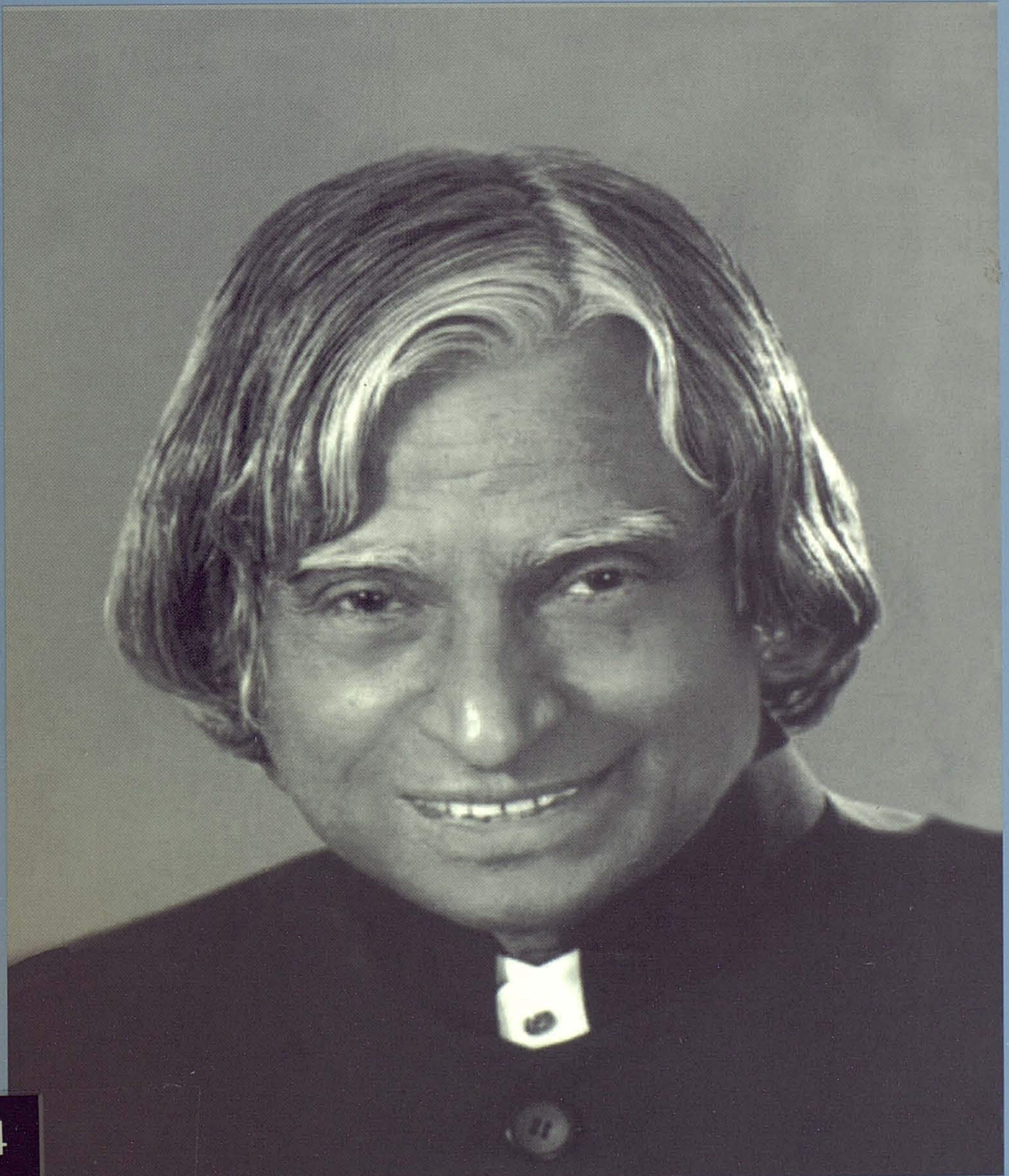


# A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

EVOLUTION OF  
ENLIGHTENED SOCIETIES



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**ISEAS**

INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES



**EVOLUTION OF  
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Singapore Lecture  
1 February 2006

**EVOLUTION OF  
ENLIGHTENED SOCIETIES**

*A.P.J. Abdul Kalam*



Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore

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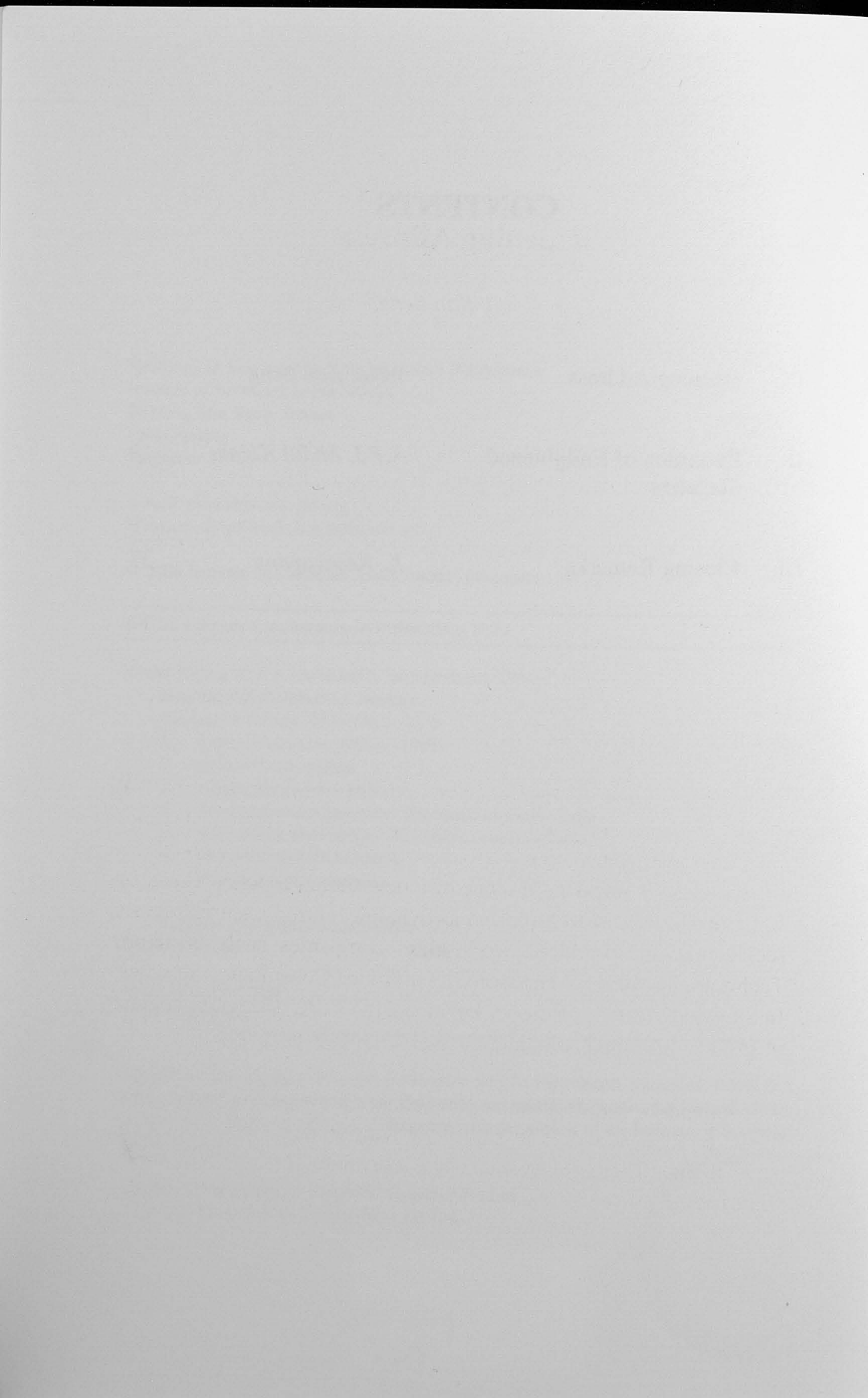
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# I

## Opening Address

*Wong Kan Seng*

Your Excellency, Dr Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam, President of the Republic of India, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my pleasure today to welcome you to this Singapore Lecture. We are privileged in that it is the third time that a distinguished Indian leader has addressed us. In April 2002, we were honoured that former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee agreed to deliver the 21st Singapore Lecture. I am sure the audience shares my anticipation to hear President Kalam speak on the topic “Evolution of Enlightened Societies”.

India is undergoing a major transformation. The reforms that President Kalam initiated in 1991 in his capacity then as Finance Minister have opened up India to the world economy. As a result, the world is now witnessing the rise of a new India propelled ahead by its large educated workforce and its dynamic, entrepreneurial private sector that has produced world-class companies such as Wipro Technologies, Infosys Technologies and Tata Consultancy Services. In Singapore, the US, Europe, Japan and the ASEAN region, interest in India among investors and businesses is fast growing.

Singapore and India have long historical ties dating back to the era of Indianized states in Southeast Asia in the 14th century, of which ancient Temasek on Singapore was one stop along the ancient trade routes between India and Southeast Asia. This was followed by

the colonial era, in which Singapore was governed by the East India Company from Calcutta until 1867. Singapore flourished as an entrepôt and free-port between India and China.

Our bilateral relations with India today are excellent and multifaceted. The visit of President Kalam is the latest in a series of high-profile visits between our two countries. We welcome the opportunity this visit presents to further strengthen our bilateral ties.

India is our fastest growing trade partner. Bilateral trade has more than doubled in just the last three years. The signing of the India-Singapore Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (or CECA) in June last year has significantly enhanced economic ties and encouraged India to take a greater economic stake in Singapore and in the region.

President Kalam has carved his own destiny from very humble origins to reach the pinnacle of achievement. His meteoric rise is truly an inspiration for all in India and the world. What sets President Kalam apart from other great Indian scientists is that he has never received formal education abroad. The only exposure Kalam received overseas was when the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration, better known as NASA, invited him to spend four months with American research centres in 1963. For this, President Kalam has come to be known — rather affectionately — as the “200 per cent Indian” by many of his colleagues and close acquaintances.

President Kalam’s background as a scientist is well known. Among his major career successes was the launching of the Rohini-I satellite on a low-earth orbit and his leadership of India’s integrated Missile Development Programme, which culminated in the successful launch of the Agni and Prithvi missiles. This achievement earned him the reputation of being the father of India’s missile programme. Throughout his illustrious career, President