

WITH three bold strikes of the dhol, President S.R. Nathan launched the South Asian Link on Nov 4.

As the sound of the drum reverberated in the hall and merged with the applause from the audience, a screen lit up announcing to the world the arrival of a new initiative from the Institute of South Asian Studies (Isas). The South Asian Link consists of a website and a newsletter (to be started in January 2010) that plans to link global, regional and local audiences interested in the South Asian diaspora. The South Asian diaspora number 30 million worldwide.

Mr Gopinath Pillai, chairman of Isas, told the gathering at the launch ceremony that the South Asian Link “hopes to develop relations with the diaspora outside of South Asia and build up a data-base of the South Asian communities around the world”.

The website will highlight the latest developments and happenings in the various South Asian communities around the world and will also feature snippets from eminent South Asians around the world.

The South Asian Link will also establish various country chapters to represent the different

Link for South Asian diaspora

Website and newsletter to track global activities of South Asians from various countries



Drum roll... President Nathan rolling out the new initiative. With him are Isas management board members (from left) Prof Wang Gungwu, Mr S. Chandra Das, Prof Tan Tai Yong and Isas chairman Gopinath Pillai. PHOTO: ISAS

The South Asian Link will periodically organise conferences and seminars focusing on topical issues and developments of importance to the South Asian diaspora.

— Isas chairman Gopinath Pillai

countries of South Asia. Isas is starting off with chapters for Bangladesh, India and Pakistan which will track the global activities of the diaspora from these countries.

The bi-annual newsletter will feature prominent South Asians, newsmakers, events, publications and developments.

The Link aims to serve as a key nodal point of a network of South Asian communities worldwide and hopes that its activities will position Singapore as an important hub for the diaspora.

The idea of creating a network hub for South Asians was initiated by President Nathan and the Link team is led by Prof Tan Tai Yong who is on the Isas management board.

In his address, Mr Pillai said that among world cities, Singapore has one of the larger overseas South Asian populations as a percentage of population – nine per cent. In addition to this, he said there are another 350,000 or so South Asians working or studying here.

Isas hopes that the South Asian Link will be an opportunity for Singapore to consolidate its position as an international hub for the cultural, educational and business networking of the South Asian diaspora.

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