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Singapore Government PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY DR JOHN CHEN MINISTER OF STATE FOR
COMMUNICATIONS AT THE COMPLETION CEREMONY FOR THE
AYE EXTENSION ON 17 NOVEMBER 1997, 9.30 AM**

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

1. It is my pleasure to be here this morning to witness the completion of yet another project to improve our land transport system.
2. The constraints we face in land transport for Singapore are well-known - we have limited land space and the expectations of our affluent population are fast rising. Many Singaporeans aspire to or already own a car. Motorists expect our roads to be congestion-free even as the vehicles on our roads continue to increase.

3. The task for the Land Transport Authority(LTA) is therefore a challenging one. LTA has set an ambitious goal for itself too. As spelt out in the White Paper on Land Transport, it aims to build a world class land transport system for Singapore.

4. To do so, LTA has adopted a multi-pronged strategy. This includes integrating town and transport planning, building a comprehensive road network, implementing effective demand management measures, and improving public transport.

5. As part of these strategies, LTA has been actively harnessing new technologies. Electronic Road Pricing or ERP, the Expressway Monitoring and Advisory System or EMAS and the Integrated Transport Management System or ITMS are but just a few of these examples that are in the pipeline. When implemented, they will enable motorists to better plan their journeys based on their preferred mode, time or cost of travel.

Expansion of Road Network

6. We are also constantly expanding our road network as we maximise the efficiency of our existing roads. This is because our roads form a critical component of our land transport system. They can be likened to the arteries of a heart. If the arteries get clogged, the heart works less efficiently. If the clog is too serious, the person may suffer a heart-attack. Similarly, if our roads get clogged, our economy will slow down. If the congestion is too serious, the economy may even be brought to a standstill. The building of a more comprehensive and efficient road network is therefore one of our fundamental pillars in land transport.

7. At about this time last year, LTA completed a major road project - Phase III of the Tampines Expressway which improved connections between the Northern and Eastern sectors of Singapore. In August this year, the Nicoll Highway extension and Esplanade Bridge was opened to alleviate traffic congestion in the civic district during peak hours.

8. The upgrading of Jalan Ahmad Ibrahim to an expressway to form an extension of the Ayer Rajah Expressway (AYE) is LTA's latest effort in this direction. The newly upgraded expressway will not only provide better

connections with existing expressways to facilitate traffic flow islandwide, it will also improve traffic conditions in the Tuas and Jurong industrial area.

9. I understand that traffic congestion at the heavily used interchanges of Benoi Road and Pioneer Circus has already eased significantly. Traffic speed along the newly upgraded expressway between Jurong Town Hall Road and Tuas West Drive has also increased from 40 km/h to 61 km/h during the morning peak period. During the evening peak period, the reverse city-bound traffic has also increased from 45 km/h to 55 km/h. Motorists and commuters travelling to and from the Tuas and Jurong area now enjoy smoother and faster rides. In addition, the new AYE extension will also serve as a high capacity link to the second causeway with Malaysia when it is opened next year.

Other Road Projects

10. Within the next six months, we can also look forward to the completion of more major road projects. They include:

- a. Phase II of the Seletar Expressway; and
- b. the opening of the 3-tier interchanges at the junction of Adam Road and Farrer Road and at the junction of Holland Road/Farrer Road and Queensway.

11. Within the next two years, we can expect to see the completion of:

- a. the widening of PIE from Kallang Bahru to the Bedok North Flyover; and
- b. the upgrading of the Interchange of PIE and TPE.

12. Saving time on the road and providing comfortable journeys are the main objectives of LTA's road development programme. LTA will be investing \$1.7 billion over the next five years to further expand and upgrade our road network, as part of LTA's multi-pronged strategy to build a world class land transport system for Singapore.

13. With an efficient and reliable road and rail system in place, supported by prudent demand management measures, I am confident that mobility in Singapore will continue to improve. This will bring tangible benefits not only to the economy but to all motorists and commuters as well.

14. I would also like to thank road users who have been inconvenienced in one way or another by these road works for their understanding and I look

forward to their support for the upcoming projects too. On this note, I declare the extension of the Ayer Rajah Expressway officially open.