

1 June 2022

**EMBARGOED UNTIL SATURDAY 11 JUNE 2022, 4PM**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **New RIMA Book Documents the Significant Contributions of Indian Muslims in Singapore**

1. The Centre for Research on Islamic and Malay Affairs (RIMA), a research subsidiary of AMP Singapore, has published a new hardback book titled Indian Muslims in Singapore: History, Heritage and Contributions. The 481-page book documents the contributions of Indian Muslims in Singapore to the local community in Singapore from 1819 and provides an overview of their migration history to Singapore, their growth and legacy.
2. The book takes on a non-academic approach and comprises eight chapters, including the social, cultural and religious lives of Indian Muslims in Singapore. Authored by Dr Ab Razak Chanbasha, who is a board member of RIMA, the publication of the book seeks to instil an appreciation of past generations and traditions, as well as offers a precursor for future research on the Muslim community in Singapore.
3. The book also pays homage to the life and achievements of prominent individuals, who accomplished outstanding achievements in their professions and their contributions to the community. These include the Angullias – Mohamed Salleh Eusoof Angullia and Mr Ahmad Mohamed Salleh Angullia; Mr K M Oli Mohamed; and Prof Ahmad Mohamed Ibrahim. Their profiles can be found in Annex B.
4. Publication of the Indian Muslims in Singapore is also supported by AMP Singapore, the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) and National Heritage Board (NHB). The book will be launched on Saturday, 11 June 2022 at 3pm at the MUIS Theatre. It is available for sale at [eshop.amp.org.sg](http://eshop.amp.org.sg) from 11 June onwards at \$60 per copy. The book will also be available in selected bookstores.

5. Dr Ab Razak Chanbasha, author of the book, said: “What transpired from an idea with three individuals from the Indian Muslim community became the untiring efforts of many in this arduous task of completing the book. It is our hope that the Indian Muslims in Singapore: History, Heritage and Contributions enriches the narratives on the tapestry of Singapore Muslim community, as well as builds on further research about our community.”

**END**

**MEDIA BRIEFING ON INDIAN MUSLIM BOOK LAUNCH**

**Wednesday 1 June 2022**

**AMP Boardroom**

**PROGRAMME**

10.30 am	Opening Remarks Mr Mohksin Rashid Executive Director, AMP Singapore
10.35 pm	Presentation by Author Indian Muslims in Singapore: History, Heritage and Contributions Dr Ab Razak Chanbasha Director, RIMA and Author of Book
11.00 am	Q & A Session
11.10 am	Media Interview Session
Noon	End

## PROMINENT PERSONALITIES OF SINGAPORE INDIAN MUSLIM COMMUNITY

### THE ANGULLIAS

The legacy of the Angullia family in Singapore began with Ebrahim Mohamed Salleh Angullia, who arrived in Singapore in 1837 and started a shop at Kling Street, trading commodities he bought in India. Ebrahim did not settle in Singapore and constantly travelled between India and Singapore in the 1840s and 1850s. His son, Eusoof Angullia, took over the business around 1850s and similarly lived and worked both in Singapore and India. It was Eusoof's son, Mohamed Salleh, a third-generation Angullia, who eventually brought one of his two wives, Miriam Beebee from India to settle in Singapore in 1870.

#### **Mohamed Salleh Eusoof Angullia (d. 1904)**

Mohamed Salleh formally registered his company, M S E Angullia & Co in the Singapore and Malayan Directory in 1871. It marked a change from his forefathers' methods of business as sojourners to commercial enterprise as a settler. He also expanded the business to include real estate and bought land and property, such as those in Bencoolen Street, Wilkie Road, Rochor Road and Serangoon Road areas.

On 23 April 1890, Mohamed Salleh's family acquired land along Serangoon Road to build the first Angullia mosque. By 1900, he amassed a fortune from his trades and became a successful figure in the local Indian Muslim community.

Along with his other legacy, he left behind a will that set out a wakaf, where the income must be set aside as follows: 25% to Mecca; 25% to Medina; 10% to Baghdad; and 10% to Surat as charity grants. The remainder is to be distributed as bursaries, to other charitable organisations in Singapore and to the Angullia family. His will continues to contribute to the Singapore Muslim community beyond his passing on 21 September 1904. For instance, every year, Wakaf M S E Angullia contributes to the Singapore Hajj Mission towards rental of medical facilities and medicines for Hajj pilgrims. His legacy was sustained mainly through his son, Ahmad Mohamed Salleh Angullia.

#### **Ahmad Mohamed Salleh Angullia (1873 – 1939)**

Ahmad was the first child of Mohamed Salleh and Miriam Beebee, born in 1873. He received his education in Singapore at Raffles Institution and Anglo-Chinese School, and joined his father's business as a partner at age 24. Through the years, the firm had expanded to trade in a wider variety of merchandise from various regions like India, Southeast Asia, China, Japan, Europe and the US.

Among his siblings, he was more passionate and knowledgeable in running the business. He even became the Japanese Consul in Singapore as a result of being the sole importer of goods from Japan, before the country had its own representative here. His foresight allowed him to invest in even more land and property including Tanglin area. He became the sole proprietor of the company after the passing of his father. Following his father's footsteps, he built a mosque in 1934 named the Angullia Park Mosque at Orchard Road, which had to make way for redevelopment in 1988.

He also served and contributed to the local community such as being the first Muslim Municipal Commissioner in 1911, appointed the Justice of Peace for Singapore in February 1930, and raised money for 'The Asiatic Unemployment Fund' in November 1930, among many others.

Ahmad was 65 when he passed away on 25 August 1939 and left his wealth to his 4 sons and 10 daughters. He created Wakaf A M S Angullia to benefit mainly the poor and needy. The contributions of the Angullias that continued after their deaths were honoured with a street in their name, Angullia Park.

### **K M Oli Mohamed (d. 1988)**

K M Oli Mohamed left his home in Madras at age 12 and headed to Singapore with his father in search of new opportunities. His father ran a cigarette shop along Crawford Street with Oli assisting him. Shortly after, his father asked him to look for other opportunities where he could learn a better trade. He found work in a jewellery shop and learnt as much as he could for about five years before leaving to start his own business.

With a financial loan from his father, Oli Mohamed started his own jewellery shop at 13 High Street in 1914. This marked the beginning of K M Oli Mohamed Pte Ltd. However, his life did not only revolve around his business. He took English classes because European customers were crucial in the early stages of his business. Besides buying his wares, they provided him with valuable networks to secure goods from overseas. K M Oli Mohamed Pte Ltd currently has three branches – one in Singapore and two in Malaysia. Although it is more than 100 years old, it is still a family-run business.

In addition to the jewellery business, Oli Mohamed also founded a cinema in 1947, the 600-seat Diamond Theatre. It was a joint venture with Cathay Organisations founder Loke Wan Tho and screened mainly Tamil movies until 1977, when it had to be shut down as the land it sat on was acquired by the government for redevelopment. Another movie theatre that he owned was Taj Cinema along Changi Road that Shaw Organisation bought in 1969 and renamed Singapura Cinema. It has since been redeveloped as the Millage condominium.

With the growth of his companies, Oli Mohamed became a prominent figure and went on to enter politics as a member of the Progressive Party and was elected City Councillor in 1951. He contested again in 1952 and won. In 1953, he put forward a proposal to separate the entry and exit of passengers in omnibuses, which led to the two doors in public buses.

Oli Mohamed died on 6 May 1988 and left behind 9 children, 7 of whom are running his jewellery business today.

### **Prof Ahmad Bin Mohamed Ibrahim (1916 – 1999)**

Professor Ahmad was born in Singapore on 20 May 1916. He was educated at Victoria Bridge School and Raffles Institution where he passed the Junior in 1929 and the Senior in 1930 at 13 years old. He joined Raffles College in 1932 and graduated in 1935. He was described as the first Malay boy to win the Queen's Scholarship in Malaya to study law at St John's College, Cambridge University. He graduated in 1939 with first class honours for his Bachelor of Arts (Cantab) in Economics Tripos I and

Law Tripos II, and also won the George Long Prize for Roman Law. He sat for the Bar final examinations in 1941 and obtained the Certificate of Honour at Middle Temple, London.

Prof Ahmad returned to Singapore at the start of the Second World War and joined the government service as a magistrate. After the war in 1947, he was appointed district judge. A year later, he left the civil service for a post as a law lecturer at his alma mater, Raffles College. From 1949 to 1955, he was in private practice and served as Municipal Commissioner. He was also a member of the Rural Board and Legislative Council.

Perhaps his most significant contribution to the Muslim community in Singapore came in 1966. With a reputation as an expert in Muslim law, Prof Ahmad drafted the Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA) that revamped the jurisdiction of the Syariah Court in Singapore. This led to the establishment of the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) in 1968.

Prof Ahmad left Singapore in 1969 for Malaysia, where he embarked on a new career in teaching. He wrote and published more than 100 works during his lifetime including *The Legal Status of the Muslims in Singapore*. He passed away at the age of 82 at his home in Gombak, Malaysia.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### **Dr Ab Razak Chanbasha**

Dr Razak has participated actively in the community and served in various committees in his social engagement. His involvement with the community began in 1983, where he served in the executive committee of the Muslim Converts Association of Singapore.

Dr Razak was part of the pioneering team that saw the formation of the Association of Muslim Professionals (AMP Singapore). He was in the management committee and subsequently as a member of the board of directors from 1991 to 2009. He was also the chairman of Mercu Learning Point, the education subsidiary of AMP and later as chairman of the Centre for Research on Islamic and Malay Affairs (RIMA), the research subsidiary of AMP. He served as a member of the council in the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Muis) from 2007 to 2019.

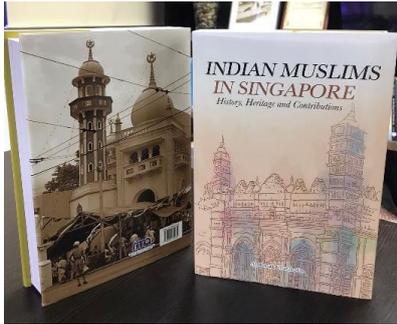
He is currently a member of the board of directors of Warees Investments, a subsidiary of Muis since 2016 and RIMA since 2014. In 2017, he was awarded the Public Service Medal, Pingat Bakti Masyarakat (PBM) and a year later in 2018, was appointed Justice of the Peace (JP) by the President of Singapore for a period of five years.

Dr Razak holds a PhD in Physics from the National University of Singapore. He is currently the Technical Director of ARC Sciences, a company that specialises in nanoscience in the field of surface nano analysis and thin film growth.

## SYNOPSIS OF BOOK

### Indian Muslims in Singapore: History, Heritage and Contributions

Publisher: Centre for Research on Islamic and Malays Affairs (RIMA)



Indian Muslims constitute a minority in the Indian as well as the Muslim communities in Singapore. In 2020, about 70,000 or 23% of Indians in Singapore are Muslims and they make up about 13% of the Muslim community. It is not widely known however, that they were a significant majority in the nineteenth century when Singapore began as a trading post for the East India Company.

The Indian Muslim community in Singapore evolved from sojourners to settlers, from a transient community who came seeking sustenance to one that became rooted in this land and has developed its identity within the social milieu of the Indian community, the wider Muslim society and the larger population.

This book documents the history, heritage and contributions of the Indian Muslims in Singapore. It provides an overview of their migration history to Singapore from the arrival of the British in Singapore in 1819, the growth of the community, the diversity in language and culture, and their legacy.

The book begins with defining Indian Muslims in the Singapore context and traces the population trends from the colonial era to the present. The following chapter chronicles the migration history of Muslims from Madras, Bengal and Bombay Presidencies of British India. The arrival, settlement and socio-economic profiles of various individuals, families and communities are related, giving a glimpse of life then. The heterogeneous composition of Indian Muslims is also examined from the perspective of ethnic groups, languages and, also, religious sects.

The next few chapters document the legacy, pioneers and subsequent generations built such as mosques, wakafs (endowments), social and religious organisations. Despite the focus on history, more recent efforts in religious education and outreach to the Indian Muslim community by the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) is also highlighted. On a lighter note, the contribution of Indian Muslims to the food scene in Singapore is presented together with a brief description of different attires and dressing, as well as their contributions to the media and the arts.

Another chapter gives an account of economic activities, key trades and professions that have been associated with early settlers — fields which they developed as a niche at the time and, for some, till today. The concluding chapter narrates the life and achievements of a selection of prominent individuals — personalities who accomplished outstanding achievements in their professions and their contributions to the community and Singapore. It is written in a non-academic style, intended for the general reader interested in the Indian Muslim community in Singapore.