

Adequate security for Apec summit: Shanmugam

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SPEAKING on the preparations for the upcoming Apec Summit K Shanmugam, Minister for Law and Second Minister for Home Affairs, said yesterday that the government has put in place what it considers adequate security measures.

"We are confident about the measures we have taken but security is not something that you take for granted," Mr Shanmugam said on the sidelines of the Fifth International Conference on South Asia organised by the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS).

"Our position has been we have not come across any seriously credible known threat but that doesn't mean that there can't be such threats. We obviously take this very seriously and I won't go into the details but people know that Singapore will take this very seriously."

Earlier, giving the keynote address, Mr Shanmugam noted that as regards India, one cannot adopt a prescriptive approach about the country and one has to accept India as it is.

He noted that in due course India could play a greater economic role in

the Asean region. "Asean is now India's third largest trading partner and Asean-India trade has increased 17-fold from US\$2.3 billion in 1991-1992 to US\$39 billion in 2007-2008." He added that by 2010 the Asean-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) envisages that trade may reach US\$50 billion.

Mr Shanmugam noted that Singapore is the most important of India's Asean trading partners accounting for US\$15.5 billion or 40 per cent of the trade.

"Singapore surpassed the US and UK in 2009 to become India's largest investor, after Mauritius."

Thus, the minister added, India will grow and its economic engagement, particularly private sector engagement, in this region will grow. "And Singapore's role in that engagement will grow as well."

Mr Shanmugam added: "India holds a lot of promise for savvy investors, with emphasis on the word 'savvy'."

Later in the evening President SR Nathan launched the South Asian Link an initiative by ISAS. The initiative aims to provide a platform for the South Asian diaspora to connect to each other.

Explaining how it will work, Gopinath Pillai, ISAS management board chairman, noted that the South Asian Link will initially have two channels to link the diaspora. The first would be a website which will become active after the launch today and the second would be a newsletter, the first issue of which is expected to be out in January next year.

Ambassador Pillai, noted that the newsletter and website will highlight the latest developments in the

various South Asian communities around the world. It will also serve to link global, regional and local audiences interested in the South Asian diaspora and the South Asian Link activities.

He added that the Link will use Singapore as a base to establish a hub for the vibrant global South Asian diaspora and link various local and international diaspora groups and individuals to facilitate interactions and communications between them.