

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **PLANS FOR AN INDIAN MUSLIM HERITAGE CENTRE ON TRACK**

Nagore Dargah<sup>1</sup>, a monument in Singapore located at 140 Telok Ayer Street will be developed into an Indian Muslim Heritage Centre and is scheduled to be opened in **May 2011**.

2. The Nagore Dargah Fundraising Committee (NDFC)<sup>2</sup>, which is a committee made up of prominent Indian Muslim community leaders has been working to ensure that the centre will showcase the “Story of the Singapore Indian Muslims” long history dating back to the early 1800s.

3. Restored in 2008 at a cost of \$900K, the centre will capture the stories and memories of the Indian Muslim community within Singapore’s past and present. It will contain galleries on:

- Who are the Singapore Indian Muslims? - personalities and professions – post-war period & contemporary present day
- Significant historical events – post-war & contemporary
- Indian Muslims’ contributions to the larger Singapore society
- Telok Ayer and the Indian Muslim establishments in the area in the past and today.
- History & significance of Nagore Dargah and Islam – beliefs & practices

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<sup>1</sup> The Nagore Dargah (originally called “Shawal Hamid Durgha”) is one of the earliest religious monuments in Singapore. It was gazetted as a National Monument on 19 November 1974. Dedicated to the memory of the Holy Shahul Hamid of Nagore, it was built between 1827 and 1830, by Chulia Tamil Muslims from the Coromandel Coast India.

<sup>2</sup> , This committee was formed in 2005 and chaired by Mr Hj Shaikh Mohd Abdul Jaleel s/o Shaikh Mohamed Muthu Maricar. It consists of prominent Indian Muslim leaders like Mr Sharafdeen s/o SN Abdul Rasak, Mr Naseer A Ghani, Mashuthoo Abdul Rahim, Mr Shaik Alaudin, Mr Jahanguire , Mr Nazumudin, Mr Mohd Elias, Mr Jalaludin s/o Peer Mohamed, Mr Fariullah, Mr Raja Mohamad Bin Maideen and Mr Mohd Jaafar

- Indian Muslim culinary, as part of the heritage with displays and storyboards. Visitors can savour traditional Indian Muslim food as part of their overall experience.

4. Through various briefings conducted by the Nagore Dargha Fund Raising Committee, Indian Muslim community leaders have given their support to the project.

### **Background**

5. The idea of developing the Nagore Dargah monument into an Indian Muslim Heritage Centre was first conceived as early as in 1994 by the then, an 18-member committee comprising Indian Muslim leaders who volunteered their services to fund raise monies needed to restore the Nagore Dargha. Nagore Dargha is a *wakaf property* (endowment) and is vested with Muis. Muis supported this idea and facilitated the process.

6 In 2005, this committee was reconstituted into the present NDFC. The NDFC re-endorsed the idea of an Indian Muslim Heritage Centre and continued the fund raising efforts for the restoration. With Muis assistance, the committee managed to raise \$165K and together with a capital injection of \$600K from Muis, the building was restored in 2008.

### **Management of the Nagore Dargah Heritage Centre**

7. A Management Committee comprising key Indian Muslim community leaders will be appointed to manage the heritage centre to ensure that the objectives of the centre are met. This committee will be assisted in the day-to-day operations and maintenance by Banquet Holdings, the popular *halal*-food chain which, as part of its corporate social responsibility, had supported this concept and sponsored the cost of the development of the heritage center. The development cost includes costs for the acquisition of the artifacts and the construction of the heritage gallery. They will run the culinary section.

### **Historical Significance of Nagore Dargah**

8. Recognizing the historical significance of the building, the newly appointed Management Committee will be tasked to ensure that all possible steps are taken to preserve it. For example, the annual kenduri - simple events held in commemoration of Prophet Muhammad and the pious Shahul Hameed will be held annually there. A custodian will also be deployed to explain to visitors the history and significance of Nagore Dargah and the heritage of the Indian Muslim community.

### **Appeal to the community to share images**

9. In order to celebrate this reliving of the Indian Muslim heritage, the NDFC is appealing to members of the Indian Muslim community to share images depicting their stories and memories relating to their immigration and travel to Singapore from India (pre and post Second World War) and other significant events from that period until the present. The images to be shared can also be about social lifeways – e.g. food associated with festivals, traditional trades & occupations and about Nagore Dargah at Telok Ayer. Other Singaporeans who would like to share would be most welcomed.

10. For this purpose, the NDFC will be organizing a two-day event on **8 & 9 Jan 2011** at the location of the proposed Nagore Dargah Heritage Centre, where members of the Indian Muslim community can bring these images to be photographed or digitally scanned for the committee to study and potentially feature in the new heritage centre. More information on the event will be announced nearer the date. NDFC also welcome artifacts to be loaned or donated to the Heritage Centre.

### **Timeline**

11. The development of the Nagore Dargah Heritage Centre is expected to be completed in May 2011.

**Nagore Dargah Fundraising Committee**

**16 December 2010**