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Singapore Government

# PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR SIDEK BIN SANIFF, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
(TRADE & INDUSTRY), AT THE KOLAM AYER CONSTITUENCY  
NATIONAL DAY DINNER AT BLOCK 67 KALLANG BAHRU  
ON SATURDAY, 6 AUGUST 1988 AT 7.30 PM

In the coming General Elections, Kolam Ayer Constituency together with Jalan Besar and Geylang West will merge to form the Jalan Besar GRC.

GRC is one of the most important decisions made by our Government. It is not the most ideal system, but the best one could opt for in the absence of anything better.

We have taken into account the communalistic tendency that is happening around the globe. We realised the urgency. The meticulous and conscious deliberations of the system island wide, through the Select Committee and over TV gave Singaporeans every opportunity to air their views.

There is no model to follow. But we are not experimenting with it either. We have carefully thought, discussed and digested it and never digressed from the most important factor and that is you: your welfare was always at heart. The welfare of Singaporeans as a whole.

I have been working with you for the past 12 years. It is indeed a great experience. Our grassroots organisations have made tremendous contributions. Today I salute them including those who are no more in this Constituency. Quite a number have upgraded themselves in life and moved to bigger homes. I do not consider it a loss but a gain for Singapore and the constituencies that they have moved to.  
Why?

The stable, honest and efficient Government that we have enjoyed in the past, together with its leaders, have played a crucial role in this progress. We pursued sensible policies. Policies that enjoyed widespread support from the people. Our future prosperity hinges on our preserving our political stability and quality of our Government - both in implementing national policies and in mobilising the people to achieve progress. GRC is one such national policy.

The people will be given more and more opportunities to determine their future. I am quite confident that once we have our Town Council some of you, Chinese, Malays and Indians will be the councillors and together with the other two MPs and grassroots leaders, we will map out activities and the future of Jalan Besar GRC.

The multi-racial approach, like the formation of the GRCs to nation building is still the best approach as it allows the integration of all - minority and majority communities to co-exist and live in harmony.

History will prove that we have made a wise, decisive and important decision. That some countries may emulate this concept, I will never rule it out.

Another important development that needs your careful and intelligent consideration is the Elected President. He is non-Executive but he will have important powers in two major areas:

- \* to safeguard Singapore's financial assets
- \* to safeguard the integrity of the public service.

For the former, it is an added key to any Government that needs to use the reserves in our kitty; and the latter is the legacy of our colonial masters. They left something most valuable for us to inherit - the Civil Service. This must be further nurtured. To some countries the mishandling of this institution has proved to be volatile.

