bukit Gombak Community Centre Indian Cultural Group was formed in January 1985 to popularise this Community Centre through social, recreational and cultural activities. To date, it has numerous successful projects to its credit, all of which have helped to attract the residents of Bukit Gombak to this Community Centre to make it the focal point of their social, recreational and cultural lives. The Bukit Gombak CC Indian Cultural Troupe has also participated in numerous cultural events organised at the national level such as the National Day celebrations, and this has brought the residents of Bukit Gombak into the mainstream of our national life.

All this would not have been possible without the dedication and support of volunteers in the Indian Cultural Group of Bukit Gombak CC who have sacrificed much of their personal time to make Bukit Gombak CC the hive of activity that we see today.

It is important for the residents of Bukit Gombak to be involved in community-based programmes and activities such as this evening's Indian Cultural Nite. There are many reasons for this.

By participating in these activities even as a mere spectator, one will become aware of the community around and the people who are involved in community work. It is important for citizens to get involved in the happenings of your community. By doing so, one will have a feel for the problems and issues of one's neighbourhood, constituency and country. In this way, we will develop a greater sense of belonging to community and country.

Grassroot bodies such as the Gombak C C Indian Cultural Group play a significant role in promoting a greater appreciation of culture and the arts in Singapore.

You must have read about the work and recommendations of the Advisory Council on Culture and the Arts, chaired by Second Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Ong Teng Cheong. This Advisory Council has recognised the importance of promoting community-based cultural activities in order to make the arts more accessible to Singaporeans.

In this respect, cultural bodies such as the Indian Cultural Group could contribute towards achieving the Government's vision of a Singapore that is culturally more vibrant. Such cultural activities are not necessarily high-brow but are generally accessible to the general population. In this way, they will help cultivate in the residents a sense of aesthetic appreciation and some will proceed to develop and nurture cultural and artistic taste and skills at levels of excellence.

I would like to encourage the support and fostering of all cultural activities organised at the grassroots level such as this, as not only do they make us more appreciative of the cultural diversity of our country as well, they remind us of our rich historical and cultural heritage. As we nurture the arts and culture of our different ethnic communities, we will become a more understanding and tolerant society in which everyone takes pride in his or her own culture as well as the cultures of our neighbours.

It is said that the arts have a therapeutic effect. This evening's Cultural Show offers a good break for all of us after a hard day's work. I hope all of you will relax and enjoy the show.

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