

1st Orange Ribbon event for newcomers to mix

BY JESSICA JAGANATHAN

MORE than 5,000 people turned up for the inaugural National Orange Ribbon Celebrations at Clarke Quay yesterday.

One in 10 was a new citizen or permanent resident trying to assimilate into Singapore society by becoming members

of grassroots associations such as the Singapore Malayalee Association and the Ladies Association of the Malaysian High Commission.

Mr Zaimudin Nordin, Mayor of Central Singapore District and chairman of OnePeople.sg, said that with Singapore becoming more cosmopolitan, there was a need to integrate new citizens and expatriates into society.

He said the challenge would lie in "how to integrate people, interact more and understand each other better".

This should be done by developing an inclusive society, so new citizens can join in the everyday life of the nation.

Events during the month-long National Orange Ribbon Celebrations will include a pho-

tography contest, exhibitions, and performances.

The Clarke Quay event marked the first gathering of all five community development councils and their residents. Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports Vivian Balakrishnan was the guest of honour.

Mr Avinash Lotke, 34, from the Indian state of Maharash-

tra, has been a permanent resident here for seven years. The president of Maharashtra Mandal Singapore, an association for people from there, said the event gave the group's members a chance to bond with other societies.

"As we are away from our homes, it's very important that we live together peacefully and in a harmonious way here," he said.