

A NEW DAWN RISING:

The Post- Independence Years

The Post-Independence Years

1966

The responsibility of the Chamber increased after Singapore became an independent nation on 9th August 1965. The Chamber was consulted quite often by the Government on all matters affecting Commerce, Trade and Industry. Similarly, the Joint Standing Committee of the Chambers of Commerce, in which the Chamber was active, had also been in close touch with Government in order to bring an early understanding with the Malaysian Government on the trading difficulties which both the countries were experiencing especially since Independence. All members were asked to give their views on certain rules of the Chamber's Articles of Association based on recommendations of sub-committees of the Textile, Export, Import and General Sections after consideration by the Management Committee, the Memorandum and Articles of Association were revised.

As part of their community service, the Chamber donated a collective sum of \$62,104.25 to the Medical Progress Fund at short notice. In the interest of the Minority Communities, the Chamber was able to submit a Memorandum to the Constitutional Commission which was appointed by the Government to safeguard the rights of minorities.

As part of the thrust for new markets, the Chamber held meetings with visiting delegations from Russia, Bulgaria, Pakistan, Indonesia, Poland, Hungary, U.K. and Romania.

A dinner meeting was also organised by the Chamber in honour of the Vice-President of India, H. E. Dr. Zakir Husain, on 14th October 1966.

In order to address current trade matters, a meeting of the Management Committee and the Sub-Committees was held on 25th August 1966 to discuss the resumption of trade with Indonesia, and the Chamber submitted views to a meeting of all Chambers, Manufacturers' Association, Bankers and insurance Companies which was held on 26th August.

The Chamber also made representations to various Government bodies:

a) The Chamber submitted a confidential Memorandum to the Constitutional Commission 1966 on safeguards for the minorities in Singapore, on 15th February, 1966.

b) A memorandum was also submitted to the Attorney General of Singapore by the Chamber, commenting on the Draft Companies Bill of 1966.

c) The Chamber submitted its comments to the Salaries Commission on the salary scales and conditions of service of public officers at the invitation of the Commission.

In the address by Mr. G. Ramachandran, President at the 26th Annual General Meeting of the Chamber, he said that the Chamber was able to fulfill its obligations and responsibilities for the advancement of Singapore's economy, in which the Chamber was jointly associated with all the other Chambers of Commerce and the Government.

He added that the year 1966 was declared as the "year of survival" by the Government, not as a signal of despondency, but as a challenge for greater efforts by the people in all fields of Singapore's economic activities. The mercantile community, he said, had rallied to the survival call with all its enthusiasm, skill and experience, and helped to close the year with an ever growing economic prosperity. Singapore's exports during the year had increased by 13.3 per cent and imports increased by 6.3 per cent.

(see Appendix II)

1967

As part of the drive for more trade, the Chamber held meetings with visiting delegations from Romania, Korea, U.K., U.S.A., Pakistan, Zambia, Fiji and East Germany.

The Chamber also participated in the Trade and Economic Missions to Indonesia and Eastern Europe organised by the Government. Both the missions were led by Mr. Sim Kee Boon of the Ministry of Finance.

H. E. Mr. Mohamed Ali Currim Chagla, India's Minister for External Affairs, paid a State Visit to Singapore in May. The Chamber held a luncheon party on 9th May where Mr. Lim Kim San, the Finance Minister, Mr. P. Coomaraswamy, the Speaker of the Parliament, and other distinguished guests graced the occasion.

The Chamber also participated in the Zambian Trade Fair held at N'dola in July 1967.

TEXTILE QUOTA: Arising out of a report in the "Sin Chew Jit Poh" of 16th April 1967 regarding Singapore's first textile mill and the possible imposition of quota restrictions on textile imports, representatives from the Chamber met Trade Division officials and put across the following points:

1. No blanket quota should be imposed on all textiles, as this would endanger trade.
2. Any quota restrictions contemplated should be based on very specific classification of the material. For instance, if the mill was producing Nylon, care should be taken to ensure that quota restrictions are not imposed on synthetic fabrics as a whole or even on Nylon as such since the mill could quite conceivably not be able to produce the various items under Nylon such as Nylon Sari material, Nylon Crepe, Nylon knitted goods, etc.

The Chamber was assured that a realistic approach would be taken if any quota restrictions were imposed and that the points raised would be considered, especially the request that any quota restriction should be "selective" and not a "blanket" one.

SHIPPING FREIGHTS: The Chamber was represented at a mass rally on shipping freights held at the Chinese Chamber on 20th May. They fully supported the proposal to break the monopoly of the freight conferences. Mr. G. Ramachandran served on the Working Committee. Strong representations were made in December to Dr. Goh Keng Swee, the Finance Minister, by this Working Committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Soon Peng Yam. The Minister was sympathetic.

NATIONAL SHIPPERS COUNCIL: The Chamber was represented at a preliminary meeting held on 29th May at the Trade Division to consider the formation of a National Shippers Council. Later a memorandum was submitted to the Trade Division setting out the Chamber's views on the subject.

NATIONAL DAY: An illuminated arch was put up across High Street in the name of the Chamber in connection with the National Day celebrations.

1968

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS: The following functions were held under the auspices of the Joint Standing Committee of the Chambers of Commerce of Singapore in which the Chamber participated: Dinner in honour of Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew on 23rd January 1968, Luncheon in honour of the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Mr. Adam Malik, on 18th March 1968, Luncheon in honour of the Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, on 20th May 1968.

SINGAPORE TRADE MISSION: The Chamber participated in a Singapore Trade Mission to Burma, Thailand, Philippines, Japan, Hongkong and Cambodia sponsored by the Chinese Chamber. The mission left on 25th March and returned on 17th April after a successful tour.

DUTY ON MADE-UP GARMENTS: Consequent on the imposition of import duty of 15 per cent on garments with effect from 3rd December 1968, the Chamber's Textile members of the Management Committee and the Textile Sub-Committee members together with the Secretary held a meeting with the Trade Division officials on 27th December 1968 and put forward proposals for improved bonded warehouse facilities, etc. with a view to the continued maintenance of the re-export trade in garments notwithstanding the introduction of the duty.

SHIPPING FREIGHT WORKING COMMITTEE: Mr. G. Ramachandran continued to serve on this Working Committee, which carried on its campaign to break the monopoly of the conference system vigorously throughout the year. A Freight Booking Centre was established in October 1968 at Room 407

of the Chinese Chamber Building, whose main function would be to collect and disseminate information on sailings of non-conference vessels and assist shippers in booking freight space, thus breaking the monopoly of the conference lines.

INDUSTRIAL SUB-COMMITTEE: An Industrial Sub-Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. G. Ramachandran was appointed in May 1968. Two proposals from India for setting up factories in Singapore with local participation were processed during the year. The first proposal was from Messrs. Kesoram Industries & Cotton Mills Ltd. Of Calcutta to set up a plant for the manufacture of transparent paper and the second from the Universal Engineering Works of Rajkot to set up a machine tool factory. The Economic Development Board evinced keen interest in both proposals.

1969

The following delegations visited the Chamber during 1969 for discussions:

- 1) Mr. K. B. Lall, Commerce Secretary, Government of India on 25th April 1969.
- 2) A party lead by Mr. Young Sun Kim, the Vice-President of the Korean Traders Association and Chairman of the Korean Knitted Goods Exporters Association on 4th September 1969.
- 3) The Vice-President and two directors of the Chamber of Foreign Trade of the German Democratic Republic on 5th November 1969.

MOBILE VAN/CLINIC FOR SINGAPORE CANCER SOCIETY: As part of the community service, a mobile van/clinic costing \$38,511 was formally presented to Mr. Richard K. M. Eu, the Chairman of the Singapore Cancer Society, at a tea party held on 5th February 1969 at the Adelphi Hotel Grill room.

BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE: The Chamber's gift of 20 mobile beds was formally presented to Mr. Char Yeok Eng, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health by our President on 28th November 1969 at a ceremony held at the Blood Transfusion Service Centre. These beds cost a total of \$3,600. 19 members of our Chamber also donated blood on the occasion.

150TH ANNIVERSARY INDIAN CHAMBER SCHOLARSHIP FUND:

The 150th anniversary of the founding of modern Singapore was commemorated by the Chamber by establishing the "150th Anniversary Indian Chamber Scholarship Fund" for the benefit of deserving students who wish to pursue technical courses of study. A cheque for \$25,050 representing donations of \$150 each from 167 members was presented to Mr. Ong Pang Boom, the Hon. Minister for Education, at a cocktail reception held on 26th August 1969 at the Adelphi Hotel Grill room.

VICTIMS OF 13TH MAY 1969 DISTURBANCES IN MALAYSIA: As a token of the Chamber's sympathy to the victims of these disturbances, a gift of 1,000 cases of condensed milk for their relief - costing \$18,000 - was resented on 21st May 1969 to H. E. Tan Sri Jamal bin Abdul Latiff, the High Commissioner for Malaysia in Singapore.

GIFT OF BOOKS ON INDIA TO THE NATIONAL LIBRARY: A special collection of 246 books entitled "Discovering India" was formally presented to Inche Sha'ari bin Tadin, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Culture, on 9th December 1969 at a ceremony held in the National Library Lecture Hall. The books costing \$3,000 represented the cream of Indian publishing chosen by the Lok Milap Trust of India for an international exhibition of Indian books in commemoration of the Gandhi Centenary Year 1969.

NATIONAL DAY ARCH: Consistent with the practice in previous years, an illuminated arch in the name of the Chamber was put up across High Street in celebration of the National Day on 9th August at a cost of \$6,250.

1970

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING: At the Special General Meeting convened on 11th April 1970, it was resolved that the name of the Chamber "The Indian Chamber of Commerce, Singapore" be changed to "Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce" with immediate effect.

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGIN- LEGISLATION: In January 1970 the Trade Division of the Ministry of Finance sought the views of the Chamber on the desirability of introducing legislation in Singapore similar to that in force in Hongkong relating to Certificates of Origin. It was decided that the Joint Standing

Committee of Chambers of Commerce of Singapore should be requested to submit comments on behalf of all the Chambers. The Joint Standing Committee of Chambers of Commerce of Singapore replied to the Trade Division in March expressing the view that legislation similar to the one in force in Hongkong would not be suitable for Singapore but agreeing that guide-lines from Government would be desirable.

STANDARD EXPORT DOCUMENTS: On 17th April 1970, the Trade Division asked for representatives from the Chamber to attend the first meeting convened by them to consider the question of introducing standard export documents, at which the proposal was accepted in principle. The new standard export document forms were officially introduced by the Government with effect from 1st January 1971.

SINGAPORE INDIAN CHAMBER GOLD MEDAL: On 10th September 1970, the Chamber agreed to a request from the Industrial Liaison Committee of the University of Singapore for an Indian Chamber Gold Medal to be awarded annually in March to the student who stood first in position in the Mechanical Engineering class.

1971

Mr. Roop K. Vaswani at the 30th Annual General Meeting of Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce on 24th April 1971 said:

"The NTUC came out with the organization of INCOME and COMFORT. This has been the first attempt of the Trade Union Congress to enter the field of business and commerce. I am firmly convinced that private business, instead of being anxious on this score, should welcome this enterprise. In the long run it will only assist private industry and business having to deal with a Trade Union Congress who themselves know by their own personal experience problems of Management and commerce."

He also noted that

"It is gratifying that the government has accepted the need for importation of labour particularly for the building industry and selected industries. Whereas this is highly encouraging, it is unfortunate that the Government has not realized that the same problem is faced by the small trader who continues to play an

important and traditional part in the economy of Singapore. Granted that no organization can rightly ask for a blanket liberalization of Immigration controls, however, it can do no harm to Singapore but can only assist our young Nation in work permits for restricted periods being very readily granted for other spheres of commercial activity. If this problem is not dealt with urgently, and at a comprehensive level, the traditional trader will face a real crisis in an extremely short time."

1972

Addressing the 31st Annual General Meeting of Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce on 25th March 1972, Mr. Roop K. Vaswani said,

"In spite of the British military withdrawal last year, the Republic enjoys a full employment situation now and in this context it is timely that the Government has recently established a National Wages Council consisting of high level representatives from employer organizations, the NTUC and the Government to formulate general guidelines on wages policy and to recommend necessary adjustments in wage structure. I also welcome the recent announcement by our Prime Minister that civil servants- who play an important part in our sustained economic growth - are to receive an additional month's salary as allowance each year. This would help boost the high morale of the civil service and also bridge the gap existing between the public and private sector."

He also said that "the time has now come for our Government to consider expanding our own institutions to include training in a variety of high skills, which will be needed by sophisticated industries whose numbers are growing."

At a formal ceremony held on Saturday, 9th September 1972, at the Lecture Hall, University of Singapore's Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Kandang Kerbau Hospital, President Mr. Roop K. Vaswani presented a cheque for \$22,161.15 to Dr. Toh Chin Chye, the Vice Chancellor of the University to defray the cost of the foetal heart monitor "Cardiotocograph" (CTG) - a sophisticated equipment, which would help prevent babies being born mentally damaged or retarded due to injuries sustained during labour. In addition, the chamber also made donations to: the 5th Asia Pacific Congress of Cardiology, National Skills Competition, Singapore Polytechnic Prize Awards, St. John's Home for the Aged and the Catholic Welfare Service.

1973

At the request of the National Archives and Records Section, old records and photographs of the Chamber were selected and handed to them in January 1973 for microfilming and preservation.

1974

SINGAPORE TRADE MISSION TO WEST ASIA: A Singapore Trade Mission consisting of 24 businessmen including Indian Chamber representatives and led by Mr. Ridzwan Dza'fir, the Director of Trade, Ministry of Finance, visited West Asian countries from 12th May to 10th June 1974. The Mission visited the Arab Republic of Egypt, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Doha, Bahrain, Kuwait, Beirut, Teheran and Baghdad.

SINGAPORE ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND SURVEY MISSION TO PAPUA NEW GUINEA: The Chamber participated in a Government-sponsored fact finding mission to Papua New Guinea from 3rd September to 16th September 1974.

CULTURAL GOODWILL MISSION TO INDONESIA: A cultural goodwill mission under the leadership of Tuan Haji Sha'ari Tadin, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Culture, toured Indonesia during the week 26th October to 2nd November 1974.

The Chamber made a contribution of \$7,000 towards the cost of this mission and three representatives accompanied the mission.

NATIONAL DAY PARADE & INDIAN CONTINGENT: For the 1974 National Day Parade, an Indian cultural contingent was presented by the Chamber.

VISIT OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF INDIA: Mr. Swaran Singh, Foreign Minister of India paid an official visit to Singapore from 4th to 6th August 1974 and the Chamber held a Reception in his honour on Monday 5th August 1974 in the Grand Ballroom of Singapore Hilton.

MEMBERS SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION: As part of the Chambers' continuing support for education, the Chamber awarded the following bursaries/scholarships:

(a) National Day Scholarship: 42 Students from 24 secondary schools were awarded \$125 each

(b) 150th Anniversary Scholarships - The Ministry of Education awarded these chamber scholarships in 1974 to 20 students in Technical schools

(c) The Chamber's Silver Medal was awarded to the top student in Electrical Engineering in the University of Singapore. The Chamber's annual prize of \$100 each was awarded to the top four students of Singapore Polytechnic in 1974.

1975

Mr. G. Ramachandran in his address at the 34th Annual General Meeting of the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce on 26th April 1975 welcomed government measures to promote trade. He outlined the four-point programme announced by Finance Minister Hon. Mr. Sui Sen to promote exports particularly during the present recessionary period when demand the world over had declined substantially

- 1) Expansion of Commercial Secretaries Service to strengthen existing markets and explore new ones;
- 2) Establishment of an export credit insurance guarantee scheme which the various local chambers of commerce including our own had suggested long ago;
- 3) Re-discounting of export bills by banks so as to help exporters; and
- 4) Building up stronger organisations for export promotion. These were in addition to the usual export promotion activities such as the organisation of seminars and workshops, trade missions and trade fairs.

ACQUISITION OF CHAMBER BUILDING AT 55 ROBINSON ROAD: Notification No.3390 under the Land Acquisition Act Section 5 was published in Government Gazette Extraordinary Voi. XVII dated 5th November 1975 declaring that the land on which the Chamber building stood was required for urban redevelopment.

1976

In the address by Mr. D.D. Sachdev at the 35th Annual General Meeting of the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce on 24th April 1976, he outlined the importance of ASEAN to Singapore in its economic development. He pointed out the participation of the Chamber in the activities of the ASEAN Chambers of Commerce & Industry (ASEAN-CCI) and said,

"With the decision to forge closer economic co-operation taken at the Bali Summit, it is now the task of the ASEAN CCI to re-double its efforts to promote intra-regional trade and industrial co-operation. As you know, at the 4th Council meeting held in Manila last November our Chamber was represented."

JSCCI GOODWILL/TRADE MISSIONS: The Chamber participated in three Goodwill/Trade Missions organised by the Joint Standing Committee of Commerce and Industry during 1976 to Malaysia (27th-30th July 1976), Thailand (10th-14th August 1976) and China (4th-20th December 1976).

FICCI DELEGATION'S VISIT: A 5-member delegation from the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, New Delhi led by its President Mr. M. V. Arunachalam visited the Chamber on 18th October.

1977

ASEAN-CCI: The Chamber was represented at the ASEAN-CCI's 6th Council Meeting- Bangkok (28th-30th March 1977); Working Group on Industrial Complementation Meeting - Manila; Working Group on Preferential Trading Arrangements- Manila (25th-28th July 1977); and 7th and 8th Council Meetings and 3rd Conference, Manila (2nd-5th Nov 1977).

RESTRICTED LETTERS OF CREDIT: The difficulties experienced by members in negotiating restricted Letters of Credit with advising banks were taken up with the Monetary Authority of Singapore. The Authority referred the matter to the Association of Banks in Singapore. These difficulties were also taken up with the International Chamber of Commerce, Paris.

1978

At the 37th AGM of the Chamber held on 22nd April 1978, President Mr. D.D. Sachdev referred to a domestic matter of some importance to the Community and particularly to the Chamber members:

"Two months ago I submitted to the Minister for Labour a memorandum from 19 Indian restaurants setting out their manpower problems and appealing to him to authorize issue of Work Permits to non-Singapore Citizens to work in these establishments. This problem applies with equal force to shop assistants in textile and provision shops as well."

SFCCI: The Joint Standing Committee of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (JSCCI) which had functioned for a number of years on an informal basis came to an end in March 1978 when the Singapore Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (SFCCI) was registered under the Societies Act. The inaugural general meeting was held on 20th April at which Mr. Wee Cho Yaw (President of Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry) was elected President. On 5th May Mr. Han Sui Sen, the Hon. Minister for Finance, formally inaugurated the SFCCI.

The SFCCI had its own Secretariat and budget. In 1978, the Indian Chamber paid \$34,505 as their share of its expenses as compared with only \$6,030 paid to the former JSCCI in 1977. With the growing importance and increased activities of the SFCCI in the following years its budget and consequently chamber share of it would increase significantly. Chamber President Mr. J. M. Jumabhoy was one of the five Vice Presidents of the SFCCI.

TRADE MISSION TO BANGLADESH: The first trade mission in the name of SFCCI was organised by the Indian Chamber and consisted of 16 members. The mission attracted considerable interest amongst the Government, trading and industrial sectors in Bangladesh. The mission was received by the Bangladesh Commerce Minister in his office and meetings were held with Secretaries of the Ministry of Industry and Ministry of Commerce, various Government public sector corporations and Chambers of Commerce.

TRADE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: In July, a Trade Development Committee was constituted by the Department of Trade under the chairmanship of Dr. Tan Eng Liang, Senior Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance. The Chamber's President was a member of this committee.

VISIT OF COMMERCE MINISTER OF INDIA: A luncheon was held at the Singapore Hilton on 1st June in honour of the visiting Hon. Minister of Commerce of India, Mr. Mohan Dharia. The Chamber President in his speech made some suggestions for enhancing India's economic relations with Singapore and ASEAN. This was well-received by the Minister, who in his reply invited the Chamber to send a mission to India.

VISIT OF ASSOCHAM DELEGATION: A six-member delegation from the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), New Delhi, led by Mr. F.A.A. Jasdanwalla was in Singapore from 29th November to 4th December to examine the possibilities of increasing trade and economic co-operation with Singapore, particularly through industrial joint ventures.

ASEAN-CCI MEETINGS: The Chamber was represented at the meetings of the Working Group on Industrial Complementation and the Working Group on Preferential Trade held in Jakarta from 24th to 27th April and at the 5th Plenary Meeting of Working Group on Industrial Complementation, 3rd Plenary Meeting of Working Group on Trade and 9th ASEAN-CCI Council Meeting held in Bangkok from 15th to 18th November 1978.



L TO R: MR.:N.A. BANO, MR.:CHANDULAL DOSHI, MR: J.M.JUMABHOY; PRESIDENT, THE HON. MR. MOHAN DHARIA, MR. LIM KEE MING, MR. WEE CHO YAW, MR. KAMILAL J. SHAH AND MR..G. RAMACHANDHRAN.

1979

In a speech by Mr. J. M. Jumabhoy, President, Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce at the Chamber's Annual General Meeting on Saturday 28th April 1979, he said: "A hopeful factor in the coming years is the opening of China to world trade, and no doubt we look forward to getting some of the share."

He also said:

"The past year has seen the emergence of close co-operation between Government and the private sector in matters concerning Singapore's economy, by the consolidation last April of the private trading and industrial sector into one national body- the Singapore Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry, and its recognition by the Government as the joint voice of the private sector. Immediately after the formation of the SFCCL, the Government set up the Trade Development Committee, which for the first time, established a formal machinery for regular discussion between the Government and the private sector on ways and means to jointly improve further our economic performance.

This Trade Development Committee has proved quite useful, but I feel (and this is my personal opinion) that there is room for improvement. What I have in mind is a forum where there is scope for more detailed and wider discussion, a candid exchange of ideas and detailed examination by both sides and the workability of such ideas -something like a joint "Think Tank" of the Government and Private Sector. Perhaps the time is now ripe when the Trade Development Committee could evolve into another body with wider scope and more powers."

Congratulating the Guest-of-Honour at the AGM lunch, Mr. Goh Chok Tong, the Minister for Trade and Industry on his appointment, Mr. Jumabhoy said: "Although industry accounts for a progressively larger share of our total economic growth, entrepot trade still takes a very significant place and all efforts should continue to be made to boost this sector."

In the sphere of shipping, the President Mr. J. M. Jumabhoy highlighted the problem of unreliability.



L TO R: MR. N. S. PATEL, MR. CHANDULAL DOSHI, MR. K. M. A. ABDUL RAHIM, MR. D. G. SHAH, MR. T. R. MULAM (EXTREME RIGHT) THE HON. MR. GOH CHOK TONG, MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY. BEING INTRODUCED TO SOME COMMITTEE MEMBERS AT THE CHAMBER'S LAUNCH ON 28 APRIL 1979 BY PRESIDENT MR. J. M. JUMABHOY.

"Apart from the well-known shipping lines, the exporter has no way of checking the bonafides of the owner or charterer. The fault does not lie with the local agent, as he is unaware of what problems may crop up later. Therefore some machinery has to be devised to gather relevant information which could be made available to exporters."

ASEAN-CCI MEETINGS IN MANILA- JULY 1979

At these meetings held in Manila from 19th to 24th July 1979, Chamber President Mr. J. M. Jumabhoy was appointed as Chairman of the Working Group on Trade for a 2-year term at the meeting, with the SFCCI Secretary-General functioning as interim Executive Director. He chaired the 5th Plenary Meeting of the Working Group on Trade on 14th December and called on ASEAN Governments to adopt the following measures to quicken intra-ASEAN trade co-operation.

- Reduction of red tape
- Setting specific goals and definite periods and pace to achieve them
- Giving clear-cut directives to officials of the Committee on Trade & Tourism to expedite matters
- Direct contact between Government committees and ASEAN-CCI counterparts

His points were fully endorsed by the meeting.



MR. J. M. JUMABHOY (CENTRE), CHAIRMAN ASEAN-CCJ WORKING GROUP ON TRADE, ADDRESSING THE GROUP MEETING AT THE SHANGRI LA HOTEL ON 14 DECEMBER 1979.

SHIPPING PROBLEMS: A sub-committee was appointed in June to identify shipping problems and malpractices with a view to make specific recommendations to Government. Subsequently the President drafted a paper on the subject which was approved by the Management Committee and sent on 21st August to the Department of Trade and SFCCI.

TRADING COMPANY APPROACH: The Chamber submitted a lengthy paper in August to the SFCCI on a proposal to intensify the role of trading companies in Singapore's trade development.

MEASURES TO IMPROVE ENTREPOT TRADE: A letter setting out the Chamber's views on this subject was sent to SFCCI in July 1979 and the SFCCI later submitted a paper on the subject to the Government in which the suggestions made by the Chamber were incorporated.

1980

ASEAN-CCI MEETINGS IN JAKARTA, 4TH-12TH DECEMBER 1980:

Mr. J. M. Jumabhoy who chaired the 7th Plenary Meeting of the Working Group on Trade (WGT) was able to propel a resolution which was subsequently approved by the ASEAN-CCI Council for onward transmission to the ASEAN Economic Ministers.

Some of the important points made in the resolution were that the WGT recommended the granting of Preferential Tariff Arrangements (PTA's) to more ASEAN products provided that:

- (a) The granting of such PTA's on selected products proposed by ASEAN-CCI was for a limited period subject to review every 3 years.
- (b) The local content requirements under the Rules of Origin of a given product, for purposes of PTA entitlement, may be lowered to not less than 20 per cent for a duration consistent with the capacity of the supplying ASEAN country in fulfilling such local content requirement.



MR. TAN HONG HIN, THE TOP GRADUATE IN ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE RECEIVING THE SILVER MEDAL FROM THE CHAMBER'S PRESIDENT MR. J. M. JUMABHOY ON 10TH JULY 1980.



VITB OFFICIALS AND STUDENT RECIPIENTS WITH THE PRESIDENT, M. JUMABHOY.

ASEAN-CCI SPECIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE: The ASEAN-CCI at its 13th Council Meeting on 23rd June 1980 created a special Review Committee on ASEAN Development to undertake a serious and objective assessment of why so little had been achieved after so long. The Chamber's President and Secretary were members.

1981

MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER: On 17th July 1981, the Prime Minister had called a meeting of the Employers' Representatives. President Mr. J.M. Jumabhoy represented the Chamber. Prior to this, the Chamber had submitted comments on the Report of the Committee on Productivity.

ASEAN-NEW ZEALAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MEETING: The first meeting of the ASEAN-NZ Chamber of Commerce and Industry was held on 30th April 1981. The President Mr. J.M. Jumabhoy and the Secretary represented the Chamber at this meeting. The President presented a paper on ASEAN Trade.

ASEAN-CCI SPECIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING - JAKARTA: The Secretary, as member of the ACCI Special Review Committee, attended the meeting in Jakarta on 13th May 1981. The purpose of the meeting was to review the structure of ACCI and to create a framework for changes to be put forward at the ACCI meetings in Manila in June.

ASEAN-CCI SPECIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE- PUBLIC CONSULTATION: On 15th May 1981, the Special Review Committee held public consultations in Singapore with businessmen and academics from the University and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. The meeting was chaired by President Mr. Jumabhoy. The purpose of the public consultations was to gauge the feasibility of a proposed ASEAN Economic Treaty.

ACCI MEETINGS (MANILA 24TH JUNE-1ST JULY): The President and Secretary attended the meeting where the President chaired the 8th Plenary meeting of the Working Group on Trade (WGT).

In his opening address, Mr. J.M. Jumabhoy enumerated the various areas to which WGT should address itself. He called on WGT to study the best ways and means of expanding trade in food products and to study thoroughly all the non-

tariff barriers and identified those that were detrimental to the expansion of intra ASEAN trade.

PETITION FROM SERANGOON ROAD EMPLOYERS REGARDING

WORK PERMITS: A group of Chamber members had written in to the Chamber requesting help in obtaining employment permits for workers in their shops. Owing to the peculiar nature of their jobs, local help was unavailable and workers from Malaysia were needed. There appeared to be difficulties in the case of Malaysian workers issued with 2 day permits.

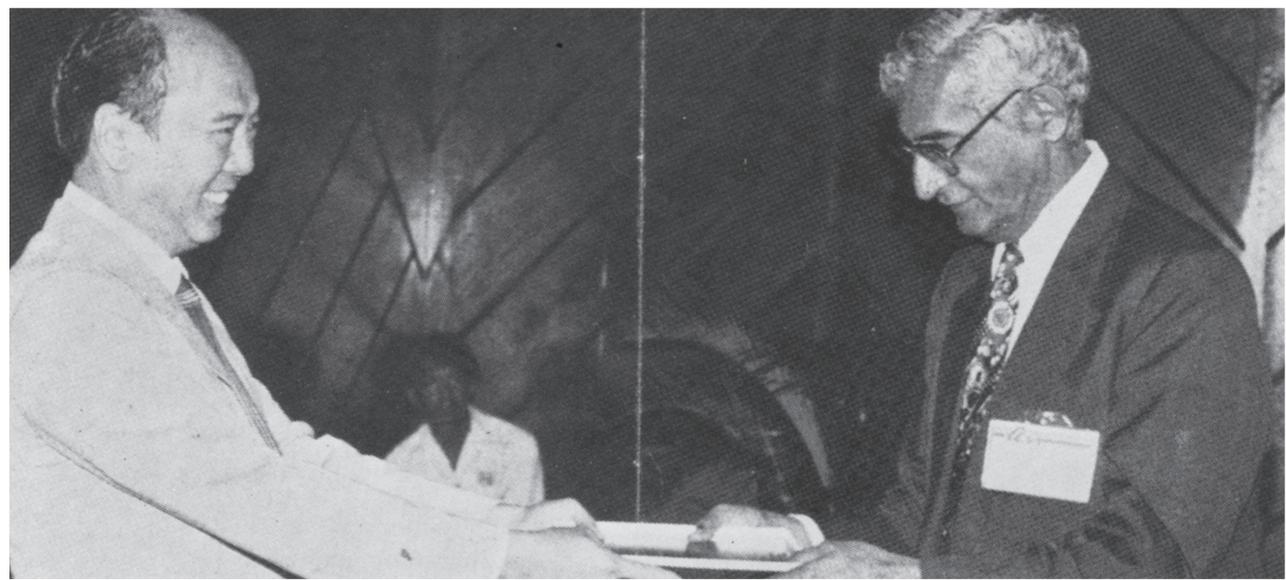
The matter was taken up with the Ministry of Labour and then the office of the Director of Work Permits which expressed willingness to consider deserving cases sympathetically.

The Secretary had subsequently written to all the applicants informing them of the outcome and offered the Chamber's help in channeling all existing problematic cases and fresh applications to the Work Permit Office.

VISITING DELEGATIONS: The Chamber met with a delegation of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) on 30th January 1981, a delegation from Chotanagpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 11th March 1981, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Paris delegation on 13th March 1981 and a delegation from Africa on 26th March 1981. The Chamber also met a Bangladesh delegation on 2nd April 1981, a Brazilian Delegation on 6th May 1981, a Pakistan Trade Delegation on 24th November 1981 and a delegation from China on 18th December 1981.



8TH WGT PLENARY MEETING IN SESSION (MANILA, JUNE 1981). L-R: MR. ACHMAD SARBINI (INDONESIA), VICE CHAIRMAN, MR. J. M. JUMABHOY, CHAIRMAN, WORKING GROUP ON TRADE (WGT), ASEAN-CCI, MR. GEORGE ABRAHAM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WGT.



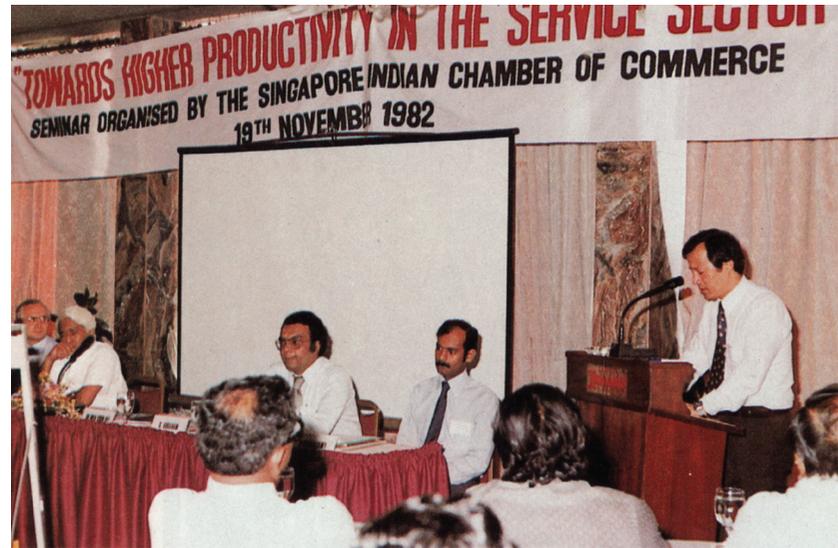
THE OUTGOING WGT CHAIRMAN MR. J. M. JUMABHOY RECEIVING A MEMENTO FROM MR. WEE CHO YAW, PRESIDENT ASEAN-CCI (MANILA-JUNE 1981)

1982

In a speech by Mr. J. M. Jumabhoy, President of Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce at the Annual General Meeting held at Singapore Hilton, Singapore on Saturday 24th April 1982, he pointed out the pressure on office space and higher rental trends.

He said:

“This is due to strict observance of zonal planning. Whereas the Government Policy was to encourage businesses to move out the CBD in order to relieve pressure there, the lack of flexibility in allowing offices in areas outside the CBD fringe has a defeating effect. There is too strict an observation of what is termed as “commercial use” which means shops and shopping complexes – not offices. Warehouses are deemed to be strictly demarcated as domestic or flatted factory areas. Therefore, whereas residential property values and rentals are generally now on the downward trend, office space is still under great pressure.



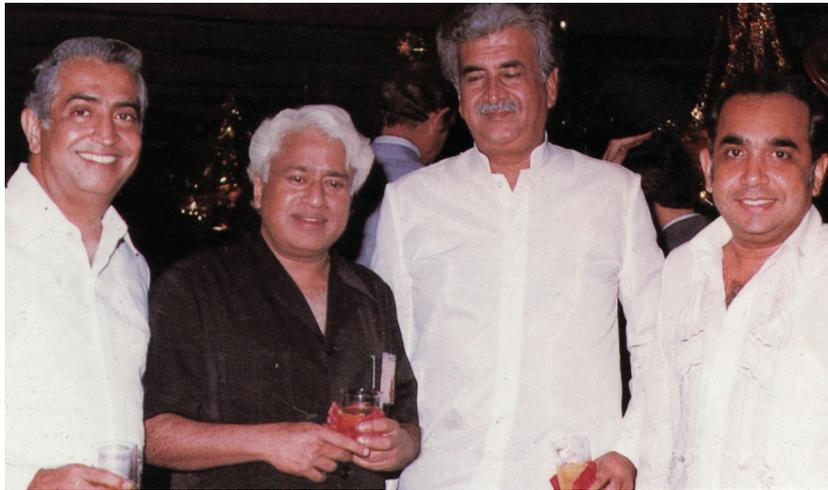
DR. WAN SOON BEE, M.P. AND DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL, NTUC, DELIVERING THE OPENING ADDRESS AT THE SEMINAR.



MEETING OF THE SINGAPORE PRIVATE SECTOR WITH A BRAZILIAN DELEGATION ORGANISED BY OUR CHAMBER.



DELEGATION FROM AFRICA MEETING SICCI MEMBERS.



MR. RAMACHANDHRAN WITH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS OF THE PHILIPPINES INDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.



L. TO R.: MR. G. RAMACHANDRAN, H. E. MAYOR RAMON BAGATSING, MAYOR OF MANILA, H. E. AZIZ MAHMOOD SINGAPORE'S AMBASSADOR TO THE PHILIPPINES, MR. GEORGE ABRAHAM



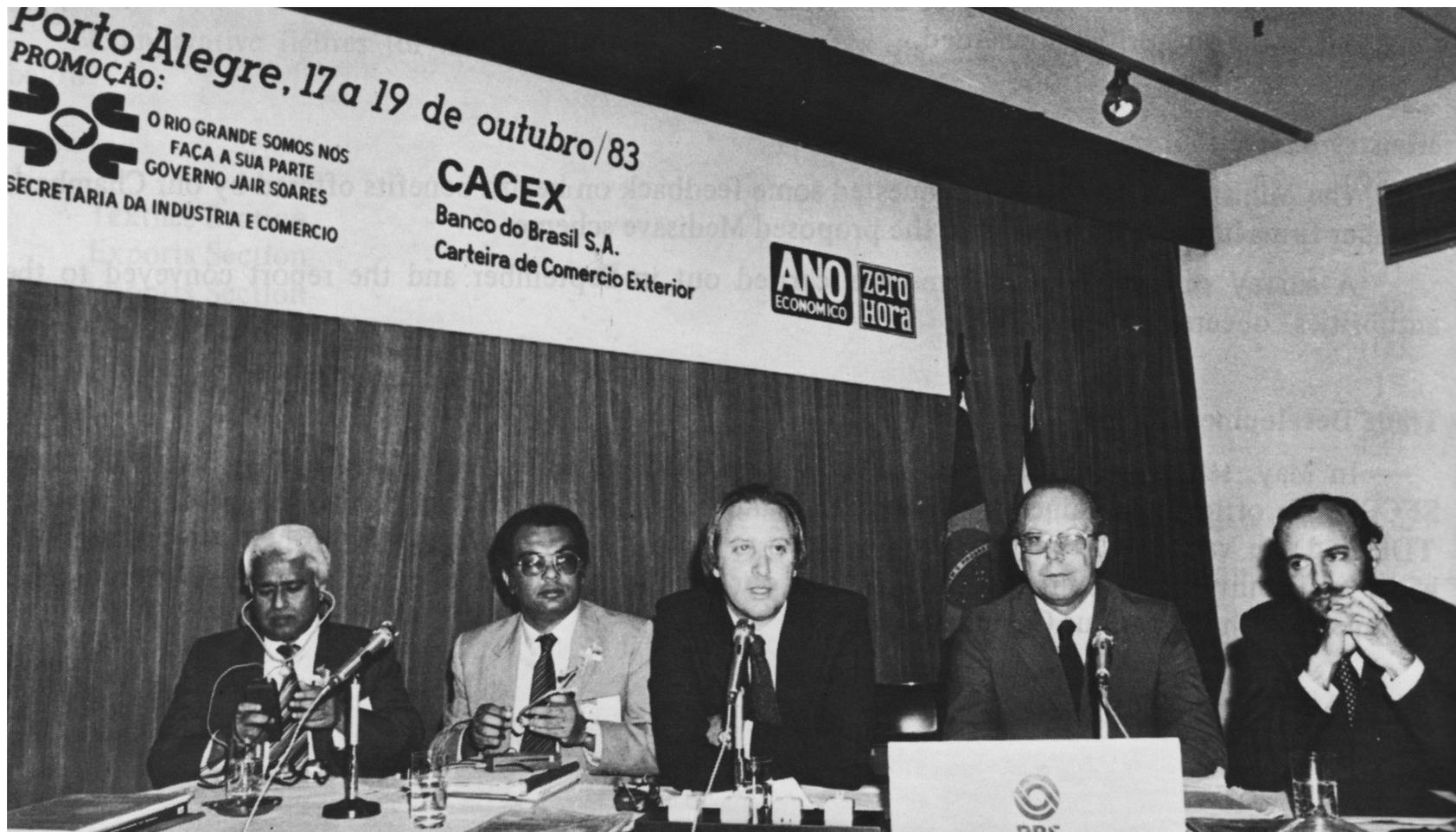
L TO R.: MR. GOPINATH PILLAI (SMA). MR. G RAMACHANDHRAN (DEPUTY CHIEF DELEGATE). MR. LINN IN HUA (SCCC!), MR. J K SHAH (SJCC/). MR. G ABRAHAM (SICC I).

The Government should consider relaxing this very strict zonal demarcation to allow more office space even in areas which are a few kilometers away from the CBD because the periphery of the CBD is already taken up mostly by high land value shopping complexes and hotels. This will help the thousands of individual businesses to cut costs and export competitive!"

MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER: On 11th August 1982, the Prime Minister met representatives of employer groups in Singapore. The Prime Minister discussed various matters covered in submissions made by employer groups. The Chamber was represented by Mr. G. Ramachandhran.

The Chamber had made a submission to the Prime Minister on company welfarism, management styles, work attitudes, training of workers and productivity practices based on a survey of our member firms.

ASEAN CCI MEETINGS, SINGAPORE, 1ST- 5TH JUNE 1982: The various working groups of the ASEA CCI and the Council met in Singapore. The Chamber provided the administrative support for the meetings of the Working Group on Trade (WGT).



INVITATIONS HAD BEEN SENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BRAZIL FOR THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE AND TO PRESENT PAPERS ON "POTENTIAL OF S.E. ASIAN MARKETS FOR RIO GRANDE DO SUL'S EXPORTS" ARRANGEMENTS WERE ALSO MADE FOR VISITS TO SOME GOVERNMENT PROJECTS AND MEETINGS WITH TRADE OFFICIALS IN BRAZIL WITH A VIEW TO DEVELOPING BILATERAL TRADE.

1983

NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY BOARD: Throughout the year under review, various meetings were held at the National Productivity on matters and activities related to the productivity movement in Singapore. Dr. Wong Kwei Cheong, M.P. and Chairman of National Productivity Board had requested views from the Chamber on Productivity and related issues. Based on a survey of member firms, a survey report was prepared and sent to the National Productivity Board.

NWC GUIDELINES: The SFCCI had an ad-hoc Committee to deliberate and make recommendations on the yearly NWC guidelines. The Ministry of Trade had requested a feedback survey on the 1983 NWC Guidelines and their

implementation. A survey of members was carried out in August/September and the report conveyed to the authorities concerned.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH: The Ministry of Health had requested some feedback on health benefits offered by the Chamber's member firms in order to relate it to the proposed Medisave scheme. A survey of member firms was carried out in September and the report conveyed to the authorities concerned.

TRADE DEVELOPMENT BOARD: In May, senior officials of the newly set up Trade Development Board (TDB) met officials of SFCCI. The officials

explained the role of TDB and discussions centred on ways of cooperation between TDB and the various Chambers. The Chamber brought up points about wider availability of TDB stamps (which was sold at the Chamber to members) and computerisation of TDB for link-up with the various Chambers.

LECTURE ON “MARKET OPPORTUNITIES FOR HUNGARY IN SINGAPORE AND ASEAN”: Secretary Mr. G Abraham was invited by the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce to visit Hungary with a view to studying possibilities of developing bilateral trade and to deliver a public lecture on “Market Opportunities for Hungary in Singapore and ASEAN”. The lecture was delivered on 12th July 1983 in Budapest.

SECOND SEMINAR ON RIO GRANDE DO SUL'S EXPORTS, BRAZIL, 17TH-19TH OCTOBER 1983: At the conference which had speakers from Europe and North America, Mr. G. Ramachandhran and Mr. G. Abraham had presented papers on “ASEAN as a Market for Brazilian Goods” and “Opportunities for using Singapore as a base for Brazil’s S.E. Asian Trade”.

CHAMBER AFFAIRS: A sub-committee on Trade Facilitation was set up by all Chambers at the request of SFCCI to liaise with TDB on matters of mutual interest.

LOCAL PRODUCTS: There was a dearth of knowledge of local products. TDB was asked to help local manufacturers exhibit their goods at local fairs for publicity abroad.

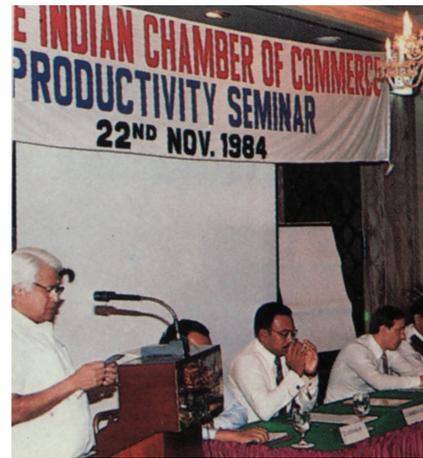
HELP FOR SMALL BUSINESSES IN SELECTING COMPUTERS: The National Computer Board was approached to help advise small businesses on selecting appropriate computers.

EMPLOYMENT PASS I WORK PERMIT EXTENSION PROBLEMS: Many rejected cases of renewal of employment passes were brought to the Chamber for assistance as it was claimed that the people concerned were professionals who were an asset to the various firms.

1984

ASEAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (ASEAN CCI):

The Chamber was represented at the meetings held in Bangkok, 15th-19th July 1984 and Singapore from 26th-30th November 1984. The Chamber handled the secretariat for the WGT meeting of 28th November. Arising from the WGT meeting, an “ASEAN Trade Facilitation Symposium” was held in Kuala Lumpur from 11th-13th December with each ASEAN country sending 10 official delegates.



L TO R : GOH (CENTRE), MR. S. CHANDRA DAS, M.P.

PRODUCTIVITY SEMINAR: In support of Productivity Month 1984, the Chamber organised a seminar on “Conducting In-House Training Programmes” on 22nd November 1984 at the Oberoi Imperial Hotel.

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE: As in the past, the Chamber continued to provide educational assistance to students enrolled in Singaporean tertiary institutions.

SICCI’s contribution to the 150th Anniversary Celebration of Singapore’s founding as in the form of a scholarship started in 1969. A sum of \$35,050 was presented to the then Minister of Education Mr. Ong Pang Boon. The fund now stands at \$59,714.90.



IN-COMING COMMITTEE (SEATED FROM LEFT TO RIGHT): MRS. ZAREENA N. BARA, MR. MICHAEL FERNANDEZ, MR. ABDUL RAHIM, MR. B. H. MELWANI (VICE-PRESIDENT) AND MR. GEORGE ABRAHAM (SECRETARY).

1985

NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY BOARD: In February, Dr. Wong Kwei Cheong, Chairman NPB met employer groups for a briefing and discussion on productivity related issues. The Chamber was represented at NPB Promaps meetings held throughout the year and given the task of coordinating the seminar for the year's productivity programme. Further to various meetings to coordinate productivity activities, the Chamber held a seminar in November entitled "Effective Functional Management for Small Businesses".

A meeting was held in NPB in July to discuss Employer Groups Submission on productivity related issues. The Chamber's submission and recommendations on training needs of small businesses were looked into by NPB.

TRADE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (TDB): SFCCI representatives and TDB officials met in April where it was suggested that the Chambers take on certain areas for trade promotions. The Indian Sub-Continent was suggested as a possible area for the Chamber.

LOCAL BUSINESSES SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE HEADED BY BRIG. GEN. LEE HSIEN LOONG: In March 1985, an Economic Committee was set up in Singapore by the government to review the progress of the Singapore Economy and to identify new directions for its future growth. The Chairman of this Committee was Brig. Gen. (Res) Lee Hsien Loong, then Minister of State for Trade and Industry.

This Economic Committee set up various sub-committees to look into various aspects of the Singapore economy and the "Local Businesses" sub-committee was formed to look into the problems of the local businesses.

Mr. G. Ramachandhran and Mr. George Abraham represented the Chamber on this subcommittee. The Chamber prepared a paper entitled "Small and Medium Enterprises in Singapore-Problems and Assistance Required". This paper dealt with problems faced by small businesses in Singapore and called for a special body to be set up (comprising of members from Economic Development Board for economic aspects, TDB for trade aspects and NPB for training aspects) to look into the problems of small businesses.

As a result of this, the Small Enterprise Bureau was set up by the government to look into problems faced by small businesses in Singapore. In addition, the

Trade Development Board extended assistance to exporters through various schemes and the NPB initiated consultancy and training programmes for small businesses.

(see Appendix III & IV)



MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION IN A RELAXED MOOD AT THE BERLIN WALL. L TO R: MR. S D MANIAM, MR. VIJAY SHAH, MR. TULSHYAM, MR. KUMRA, MR. S R SABA (LEADER), MR. SERAJUDEEN SHAIK. CDR OFFICIAL, MR. N B DOSHI (DEPUTY LEADER) AND MR. MARAN DORAIRAJ (TDB OFFICIAL).

CHAMBER TRADE MISSION EASTERN EUROPE AND AUSTRIA, 29TH SEPTEMBER-14TH OCTOBER: At the invitation of the Foreign Trade Departments of Hungary, East Germany and Poland, the Chamber organised a trade delegation to these countries and Austria. The delegation comprised 10 businessmen from member companies of the Chamber. The mission was also accompanied by a Senior Trade Officer of the Trade Development Board.

The delegation held useful talks and meetings with senior government and trade officials in Budapest (Hungary), East Berlin (East Germany) and Warsaw (Poland). The delegation also had the useful meetings with members and officials of the Vienna Chamber of Commerce in Austria.

This was the first ever Singapore trade delegation to visit Poland and Austria. Arising from the success of this trade delegation, it was felt that Singapore also could be used as a countertrade centre for promoting trade with these countries and the region.

ASEAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (ASEAN-CCI): At the meetings held in Manila, 6th-10th May 1985, Chamber President, Mr. Ramachandhran was also able to meet officials of the Philippines Indian Chamber of Commerce to establish closer links with the Chamber.



ASEAN PRIVATE SECTOR OFFICIALS AT THE OPENING. 4TH FROM LEFT H. E. CAESAR VIRATA, PRIME MINISTER OF THE PHILIPPINES. EXTREME RIGHT: MR. G. RAMACHANDRAN, LEADER, SINGAPORE DELEGATION.



SICCI CHAIRMAN MR. G. RAMACHANDRAN, BOARD MEMBERS MR. P.R. AHUJA AND MR. KANTILAL SHAH AT AN ASEAN-CCI MEETING IN MANILA DEEP IN DISCUSSION WITH EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MR. GEORGE ABRAHAM ON INTRA ASEAN TRADE ISSUES.

At the meetings held in Kuala Lumpur, 27th-29th November 1985, a task force was set up to look into an ASEAN private sector position on the new round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations in GATT(General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). Chamber President, Mr. G. Ramachandhran was the Singapore member of this task force.

60TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER: The Chamber which originated as the Indian Merchant's Association in 1924 celebrated its 60th year of existence with a dinner held on 4th December 1985 at the Hyatt Hotel. The Guest of Honour was Mr. Lee Yock Suan, Acting Minister of Labour. 370 members and invited guests attended the dinner. The invited guests included officials from the government and statutory bodies, senior diplomats and officials from sister Chambers and business and trade bodies in Singapore.

Mr. G. Ramachandhran in his speech outlined the contributions of members of the Chamber to society. Special tribute was paid to Mr. R. Jumabhoy who had served as the President of the Indian Merchants Association and the Indian Chamber of Commerce. Mr. R. Jumabhoy was garlanded by the Hon. Minister. Special tribute was also paid to Past Presidents, Mr. D. D Sachdev, Mr. J. M.



MR. & MRS. LEE BEING WELCOMED BY MR. C RAMACHANDHRAN AND MR. S. H. M ELWANI.



MR. M. AIYAKANNU WHO HAS BEEN IN THE SERVICE OF THE CHAMBER FOR 34 YEARS RECEIVING A LONG SERVICE AWARD.



THE HON. MINISTER GARLANDING MR. R. JUMABHOY WHO HAS BEEN PRESIDENT OF THE INDIAN MERCHANT'S ASSOCIATION AND THE INDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Jumabhoy and Mr. D. T. Assomull for their continuing contributions and long serving Committee members, (more than 20 years) Mr. B .H Melwani and Mr. K. J. Shah.

(see Appendix V)

1986

NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY BOARD: The Chamber had made a submission to the National Productivity Board in January '86 on "Training Needs for Small Business" and made 3 recommendations to initiate:

- (a) a training programme for consultants to Small Businesses.
- (b) a course designed with the specific purpose of assisting owners/entrepreneurs/business managers of relatively small businesses and with emphasis on the kinds of problems peculiar to the Small Businesses in Singapore.
- (c) export-related programmes for small businesses to help them during the current recession.

Subsequently, a training needs survey of some Chamber members was conducted by NPB in March 1986 and arising from the findings of the survey, the following courses were scheduled for the Chamber's members with NPB assistance.

- (i) Business Computing for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
- (ii) Export Marketing for SMEs
- (iii) Financial Management for SMEs.

CHAMBER DELEGATION TO THE PHILIPPINES

(30/9/86 - 5/10/86): A 12 member delegation led by SICCI President Mr. Rupchand J. Bhojwani held discussions for increased bilateral trade with H.E. Mrs. Corazon Aquino, President of the Republic of Philippines, Mr. Jose Concepcion Jr., Minister for Trade & Industry, Philippine Chamber of Commerce & Industry & Philippine International Trading Corporation.



CHAMBER'S DELEGATION TO THE PHILIPPINES. L TO R: MR. RUPCHAND J. BHOJWANI, H. E. PRESIDENT CORAZON AQUINO, MR. JOSE CONCEPCION, MINISTERS FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY.

Singapore may be Manila's middleman in trade

MANILA — Singapore could well become the new middleman for the sale of Philippine products, judging by the anticipated success of the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce's five-day visit here.

The Philippines has never been a traditional trading partner of Singapore but the chamber members found a lot of prospects for goods they normally get elsewhere.

Mr. J. B. Rupa, the chamber president, said products from the Philippines are diverse and the market demands promising.

Agreements

"You can be sure there will be follow-ups," he said. "It was definitely a success. There is a lot of scope."

The businessmen were looking into the purchase of idle machinery and non-performing assets which the government and private sector wanted disposed off, for re-sale to Third World countries.

BY ABBY TAN
Manila Correspondent

Mr George Abraham, the chamber executive director said: "We came here to offer our market, to absorb some of the goods they have been unable to dispose off."

Among the firm agreements were the packaging in Singapore, under different labels, of processed meat and canned juices for markets in the Middle East and Africa. Mr Abraham said: "We already have those markets."

Children's clothes were among other items finalised. There were negotiations for the use of idle typesetting machines in the Philippines. Singapore will do the printing for the Australian market, Mr Abraham said.

Filipino businessmen have also asked for Singapore's help in mounting exhibitions for jewellery designs. The busi-

nessmen were impressed with Filipino designs in jewellery and cane and rattan furniture.

Mr Rupa said his delegation was interested in getting the jewellery moulds from the Philippines but have the jewels set in Singapore.

A member of the delegation, Mr Moez Nomanbhoj, said he was negotiating for US\$12 million (S\$26 million) worth of traditional Philippine exports — coffee, cacao, cashew nuts and onions.

The chamber felt that talk of investments in the Philippines were premature at this stage until the country's ground rules were established.

Negotiations

The delegation paid a courtesy call on President Corazon Aquino on its arrival in Manila on Tuesday and got into serious negotiations, they said, with Filipino exporters and officials from the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

The delegation leaves for home today.

The team's visit to the Philippines came about a month after a trip by a delegation of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Business possibilities with the Philippines were outlined by Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew at the end of his visit to the country in July.

Singapore's exports to the Philippines last year were valued at \$478.5 million while it imported \$437.4 million worth of goods from the country.

Imports included food, animal and vegetable oils and fats, chemicals and machinery. Singapore exported mineral fuels, manufactured goods, crude material and machinery and transport equipment.

SEMINAR ON "BUSINESS COMPUTING FOR SMALL & MEDIUM ENTERPRISES"- NATIONAL COMPUTER BOARD (NCB):

The Chamber together with Systems Education Centre, the training arm of the NCB conducted a 2 day training programme on Business Computing on 19th-20th December 1986. The 18 participants who attended the course found it very informative and beneficial.

Woes of the trader

By ANNA TEO

A COMPREHENSIVE PAPER spelling out the problems of small traders and their training needs has been submitted by the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce (SICC) to the National Productivity Board.

The chamber has made three recommendations to the NPB. It suggests a training programme for the proposed pool of consultants to small businesses; a course designed with the aim of helping owners and entrepreneurs of small businesses, with emphasis on the kinds of problems these people would face; and export-related programmes for small businesses.

Operating with inadequate or at best, minimum quantitative data to save costs; difficulty in recruiting high-calibre employees; and limited financial resources coupled with low borrowing capacity, are some of the specific problems of the small trader, says the SICC.

The small enterprise manager is a relatively isolated individual dealing with policy and operational problems simultaneously. He is severely limited in his ability to raise initial or additional capital because investors are seldom attracted to the new small business.

His pre-occupation with on-going operational problems may also mar his ability to change and adapt. Often, the small business does not encourage opportunities for staff training.

The consultants who are going to help these small enterprises have to be "more generalists than specialists", trained to handle the whole spectrum of management.

The proposed training programme for consultants will ensure that they have the ability to advise their clients.

"There are far too many courses conducted by the NPB

and the Singapore Institute of Management, for example, at high-level which are useful for large organisations in a general sense, but for small entrepreneurs, the programmes are not relevant," George Abraham, SICC's executive director, told BT yesterday.

The second recommendation on a specific course for the small entrepreneur was based on an Asian Productivity Organisation programme.

A lot of traders need help in promoting their products overseas, said Mr Abraham. The NPB, which is conducting a training needs survey with the Malay and Indian chambers of commerce, has spoken to several member-companies of the SICC dealing in international trade, he said.

SEB aid for Indian chamber project

By ELAINE KOH

THE SMALL Enterprises Bureau (SEB) will help 15 members from the Indian Chamber of Commerce (SICC) to take part in a training and consultancy programme to hone their international marketing skills.

This is the first SICC project supported by the Small Enterprises Bureau. Others are still being discussed.

The SICC has about 460 members, of which 75 per cent are involved in international trading. "We felt that many traders lacked sophisticated marketing practices," said Mr George Abraham, the executive director of the SICC.

"For a company emerging from anything between five and 20

employees, they don't seem to have the modern marketing approach."

Hence, the launching of this pilot programme aimed specifically at upgrading the marketing skills of small and medium sized companies.

Participants will pay \$500 for the programme, while the SEB will sponsor \$2,000 for each participant.

The programme, enlisting the expertise of Executive Data Centre, will enable exporters to make marketing plans to sharpen their international trading practices. Executive Data Centre is a Singapore management consultant firm.

It was designed to answer the needs of the SICC members, many of whom run family businesses in

textiles, electronics, consumer goods and commodities.

"We chose this particular programme because we find generally that seminars cover general trends, and leave out the local aspect," said Mr Abraham.

If the 15 companies were seen to have benefited from the programme, there would be others planned, said Mr Abraham.

The programme — "Battling for Profits" — will start this Saturday and end on Dec 17.

The first three days will involve lectures with a practical bias. This will be followed by another three days for the participants to

bring up their individual problems and draw up their own marketing plans.

There will then be a monitoring period, from July 12 to Dec 17.

During this monitoring period, participants will be able to call on the services of Executive Data Centre to refine further their marketing blueprints.

The programme will be led by Professor Donald Hendon, an American expert on marketing with the Arkansas State University, and a consultant with the Executive Data Centre.

"We chose this consultant because of his experience in the Asian region," said Mr Abraham.



INAUGURATION OF THE CHAMBER'S PREMISES BY SICCI CHAIRMAN MR. G. RAMACHANDHRAN. L-R: PAST PRESIDENTS OF SINGAPORE CHINESE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY, MR. LIM KEE MING AND MR. K. C. TAN.



CHAMBER'S TRADE DELEGATION TO THE PHILIPPINES.

SINGAPORE FEDERATION OF CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SFCCI): At the SFCCI Annual General Meeting held on 23rd September 1986, the council unanimously elected Mr. G. Ramachandhran as President of SFCCI for the term 1986-1988. Mr. George Abraham was appointed the Honorary Secretary General of SFCCI for the period 1986-1988.

ASEAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (ASEAN-CCI): The Chamber was represented at these meetings held from 8th-12th July 1986 in Jakarta and from 2nd-6th December in Singapore. The Chamber handled the secretariat for the WGT meeting of December 4th 1986 and hosted a lunch which was attended by 150 delegates and representatives from the ASEAN Trade Commission.

ASEAN GOVERNMENT'S COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND TOURISM (COTT): The Chamber made a presentation at the 20th COTT meeting held in Singapore on 19th June 1986 on requests pertaining to the ASEAN-CCI. One of the items presented was the ASEAN-CCI position on the new Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations of GATT.

INAUGURATION OF THE CHAMBER'S NEW PREMISES: The Official Opening of the Chamber was held on 23rd January 1986. 162 invited guests from the Trade Consulates and Representatives, Sister Chambers, Statutory and other relevant bodies and Chamber member representatives attended the opening ceremony. Mr. G. Ramachandhran officiated at the opening ceremony.

1987

TASK FORCE ON SMALL & MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SME)

The Chamber was represented on the Task Force on Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) set up by the Economic Development Board for the purpose of examining, rationalising and evaluating the effectiveness of the various schemes promulgated under the Board either within the purview of the Small Enterprises Bureau or without. The Task Force was also asked to comment upon how useful the various schemes have been whether they were reaching out to the right quarters and creating the necessary ambience for the development of a healthy SME segment, and what would be necessary to achieve the stated objectives.

TRADE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (TDB)

MEETING WITH TRADERS FOR TRADENET PROJECT: The Trade Development Board and National Computer Board (NCB) embarked on a project to develop a computer network called Trade net to enable the electronic transfer of trade documents within the trading community. Various meetings were held in February with representatives of the trading community to obtain feedback on the benefits and pitfalls of the system. Members of our Chamber attended this meeting.

Parallel to these meetings, a Meeting with Chambers of Commerce was held to discuss the issue of certificate of origin, with a view to electronically transfer documents where possible. The Chamber was actively involved in TDB and NCB's efforts in implementing Trade Net

COMMITTEE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL MARKETING EXPERTISE (CDIME)

The Chamber was represented at a meeting called by TDB in February to discuss training to help exporters. A Committee on the Development of International marketing Expertise was set up with representatives from the Trade Development Board, Singapore, Export Credit Insurance Corporation, and the National Productivity Board, Economic Development Board's Small Enterprise Bureau, the Singapore Institute of Management, the Marketing Institute of Singapore and SFCCI. Subsequently, Mr. George Abraham was appointed Chairman of this Advisory Committee by the Trade Development Board. This Committee produced a quarterly publication outlining for local businesses, all relevant courses and programmes on international marketing and actively engaged in finding new ways to help Singapore exporters in developing their international marketing expertise.

BUSINESS ENTERPRISE COMMITTEE (BEC)

A meeting was held between the BEC led by Dr. Lee Boon Yang, Chairman, and the Chamber Committee members led by President, Mr. Rupachand J. Bhojwani.

The BEC was set up to obtain feedback from the various trade organisations on the problems faced by the business community in Singapore and to foster growth of business enterprises.

Five problems were raised by Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce's representatives:

- (a) Use of Residential Premises for commercial purposes.
- (b) Immigration Policy with regard to Employment Passes and Work Permits.
- (c) Double Taxation Relief for Transshipment Cargoes.
- (d) Port Charges and problems on Air Freight.
- (e) Processing and Inward /Outward Declaration.

DEEPAVALI LIGHT-UP '87 AND THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS: The STPB had requested the Chamber to sponsor the lighting of Serangoon road area to mark the celebration of Deepavali in October. It was decided that High Street be lit up as well.

The Chamber was also part of the organising committee for the Deepavali function graced by the President of Singapore H. E. Mr. Wee Kim Wee.



L TO R: PRESIDENT AND MRS. WEE KIM WEE, MR. RUPCHAND J. BHOJWANI, PRESIDENT OF SICCI; AND DANCERS.



FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS ON 26TH OCTOBER AT THE KALLANG THEATRE. H. E. MR. WEE KIM WEE, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE AND MRS. WEE, WERE THE GUESTS-OF-HONOUR.



MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER WITH SFCCI MISSION IN INDIA. FRONT ROW (FROM LEFT): MR. D. D. GUPTA, H. E. MR. CHAN KENG HOWE, HIGH COMMISSIONER OF SINGAPORE TO INDIA, MR. MOEZ NOMANBHOY (LEADER OF THE DELEGATION) AND MR. G. ABRAHAM

ASEAN-CCI MEETINGS: The Chamber participated in the meetings held in Bangkok from 30th June to 4th July 1987. Mr. G. Ramachandhran and Mr. George Abraham who represented the Chamber at this meeting were appointed Chairman and Executive Director respectively of the Working Group on Trade of the ASEAN-CCI from 1987 to 1989.

CHAMBER DELEGATION TO INDIA: A Chamber delegation to India, led by Mr. Moez Nomanbhoj, visited New Delhi and Mumbai.



MR. MOEZ NOMANBHOY WITH MEMBERS OF THE KARNATAKA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Joint venture offer to Singapore

Hindustan Times Correspondent

NEW DELHI, May 1—India today offered Singapore engineering goods and services and joint ventures in several areas to augment bilateral trade.

The visiting trade delegation from Singapore which called on the Minister of State for Commerce, Mr P. R. Das Munshi, here last evening apprised the Minister of export opportunities in Singapore and said India could become a major source of supplies of all types of machinery to the ESCAP region and Africa on re-export basis through Singapore.

The delegation, which is led by Mr Moez Nomanbhoj of the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and includes Mr K. H. Ong and Mr George Abraham representing the Singapore trade and industry, also evinced keen interest in promoting joint ventures with India in the field of packaging of Indian consumer products for third country markets and in printing which could provide new opportunities for utilisation of typesetting facilities and design layout consultancy from India as well as sharing of technology.

The delegation called on Commerce Secretary Prem Kumar and held detailed discussions with FICCI, ASSOCHAM and the Confederation of Engineering Industries (CEI).

Singapore keen to re-export Indian goods

By A Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI, April 30. A nine-member trade delegation from Singapore stated here today that the scope for re-export of Indian commodities to other ASEAN and Pacific countries through Singapore seemed bright.

Addressing members of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) here today, the leader of the delegation, Mr. Moez Nomanbhoj said Indian capital goods could be exported to ASEAN countries through Singapore. Moreover, Indian parties could utilise the facilities for better packaging in Singapore and then export their items.

At the same time, he felt, that Singapore could utilise the services of the personnel in the printing field here as well as lay-off artists for the print media in that country. He felt that the geographical proximity, good shipping services and close and friendly ties between India and Singapore provide good opportunities for augmenting two-way trade between the two countries.

The important items which could be exported via Singapore included chemicals, engineering goods, gems

and jewellery, textile and spices, earth moving machines, light engineering items, implements for agrobased industries, cranes and tractors.

At the same time it was felt that Indian industry could also meet Singapore's requirements in areas of installation of industrial plants, electric transmission and distribution equipments, electronic and telecommunication products, computer software, civil construction work and technical consultancy. The delegation represents the Singapore Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and is sponsored by the Singapore Trade Development Board.

Speaking on the occasion, FICCI president, Mr. R. P. Goenka referred to the inadequate trade between the two countries which he said was far less than \$ one billion. He hoped that the new initiatives shown by both the countries could set up a mutual target for doubling the two way trade in three years time. This could be offset by Singapore importing more of traditional and non-traditional items from India.

1988

TRADE MISSION TO INDIA: A high powered 80 member delegation led by Mr. Mah Bow Tan, Minister of State, Trade & Industry visited India from 11th – 23rd November 1988 to expand existing trade and investment ties. The Chamber was represented by Mr. G Ramachandhran who was leader of the International Trade Delegation and members of the Chamber.

ASIA-PACIFIC INDIAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY (APICCI) MEETING: The main objectives of this Chamber coordinated meeting were to forge closer economic links and to work towards mutually beneficial business projects. The meeting held on 8th October 1988 had 37 participants covering Australia, Thailand, Malaysia and Philippines. Discussions centered on the measures for increasing bilateral trade/investment and joint ventures among the APICCI members and the draft constitution of the APICCI. Presentations were also given on "Overseas Indian Business: Opportunities and Challenges" and "Opportunities for trade and investment in India".

ASEAN-CCI MEETINGS: The Chamber participated in these meeting held in Kuala Lumpur (18th -22nd July 1988) and Manila (2nd-5th December 1988). The Chamber served as the secretariat for the Working Group on Trade (WGT). During these meetings held in Kuala Lumpur and Manila, matters discussed included revised guidelines for the future reduction of ASEAN content requirement in the Preferential Trading Arrangement (PTA) Rules of Origin from 50 per cent to 35 per cent.

Joint panel to boost trade with India

ECONOMIC and trade ties between Singapore and India will receive a boost with the establishment of a joint business co-operation committee by private sector businessmen from both countries today.

Mr G. Ramachandhran, President of the Singapore Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (SFCCI) and Dr Charat Ram, past president of the Federation of Indian

and ocean engineering, electronics and construction," Mr Abraham said.

"The Indians, on their part, have expressed interest in supplying to Singapore computer software and other electronic products, metal worksite equipment, automotive parts and agro-engineering machinery."

He said the establishment of the new committee was timely, especially with

An enlightening exercise in harmony

by ASAD LATIF

Business Time 14/12/88



Adult harmony . . . Kenny Tan (left) and others from the Indian Fine Arts Society performing an orchestral piece.

CULTURAL PROGRAMMES suffer from an undeserved handicap. It is not unusual for the audience to think of them as a form of relaxation. People arrive, looking forward to an "easy" evening. They see and hear. And then they go away, thinking about the dinner that awaits them at home.

These programmes are meant to be enjoyed, of course. But the pleasure is not the same as that which comes, for example, from watching a thriller on screen. Culture is what we are; a programme which reminds us of what we are deserves to be treated with something of the seriousness which goes into an exercise in self-realisation. Cultural functions, when successful, show us a way of finding the personal self in the midst of the larger life of the community.

Festival of Lights, a Deepavali programme presented at Kallang Theatre recently by the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with various cultural organisations, was fortunate in this regard. It opened with a hard-hitting speech by former Cabinet minister S Rajaratnam, who dwelt on what was involved in being members of Singapore's Indian community.

There would always be an Indian community here regardless of the problems caused by cultural differences back in India. Members of the community, however, "must feel and believe" that they are Singaporeans. The majority community could afford to be something else; Indians had a higher stake in a Singaporean outlook. They could not afford "the minority complex."

Mr Rajaratnam ended his speech with a smile and a call to the audience to forget what he had said and go ahead and enjoy the programme. In reality, his emphasis on ethnic identity realised only through communal harmony set the tone for a genuine appreciation of the items that followed.

This was so, for example, with regard to the sweet "Salutations Singapore", in which little girls from Natyalaya, an organisation of the Kallang Community Centre, performed a scintillating dance about Singapore hand in hand. They were a picture of harmony gained through innocence.

Harmony, this time adult, was the fabric of "Vadya Vrind Sangeet", an

orchestral piece performed by the Singapore Indian Fine Arts Society. The music was Indian, but its meaning — its significance for all those present that day — was Singaporean, not because of the presence of sitarist Kenny Tan, but because, in his music, he had become one with the other performers. The theme was culture, forever ancient but forever looking ahead.

The theme of cultural harmony was dramatised in other pieces, too. Especially noteworthy was "Dvi Rupa" by the Fine Arts Society, a striking attempt to harmonise Bharat Natyam and Kathak, the two main Indian dance forms. It was a symbolic effort along the lines of a similar experiment, years ago, which had brought together Ravi Shankar, India's leading sitarist, and Yehudi Menuhin, Europe's leading violinist.

Now, as then, two cultural idioms confronted each other; they laid out a sporting challenge; they competed — only to become one in the overwhelming harmony of a common rhythm reached step by inexorable step.

Among the other items, the song-and-dance composition "Shad Mana" by the Sindhi Merchants' Association and a Punjabi Bhangra dance by the Singapore Khalsa Association were performed with characteristic vivacity. Ancient agricultural rituals were revived in the sheer joy of movement, which attested to the sheer joy of being alive, not just individually but as members of a community rooted in a history that had survived to call itself by that name.

The characteristic of the South Indian compositions was solemnity, which was expressed with deep intensity, for instance, in the invocatory "Ganesha Kautuvam" by the Singapore Kairalee Kala Nilayam. The programme ended with the fantastic "Tala Vadya", a "conversation" among seven Indian drummers in which varying rhythm patterns begun by the first were "answered" by the rest till the climax arrived in the delirium of consciousness becoming one with the harmony of sound.

Nationhood is a comparable process.

PERSPECTIVE

From petty traders to world businessmen

MORE THAN HALF a century ago, a group of Indian merchants got together to try and organise the Indian community. As a result of their efforts to start a "unified body to protect and further their business interests", the 30-member Indian Merchants' Association was formed. Eleven years later, in August 1935, the name of the association was officially changed to the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce (SICC). That year, the chamber had 50 members. Today, the SICC has close to 500 members and has evolved from a "chamber of petty traders" to one comprising "international traders".

From a motley group of petty traders, restaurant owners and shopkeepers, the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce has today become a 500-strong organisation whose membership includes manufacturers and international traders. In recent years, the chamber has taken on a higher profile. LILIAN ANG reports.

1989

ENTERPRISE PROMOTION CENTRE: Several meetings were arranged by EDB throughout the year with representatives from the local Chambers of Commerce and trade associations to explore the possibility of setting up an Enterprise Promotion Centre.

This Enterprise Promotion Centre concept was first brought about by EDB mainly for the SMEs. The objectives of the EPC were to provide business services such as business diagnosis and counseling, first-line assistance and referral services, as well as the identification, formulation and implementation of appropriate programmes to address specific needs of business groups in conjunction with relevant government agencies.

After careful deliberation, the Chambers/Associations decided to take up shares in the EPC. The main objectives of participating in this scheme were to provide the members a wider range of services which may be used to further upgrade themselves and their companies. As a form of equity participation, each chamber/association agreed to put up a sum of \$10,000.00. The government also decided to give a grant of \$5 million for 3 years and would continue to subsidise this project through various schemes.

EXPORT SERVICES INTERNATIONAL (ESI) '89: The Export Services International (ESI) '89 was the first of its kind to be held in the Asia Pacific region. This exhibition cum conference organized by the Singapore TDB and supported by 32 organisations and government bodies was held from 18th-21st October 1989.

The exhibition saw a wide range of services for exporters which covered areas of banking and finance, transport and communications and other business services.

S M E

CHAMBERS AND ASSOCIATIONS ANNOUNCE ALL-OUT-EFFORT TO REPRESENT AND ASSIST SMES

Seven chambers of commerce and industry-specific associations held a press conference on 5 Oct 89 at Marina Mandarin, to explain their rationale for setting up the Enterprise Promotion Centre Pte Ltd (EPC). The EPC founder members are the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCCI), Singapore Malay Chamber of Commerce (SMCC), Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce (SICC), Singapore Manufacturers' Association (SMA), Textile and Garment Manufacturers' Association of Singapore (TGMAS), Singapore Precision Engineering and Tooling Association (SPETA), and the Master Printers' Association (MPA).

Chairing the conference, Mr George Abraham, Executive Director of SICC, said that there were more than 5,000 SME members among the EPC founder members. Taking into account the 16,000 SME members in the 120 trade associations that were affiliated to the SCCCI, the EPC would be able to reach out to more than 21,000 SMEs in Singapore.

The large numbers and wide representation of SMEs from the three main ethnic business groups and industry associations placed EPC in a strong position to identify their needs, retail the government development assistance programmes and provide industry-specific solutions.

Each EPC member would have a front-end outlet, manned by a full-time consultant, to provide direct assistance to its SME members. They would be backed up by the consultant pool in the

• Productivity Digest

The Chamber participated in this exhibition, in order to promote the Chamber and its services and at the same time invite these trade professionals/businessmen to be members of the Chamber.

JOHORE-SINGAPORE JOINT COMMITTEE: The official launching of the Johore-Singapore Joint committee Business Co-operation which took place on 29th March 1989 was officiated by the Minister for Trade & Industry, BG Lee Hsien Loong and the Mentri Besar of Johore, Tan Sri Muhiyiddin Yassin. A delegation of 100 businessmen including Chamber members attended this function.



SINGAPORE INDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE'S BOOTH AT THE WORLD TRADE CENTER DURING THE EXPORT SERVICES INTERNATIONAL '89 EXHIBITION.

SMALL BIZ SCENE
by Walton Morais

Helping SMEs gain access to govt funds

It is time that a body is set up in Singapore to look into the needs of small and medium-sized companies and help the local businesses. Essentially, it should comprise a core group of consultants from the Economic Development Board (to assist in finance and planning), the Trade Development Board (to assist in export related activities) and the National Productivity Board (to assist in training and development needs of SMEs in Singapore). This body could also help to formulate appropriate policies for SMEs' development and growth in Singapore.

cause. Indeed, the local business sub-committee to whom the Indian Chamber wrote was one of two EC sub-committees during deliberations leading up to the 1986 Economic Committee Report, which served as a map for guiding Singapore out of the last recession.

A recommendation by the services sub-committee bears even closer resemblance to the EPC. In identifying ways to boost economic growth, the sub-committee called for the setting up of a Small Business Corpora-

tion — a non-profit body to be managed by the chambers of commerce and trade bodies and funded to the tune of \$60 million by a 15-year, interest-free government loan.

The corporation, the sub-committee said, would have nine directors, including a government nominee, and would secure the services of retired business executives from abroad, as well as local business consultants to advise and help SMEs planning to upgrade and expand. Justifying the need for a corporation despite the fact that the government had just formed a Small Enterprise Bureau in the

• Singapore Business

1990

COMMITTEE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL MARKETING EXPERTISE (CDIME): The CDIME Committee which included representatives from various government and private institutions met regularly since its inception in 1988, to discuss among other matters, the details of setting up the proposed Singapore Institute of Export designed to equip local businessmen with the necessary skills and know-how of International operations, and enable them to sell abroad with the support of professionally trained staff. The Chairman of the Committee was Mr. George Abraham. The Committee had completed its task when the Export Institute of Singapore was launched on 26th March 1990.

PORT OF SINGAPORE AUTHORITY (PSA): Over the year, meetings were held on a quarterly basis to discuss updates on PSA's move towards a paperless trading community with the use of PORTNET, the Electronic Delivery and the Freight Auto-Service Terminal. Tariff Revision was also discussed with the intention of passing back some of PSA's productivity gains to those who had a faster turnaround of containers in the port.

DOING BUSINESS WITH TURKEY: This seminar, jointly organised by our Chamber and the Turkish Embassy in Singapore was held at the Empress Place Theatre on 16th August 1990. Together with H. E. Mr. Yuksel Soylemez, the Turkish Ambassador to Singapore and a visiting Turkish delegation, 74 participants were present from the trading, manufacturing and banking sectors, including 37 members from the Chamber. The Chamber's publication entitled "Doing Business with Turkey" was also well received by both the participants and the Turkish delegation.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN MYANMAR: This 2-day seminar supported by the Singapore Trade Development Board and managed by the Chamber was successfully held at the Pan Pacific Hotel on 9th and 10th October 1990. A team of 5 top Myanmar Government officials presented papers on various topics covering Trade and Investment Opportunities; Foreign Investment; Hotel and Tourism Development; Opportunities for Foreign Investors in Industrial Development; and the Energy Sectors and the Financial System of Myanmar. The 150 participants who attended the seminar found it informative and beneficial.

DOING BUSINESS WITH SINGAPORE: Vice President, Mr. G. Ramachandhran, committee member, Mr. M. Rajaram and Mr. George Abraham were invited by the Tamil Nadu Small Scale Industries Association (TANSSIA) to speak at this seminar held in Madras from 19th-20th December 1990. This seminar was an overwhelming success and 150 copies of our publication "Trading with Singapore 1990" were given to TANSSIA. Arising from this seminar, an Indo-Singapore Chamber of Commerce was set up in Madras to promote bilateral trade.

DELEGATION FROM TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: A meeting was arranged on 23rd July 1990 at the Chamber for a 10-member Trinidad and Tobago delegation. This delegation, led by H. E. Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewari, Minister for Industries, Enterprises and Tourism, comprised Public Sector officials and leading businessmen with the objective to meet Singapore businessmen interested in investing in the manufacturing facilities in Trinidad in order to gain access to the North American markets through the Caribbean Basin Initiative Programme. This meeting was chaired by Vice-President Mr. G. Ramachandhran.

25TH ANNIVERSARY CHARITY FUND: The 25th Anniversary Charity Fund was set up by the Government to provide an avenue for Singaporeans to participate actively in the 25th Anniversary Celebrations.

Our immediate past President, Mr. Rupchand J. Bhojwani, collected a sum of \$41,353 from members of the Chamber and as decided by the Committee, channeled this amount to the Singapore Indian Development Association, an approved charitable organisation under the 25th Anniversary Charity Fund.

NATIONAL DAY HONOURS 1990: Mr. G Ramachandhran, Vice-President of our Chamber and President SFCCI, was awarded the PINGAT BAKTI MASHARAKAT (Public Service Medal) by the President of the Republic of Singapore in recognition of his public services.

SINGAPORE FEDERATION OF CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SFCCI): At the Annual General Meeting of the SFCCI held on 25th September 1990 at the Singapore Chinese Chamber Conference Room, Mr. G Ramachandhranour Vice-President, was elected President for the year 1990-92.

Good response to seminar on Turkey

BUSINESS TIMES 17/8/90

By Schutz Lee

LOCAL businessmen are open to the idea of doing business with Turkey, despite the Gulf crisis and the fact that Turkey shares a common border with Iraq.

Over 70 of them turned up at yesterday's seminar on "How to do business with Turkey" to gather information on business opportunities and to make contacts.

The turnout was better than what the organisers — the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce (SINDCC) and the Turkish embassy — had expected. Coming from

the trading, banking and manufacturing sectors, they were quick to snap up the book *Doing business with Turkey*, published by the SINDCC for the occasion.

The seminar was organised in response to the substantial interest in Turkey following Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's visit to the country last May, during which he discussed the potential for greater Singapore-Turkey business cooperation with the Turkish authorities.

At the seminar, the Turkish Ambassador to Singapore Mr Yuksel Soleymez reiterated his belief that the crisis would not be a protracted

one. "Oil is an important commodity and the sanctions imposed to punish Iraq will soon make themselves felt," he said. But he acknowledged the adverse impact of the crisis on Turkey, as Iraq is Turkey's major trading partner. Turkey exchanges US\$3 billion worth of goods with Iraq, of which half is Iraqi oil.

The decision to shut off the Iraqi oil pipelines running through Turkey may raise inflation again. Inflation, at 60 per cent last year, was beginning to experience a downtrend before the crisis.

Nevertheless, in the middle and long term, given its

strategic location straddling Asia and Europe, its rich cultural heritage, its open and liberal economic policies and its scheduled membership in the EC within the next 10 years, the opportunities for doing business with Turkey remained, he said.

In the area of investments, the ambassador said that there were opportunities for joint ventures in areas like personal computers and software, hotel management and tourism and construction. An example is the building of a luxury seaside resort hotel in Marmaris, south of Istanbul, by the Mandarin Group and a Turkish company.

Following this, he was also nominated ASEAN-CCI President for Singapore. Mr. T. R. Mulani, Mr. Rupchand J. Bhojwani and Mr. K. J. Shah continued to serve in the SFCCI Council in 1990. Mr. George Abraham was appointed Secretary-General of SFCCI and ASEAN-CCI.

22ND MEETING OF THE ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERS (AEM):

During this meeting held in Bali Indonesia from 29th-30th October 1990, ASEAN-CCI Secretary General Mr. Abraham made a presentation. Arising from the discussions, representatives at the AEM, in response to ASEAN CCI's presentation, agreed that there was need for closer cooperation between ASEAN private and public sectors and that a new framework had to be established.

FOURTH MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, MEMBERS OF THE GROUP OF 77:

Representatives of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of 63 countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Carribean participated in this meeting held in Havana, Cuba from 1st-4th November 1990. The Chamber was represented at the meeting. G77 is divided

into 3 regional groupings: Latin-America and the Carribean; Africa (including part of Middle East); and Asia (including part of Middle East, Indian Sub-continent, ASEAN and the South Pacific).

A Steering Committee comprising 4 members from each region were elected. Mr. Abraham was one of the members elected for the Steering Committee under the Asian Grouping.

SIGNING OF AGREEMENT ON MUTUAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE USSR CCI AND THE SFCCI IN MOSCOW:

As a result of agreements between the governments of Singapore and the USSR and at the request of TDB, an agreement on mutual cooperation was signed between the USSR Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 30th November 1990 in Moscow. SFCCI Secretary General Mr. George Abraham, who accompanied a TDB delegation led by Mr. Alan Yeo Chairman TDB, signed on behalf of the SFCCI and Mr. Nickolay N. Melnikov signed on behalf of the USSR Chambers of Commerce and Industry. (see Appendix VI for SICCI participation in Singapore's 25th anniversary celebrations)



MR. G RAMACHANDHRAN, MR. T R. MULANI AND SENIOR DELEGATES OF ASEAN-CCI MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES, H. E. CORAZON C. AQUINO.



MR. G. RAMACHANDRAN, PRESIDENT AND MR. GEORGE ABRAHAM, HON. SECRETARY OF THE ASEAN-CCI WERE AWARDED A PLAQUE OF APPRECIATION BY DR. SUTHEE SINGHASANEH, MINISTER OF FINANCE, THAILAND, AS THEY COMPLETED THEIR TERM OF OFFICE.

1991

MINISTRY OF TRADE & INDUSTRY (MTI)- SFCCI DIALOGUE

A) The first MTI-SFCCI Dialogue was held on 2nd February 1991 at the Treasury Building.

The topics that were discussed during the sessions were:

- a) higher cost of doing business;
- b) Government' s 1991 Policy on CPF ;
- c) labour cost vs. productivity;
- d) an increase in the foreign workers levy for the ship building and repair industry.

B) The second Dialogue Session between the MTI and the private sector held on 23rd September 1991 discussed the following topics:

- a) foreign workers policy;
- b) textile quota levies;
- c) establishment of a "crisis management centre" during difficult economic periods, e.g. the Gulf crisis;
- d) Political Risk Insurance

DELEGATION FROM INDIA: A high level delegation, consisting of a team of senior government policy makers and leading businessmen led by the Minister of Finance, Dr. Manmohan Singh and the Minister of Commerce, Mr. Chidambaram, was in Singapore to brief the local business community on the new trade and investment regulations and incentives that have been implemented in India.

A dinner was hosted by the Chamber for this delegation on 18th October 1991 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

ACTION COMMITTEE ON INDIAN EDUCATION (ACIE): The ACIE headed by Mr. J. Y. Pillay, was set up in September 1990 to study the problem of educational under-performance of Indian Singaporean students. The 13 member committee included Executive Director Mr. George Abraham.

The Chamber provided the financial and secretarial support and also funded the publishing of the ACIE report "At the Crossroads". The Chamber donated \$15,000 towards the printing of this publication which was distributed as well as sold in several bookshops.

"At the Crossroads" was officially launched by Prof. S. Jayakumar at a ceremony held at MND building on 13th July 1991 where the ACIE was dissolved and SINDA (Singapore Indian Development Association) was given the task of implementing the plans put forth by the ACIE.

Chairman, Mr. T. R. Mulani was appointed Patron of the SINDA Fund Raising Committee and was later appointed as its Chairman.

Dollar-for-dollar govt backing up to \$1 m a year for donations to Sinda

THE Government has pledged dollar-for-dollar backing of up to \$1 million a year for donations to Sinda, the Indian community's self-help body.

This will apply to all contributions of over 50 cents donated by Indian Singaporeans through the Central Provident Fund, or to Sinda's endowment fund.

Announcing this yesterday, Professor S Jayakumar, chairman of Sinda's board of trustees and Minister for Law and Home Affairs said that legislation would be tabled in Parliament next month to enable working Indians to make monthly contributions through the CPF.

To encourage those who earn more to pay more, Sinda's executive committee has decided that those earning less than \$600 a month should contribute at least \$1; those earning \$600 to \$1,500, at least \$2; those earning \$1,500 to \$2,500, at least \$4; and those earning \$2,500 and above, at least \$6.

Prof Jayakumar expected that the scheme could be implemented by next April. He was speaking at a brief ceremony at which the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce pledged \$2 million to the endowment fund.

Sinda hopes to raise \$30 million for its endowment fund in three years and the fund-raising committee, previously headed by MP S. Chandra Das, is now chaired by Mr T. R. Mulani. Sums of \$12,000 to \$50,000 had also come from Hindu temples and other Indian businessmen, said Prof Jayakumar.

He welcomed the involvement of six Chinese businessmen in the fund raising committee, and said: "This

shows that there is goodwill from others to our community's efforts to tackle our problems." He said he and National Development Minister S. Dhanabalan had recently asked Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and the Cabinet for more help for Sinda.

Mr Goh responded very positively and felt that while the Indian community should spearhead efforts to tackle its problems, the Government should contribute too.

Said Prof Jayakumar: "The task of arresting and reversing the decline in Indian educational standards is significant not just from the community's viewpoint but also in the national interest."

"In our meritocratic soci-

ety, educational under-performance in any particular community is of concern not only to those in that community but to the nation as a whole."

The Government had also agreed to:

■ **ALLOCATE** at nominal rent a vacant government building to be Sinda's headquarters after renovation.

The HQ now at Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Hall at Race Course Lane does not have enough space for an office and classrooms.

■ **Second** government officers to Sinda at cost, waiving the standard practice of charging 5 per cent of the officers' salary for each day of the secondment.

He said that Sinda was poised to launch its education and welfare projects next month. Five to 10 tuition centres will start classes in mathematics, science and English in the third week of January.

More than 1,500 Indian students in key streaming or examination years — Primary 4, Primary 6, Secondary 2 and Secondary 4 — will receive help at modest cost.

Also coming up are an education camp for bright Secondary 1 students and talks on parenting skills.

Sinda President J. Y. Pillay told reporters that the Education Ministry had accepted in principle the idea of setting up a joint committee with Sinda

SICC offers trade information at your fingertips

TRADE information and statistical analysis at your fingertips — that is what the Singapore Indian Chambers of Commerce (SICC) is offering the local business community via the EPC-NET.

Called the Time Series Trade Statistics Analysis Database, it gives EPC-NET users access to trade statistics compiled from the Trade Development Board from the most recent four years (1987-90).

Previously, traders and researchers would have had to sieve through pages of statistics published by the TDB, or plug into a TDB database, which only offered textual information.

At a time-based rate of 50 cents per minute (on top of the EPC-NET subscription rate of \$10 per month), the 4,000 existing users can get information on specific commodities or commodity sections.

Speaking at the launch of this database yesterday, SICC executive director George Abraham noted that it would allow local businessmen to act quickly on changing trends.

For example, the database provides a ranking of the top 10 import and export markets, which can be further broken down into lists of the major trading items in each market, which in turn can be arranged in descending monetary value. The same applies if users were to request information on a country-wise or commodity-wise basis.

And updating the statistics every six months would allow for better defined trends, rather than updates on a monthly basis, Mr Abraham felt.

The SICC is the third service provider in Singapore to link up with EPC-NET.

Day-long Deepavali festival to be held at museum

THE National Museum will shed its image as a silent treasure house of the past for a lively and colourful celebration of Deepavali on Nov 10.

Organised for the first time by the museum, the Hindu Endowments Board and the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce, the event will be a day-long festival of food and traditional entertainment.

Welcoming the festival, the secretary of the board, Mr P. Athilsdam, said: "Deepavali has traditionally been celebrated only in the home. This is a good opportunity for other races to join in the celebrations."

The festival is part of the museum's ongoing efforts to highlight the culture and lifestyles of the different ethnic communities in Singapore.

The museum held a similar festival for Hari Raya Puasa in April and plans to organise a Heritage Day for the Eurasian community.

Said the museum's director, Mr Kwa Chong Guan: "The traditional image of the museum is that of a treasure house of the past, but we want to show the relevance of the past for the present and future. Festivals are constantly changing in their significance and the way they are celebrated."

Indian chamber opening doors to self-employed professionals

Business group to amend its constitution to inject new blood into membership

by Narendra Aggarwal

THE Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce will be injecting new blood into its ranks with the opening of its membership to self-employed professionals, a move that could also point the way ahead for other local chambers and trade bodies.

To allow for the broadening of membership base, it will move to amend its constitution at a special meeting of all its members today.

Mr T. R. Mulani, president of the Indian chamber, told The Straits Times yesterday that once the constitutional amendments are approved, "professionals would be invited to join the chamber".

The chamber is particularly interested in young graduates, professionals and businessmen who will then lower the average age of members, the majority of whom presently are over 50 years old.

The proposed change is the result of a study by the chamber's constitution review committee headed by



Mr Mulani: Wants to lower average age of membership.



Dr Cooper: Move in keeping with world trend.

Dr R. C. Cooper, a financial and management consultant by profession.

The admission of professionals into the chamber will be made possible by the introduction of a new membership section called "services".

People of ethnic Indian origin in professional services such as tourism, insurance, banking and finance can join the chamber. Architects, engineers, head-hunters, accountants and lawyers, who are sole proprietors of their firms will also be eligible for

membership.

Dr Cooper told The Straits Times yesterday that the move to open the Indian chamber's door to professionals was in keeping with the international trend. A large number of chambers overseas had amended their constitutions to allow professionals to become members.

This move is interesting as it comes in the wake of the recent controversy over the leadership of the Singapore Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

There was some disagreement over the move to institutionalise the rotation of the federation's presidency among the five constituent members, three of which are ethnic-based chambers.

Reacting to the controversy, businessman and politician S. Chandrasekaran suggested bringing in new faces into the federation and revamping its working structure.

On opening the Indian chamber's membership, Mr Mulani said the idea was to get younger people involved

in its activities to enable it to better serve the Indian business community in Singapore.

With an enlarged membership base, the Indian chamber can then work on sending delegations overseas for promoting trade, he added.

The Straits Times also understands that among the other recommendations made by Dr Cooper's committee is to change the chamber's name to Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in line with current business developments.

The word "industry" is being added to reflect the growing number of members who are in manufacturing.

The chamber — set up in 1924 as the Indian Merchants' Association — currently has 449 ordinary and 37 associate members from other ethnic groups.

As it is incorporated under the Companies Act, any amendments to its constitution are subject to the approval of the Registrar of Businesses and Companies.

Story behind the report

Clear and coherent report that took 3 months to draft

ONE Pillay put on paper the facts, figures and forecasts gathered by his team-mates in the Action Committee on Indian Education.

The other Pillay polished the package and turned it into a model of precision and simplicity.

Together they and 11 other Indian professionals produced a 60-page Indian education report — "At the Crossroads" which can be easily understood by any O Level student.

Dr Philip Pillay, a lawyer, wrote up what the three sub-committees had to say about funds, research and programmes.

Committee chief J. Y. Pillay made sure that the report was clear, consistent and coherent.

Drafting the report took more than three months.

After the committee was set up in September last year, Mr Pillay and his team of 12 professionals tapped the brains of Indian grassroots leaders and professionals, gathered data from the ministries, diagnosed problems and prescribed cures.

About 5,000 copies will be sold at \$5 each with the proceeds going into funds for ed-

ucation projects.

An abridged Tamil translation of the report will be available later.

The 11 others who made the Pillay and Pillai product possible are:

■ Deputy Chairman: Dr N. Varaprasad, Principal, Temasek Polytechnic

■ Secretary: Mr N. Sreenivasan, Lawyer

■ Members: Mr D. Natarajan, Principal, Swiss Cottage Secondary School

■ Mr George Abraham, Executive Director, Indian Chamber of Commerce

■ BG Kirpa Ram Vij, Executive Chairman, Neptune Agencies

■ Mr V. Krishna, Assistant Chief Transportation Engineer, Public Works Department

■ Mr G. Amoganathan, Principal, Upper Serangoon Technical School

■ Mr R. Sinnakaruppan, Project Manager, National Semiconductor Singapore Pte Ltd

■ Mrs A. Ganapathy, Principal, Loyang Secondary School

■ Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Deputy Director, Monetary Authority of Singapore

■ Mr Bhajan Singh, Principal, Si Ling Secondary School

1992

'ENTERPRISE '92'- TOTAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FOR LOCAL ENTERPRISE': Jointly organised by the Economic Development Board, Enterprise Development Council and Enterprise Promotion Centres Pte Ltd and co-sponsored by our Chamber, a 3-day conference, 'Enterprise '92' was held in Westin Hotel from 25th to 27th August 1992.

The Conference was a major undertaking by private and public sectors to create a platform for entrepreneurship, addressing local entrepreneurship issues, facilitating the exchange of ideas, experiences and promoting entrepreneurship and international business collaborations. Chairman Mr. M. K. Chanrai who was a panel member, represented the Chamber.

TRADE MISSION TO VIETNAM: A trade mission to Vietnam was organised by the Chamber to coincide with the inaugural flight of Singapore Airlines to Ho Chi Minh City. The delegation had business meetings in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. They had briefings and discussions with various Central and State Government authorities. The visit was coordinated with the assistance of the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

The delegation was led by the Chamber's Vice-Chairman and SFCCI President, Mr. G. Ramachandhran. The 8-member delegation was in Ho Chi Minh City from 4th to 8th February 1992 and in Hanoi from 8th to 11th February 1992.

MTI - SFCCI DIALOGUE: Two dialogue sessions between the Government and the Private Sector held on 14th February 1992 and 17th September 1992 at the MTI building discussed: (a) Government support for SFCCI membership of various regional organisations, e.g. ASEANCCI, CACCI; (b) Notification of changes in Substantial shareholdings; (c) Stamp Duty abolition on contracts/transfers in the Security Industry; (d) Reduction in property tax rate; (e) Reduction in Corporate Tax Rate, Personal Income Tax rates and Review of Personal Tax Relief.

FOURTH ASEAN SUMMIT: Mr. George Abraham, Secretary-General of ASEAN-CCI collaborated with the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in the preparation of the ASEAN Private Sector input to the Fourth ASEAN Summit and this was approved at the 41st ASEAN-CCI Council Meeting held in Bangkok on 28th November 1991.

5TH MEETING OF G-77 REPRESENTATIVES: The 5th meeting of representatives of Commerce and Industry of Developing Countries, members of Group 77, was held in Jakarta, Indonesia from 16th-20th February 1992, where the Chamber was represented, it discussed the progress in implementing the Master Plan for the establishment of the Trade Information Network between developing country Chambers and the progress in instituting a mechanism for enhancing cooperation among Chambers of Commerce and Industry of developing countries.

CHAMBER'S FUND RAISING DINNER FOR SINGAPORE INDIAN DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (SINDA): The Chamber organised a Fund Raising Dinner for SINDA on 29th October 1992 in the Mandarin Ballroom. The funds raised from this dinner formed part of the Chamber's pledge of \$2 million (over a 5-year period) towards the SINDA Endowment Fund.

Guest-of-Honour at this dinner was the Hon. Prime Minister Mr. Goh Chok Tong, who was accompanied by Mrs. Goh. Also present was the Minister for Law & Home Affairs, Prof. S. Jayakumar, seven other Indian Members of Parliament, members of the Diplomatic Corps, prominent members of the business community and CEOs from Sinda, Mendaki and CDAC. About 1000 guests attended the dinner.

Chairman, Mr. M. K. Chanrai delivered the opening address, The Hon. PM, Mr. Goh Chok Tong, in his speech, touched on the topics of broadening the



H.E. PRIME MINISTER MR. GOH CHOK TONG RECEIVES FROM CHAIRMAN MR. M. K. CHANRAI A TOKEN OF APPRECIATION: A SPECIALLY COMMISSIONED PORCELAIN PLATE DEPICTING HIS SWEARING IN CEREMONY AS PRIME MINISTER.

talent pool in the Indian community by attracting qualified overseas Indians to work here, as well as the problem of under-performance of Indian students in Singapore and the role of both SINDA and others in the community in reversing this trend.

A cheque for the amount of \$200, 000 representing the proceeds of the dinner was presented by Chairman Mr. M. K. Chanrai to Prof. S. Jayakumar, Chairman, Board of Trustees of SINDA.

(see Appendix VII & VIII)

LEE KUAN YEW SCHOLARSHIP FUND: The Lee Kuan Yew Scholarship Fund was set up in 1991 in appreciation of the immense contributions the former Prime Minister Mr., Lee Kuan Yew had made to the nation.

The objective of the Fund is to enable Singaporeans of sound character and outstanding intellectual ability who are active in sports and community service, to pursue post graduate studies to develop their potential as leaders in their fields and community. The Fund is managed by the Public Service Commission.

Mr. T. R. Mulani, immediate past Chairman, was a member of the Project Committee. The Chamber donated a sum of \$100,001 towards this fund, which was collected from members of the Chamber.



THE PRIME MINISTER MR. GOH CHOK TONG ARRIVES AT THE BANQUET HALL ACCOMPANIED BY MR. M. K. CHANRAI AFTER BEING ADORNED WITH A SPECIALLY ORDERED HANDMADE SANDALWOOD GARLAND FLOWN IN FROM INDIA.

INDIAN COMMUNITY DINNER TO HONOUR SENIOR MINISTER

MR. LEE KUAN YEW: The Singapore Indian Community Dinner to honour Sr. Minister Mr. Lee Kuan Yew was held on 16th January 1992 at Westin Raffles Room to pay tribute to the contributions of Mr. Lee Kuan Yew to Singapore and to the Indian community in Singapore.

The gala affair was attended by 1,000 persons representing a cross section of the Indian community in Singapore. Our Chamber supported the function with 200 persons attending the dinner.

Launch of Video Documentary on Indian Customs & Practices: Ministry of Community Development (MCD) with the help of a group of Indian culture experts had produced a video documentary entitled "Customs and Celebrations - an Indian Way of Life". This was to promote inter-ethnic understanding and cross cultural appreciation amongst Singaporeans.

Together with the National Community Organisations Council (NCOC) and our Chamber, MCD launched the documentary on 22nd November 1992 at the NPB Auditorium. Prof. S Jayakumar, Minister for Law and Home Affairs, was the Guest of Honor. The welcome address was delivered by our Chairman Mr. M. K. Chanrai.



CHAIRMAN AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS WITH THE NEW LOGO.

1993

SINGAPORE – INDIA BILATERAL TRADE & INVESTMENT RELATIONS

A high powered delegation comprising Brig. Gen. (Res) George Yeo, Minister of Information and Arts, Mr. Lim Boon Heng, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Mr. Tan Chin Nam, Managing Director of EDB, Officials of the Ministries and businessmen visited India from February 5th - 15th, 1993.

Chairman Mr. M. K. Chanrai, was invited to participate in the mission's visits to Delhi, Bombay, Bangalore and Madras where they were briefed on the economic developments in India and proposals were made for further strengthening trade and investment ties. In Madras, meetings were held with the Tamil Nadu State Government officials to receive a proposal on the Madras-Singapore Corridor, a 800 hectare piece of land, designated for joint venture development.

The delegation observed that India had been opening its doors to foreign investors following the economic reforms begun in 1992. It was felt that many opportunities existed for increased cooperation between India and Singapore, the full potential of which had yet to be explored.

At a meeting held in the Chamber in March 1993, Chairman, Mr. M. K. Chanrai briefed the Chamber members on the trade mission's visit to India. The details of the proposed Madras Corridor and the setting up of the proposed Chamber initiated Investment Holding Company for investments India were explained.

The meeting approved the idea for the setting up of an investment company and indicated that an action plan to gather support from the members was needed.

PARAMESWARA HOLDINGS LTD: Arising from the visit of the trade delegation to India in February Chairman Mr. M. K. Chanrai who accompanied Brig. Gen. (Res) George Yeo, expressed great optimism upon their return on what India could offer now and in the future. With encouragement from the Minister and with a specific brief to spearhead Singapore Investment and trade with India, SICCI decided to give the lead. The SICCI Board of Directors, at their meeting held on 27th February 1993, took an important decision to form a Steering Committee to explore the possibility of forming an Investment Company with a view to spearheading a strategic business thrust into India and to work out feasibility studies on suitable projects. Mr. S. H. Hassanbhai was appointed Chairman of this Steering Committee.



OFFICERS OF PARAMESWARA HOLDINGS LTD MR. S. H. HASSANBHAI (DEPUTY CHAIRMAN), MR. M. K. CHANRAI (CHAIRMAN), MR. GEORGE ABRAHAM (DIRECTOR/SECRETARY) AT THE SIGNING CEREMONY OF ITPL.



The Steering Committee consisted of Mr. M. K. Chanrai, Mr. Shabbir H. Hassanbhai, Mr. M. Rajaram, Mr. N. M. Ramchandani, Mr. Inder R. Vig, Mr Vijay Iyengar and Dr. R. C. Cooper.

The subsequent meeting with Chamber members in March also gave impetus to the setting up of an investment holding company.

The Chamber took the initiative to incorporate a Holding Company, i.e. Parameswara Holdings Ltd, on 26th May 1993 under the Companies Act Cap 50 to spearhead investments into India.

The original promoters and Directors of the Company were Mr. M. K. Chanrai (Chairman), Mr. S. H. Hassanbhai (Deputy Chairman), Mr. M. Rajaram, Mr. N. M. Ranchandani, Mr. Vijay Iyengar, Mr. Inder R. Vig, Dr. R. C. Cooper and Mr. George Abraham. With the registered office in the Chamber, Messrs J. K. Medora & Co were appointed Auditors and Mr. George Abraham Company Secretary.

GST Select Committee sits today

Business groups will face a high-level Parliamentary Select Committee today to present their views on the Goods and Services Tax (GST) proposed for next year.

One group comprises four chambers of commerce — Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Singapore Malay Chamber of Commerce and Singapore International Chamber of Commerce.

The other, the Electronic Industry Finance Committee, is a grouping of electronics companies, a Parliament spokesman said yesterday.

He declined to disclose the total number of groups and individual members of the

public who will make representations at six hearings between today and the end of the month.

Besides today, hearings are slated for June 22, 24, 25, 28 and 29. They are open to the press.

Finance Minister Richard Hu gave details of the tax, set at 8 per cent, on Budget Day, Feb 26, along with a package of personal and corporate tax cuts to cushion its effects.

The House went on to debate the tax the following month, with the Government explaining that taxing domestic consumption across the board would spread the tax burden, while the tax cuts were designed to spur enterprise and investment.

The hearings are expected

to centre on the mechanics of implementing the GST and how it will affect business operations.

The 10-member Select Committee is chaired by Speaker Tan Soo Khoon.

The Government's representatives are Dr Hu, Minister of State (Finance and Communications) Teo Chee Hean, Trade and Industry Minister S. Dhanabalan and Senior Minister of State (Trade and Industry) Lim Boon Heng.

The backbenchers on the committee are Leng Kuei Ann, Ow Chin Hock, Eoon Lay, Goh Chee Wee, Sembawang GRC MP Ho Peng, Keong Tong Pasir MP Shiu Joo, Tong and Nominated Member of Parliament Chua.

Technopark in India: Work to start in Jan

A SINGAPORE consortium, which includes three government-linked companies as well as private firms, will begin construction work on a \$4250 million information technology park in south-west India in January.

The first phase of the park covering 58 acres, equivalent to about 25 football fields — will be ready by the end of 1995, and the second phase a year later.

The Singapore consortium, called Information Technology Park Investment Pte Ltd (ITPI), will own 40 per cent of the park located in the capital of Karnataka state. Indian parties will own the remainder.

The six members of ITPI, which has a \$10 million authorised share capital, signed a shareholders' agreement yesterday.

They are L&M subsidiary L&M Properties, which will have a 19.9 per cent stake, RSP Architects (20.1 per cent), Technology Parks (20 per cent), listed Singapore Technologies Industrial Corporation (20 per cent), Sem-



Gathered around an artist's impression of the park are (from left) Parameswara's Murlidharan, RSP's Albert Hong, Indian High Commissioner Shri B. M. C. Nayar, EDB's Phillip Yeo, Semiswamy's Lal Chun Loong and L&M deputy chairman Putra Masagung.

bawang Construction 10 per cent and Parameswara Holdings, the investment arm of the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (10 per cent).

Their Indian partners in the park are conglomerate Tata Group (40 per cent stake), and the Karnataka state government (20 per cent).

dian Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao last year.

The Straits Times understands that Prime Minister Goh is likely to be at the park's ground-breaking ceremony as he will be visiting India early next year as the country's National Day guest, and to lead a Singaporean business delegation there.

Speaking to reporters before the signing, Mr Liew Mun Leong, group managing director of L&M Group Investments Ltd, said the park already has so many prospective tenants that ITPI has requested another 10 acres to be added to it.

He said multinationals IBM and AT&T will be the anchor tenants, with others such as Texas Instruments, Siemens, Motorola and home-grown companies like Singapore Computer Systems registering their interest.

Yesterday's signing was witnessed by the chairman of the Economic Development Board, Mr Philip Yeo, and India's High Commissioner to Singapore, Mr Shri B. M. C. Nayar.

Indian chamber's new firm named after Parameswara

THE Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (SICCI) new company, formed last week to spearhead investments in India, has been named Parameswara Holdings Ltd — after the legendary ruler of Singapore.

The chamber announced yesterday that the company has been registered with a paid-up capital of \$10 million. It has also set up a seven-member steering committee to oversee the formation and action plan of the company.

These details were given at a conference on business opportunities in India yesterday organised by the Trade Development Board (TDB), the Singapore Manufacturers' Association, the SICCI and the Indian High Commission in Singapore.

The main speaker at the conference was India's Commerce Secretary, Mr A. V. Ganesan.

Mr Shabbir Hassambhai, chairman of the steering committee for the company, said that it had shortlisted "a number of investment projects" in India but he declined to elaborate.

He said details of the projects were expected in three to six months.

By that time, "we also expect to have brought in a number of interested investors to take up equity in the company", he said.

The new company will work with the TDB and government-linked companies to develop industrial parks and power generation projects in India.

A possible project is in Madras in Tamil Nadu, south India, which has been identified as a possible manufacturing zone for local investors.

Indian High Commissioner Yogesh Tiwari said that his government was expected to formally present its plans for Madras to Singapore investors in June.

He said that the state government of Tamil Nadu had already designated about 1,000 hectares of land for the proposed industrial zone.

Consultants appointed to study the project have just completed their report, which will be submitted to the Economic Development Board by the end of this month, he said.

Mr Tiwari said that Madras will have India's first economic processing zone to be jointly undertaken by the Indian government, and the Indian and Singapore private sectors. India's seven other EPZs are all owned and managed by the government, he said.

Fund for quake victims

THE Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry will be collecting donations for the victims of India's worst earthquake in 50 years.

A statement from the chamber yesterday asked donors to make out their cheques to the "Indian Disaster Relief Fund".

Cheques should be sent to The Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, #23-01, Tong Eng Building, 101 Cecil Street, Singapore 0106.

Last Thursday's earthquake in Maharashtra state, measuring 6.4 on the Richter scale, was reported to have killed about 20,000 people.

10 local-based Indian firms make pledges to Indian chamber's investment group

By Tan Sung

MORE than 10 large Singapore-based Indian companies have made pledges to the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry's investment vehicle, Parameswara Holdings.

Some have committed up to \$2 million each to Parameswara, which was incorporated in April.

Declining to name the companies, chairman M.K. Chanrai told The Straits Times that the chamber's thrust into the subcontinent was quickly gaining momentum.

He added that specific investment projects identified to date included participation in the 800-hectare Madras Industrial Park, a hotel-cum-convention centre in Bangalore, and an Indian housing project in which another Singapore-listed property company was showing keen interest.

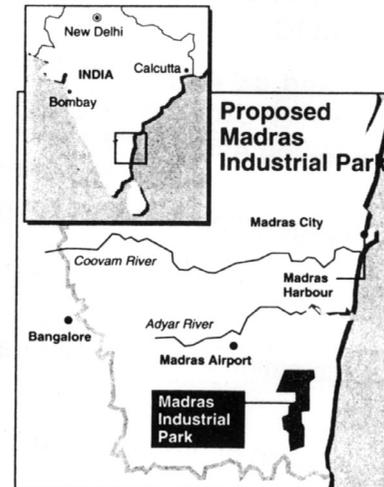
The investment holding company, with a paid-up capital of \$10 million, is also positioning itself as a venture capital fund to buy equities on India's stock exchanges, he said.

Mr Chanrai added that Parameswara was also negotiating with several Indian banks here to form a consortium to provide financing facilities for projects identified in India. The banks approached include the Indian Overseas Bank, Indian Bank and United Commercial Bank.

On the flip side, however, the holding company's steering committee has found the Indian government slow in addressing certain issues which local investors have raised.

Committee member Dr R.C. Cooper said that the Indian authorities had been "dragging their feet" over the Madras Industrial Park project.

While it had made a com-



mitment to provide Singapore developers an 800-hectare site, Singapore investors were still worried over problems such as the terms for its land lease, the scarcity of power supply, and a dearth of supporting industries and infrastructure.

"We were promised an in-depth feasibility study for the project by April. This is still not forthcoming to date," he said.

He added that another problem area concerned India's labour laws which prevent private companies from firing workers. Noting that many first-class Indian companies had been ruined by workers' strikes before, Dr Cooper said that the committee was hoping the Indian authorities would provide some form of protection in this area.

The third major problem

TDB to set up informal business grouping of Indian and S'pore firms

By Phua Kok Kim

THE Trade Development Board (TDB) is setting up an informal business grouping involving both Singapore and Indian companies here and in India aimed at boosting bilateral trade and investment ties.

To be named the India Business Interaction Group (IBIG), the forum will provide a network whereby information on projects and business proposals in India can be exchanged and disseminated.

The proposed IBIG will also allow TDB to obtain feedback on its promotional programmes and activities in India. The TDB yesterday confirmed that it was plan-

ning to set up the informal grouping jointly with the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The statutory board said the interaction group will comprise Singapore companies with business interests in India as well as subsidiaries of Indian companies here.

But it added that the composition and activities of IBIG are still being decided.

Sources told The Straits Times that the TDB has written to about 50 local companies, most of whom have expressed enthusiasm about the proposed grouping.

The sources said the IBIG mechanism would enable TDB to better co-ordinate efforts by local companies investing in India. They said the TDB

has indicated that the proposed IBIG would meet regularly — tentatively on a quarterly basis — to exchange information on specific project proposals and business opportunities.

Whenever appropriate, it would also organise talks by experts on relevant topical issues.

The IBIG will also arrange meetings for local businessmen with visiting Indian business leaders and Indian delegations coming here.

This initiative by the TDB is in line with remarks made by Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong at the recent National Day rally that India was an emerging economy with opportunities which Singapore businessmen were well-positioned to take advantage of.

The Prime Minister also said that he would be leading a business delegation to India sometime late this year or early next year, which he hoped would spark off a mild "India fever".

When contacted, Mr B Shetty, the acting Indian High Commissioner here, said the proposed IBIG was an "excellent idea".

Since India began its economic reform about two years ago, Singapore investments in the subcontinent has picked up. For the first four months this year, local companies have invested in Rs 354 million worth of projects there, more than half the total investment figure last year of Rs 602 million.

The Steering Committee of the Chamber identified several possible projects in India to invest in, including an Information Technology Park in Bangalore and the Madras-Singapore Industrial Park. For the first project, Parameswara Holdings Ltd was part of the Singapore consortium to develop India's first Information Technology Park, estimated to cost \$250 million.

The consortium of six Singaporean companies comprising RSP Architects Planners and Engineers Pte Ltd; L&M Properties Pte Ltd; Technology Parks Pte Ltd; Singapore Technologies Industrial Corporation Ltd; Sembawang Construction Pte Ltd and Parameswara Holdings Ltd signed a shareholders' agreement on 25th November 1993 to form "Information Technology Park Investment Pte Ltd (ITPI)" to develop business parks in the region.

Chairman, Mr. M. K. Chanrai signed on behalf of Parameswara Holdings Ltd. Mr. Shabbir H Hassanbhai, Director and Mr. George Abraham, Director/ Secretary witnessed the signing ceremony.

1994

VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER GOH CHOK TONG TO INDIA: Prime Minister Mr. Goh Chok Tong was invited to be the Chief Guest of the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao at the Republic Day celebrations on 26th January 1994 in India. A high level delegation of senior ministers and corporate leaders, accompanied the Prime Minister on his visit from 23rd-29th January 1994. The delegation which also included Minister for Foreign Affairs, Prof. S. Jayakumar; Minister for Trade & Industry, Mr. Yeo Cheow Tong, Minister of State for Trade & Industry, Mr. Goh Chee Wee; Chairman, Mr. M. K. Chanrai; Director, Mr. Shabbir H. Hassanbhai; Director, Mr. D. D. Gupta and other members, visited Delhi, Bangalore and Bombay and held meetings with private and public sector representatives.

The Bangalore Information Technology Park was officially launched by the Singapore Prime Minister, Mr. Goh Chok Tong, on 28th Jan 94. Chairman, Mr. M. K. Chanrai, and Directors Mr. Shabbir H. Hassanbhai and Mr. George Abraham represented Parameswara Holdings Ltd which was one of the Singapore Consortium members involved in the project.



L TO R: MR. M. RAJARAM, CHAIRMAN, ASEANINDIA BUSINESS COUNCIL (AIBC), MR. P. M. S. MALIK, FOREIGN SECRETARY, INDIA, H. E. DATO AJIT SINGH, SECRETARY-GENERAL (ASEAN), MR. GEORGE ABRAHAM, SECRETARY-GENERAL AIBC (ASEAN), MR. SRIVASTAVA, SECRETARY GENERAL AIBC (INDIA).



L TO R: MR. VIJAY IYENGAR, MR. S. H. HASSANBAHAI (VICE CHAIRMAN), MR. COL. KO LAY (MAYOR, YANGON CITY DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION), MR. GEORGE ABRAHAM (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR) AND MR. ATISH L. MODY.

BUSINESS DELEGATION ACCOMPANYING INDIAN PRIME MINISTER P. V. NARASIMHA RAO TO SINGAPORE: H. E. P. V. Narasimha Rao, who visited Singapore from 7th-9th September 94 at the invitation of Prime Minister, Mr. Goh Chok Tong, was accompanied by 28 business delegates and representatives of FICCI, CII and ASSOCHAM led by

Mr. R. P. Goenka, Ex-President of FICCI. A meeting was held at SMA on 7th September 1994, where a presentation by the Indian delegation on economic conditions and investment opportunities in India, followed by a presentation by EDB on Singapore's regionalization strategy was made.

Prime Minister Mr. Rao delivered the 13th Singapore Lecture on 'India & the Asia-Pacific: Forging a New Relationship' on 8th September 1994 which was attended by several SICCI members.

RELIEF FUND FOR EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS IN MAHARASHTRA,

INDIA: In its effort to help the victims of the devastating earthquake which rocked the state of Maharashtra in September 1993, our Chamber mobilised support and collected \$81,936 through its fund raising campaign. A bank draft in favour of the 'Prime Minister's Relief Fund, New Delhi' was handed over to the Indian High Commissioner by Chairman, Mr. M. K. Chanrai on 28th February 1994.

TIMBER EXPORT TO MYANMAR: The problem encountered by some members with regards to prepaid timber exports to Myanmar, was taken up with the TDB by Executive Director, Mr. George Abraham in May 94. With the assistance of TDB and as a result of the discussions held by Vice-Chairman, Mr. Shabbir H. Hassanbhai and Executive Director, Mr. George Abraham with Myanmar government officials in August 1994, the matter was resolved in June 1994.

ASEAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY (ASEAN-CCI): The ASEAN-India Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee meeting held on 7th Jan 94 at Bali, Indonesia, was attended by government representatives from member countries and India. A decision to set up a ASEAN-India Business Council was made. Our Chamber was given the responsibility, as Country Convenor, for setting it up. The meeting was attended by Vice-Chairman, Mr. M. Rajaram and Executive Director, Mr. George Abraham.

Network to offer trade data on 40,000 firms

SMALL and medium businesses in the Asia-Pacific will be able to access either free or at nominal cost, the latest trade information on 40,000 regional companies by the end of the year.

This will be made possible through Trade Match, a new computer data-base network being developed by the Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI).

At a presentation of Trade Match in Singapore yesterday, Mr Ken Court, past president of the CACCI and the Western Australian Chamber of Commerce, said its key feature is access to information at low cost using the latest technology.

The system could potentially list all six million members of the chambers in the 18 member countries of the CACCI, he said.

Mr Court said every chamber already has its own data base of members and their business activities. Under Trade Match all this data is loaded on to a CD-ROM and specially designed user-friendly software used to search for trade information.

The Western Australian Chamber of Commerce, which is co-ordinating the project on behalf of CACCI, hopes to release the first CD-ROM at CACCI's biennial conference in Perth this December.

It hopes to provide every three months information avail-

able is as current as possible. Trade Match director Jean Du Buisson said the CD-ROMs will be provided free to the chambers, which will decide whether to charge their members a fee for using the data.

He said that Trade Match will be like an "active Yellow Pages" as it will be updated frequently.

Singapore, Sri Lanka, New Zealand and South Australia have already provided their data bases. India, Vietnam, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, the rest of Australia, Malaysia and Taiwan are expected to provide data in time for the launch of Trade Match.

Trade Match's cost has been kept low by keeping it as an off-line network.

Chamber members will have to go to the chamber and search for the trade information they require as if they were in a library. Alternatively they can have the chamber staff do the search and have the data transmitted via electronic mail or by fax.

The Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry has listed all its 520 members in Trade Match. It will also be providing the Trade Match search facility free to its members, according to its executive director George Abraham.

The other chambers in the Republic have yet to join Trade Match.

Page Eight

Indian music, dance and poetry from golden age fuse

Theme revolves around love, desire, loneliness and passion

TAN SHZR EE

INDIAN poetry, music and dance will merge to become one tonight at The Substation Garden.

Two classically-trained Indian dancers will be lending movement to the lines of 2,000-year-old Sangam poems in a dance-theatre production titled *What She Said*...

The Sangam period was a golden age for classical Tamil poetry, and the poems from the era, in the modern English translation by A. K. Ramesh, will be narrated by Singapore actress Rani Moorthy during a one-hour performance.

Presented in the form of a dialogue between two ancient Indian women, the text centres around uni-

versal themes of love, desire, loneliness and passion gone cold.

The two women's object of love — a man — creates triangular tension through his presence in their memory.

Canada-based dancer-choreographer Gitanjali Kolanad and classical Indian dancer Priya Arun will be bringing the verses to life through the ancient form of Bharata Nattya.

Characterised by strict geometry and complex rhythms, Bharata Nattya's real strength lies in its emotional richness.

The jealousy, pain, lust and betrayal expressed in the contemporary English lines will penetrate the emotional realm through slow-mov-

ing gestures.

But the verses are not translated "literally" into dances.

Rather, the dances will depict the possible situations in which the two women could have carried on their conversation — the women are seen fetching water, pounding grain and washing at the riverside.

The dancers will be accompanied by three musicians from the Singapore Indian Fine Arts Society.

What She Said... is sponsored by the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the Canadian High Commission. It is on at The Substation Garden tonight at 7.30 pm. Admission is free.

Singapore Festival of Arts



What She Said... the jealousy, pain, lust and betrayal are expressed in

1995

INA MARKING CEREMONY AT THE ESPLANADE: To commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the End of World War II, The Ministry of Information and Arts (MITA) marked 11 historically significant sites including the Indian National Army (INA) Monument at the Esplanade. The Chamber sponsored the commemoration plaque for the INA monument at a cost of \$50,000.

The Chamber also organised the official marking ceremony for the site of the Indian National Army Monument at the Esplanade on 15th July 1995. Mr. S. Dhanabalan, MP for Toa Payoh GRC, was the Guest-of-Honour. The ceremony was attended by about 20 INA veterans from Singapore, Malaysia, the Seychelles and India. 30 members from the chamber and 30 other guests and officials also attended this function.

ASEAN-INDIA ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: The ASEAN-India Business Council and the India/ASEAN Economic Cooperation Committee jointly presented this Roundtable discussion on 21st September 1995. Hon. Dr. Manmohan Singh, Minister of Finance, India and Data' Ajit Singh, Secretary-General, ASEAN and the Co chairmen of the ASEAN India Business Council were keynote speakers for the event. The Chairman for the session was Mr. S. Dhanabalan, former Cabinet Minister and Member of Parliament.

DINNER FOR DR. MANMOHAN SINGH, MINISTER OF FINANCE, INDIA: In honour of Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Chamber organised a dinner reception on 22nd September 1995 at Pan Pacific Hotel. Mr. S. Shanabala, former Cabinet Minister and Member of Parliament and Mr. Davinder Singh, Member of Parliament were also present. About 180 guests including members from the Chamber attended this function.

INDIA: At the invitation of the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), Hon. Prime Minister, Mr Goh Chok Tong visited Calcutta from 3rd-6th January 1995 to attend the centenary celebrations of CII at which he delivered the keynote address. The Prime Minister was accompanied by a delegation of Singapore businessmen, including our Chairman, Mr. M. K. Chanrai.



GUEST OF HONOUR: MR. S. DHANABALAN AT THE INA MONUMENT MEMORIAL PLAQUE.



MR. DHANABALAN WITH FORMER INA VETERANS FROM SINGAPORE, MALAYSIA AND INDIA).



FORMER MEMBERS OF INA RANI OF JHANSI REGIMENT. 2ND FROM LEFT: MADAM J. NAHAPPAN, 5TH FROM LEFT: DR. LAKSHINI SAHGAL.



HON. CHIEF MINISTER OF KARNATAKA STATE, INDIA, ADDRESSING MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER.

KARNATAKA DELEGATION LED BY HON CHIEF MINISTER MR.

H. D. DEVE GOWDA: A 12 member delegation from the State of Karnataka, led by Mr. H. D. Deve Gowda visited Singapore from the 24th–26th July 1995. With the aim of renewing cooperation between Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the State of Karnataka, a meeting-cum-luncheon was arranged at Imperial Hotel, Singapore on 26th July 1995.

The meeting was chaired by Chairman, Mr. M. K. Chanrai who welcomed the delegation and briefed them on Singapore-India trade. FKCCI president, Mr. K. L. Ramesh also addressed the meeting and spoke on the potential of Karnataka for trade and investment purposes. Hon. Mr. Roshan Baig, Minister of State for Bangalore City Development & WAKFS and Hon Mr. R. V. Despande, Minister for Large & Medium Industries also attended the meeting and made a presentation on Karnataka. A deed of declaration outlining the focus areas of cooperation between our two chambers was also signed.

ASEAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY (ASEAN-CCI)

The ASEAN-INDIA Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee meeting held from 12th-14th February 1995 at New Delhi and Goa, India was attended by government representatives from member countries and India. Mr M. Rajaram and Mr. George Abraham as Chairman and Secretary General of ASEAN-INDIA BUSI NESS COUNCIL respectively acted on behalf of SFCCI.

1996

(see Appendix VIII)

GLOBAL INDIAN ENTREPRENEURS CONFERENCE 1996

(GIEC'96): The first ever organised Global Indian Entrepreneurs Conference 1996 took place at the Westin Stamford, Raffles City Convention Centre, Singapore on 19th-21st June 1996. This conference was organised by the Chamber with the support of the Singapore Trade Development Board, Singapore Economic Development Board and the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board. An overwhelming support was received not only from the local entrepreneurs but also all over the world. More than 500 participants from various countries took part in this major event. It was also given a wide coverage by both the local and the international media.

This 3-day conference aimed to explore the political background and the potential of the reform process in India, and to forge strategic partnerships between India and the rest of the world, through interaction among leading business personalities, the Indian diaspora and leaders of multi-national corporations interested in tapping India's potential. Special sessions devoted to business meetings and networking activities gave rare opportunity for entrepreneurs, investors and other key decision makers to form partnership to benefit from the vast economic opportunities arising from the opening of the Indian economy to the world and the use of Singapore for linkages in the region.

Several prominent speakers delivered thought provoking speeches. The presence of President, Mr. Ong Teng Cheong, Prime Minister, Mr. Goh Chok Tong and Deputy Prime Minister Brig. Gen. (NS) Lee Hsien Loong, Minister for Trade & Industry, Mr. Yeo Cheow Tong, and the Minister of Finance, India, Mr. Palaniappan Chidambaram added prominence to the event. Overall, the conference was a great success.

The Chamber, in appreciation to members of the Advisory, Organising and Working Committees and others involved in the GIEC '96 hosted a tea party on 9th September 1996 at Hotel Imperial, Singapore. At the party, the Chamber presented a donation to SINDA from the excess funds generated of about \$184,000,



GIEC VIP LINEUP AT THE OPENING: L TO R: MR. K. CHANRAI, PROFESSOR S. JAYAKUMAR, MR. S. DHANABALAN, DPM BG(NS)LEE HSIEN LOONG, AND MINISTERS MR. P CHIDAMBARAM, MR. YEO CHEOW TONG, BG(NS) GEORGE YEO.



GIEC PRESIDENT ONG TENG CHEONG BEING GREETED BY BOARD MEMBERS: L TO R: MR. J. K. GOPALRAMAM, MR. NITIN B. DOSHI, VICE-CHAIRMAN MR. M. RAJARAM AND CHAIRMAN MR. D. D. GUPTA AT THE GARDEN PARTY HOSTED.

Prof. S Jayakumar, Minister for Law and Foreign Affairs, graced the occasion as Guest of Honour and received the donation on behalf of SINDA.

The Chamber recorded its appreciation to Mr. S. Dhanabalan, Chairman of the GIEC '96 Advisory Committee, Immediate Past Chairman of SICCI, Mr. M. K. Chanrai, Chairman of the GIEC '96 Organising Committee and former Director, Ministry of Trade & Industry, Singapore, Mr. S. Iswaran, Chairman of the GIEC '96 Working Committee, members of these committees and all those who helped to make GIEC '96 a success.

(see Appendix X & XI)

DEEPAVALI TEA PARTY FOR PRIME MINISTER: The Singapore Indian Community organised a Deepavali Tea Party for Prime Minister Mr. Goh Chok Tong on 15th Nov 1996 at the Singapore Indian Association Grounds. A special committee was formed for organizing this event. Vice Chairman, Mr. M. Rajaram was requested by the Board to represent the Chamber in the Organising Committee for which SICCI pledged to raise a total of \$50,000 for the function.

The Hon. Prime Minister had a large gold- threaded shawl draped over his shoulders and was also presented with a traditional garland and a gold mace. The event was attended by more than 1,000 members of the Indian Community from

a different cultural, social and religious background. During the function, the organising committee presented a cheque for \$20,000 to SINDA.

MTI-SFCCI DIALOGUE: The first MTI-SFCCI dialogue was held on 14th Feb 1996. Rising Business costs, extension of JTC leases, financing for SMEs going regional (financial assistance for overseas ventures, foreign exchange risks), estate duty and political risk insurance were discussed. Our chamber was represented by Chairman, Mr. M. K. Chanrai and Executive Director, Mr. George Abraham.

LUNCH WITH THE MINISTER OF TRADE & INDUSTRY: This lunch was part of the Minister's series of lunches with the private sector and six key officials of our chamber were invited to a lunch on 13th May 1996. From our Chamber Mr. M. K. Chanrai, Immediate past Chairman, Mr. D. D. Gupta (Chairman), Mr. M. Rajaram (Vice Chairman), Mr. Moti C. Melwani (Vice Chairman), Mrs. Jaya Mohideen (Hon Treasurer) and Mr. George Abraham (Executive Director) attended the lunch. It was a very useful meeting as the chamber was able to raise many matters concerning our members and the Minister was very receptive to the points raised.



GIEC: R TO L: MR. S. ISWARAN (CHAIRMAN WORKING COMMITTEE), MR. M. K. CHANRAI (CHAIRMAN ORGANISING COMMITTEE), MR. S. DHANABALAN (CHAIRMAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE), MR. D. D. GUPTA (CHAIRMAN SICCI), MR. S. H. HASSANBHAI (WORKING AND ORGANISING COMMITTEES), MR. GEORGE ABRAHAM (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SICCI).



GIEC: BG (NS) MR. LEE HSIEN LOONG BEING GREETED BY MR. S. P. HINDUJA. DATO AJIT SINGH, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF ASEAN (2ND FROM RIGHT) WITH MR. P. CHIDAMBARAM, MINISTER FOR FINANCE, INDIA.

1997

"INDIA TODAY!" A FASHION EXTRAVAGANZA: The first fund raising event "India Today!" A Fashion Extravaganza took place at the Mandarin Singapore, Mandarin Ballroom on 10th September 1997. This event was planned to generate funds and also to promote an annual show case event for the Chamber. The Guest-of-Honour was Mr. Abdullah Tarmugi, Minister for Community Development.

The fashion show was presented by NIFT, the National Institute of Fashion Technology, New Delhi which is renowned for designing high quality designer wear. A sophisticated array of ensembles created by leading designers was presented by India's top models flown in by courtesy of Indian Airlines. A team of Master Chefs from Taj group of hotels were flown in by Singapore Airlines to prepare a culinary feast. The event was sponsored by Indian Airlines, Hong Kong Bank, Singapore Airlines, and the Taj Group. TV12 & Television Corporation of Singapore filmed the show and aired it on Channels 5 and 12. It was rated as a grand success by those who attended the show and the chamber raised about \$98,000 .

RESOURCE PANEL FOR THE GOVERNMENT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE (GPC) FOR FINANCE, TRADE & INDUSTRY: A member of the Resource Panel of the Government Parliamentary Committee (GPC) for Finance, Trade and Industry, Executive Director Mr. George Abraham gave feedback on the following: Local Enterprise Financing Scheme, training, incentives for the trade, tourism and retail sectors, flexi-wage system , pre-emptive budget and reduction in GST.

MAHARASTRA STATE DELEGATION LED BY HON. CHIEF MINISTER, MR. MANOHAR JOSHI: The Hon Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Mr. Manohar Joshi led an 8-member State Level Delegation to Singapore on 19th May 1997. The basic objective of the mission was on urban issues including urban renewal, transportation and amenities. The Hon. Chief Minister indicated an interest to interact with major industry groups and NRI Associations as a follow-up of "Advantage Maharashtra."



L TO R: MR. N. B. DOSHI (CHAIRMAN FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE) MR. D. D. GUPTA (CHAIRMAN SICCI); GUEST-OF-HONOUR; HON. MINISTER MR. ABDULLAH TARMUGI, MRS. TARMUGI, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, MR. R. RAVINDRAN AND MRS. RAVINDRAN.

INDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CALCUTTA-WEST BENGAL: A 15 member delegation from Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta-West Bengal led by Hon. Mr. Somnath Chatterjee M P, Chairman, West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation Limited, with multi-product business interest businessmen visited the Chamber on 22nd September 1997. Chairman, Mr. D D Gupta signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation and a Business Co-operation Agreement with the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta.

SINGAPORE-INDIA JBC MEETING: The Second Meeting of the Singapore-India JBC was held on 13th October 1997 in Singapore. The Indian delegation was led by Mr. V. Chidambaram, Chairman, India-Singapore JBC and the Singapore delegation by Mr. M. Rajaram Co-chairman Singapore-India JBC. H. E. Mr. Prem Singh, Indian High Commissioner in Singapore inaugurated the meeting urging both sides to step up this business cooperation of mutual benefits.

INDIA TODAY - A FASHION EXTRAVAGANZA



SPEECH BY
Mr ABDULLAH TARMUGI
MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AT SINGAPORE INDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY'S
FUND-RAISING FASHION EXTRAVAGANZA "INDIA TODAY 1997".
WED, 10 SEP 97, 7.30 PM, MANDARIN HOTEL

Good evening Mr D D Gupta, Chairman, Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SICCI), Members of SICCI, Ladies & Gentlemen

My wife and I are very happy to be here this evening for the fashion extravaganza organised by the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SICCI), the first fund-raising event by the SICCI.

Since the formation in 1924 of SICCI's predecessor, The Indian Merchants Association, the Indian business community has been an active player and partner in Singapore's economic development and progress. Without doubt, SICCI today is seen as the leader in directing the business interests of the local Indian community, establishing links with its counterparts in the other communities here and abroad, as well as building strong connections with other Indian business communities throughout the world.

SICCI has also been a firm supporter of Singapore's efforts to develop its external economic wing. SICCI's established links with India and Indian businessmen have made the Chamber an important partner in our thrust into India's economy. In 1993, SICCI sponsored Parameswara Holdings Ltd, a public company with its registered office in the Chamber, and which currently holds shares in the Bangalore Information Technology Park and other projects in India. Just last year, SICCI successfully organised the Global Indian Entrepreneurs Conference. And even now, it is working on developing the Global Indian Business network on the Internet.

But SICCI is not one to rest on its laurels and do the usual things in the usual way. I understand that the Chamber has been proactive in seeking new ways to expand its role in Singapore society. It has brought in two NUS academics to look into how SICCI could better prepare itself for the next century. It is also considering extending membership to professionals in the business sector, including non-resident Indians.

I would like to commend these bold initiatives. This shows that the Chamber is not afraid to search for new solutions to new situations. By doing so you adjust and adapt and are thus better able to fit into the new environment. The intended opening up of membership to professionals and Indian non-residents will help bring in new ideas and perspectives into the Chamber. This can only help SICCI to develop and progress further.

At a time when foreign talent is being courted to boost our talent pool, SICCI's intended move to accept non-resident Indians can be seen to complement this exercise. This move is particularly significant in the light of concerns being articulated by some of our own citizens over the threat of competition from these foreign talent.

Instead of fearing competition, you recognise the positive aspects of introducing such talent into your midst and the ultimate benefit they could bring into your organisation, your community and your country. Indeed, it will provide talented foreign-born Indians a feeling of belonging to Singapore and may even entice them to remain here. Even if they do not, their bonds with Singapore will hopefully linger on when they return to their homeland. Such connections can only be good for Singapore.

Tonight, we are promised an extravaganza of Indian fashion and food. For this, we have two NUS professors whom SICCI has appointed as its consultants to thank for. They had recommended that the Chamber should organise a major function annually to give it higher profile and which the Singapore business community can look forward to.

But this is more than a feast for the eyes and taste; this event is to raise funds towards an endowment to be used to promote training and provide scholarships. Again, these are value-adding activities which will be of benefit in the long-run.

Ladies & gentlemen, in less than 30 months we will enter a new millennium. While we cannot foretell what the future holds for us, one thing is certain and that is the pace of change will quicken and IT advances will make communication so easy and efficient such that time and distance become irrelevant. Life will run at a faster pace and unless we are nimble and adaptable, we risk being left behind by the rest of the global community.

We will have to be prepared for these challenging times. By your past actions and from what I know of your future plan, I have every confidence that the Chamber has the will and wherewithal to meet the challenges of the coming millennium.

Let me end by congratulating the Chamber for organising this important inaugural event. I wish the Chamber and this event every success. I wish you a pleasant evening.

Indian chamber to broaden scope by signing on professionals

THE Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry is planning to throw open its doors to professionals working with multinational corporations as part of an effort to broaden its scope.

It is also holding its inaugural dinner and fashion show "India Today—1997" at the Mandarin Hotel next week to raise \$100,000 for promoting activities such as training and scholarships.

"The two steps are the initial outcome of a constitution review being undertaken by the chamber to prepare itself for the year 2000 and beyond," said its chairman, Mr D.D. Gupta, in an interview yesterday.

A proposal under active consideration by the chamber is to create a new class for individual membership so as to enrol highly qualified professionals—including non-resident Indians—in the business world.

Under a previous review carried out in 1991, the chamber admits professionals such as lawyers who are employers. But their firms must be majority-owned by Indians.

About 10 per cent of the Chamber's 500-plus mem-

bers are professionals, said Mr M. Rajaram, vice-chairman of the chamber. He heads its Constitution Review Committee.

Singapore is welcoming more foreign talent in response to Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong's call at the National Day Rally last month, and the potential pool of professional Indians in the Republic runs into thousands.

"We will make a modest start by trying to attract between 50 and 100 such talented people to the chamber in the first year after the proposal is approved by the general body," said Mr Rajaram, who is a lawyer.

The chamber has appointed Associate Professors Mukul Asher and Bhanoji Rao from the Department of Economics, National University of Singapore (NUS), as consultants to advise in its restructuring and help it prepare Vision 2000, he added.

Meanwhile, a study is being carried out to obtain feedback through a detailed questionnaire from at least 75 per cent of the chamber's members on the new activities they would prefer.

In an interim report, the

two NUS professors had proposed that the Indian chamber organise a major function every year which would become identifiable with it and which Singapore's business community could look forward to.

The inaugural function will kick off on Sept 10 with a fashion extravaganza and food festival.

Minister for Community Development Abdullah Tarmugi is the chief guest.

The highlight of the evening will be a fashion show by the New Delhi-based National Institute of Fashion Technology, said Mr Nitin Doshi, chairman of the fund-raising committee of the chamber.

Eighteen top Indian models with considerable international experience are being flown to Singapore to display the capability of the Indian fashion industry, he added.

Already here for the event is the executive chef and his team from the famous Rambagh Palace Hotel in Jaipur.

The Mandarin Hotel will use their services to host an Indian food festival from Sept 11 to 14.

ASEAN - INDIA BUSINESS COUNCIL (AIBC)

*Asean and Indian
Representatives
at the AIBC
Meeting*



*Exchange of Documents at AIBC
Meeting*

*L. to R.: Ms Vinitha Sethi
(Sec., IAECC), Mr. Deepak
Banker (Co-Chairman, AIBC,
India), Mr. M. K. Chanrai
(Co-Chairman, AIBC, ASEAN),
Mr. George Abraham (Sec. Gen.,
AIBC)*

UN Economic & Social Commission for ASIA & THE PACIFIC Technical & Implementation Committee of the Investment Network Services of Asia & the Pacific, 15-16 September 1997, Singapore

*L. to R. Members of the Steering
Committee: Mr. Phil E. Karp
(World Bank), Mr. Nestor
Arcansalin and Mr. Nimrod
M. Panares (Philippines),
Mrs. Evelyn Domingo Barker (UN
ESCAP), Mr. George Abraham
(Chairman) and Mr. Arvind
Agarwala (Technical Advisor)*



S'pore has new role as centre for Internet databank

By Ravi Velloor
in Bangkok

SINGAPORE will be the focal point for a UN Escap-backed effort to set up an information databank on the Internet meant to help channel investments into and within the Asia-Pacific countries.

Modelled and linked to the Ipanet website run by the World Bank, Insap-Information Network Service for Asia Pacific is pitched as a data bank in the region for country, industry and company-specific information.

Escap refers to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia-Pacific.

"One of Escap's high priority areas is inter-regional trade and investment flows. Insap will play a catalytic role in that," said Mrs Evelyn Domingo-Barker of Bangkok-based Escap's International Trade and Economic Cooperation Division.

She said developing countries drew currently only a third of annual global investment flows of about US\$300 billion (S\$453 billion).

Of this, US\$38 billion goes to China and 1 per cent of the residual was shared among 48 developing countries.

"The idea is to spread this dynamism, using infor-

mation technology to attack the lack of awareness," she told The Straits Times yesterday.

Insap is to be hosted by the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, with the chamber's executive director, Mr George Abraham, as chairman of its Steering Committee.

The chamber is arranging the \$250,000 expected to be spent on the project over the next six months.

Singapore-based software company Fact is setting up the website and Fact president Arvind Agarwalla has been appointed technical adviser to the project. Ipanet will be a collaborating partner.

Mr Abraham said the website would be operating in three months with a core group of five countries participating — Singapore, the Philippines, South Korea, China and India. Five other countries, including Malaysia, Indonesia and Fiji, would come on board later.

He said Insap grew from an Escap effort three years ago to set up a Regional Investment Information Promotion Service.

"The idea is to update the site using focal points in every country and to make it interactive through using push technology and pass-

words for users," Mr Abraham said.

Mr Agarwalla said it was the first time an attempt was being made to bunch up islands of information in the Asia-Pacific. "Insap will aggregate information on a common format.

"This means you can even compare labour costs between countries or search for countries offering, say, power projects for tender. And Singapore will be the central warehouse for the information," he said.

He said data updated on Insap would be mirrored immediately on the World Bank's Ipanet site as well.

Because Ipanet was proving a popular site for businessmen seeking opportunities, this would raise Insap's own profile.

Mr Nector Arcansalin, an information technology specialist at the Philippines Board of Investment, said although the BOI had three websites in the Philippines hosting its information, Insap would expand its reach.

"Since the first website got going a year ago, we have recorded only some 3,000 hits on all our sites. With Insap, we expect that figure to double or grow even more. We are banking on the technology in Singapore to propel us," he added.

HIGH LEVEL DELEGATIONS FROM INDIA



Hon. Minister of Trade & Commerce, Govt of Maharashtra, India Mr Sureshdada Jain and his delegates with Chairman, Mr. D. D. Gupta and Executive Director, Mr. George Abraham

Hon. Chief Minister of Maharashtra State, India, Mr Manohar Joshi being welcomed by Chairman, Mr. D. D. Gupta and members of the Chamber



Exchange of MOUs with the West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation

L. to R. : Mr Rajeet Mitter, Dy High Commissioner (India) in Singapore, Hon. Mr Somnath Chatterjee MP, Chairman, West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation, Chairman Mr D. D. Gupta and Executive Director, Mr George Abraham



SINGAPORE TEXTILE TRADE MISSION TO EASTERN EUROPE 17-29 MARCH 1997



Leader of the Delegation Mr. N. M. Ramchandani (standing right) at the meeting in Lodz, Poland with the Polish Chamber of Commerce.

PRIME MINISTER GOH CHOK TONG'S VISIT TO JAPAN : 25-27 AUGUST 1997 RECEPTION FOR SINGAPORE TRADE MISSION ACCOMPANYING PM

*L. to R. :
SICCI Board Directors
Mr. N.M. Ramchandani, Mr. Pradeep Kumar
Sharma (3rd from left) with Prime Minister
Goh Chok Tong (seated from right)*



(Photograph courtesy of the Straits Times, Singapore)

1998

FOLK RHYTHMS: The Chamber as part of its contribution to the Singapore Indian Community culture, which unites all cross sections, participated in 'Folk Rhythms' - A Pageantry of Indian Folk and Tribal Dances which was jointly organised by the Singapore Indian Fine Arts Society (SIFAS) and SICCI with support from the National Arts Council Project Grant Scheme.

The event was held on 22nd March 1998 at World Trade Centre Auditorium. The Guest of Honour was Professor S. Jayakumar, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Law.

FESTIVE CARE & SHARE/DEEPAVALI SEGMENT LAUNCH: Festive Care and Share was organised by the Community Chest, the fund raising division of the National Council of Social Service. Its aim was to raise funds for over 200,000 beneficiaries from 53 voluntary welfare organisations supported by the Comchest President Ong Teng Cheong launched both the Festival Care & Share and the Deepavali Donation Drive on 8th October 1998 at Grand Civic Plaza.

SEMINAR ON INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN SRI LANKA:

The Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry together with the Sri Lanka High Commission in Singapore organised a seminar on 'Trade and Investment Opportunities in Sri Lanka for Singapore entrepreneurs.

(see Appendix XII)

Chairman Mr. D D Gupta gave the opening address and the Minister of Industrial Development, Han C V Goneratne, gave the Keynote Address. Mr. Thilan Wijesinghe-Chairman of Board of Investment of Sri Lanka made a presentation on the areas available for investment, incentives and method of approach. Two speakers from Singapore highlighted their investment experience in Sri Lanka.

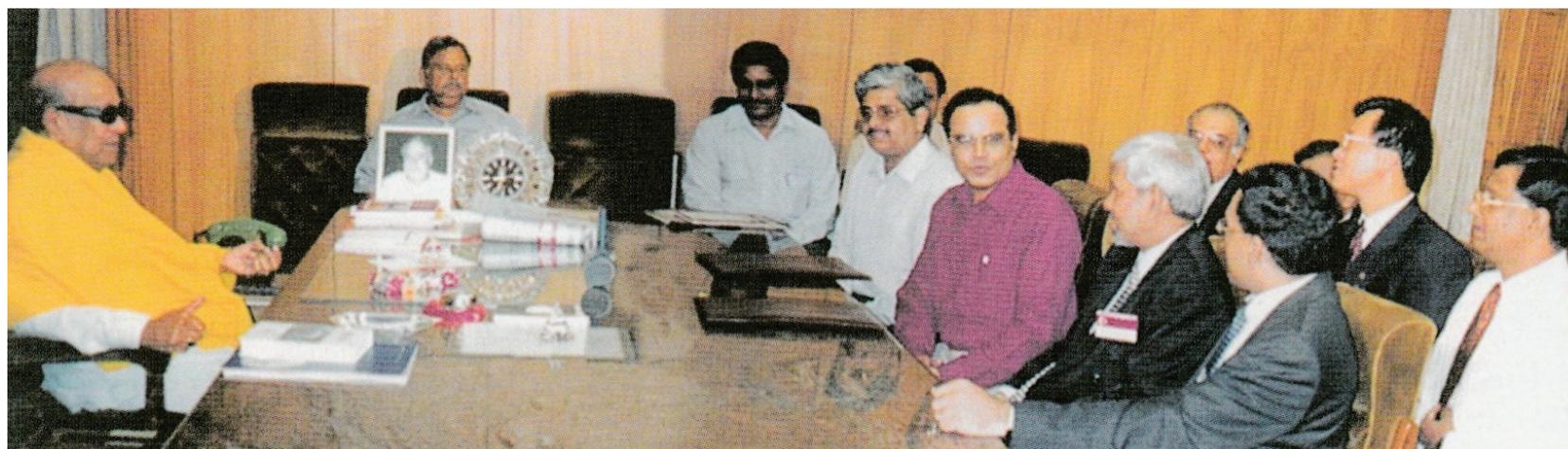
TRADE DELEGATION TO INDIA, 6TH-9TH SEPTEMBER 1998:

This trade delegation led by SICCI Vice Chairman, Mr. M. Rajaram with Mr. R. Ravindran, Member of Parliament for Bukit Timah GRC as the Advisor, visited India from the 6th to the 9th September 1998. It was organized to with the 3rd meeting of the Singapore-India Joint Business Council. ASME President Mr. Derrick Goh accompanied the delegation of 20 members.

The highlight of the Delegation's visit was the signing of the MOU between SICCI and the Tamil Nadu Government in the presence of the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Hon Mr. M. Karunanidhi and Mr. R. Ravindran.

JOINT MEETING BETWEEN MALAYSIAN ASSOCIATED INDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (MAICCI) AND

SICCI: The Chamber was invited by MAICCI to send a delegation of members to attend their fellowship session and Annual Delegates Conference on 23rd-24th May 1998 at Legend Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. Vice-Chairman, Mr. M. Rajaram led the Chamber's delegation.



MOU SIGNING CEREMONY BETWEEN TAMIL NADU AND SICCI IN THE PRESENCE OF HON CHIEF MINISTER MR. M KARUNANIDHI AND MR. R. RAVINDRAN, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, SINGAPORE.

The highlight of the conference was the Signing of Memorandum of Understanding between Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and MAICCI in the presence of Malaysian Minister Y. B. Dato Seri Dr. S. Samy Vellu.

MEETING WITH MR. R. K. HEGDE, HON. MINISTER OF COMMERCE IN INDIA 21ST AUGUST 1998: The Hon Minister of Commerce in India, Mr. R. K. Hegde led a 6-member delegation to Singapore. The purpose of his visit was to provide an update on the political and business climate of India. A meeting with chamber members was held on 21st August 1998 at Hotel Imperial.

MEETING WITH MR. SIDDARMAIAH, HON. DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER OF KARNATAKA: A 9-member delegation from the State of Karnataka led by Mr. Siddarmaiah visited the Chamber. A meeting was arranged for the delegation to meet members of the Chamber on 7th October 1998 at the Chamber. The delegation comprised of Mr. C. Byregowda, Minister of Agriculture, Mr. P. G. R. Sindhia, Minister for Transport, Mr. M. P. Praskash, Minister for Rural Development & Panchayat Raj, Mr. K. N. Nagegowda, Minister for Major & Medium Irrigation, Mr. B. S. Patil (IAS), Mr. H. Shashidhar (IAD), Dr. B. Ranganna and Mr. V. V. Shenoi. The meeting was chaired by Chairman, Mr. D. D. Gupta.

SINGAPORE INDIAN DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (SINDA): At a meeting chaired by Honorary Treasurer, Mrs. Jaya Mohideen and attended by SINDA's Mr. S. Vivakanandan (CEO) and his officials, there was a request for the Chamber to work with the Singapore Indian community through agencies like SINDA and the Peoples' Association Indian Activities Group (PAIAG), in order to develop the entrepreneurial skills of the Indian community. Arising from the meeting, the following courses of action were agreed upon:

- (i) At the Junior College Level to nurture entrepreneurship
- (ii) Developing entrepreneurial skills for working adults
- (iii) SINDA as a surrogate employer with SICCI to help develop re-training programmes to assist retrenched and/or unemployed workers to gain new employable skills.

MALAYSIAN ASSOCIATED INDIAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY (MAICCI): A joint meeting between the Malaysian Associated Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (MAICCI) and the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SICCI) was held on Saturday, 7th November 1998 at the Novotel Orchid Inn Hotel. It was jointly chaired by SICCI Chairman Mr. D. D. Gupta and MAICCI Chairman Dato V. K. K. Teagarajan. Over 20 Chamber members met with a 30 member delegation from all over Malaysia and discussed areas of cooperation for mutual benefit.

1999

75TH ANNIVERSARY GALA DINNER: A Gala Dinner was held at the Grand ballroom of the Grand Copthorne Hotel on the 20th of November 1999 as part of the Chamber's 75th anniversary celebrations. The Guest of Honour for the evening was the President of the Republic of Singapore Mr. S.R. Nathan. The dinner was also attended by a host of businessmen, foreign dignitaries, civil servants, academics and professionals. Guests were presented with watches with the SICCI logo commemorating 75 years of service displayed on it.

Dinner for the evening consisted of a unique fusion cuisine that symbolised the merging of east and west with its range of amalgamated dishes. The highlight of the evening manifested itself when the honourable president had a gold-threaded shawl draped over his shoulders and was also presented with a traditional garland by Chairman, Mr. D.D. Gupta. His Excellency was also presented with a painting from India by Vice chairman, Mr. Vijay Iyengar and Mrs. Iyengar.

A special entertainment programme of music and dance featuring a traditional welcome for the President and First Lady and a specially choreographed Indian folk dance item never before performed in Singapore (from Rajasthan), by the renowned Rajasthani choreographer and troupe leader Ms Tripti Pandey, were also part of the programme. The People's association Indian Orchestra was also in the attendance.

(see Appendix XIII)

During the dinner, the following organisations were honoured in recognition of their membership of the Chamber since 1935, which is the oldest available record in the Chamber:

1. ATE Maskati (Pte) Ltd
2. C Rashiwala Bros
3. R Jumabhoy & Sons (Private) Ltd
4. R P & Sons Pte Ltd (Ranchordas Purshotam)
5. Uttamram (Singapore) & Co



PRESIDENT S. R. NATHAN RECEIVES A PAINTING FROM SICCI. L-R: MR. D. D. GUPTA, CHAIRMAN; MR. N. B. DOSHI.



PRESIDENT AND MRS. S. R. NATHAN WITH SICCI BOARD MEMBERS AND WIVES,

Amendments to Memorandum of Articles and Association (M&A): The amended version of the Chamber's M & A which the lawyers prepared was considered, together with the letter from CRC Chairman, Mr. M. Rajaram, by the Board.

An Extraordinary General meeting was convened on 28th July 1999 for the passing of the amended M&A. The following were the major amendments made to the M&A:

- Admission of organisations as members;
- Admission of employed persons in senior managerial positions as members;
- Loss of directorship in the Chamber's Board of Directors ("BOD") due to non attendance insufficient;
- Giving the BOD powers to borrow using the Chamber's assets as collateral;
- Immediate past Chairman to serve as an ex-officio member of the next BOD;
- Election procedure for Office Bearers and BOD

VISIT BY CHIEF MINISTER OF TAMIL NADU, (4TH-6TH

JANUARY 1999): The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Dr. M. Karunanidhi made an official visit to Singapore from the 4th to 6th January 1999. The Chamber, with the support of the Singapore Tamil Organisations, held a dinner in his honour on the 5th of January 1999 at Mandarin Hotel, Singapore.

The Chief Minister was presented with a shawl by Chairman Mr. D. D. Gupta and a garland by Mr. V. T. Arasu, Past President of the Tamil Language and Cultural Society. Members of Parliament of Singapore Dr. Ken Sin Tze, Mr. K. Shanmugam, Mr. R. Ravindran, Mr. Shrinivas Rai (Nominated member of Parliament) and Mr. Stephen Lee, Chairman, Singapore Trade Development Board also attended the Dinner.

Prior to the dinner, a meeting was held with the members of the business community. Over 200 participants from the TDB's India Business Group, members of the Chamber and major Indian cultural organisations attended the meeting where the Chief Minister spoke on trade and investment opportunities in Tamil nadu and answered questions from the floor on these matters. The event generated a surplus of over \$13,000 of which \$2000 was donated to the Singapore Tamil Organisations for their support and assistance for our function and to help them defray costs in their function held on 7th January 1999.

SEMINAR ON INDIA: RISING EMERGING MARKETING: This public seminar organised by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in Singapore and supported by the Chamber and the Singapore Trade Development Board was held on 5th March 1999 at the Mandarin Singapore. Kewalram Chanrai group sponsored this public seminar. More than 250 participants including members of the Chamber attended the seminar.

SINGAPORE BUSINESS MISSION TO SRI LANKA, 9TH-13TH MAY

1999: The TDB and the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry jointly organised a business mission to Sri Lanka between 9th-13th May 1999. The highlights of the mission included:

- One-to-one business meeting
- Briefing by relevant government authorities and consultancy firms/banks
- Visit to the International trade exhibition organised by Ceylon Chamber of Commerce
- Signing of MoU between the Chamber and the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce

The 13 member trade mission led by Chairman Mr. D. O. Gupta met the Sri Lanka-Singapore Business Council members and established business contacts.



SIGNING OF MOU BETWEEN SICCI AND CEYLON CHAMBER OF /COMMERCE (CCC I). L TO R : C. G. JAYASURIA, SEC GEN CCC I; D D GUPRA, CHAIRMAN SICCI, GEORGE ABRAHAM, EXEC DIR. S I CC I. KEN BCTLENDRA, CHAIRMAN CCC I. I PAULRAJ, VICE PRESIDENT, SRI LANKA SINGAPORE BUSINESS COUNCIL.

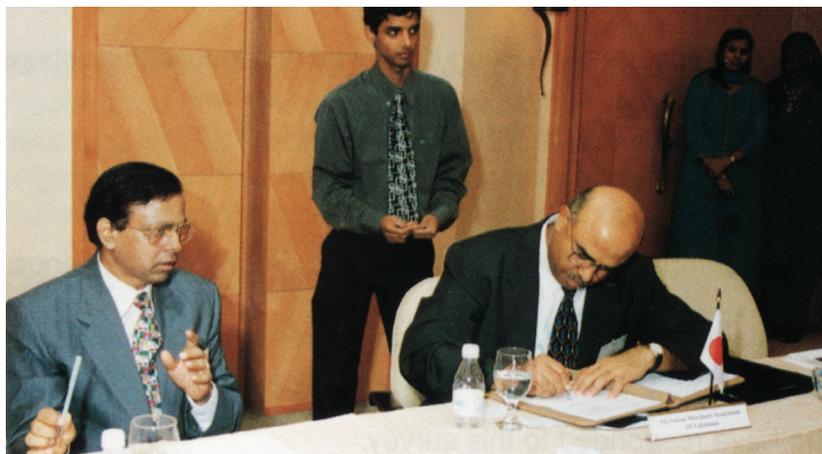
TRADE MISSION TO MYANMAR, 24TH MAY 1999: SICCI organised a trade mission to Myanmar on behalf of SFCCI to allow members to have an opportunity to attend the ASEAN-CCI meetings. The delegation led by Chairman, Mr. D.O. Gupta had meetings with the Minister of Industry Hon. Mr. U Aung Thaung, Minister of Cooperatives Hon Mr. U Aung San, Minister of Commerce Hon Maj-General Kyaw Than and Minister of SPDC Chairman's Office Brig.-Gen. Maung Maung.

SME 21ST STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS: Mr. O. O. Gupta and Mr. George Abraham participated in the series of meeting of the SME 21st Steering Committee, appointed by the Productivity and Standards Board to develop an SME plan for the 21st century. Topics discussed included the performance of SMEs in Singapore, ecommerce and the eEconomy, global best practices in the Knowledge Economy and redefinition of SME. The Board provided the following inputs:

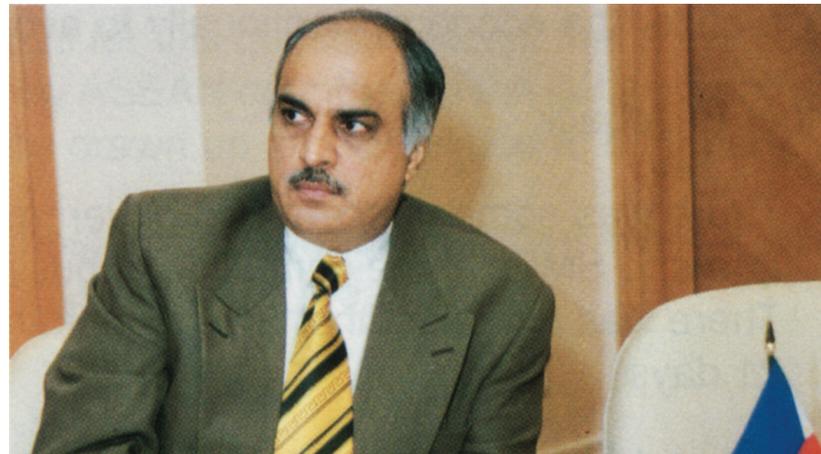
- The trading sector of the economy and the trading companies that were SMEs had been left out in the study and that these companies made a significant contribution to our economy in direct export of Singapore goods and re-exports. TDB' s help could be enlisted to identify the trading sector, as all exporters are required to register with TDB.
- Complaints that existing SME grants are geared towards manufacturers and not towards traders.



SICCI DELEGATION TO YANGON, MYANMAR & ASEAN CCI. L TO R: MR. LIM MENG HUI (CENTRE DIRECTOR; TDB [YANGOON]), MR. SHARMA. MR. VIJAV IVANGER; MR. D D GUPTA, MAJ.-GEN. NYUNT TIN, MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, MR. BASANT KUMAR SAHU, MR. GEORGE ABRAHAM, AND THE MINISTER/OR AGRICULTURE & DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE.



L-R: MR. AVINASH KUMAR, MYANMAR INDIA BUSINESS CLUB, MYANMAR, MR ISHWAR M CHUGANI, INDIAN MERCHANTS' ASSOCIATION OF YOKOHAMA, JAPAN.



MR. RAM HATHIRAMANI, TREASURER, FILIPINO-INDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (PHIL) INC.

- SME policies: Taiwan and South Korea which had specific legislations to assist SMEs in areas of finance (e.g. non-payment of outstanding dues by large companies and areas of business specially demarcated for SMEs). This could be a possible learning experience for Singapore.

ASEAN-CCI COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

During the year under review the Chamber continued to play an active role at the regional level. Mr. M. Rajaram was nominated SICCI's representative for the ASEAN-CCI Council.

ASEAN-CCI MEETINGS, 25TH-28TH MAY, YANGON, MYANMAR:

Executive Director, Mr. George Abraham conducted a survey of ASEAN SMEs and tabled the report of the ASEAN-CCI Task Force on SMEs which included the summary of two surveys of ASEAN-CCI constituents/industry associations with hands-on experience and currently servicing SMEs on the current economic scenario and activities for the private sector. This was presented at a special forum on SMEs at the ASEAN-CCI meeting.

ASIA PACIFIC INDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

(APICCI) MEETING: The Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI) organised the inaugural meeting of the Asia Pacific Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (APICCI) which resulted in the formation of API CCI on 20th November 1999.



L-R: MR. LACHMAN NARAINDAS, DEP. PRESIDENT, MALAYSIAN ASSOCIATED INDIAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY (MAICCI), DATO V. K. K. TEAGARAJAN, PRESIDENT MAICCI, MALAYSIA.



L-R: MR. C. N. SRINIVASAN, SECRETARY GENERAL ICC, HONGKONG, MR. A. S. KASLIWAL, PAST PRESIDENT, FEDERATION OF INDIAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY, INDIA.



INAUGURAL MEETING OF ASIA-PAC CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY (APICCI), L-R: MR. D. D. GUPTA, CHAIRMAN SICCI, MR GEORGE ABRAHAM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SICCI, HON BG (NS) GEORGE YEO, MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, SINGAPORE, MR M ARUNACHALAM, INDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, HONG KONG.

The objective of APICCI is to act as a facilitator for greater cross-country trade and investment in the region. It is envisaged that as the Indian business communities are part of the local business scenario in the countries where they reside, they can draw on the larger business communities in their countries to tap new opportunities for bigger projects that are otherwise unavailable to small and medium companies. SICCI expanded its existing website to include the details of APICCI members to facilitate greater interaction and faster communication between members for effective networking.

(see Appendix XIV)

The constitution was signed by the constituent members from the Chambers Entrepreneurs Groups from Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines and Singapore. They will form the primary founder membership which would be expanded to include similar bodies in these and other countries in the Asia Pacific region.

It was unanimously agreed that the permanent secretariat be located with SICCI in Singapore. The keynote address of the Inaugural Meeting was given by Hon. Minister for Trade and Industry BG (NS) George Yeo who highlighted the presence and contribution of the Indian business community in the region. APICCI's logo was launched by Minister George Yeo at the opening ceremony.

SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES PROGRAMME AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

As an avid proponent of academic enhancement, the Chamber has always been supportive of the efforts of the tertiary institutions in expanding and improving its present curriculum. The National University of Singapore had requested for the Chambers support for the South Asian Studies Programme which was launched in July 1999 by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

The South Asian Studies Programme co-ordinates teaching, research and related activities focusing on the South Asian region. The undergraduate programme curriculum enables students to select from a range of modules in economics, history, politics, international relations, sociology, culture and languages. In addition, the Programme aims to be actively involved in enhancing awareness and understanding of the region through regular seminars and conferences.

Under this assistance scheme, the Chamber:

- Would support the award of a gold medal for the most outstanding first year student reading the programme which entailed a one-time donation of \$15000 the interest of which would be used annually for the Gold Medal.
- Would provide a bursary worth \$2000 a year for two years on a renewable basis for a student recommended by the Programme.