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Singapore Government PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY DR YAACOB IBRAHIM
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
FOR THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE PIE/TPE INTERCHANGE
ON FRIDAY, 21 AUGUST 1998 AT 10:00 AM**

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies & Gentlemen,

Good Morning

I am pleased to be here this morning to witness the completion and

opening of yet another major expressway interchange, paving the way for even better connections for motorists.

2 This interchange is part of the Land Transport Authority's five-year road development programme spanning from 1996 to the year 2000. Three major projects in this programme were completed and opened to traffic earlier this year. Two three-tier interchanges, one at the junction of Adam Road/Farrer Road and Bukit Timah Roads and one at the junction of Holland Road/Farrer Road and Queensway were opened in January. Phase II of the Seletar Expressway from Upper Thomson Road to Woodlands Avenue 2 was completed and opened in February.

3 Today, we mark the completion of another significant project in the road development programme - the Pan Island Expressway (PIE)/Tampines Expressway (TPE) Interchange. This Interchange was constructed over a two-year period at a total cost of \$29.2 million. It involved the construction of two viaducts linking the TPE and the PIE in both directions and a new loop ramp, the Upper Changi Flyover linking Upper Changi Road East with the PIE in the direction of Jurong.

4 With the completion of the pair of viaducts, motorists now have a direct link between Pasir Ris and Changi Airport - eliminating the need to pass through signalised traffic junctions, which can delay a journey, especially when traffic is heavy. This direct link will result in considerable travel timesaving for motorists. A journey from Pasir Ris to Changi Airport that once took 14 minutes can now be completed in eight minutes, about half the time previously needed. The journey in the opposite direction from Changi Airport to Pasir Ris now takes only 7 minutes compared with 11 minutes before the new

interchange was built.

New Flyover/Loop Ramp at Upper Changi Road East

5 Similarly, the opening of the Upper Changi Flyover will provide motorists travelling from the TPE to Jurong with a direct connecting loop onto the PIE, thereby avoiding the signalised traffic junction at Upper Changi Road East. As a result, travel time will be reduced considerably, from 19 minutes to 14 minutes. The potential timesaving means that this interchange will provide a smoother flow of traffic. The convenience of a congestion-free ride will be welcomed by road users.

Improved Traffic Along Adjacent Roads

6 Motorists using adjacent roads, such as Upper Changi Road East and Upper Changi Road North will also benefit, as much of the traffic previously using these roads will be diverted onto the PIE/TPE interchange. With the interchange providing a faster alternative route, the traffic build up at signalised junctions along these roads would be considerably reduced.

Future Road Projects

7 Even as we witness the completion of this road project, the LTA has embarked on several new projects to expand and upgrade our road network. Some projects which we can look forward to in the near future are the widening of the PIE from Kallang Bahru to Bedok North, which should be ready by the end of 1999 and the upgrading of Telok Blangah Road into a semi-expressway on which work is expected to start next month.

Holistic Approach Towards Land Transport

8 However, while we recognise that there will always be a place for road expansion and upgrading in our land transport strategy, we also know that the continued expansion and building of roads is not a viable or sustainable option for Singapore.

9 We cannot be building roads and more roads to connect people and businesses. At 12 per cent of total landmass, our roads are already taking up a significant portion of our land. We must continue to seek fresh solutions to traffic management concerns and land use.

10 Hence, we have adopted a holistic and integrated approach towards tackling our transport problem. Where feasible, we will continue to expand the road network and build more interchanges such as this. At the same time, we have to manage demand for road usage through the Electronic Road Pricing System. The LTA is also actively harnessing technology such as the Expressway Monitoring and Advisory System (EMAS) which has worked successfully on the Central Expressway. As earlier stated, EMAS will be extended to other expressways over the next few years. Other more advanced technology like intelligent traffic information system will also be tapped to maximise road capacity. Eventually, Singapore will have an intelligent land transport system that is capable of advising motorists and public transport commuters on the best routes and modes of transport based on real time information.

11 In addition, LTA is not only focusing on private transport modes. Even as they make progress with projects such as ERP, the LTA is pushing forward fervently with improving the public transport network. Getting more trips on public transport is one of the important long-term sustainable solutions to

traffic congestion in Singapore. The LTA is therefore concentrating on providing better and quicker access to the Central Business District (CBD) by public transport so that motorists can have attractive travel alternatives. We want to make public transport the preferred choice of all commuting Singaporeans.

12 I am pleased to note that the LTA is making good progress with the building of the North-East and Changi Airport Lines. Singapore's first Light Rapid Transit (LRT) at Bukit Panjang is expected to open before the end of next year. Work will soon start on the LRT system for Sengkang. Punggol 21 will also get its own LRT. And with the go ahead given just recently for the Marina Line, transport planners are now in the process of finalising the route alignment to provide even better connections between the CBD and the new downtown in Marina South. When completed, these projects will bring about better connectivity for our people living in the respective HDB towns and those working in the CBD and new downtown.

Conclusion

13 Before I end, I would like to reiterate that it is prudent to build a good transport infrastructure for the country, whether in good or bad times. This is so that we can remain attractive as a business hub. Hence, the LTA will continue build and improve upon our transport system to ensure that people and goods can move about efficiently with minimum hassles.

14 As you can see, there is much that has been done in all the aspects of our land transport strategy and much that remains to be done. But for now, let us pause and celebrate the completion of the PIE/TPE interchange. Before I open this interchange to traffic, let me first thank the motorists who travel in this area

regularly, for bearing with the inconvenience during the construction period.

15 It is now my honour and pleasure to declare the PIE/TPE interchange officially open.
