



SPEECH BY MR S CHANDRA DAS, CHAIRMAN OF TAMIL MURASU AT THE LAUNCH OF TABLA! COMMUNITY CHAMPION AWARD AND TABLA!'S THIRD ANNIVERSARY ON MONDAY 3 OCTOBER 2011, 3.30PM AT THE SPH NEWS CENTRE AUDITORIUM

Good evening

Deputy Speaker of Parliament and SINDA president Indranee Rajah

Deputy High Commissioner Tsewang Namgyal

Distinguished guests

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to the launch of the inaugural tabla! Community Champion Award. The Award is being launched in conjunction with tabla!'s third anniversary. Time really has flown... I remember discussing the idea of an English publication for the growing Indian community here with the Tamil Murasu Board in early 2008. After some debate, we decided on the free weekly newspaper format. And on October 10 that year we launched tabla! at a time when there were very strong headwinds. Lehman Brothers had just collapsed and the world was in economic turmoil. But we stuck to the task and have now emerged with a quality product that has been well accepted by our Indian community.

We print 30,000 copies every Friday and I'm happy to say they get fully taken up over the weekend. Advertising revenue has picked up substantially and we are now looking at increasing the number of pages on a consistent basis. As the paper moves into its fourth year, the editorial team will also be fine-tuning the content with the aim of making tabla! an even more satisfying weekend read.

In the meantime, Tamil Murasu has also gone from strength to strength. Where we used to average sales of about 13,200 copies in October last year, we saw an all-time high of 18,800 in the April/May period this year. This follows a revamp of the paper a year ago, as part of its 75th anniversary celebrations. The sales of the Sunday edition of Tamil Murasu also grew substantially over the last 12 months, peaking at 26,500 in the April/May 2011 period at the height of the Tamil Nadu elections and the Singapore GE. Currently, sales figures average about 16,000 on weekdays and 22,000 on Sundays.

Coming back to tabla!, we felt it was time to establish an annual award to be presented to a person from our Indian community with a distinguished record of working with the less fortunate in Singapore. Someone who selflessly devotes time and effort in addition to his or her job or profession. An unsung hero, so to speak. We are calling it the tabla! Community Champion Award and this year it is supported by State Bank of India. The



award comes with a donation of \$10,000 from State Bank of India and tabla! to the volunteer organisation that the award winner is involved with.

On that note, let me hand you back to the MC so we can find out who this year's winner is.

Thank you