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# Singapore Government PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY DR JOHN CHEN  
MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS  
AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF  
SELETAR EXPRESSWAY (SLE) PHASE II -  
FROM UPPER THOMSON ROAD TO WOODLANDS AVENUE 2  
21 FEBRUARY 1998 AT 10:00 AM**

Parliamentary Colleagues,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies & Gentlemen,

Good Morning,

In mid-November last year, when I opened the Extension to the Ayer Rajah Expressway (AYE), I announced that within the next six months, motorists could look forward to the completion of three other major road projects. These were the 3-tier interchanges at the junction of Adam Road and Farrer Road, and at the junction of Holland Road/Farrer Road and Queensway, and Phase II of the Seletar Expressway.

The 3-tier interchanges at the Adam Road/Farrer Road and the Holland Road/Farrer Road junctions were opened to traffic just last month and today I am delighted to be here to open the Seletar Expressway (SLE) Phase II.

With the completion of Phase II, the SLE will join the Bukit Timah Expressway (BKE) at one end and the Central Expressway (CTE) and the Tampines Expressway (TPE) at the other. Motorists travelling in the northern part of Singapore will have a direct express link to the city and also the eastern part of the island. This will make for smoother and more direct island-wide expressway travel.

Journeys will also be faster. Motorists travelling between Upper Thomson Road and Woodlands Avenue 2 on the new SLE will find distances shorter and travel times almost halved. Compared to the existing routes for travelling between these two points, motorists using the SLE can shorten their journeys by up to 6 km and save up to 10 minutes in travel time.

In addition to the SLE, we will continue to build upon and expand the current road network. Some major road projects that are nearing completion are:

- the interchange at the junction of TPE and PIE - which should be ready by the end of this year; and
- the widening of PIE from Kallang Bahru to Bedok North - which should be ready by the end of 1999.

Also in the pipeline is a plan to upgrade Telok Blangah Road into a semi-expressway. Work on that project will start later this year.

The development of a comprehensive road network is only one of the key strategies by MINCOM and the Land Transport Authority (LTA) to build A World Class Land Transport System. It is essential that we also rely on other strategies to achieve our goal. Besides integrating land use, town and transport planning and improving the public transport, we will also make use of modern technology to increase the capacity and efficiency of our roads without increasing their physical size. One such system that will be introduced soon is EMAS or the Expressway Monitoring & Advisory System.

EMAS is a state-of-the-art system that makes use of strategically located detection and surveillance cameras to pick up troubled traffic conditions. This information will be transmitted back to LTA staff manning the 24-hour Control Centre. Warning or advisory messages will then be screened on the electronic signboards. So, if there is a traffic accident on the CTE or some other obstruction, motorists will be

informed before they enter the expressway. Hence, they will be in a position to take an alternative route. Those already on the expressway may be able to exit before they reach the accident site. At the very least, if traffic is moving slowly, motorists will be aware of the reason why.

Control Centre staff will also update TV and radio stations so that traffic conditions can be relayed to motorists before they begin their journey. In the event of an accident or road blockage, the relevant emergency crews will be alerted. EMAS is especially effective in minimising congestion in times of incidents, as it allows for quicker response times and enables motorists to avoid problem areas.

I am pleased to announce that EMAS on the CTE will be launched on 21 Mar 98. EMAS will subsequently be extended to other expressways. When the EMAS system is operational on the CTE, motorists should look out for 3 types of electronic signboards on and around the CTE. They are:

**i) Traffic Information Displays** - These are large, overhanging signs that will display information in words and in symbols. When there is an adverse traffic situation such as an accident, these messages and signs will be used to forewarn motorists upstream.

**ii) Traffic Sign Displays** - These are smaller signs found on the central divider of the expressway. They will use symbols to indicate adverse traffic conditions or to give instructions to motorists, such as 'Congestion', 'Lane Merging' or a

recommended speed limit in times of adverse traffic conditions.

**iii) Travel Time Displays** - These are blue, advisory signboards placed at the entrances to the CTE. These signboards will provide estimated travel times to certain locations, such as the AYE or the Pan Island Expressway (PIE), via the CTE.

The EMAS system lets the motorist know what lies ahead and helps him plan or change his journey for a more pleasant and smoother ride. Once motorists are familiar with it, the signs and symbols of EMAS will likely be a welcome addition to the Singapore motoring landscape.

The last key strategy for a World Class Transport System is demand management. This involves a judicious mix of ownership and usage measures. Come 1st April, we will launch the first phase of the Electronic Road Pricing system on the East Coast Parkway. The ERP system will be the first of its kind in the world. Along with the ERP, we will also be rationalising our vehicle tax structure. This will result in a better balance of ownership and usage costs. We will be announcing details of both the ERP and the new tax structure soon.

Let me conclude by thanking all the motorists, residents and organisations in this area for their patience and understanding during the construction of the SLE. Your co-operation has contributed to the smooth progress of the project. On this note, it is my pleasure to now declare the Seletar Expressway - Phase II - from Upper Thomson Road to Woodlands Avenue 2 - officially open.