

**SPEECH BY DR R THEYVENDRAN, CHAIRMAN ORGANISING COMMITTEE,
'TAMILS IN NATION BUILDING' JOINTLY WITH THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF
TAMIL MURASU CELEBRATION CONCERT.
DELIVERED AT THE CONCERT ON SATURDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2010, 7.00PM AT
UNIVERSITY CULTURAL CENTRE, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE**

**“His Excellency, the Honourable Mr. S R Nathan,
Republic of Singapore**

**Mr. Tharman Shanmugaratnam,
Minister for Finance**

**Mr. K Shanmugam,
Minister for Law and Second Minister for Home Affairs**

**Mr. S Iswaran,
Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry, and Ministry of Education**

**Mr. S Chandra Das,
Chairman, Tamil Murasu**

**Professor Cham Tao Soon,
Deputy Chairman SPH Board**

Community Leaders

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Welcome to this ‘Tamils in Nation Building’ event jointly celebrated with Tamil Murasu’s 75th Anniversary Concert. My Committee and I are humbled and honoured by the spontaneous and over-whelming support from all of you for today’s event. Tickets were sold out ten days before the event.

Open Support from National Leaders

Today marks an occasion of great pride for the Tamil community as we gather to celebrate two achievements. Tamil Murasu, our Tamil daily, has turned 75. Along with this milestone, the Tamil community celebrates its role in Singapore's nation-building. Today, the newspaper and the community celebrates as one.

The presence of several of our National leaders on this occasion adds stature to the event and has been a great motivation for the Tamil Community. Let me at the onset take the opportunity to thank and welcome our national leaders: President SR Nathan and the First Lady, Mr. Tharman, Mr. Shanmugam, Mr. Iswaran and Mr. S. Dhanabalan. We thank you for gracing this occasion.

Contributions of Tamil Murasu

Tamil Murasu is more than just a newspaper. It is an icon that is intricately intertwined with the development of the local Tamil Community for three quarters of a century.

Launched in 1935 by Mr. Thamizhavel G. Sarangapani, the newspaper served the early Indian migrant population with news and information on Singapore and the Indian sub-continent. From its modest beginnings, Tamil Murasu has evolved with the times and is more than just a newspaper. Three-quarters of a century later, the newspaper remains relevant to its readership.

With its eye focused on its core mission of serving the needs of the Indian Community within the context of multi-ethnic Singapore, I am sure that Tamil Murasu will continue to prosper as the "voice of the Community" for years to come.

On behalf of everyone here and the community at large, let me wish Tamil Murasu a Happy 75th Birthday.

TAMILS PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE IN NATION BUILDING

The history of Tamils in modern Singapore can be traced back to the many immigrants and settlements from our colonial times in the 19th and early 20th centuries. They arrived as labourers to construct public housing, buildings and roads. They worked in the colonial British government, or as spice merchants and moneylenders as well as in other sectors. Through all these, they have contributed to the economic foundation of our nation.

As the nation gained independence, the new breed of educated Indians played an instrumental role to foster a vibrant and new economy.

Tamils have contributed significantly to Singapore's nation-building. Talented individuals from the community have excelled in various fields, be it the education scene, the economy, sports or culture. The Tamil presence is found in all aspects of Singapore life – the Government and private sectors and politics to name a few. And the community is doing its part towards fostering multi-racial harmony.

May I also add that it is just these local talents who will be performing for your entertainment tonight. To paraphrase the title of a popular television series, Tamils got talent!

Towards forging an alliance of Tamils

Today's event is a result of many independent Tamil organisations coming together, with the Tamils Representative Council taking a leading role.

Now, it is time to explore the possibility of the many Tamil organisations forming a single, unified entity, an alliance of Tamils, so to speak. The challenge is UNITY amongst the myriad of Tamil Organizations.

This is a happy occasion but it is also an opportune moment for all the diverse groups of Tamil Organizations to come forward and think as one and be one for the future upliftment of the Tamil community. TRC is prepared to join others under one umbrella for the future progress and success of the Tamil community. I, myself who came in as an unknown is prepared to fade away to facilitate better leaders to come to the fore.

A round of thanks

I would like to thank all the people who have sacrificed their time and energy to make today's event a success.

First, the organising committee would like to thank our advisor, Mr. S. Chandra Das, who has given us his unstinting support and valuable advice, despite the many challenges.

We would also like to thank the Secretariat of the Tamils Representative Council for the success of this inspiring event. The Secretariat, made up entirely of volunteers, unselfishly donated valuable time and resources to make today's celebration special and indeed, remarkable. Of special mention are the youthful members, led by Mr Viva, and the not-so-youthful and recycled teenagers like me.

Thanks also go to Nirmala, the hard working editor of Tamil Murasu, and Rajendran, deputy editor of Tamil Murasu.

Finally, our finest gratitude will be not just to listen, utter or even speak great words, but to live by them.

To round up, let me again thank our national leaders for showing so much support for this event, and to all the rest – your presence has brightened, enlightened and added significance to this event.

May you all have a very enjoyable and memorable event.

Thank you really everyone.