

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conference, 10 October 2008
Closing Address by Mr S Iswaran, Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry, Singapore

Deputy Prime Minister S Jayakumar
Honorable Minister Vayalar Ravi,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me start by thanking the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs for giving Singapore the opportunity to host the first PBD event in Asia outside India.

It has been a very stimulating conference with insightful discussions and candid exchanges on the opportunities and challenges ahead for India. India's potential to be an economic giant is undeniable. It is only a matter of time, so long as India stays the course with its economic reforms.

We have been privileged to hear from industry experts and practitioners these two days. India can sustain its growth over time by continuing to invest in education, science and technology, and infrastructure, as well as build up a robust banking and finance industry. As India's economic dynamism is underpinned by its service sector, developing the tourism and hospitality sector will also be a natural next step.

I would like to thank the distinguished speakers and moderators for your significant contribution to the success of this conference.

I would also like to thank the organisers – the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs and the Confederation of Indian Industry, for putting together an exciting programme. Through their efforts, we now have a platform for the Indian Diaspora to connect and engage with each other.

Last but not least, I would like to express my appreciation to all the delegates for joining us and making this possible. I trust that you have enjoyed yourselves and benefited from the discussions and exchanges. For our friends who have joined us from afar, I hope that you have had the opportunity to experience the sights and sounds of Singapore despite the heavy programme.

To close this conference, I wish the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs and the Confederation of India Industry a huge success for PBD Chennai in January 2009.

Thank you.

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