

MEDIA STATEMENT

OPENING OF THE NAGORE DARGAH INDIAN MUSLIM HERITAGE CENTRE

After undergoing major restoration and redevelopment works, Nagore Dargah¹ will be reopened to the public from 30 May 2011. Located at 140 Telok Ayer Street, the 180-year-old national monument will now feature the Nagore Dargah Indian Muslim Heritage Centre, a showcase of the unique story of Singapore's Indian Muslim community.

2. The Heritage Centre will be a visual ethnography of the community - its rich and distinct history, identity, culture, heritage, belief, and social life as well as its contribution to the nation, illustrated through the text and artifacts exhibited in the various galleries within the Centre.

3. The Heritage Centre is the result of good work by Indian Muslim community leaders with strong support from the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Muis) as well as the larger Singapore Indian Muslim community. 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, 18-member committee comprising Indian Muslim leaders who volunteered their services to raise monies needed to restore the Nagore Dargah. Nagore Dargah is a *wakaf property* (endowment) and is vested with Muis. Muis supported this idea and facilitated the process. However, due to challenges then, the project did not take off

4. In 2005, this committee was reconstituted into the Nagore Dargah Fundraising Committee (NDFC)². 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 \$165,000 and together with an advance of \$600,000 from The Wakaf Jamae, the building was restored in 2008.

5. The Fundraising Committee (NDFC) made up of prominent Indian Muslim community leaders has been working to realise the idea. Through various briefings conducted by the NDFC, the Indian Muslim community leaders gave their support to the project.

¹ 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.

² 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

6. With the opening of the Nagore Dargah Heritage Centre to the public on 30 May 2011, Muis has appointed a 15 member Nagore Dargah Management Committee (NDMC) to ensure the objectives of the centre are met. This includes the religious activities which were traditionally known to be organized by the then Nagore Dargah such as the annual commemoration of the birth of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The list of the Management Committee members who are key Indian Muslim community leaders can be found in Annex A.

7. As part of its corporate social responsibility, Banquet Holdings (the popular food chain operator with halal outlets) supports the concept of the Nagore Dargah Indian Muslim Heritage Centre (NDIMHC) and has sponsored the cost of the internal development works which amounts to \$570,000. These internal development costs include costs for the acquisition of the artifacts and internal construction of the Heritage Centre. Banquet Holdings will run a small culinary section of the Heritage Centre which provides the story, smell and taste of the Indian Muslim cuisine. It has agreed to a lease agreement for three years. The rental income will be accrued to the Wakaf Jamae accounts as the premise is part of this *wakaf*. This revenue will then be used to off-set the operational costs to run the Centre.

8. The Nagore Dargah Indian Muslim Heritage Centre will be officially opened by His Excellency, President of Singapore, Mr S R Nathan on **Sunday, 29 May 2011 at 11am**. The highlight of the event is the unveiling of a special plaque by President Nathan. The event programme is indicated in Annex B.

9. Another highlight is a tour of the monument and the Nagore Dargah Indian Muslim Heritage Centre. Brief highlights on the Centre's Galleries are indicated in Annex C. (This information is embargoed until after the opening of the Centre on 29 May 2011)

10. The NDIMHC Management Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to the successful completion of this project particularly the Indian Muslim community for their unstinting support. The new Nagore Dargah and the Heritage Centre are indeed a pride of the community.

11. For more information, please contact Ms Roshida Jamari, Executive, Strategic Communications, Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) at 6359-1436/9437-3606 or roshida@muis.gov.sg. Alternatively, you may also contact Mr Naseer Ghani at 9652-4721 or naseer_ghani@moe.edu.sg or Mr Raja Mohamad at 9220-6707 or rmaiden@gmail.com.

Annex A

LIST OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (MC) for NAGORE DARGAH INDIAN MUSLIM HERITAGE CENTRE (NDIMHC)

No	NDIMHC Management Committee Members	Appointment
1	Haji S.M. Abdul Jaleel, Chairman, Bencoolen Mosque	Chairman
2	Hj Sharafdeen s/o S N Abdul Rasak ,Chairman, Al-Abrar Mosque	Vice Chairman
3	Hj Naseer Ghani, President, Singapore Kadayanallur Muslim League	Secretary
4	Mr Raja Mohamad Bin Maiden, Muis Council Member & Treasurer, Singapore Kadayanallur Muslim League	Treasurer
5	Hj A R Mashuthoo, Secretary, Singapore Kadayanallur Muslim League	Member
6	Haji Jalaludin s/o Peer Mohamed, Grassroot leader at Queenstown & Radin Mas CC	Member
7	Mr KO Shaik Alaudeen, Secretary of Moulana Mohd Ali Mosque	Member
8	Hj Nazumudin, Director Ajmir Store & Grassroot leader in East Coast GRC	Member
9	Mr Farihullah s/o Abdul Wahab Safiullah, President, United Indian Muslim Association	Member
10	Mr Mohamed Nasim s/o Abdul Rahim, Secretary, Malabar Mosque	Member
11	Mr Mohd Jaafar Peer Mohamed, Vice Chairman, Singapore Tenkasi Muslim Welfare Society	Member
12	Mr Elias s/o Mohd Yaseen, Member, United Indian Muslim Association	Member
13	Mr Jainlavudin alias Hj K M Deen, President, Federation of Indian Muslims Singapore	Member
14	Mr Fazal Mohamed s/o Mohamed Ebrahim, Vice Chairman, Al-Abrar Mosque	Member
15	Mr Shaick Fakrudeen s/o S Ali, Chairman of Jamae Chulia Mosque	Member

Annex B

PROGRAMME

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE NAGORE DARGAH INDIAN MUSLIM HERITAGE CENTRE (NDIMHC), 29 May 2011, Sunday

- 10.15am Arrival of guests
- 10.30am Guests to be seated
- 10.50am Arrival of Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts and Minister in charge of Muslim Affairs
- 11.00am Arrival of Guest of Honour (GOH), His Excellency President of Singapore, Mr S R Nathan
- 11.05am Welcome Address by Hj Naseer Ghani, Secretary, Nagore Dargah Indian Muslim Heritage Centre Committee (NDIMHC)
- 11.10am Speech by Hj S.M. Abdul Jaleel, Chairman, Nagore Dargah Indian Muslim Heritage Centre Committee (NDIMHC)
- 11.15am Shawling and Garlanding of GOH, His Excellency President S R Nathan & Unveiling of Plaque by GOH
Photo Session with members of NDMC
- 11.20am Presentation of token of Appreciation by GOH to:
- Mr Alan Lee, Managing Director, Banquet Holdings Pte Ltd
- Dr M Y Mohd Suibu, Donor for the NDIMHC
- Mr Mohamed Jinna, Donor for the NDIMHC
- 11.30am - Official Opening of Nagore Dargah Indian Muslim Heritage Centre by GOH followed by tour of the Centre
- 11.45am Photo taking in front of Nagore Dargah Indian Muslim Heritage Centre and Refreshment
- 12.00pm His Excellency President of Singapore, Mr S R Nathan takes his leave
- 1.04pm Zuhor prayers followed by 'kendoori'

Annex C

Brief Highlights on the Centre's Galleries

Gallery A - Telok Ayer - Overview of Nagore Dargah and the Indian Muslims in Telok Ayer. This gallery serves as an introduction and as a link between the exterior street and public and the Centre. In this area it covers:

- Origins of Telok Ayer
- Journey into Telok Ayer
- Development of Telok Ayer
- Conserving Telok Ayer (Conservation)
- Community Notice Board & Acknowledgement Board

Gallery B - The Indian Muslim Story - Gallery B is the heart of the Heritage Centre telling the story of the Indian Muslim in Singapore. In this gallery, 85% of the artifacts and images are donated from the members of the Indian Muslim community during the 2 day community public appeal event on 8th and 9th January 2011. The gallery tells the story through several selective themes:

- Who are the Indian Muslims?
- Journey to Singapore
- Trades & Professions
- Literature, Journalism & Education
- Weddings & Festivities
- Oor: The Return Home
- Conserving the Indian Muslim Identity
- Associations & Institutions, Indian Muslims in Singapore Society
- Contemporary Photomontage of Indian Muslim Community & Activities
- Featured Artifact - Wrought iron Spatula

Gallery C - Indian Muslim Culinary Heritage - In this gallery cafe, the visitor can try some popular Indian Muslim foods as well as find out what it constitutes.

- Discovering Indian Muslim Culinary History
- Popular Indian Muslim Food (Prata, Murtabak, Biryani, Rojak)
- Tea Story
- 19th Century Historical & Natural History Prints

Highlights of Gallery C- Selection of original 19th century commercial prints depicting natural history and scenes of India. The items here are however more decorative in nature than storytelling.

Gallery D - History of Nagore Dargah - This gallery explains the origins of Nagore Dargah in Singapore and India, and about Shahul Hamid the saint of Nagore.

- 1) Nagore Dargah Singapore
- 2) Architecture of Nagore Dargah
- 3) Nagore India
- 4) Kandoori Festival

Highlights of Gallery D - 1873 Watercolor of Nagore India; 1753 French Map of Coromandel Coast; Prayer Strip and Stone from Nagore India