

jc19990415b

To:

cc: (bcc: NHB NASReg/NHB/SINGOV)

Subject: (EMBARGOED) Speech By Dr John Chen, 15 Apr 99, 9 AM

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

Media Division, Ministry of Information and the Arts, #36-00 PSA Building, 460
Alexandra Road, Singapore 119963. Tel: 3757794/5

=====

EMBARGO INSTRUCTIONS

The attached press release/speech is EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY.

Please check against delivery.

For assistance call 3757795

=====

SPRINTER 3.0, Singapore's Press Releases on the Internet, is located at:

<http://www.gov.sg/sprinter/>

=====

Embargoed Until Delivery

Please check against delivery

SPEECH BY DR JOHN CHEN,
MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS,
AT BOAT & METS ASIA '99 AND ASIA DIVE EXPO '99,
AT EXPO GATEWAY, WORLD TRADE CENTRE
ON 15 APRIL 1999 AT 9.00AM

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1 It gives me great pleasure to be here today at the opening of Boat & METS Asia '99 and Asia DIVE Expo '99. This is the ninth year Boat & METS Asia has been held in Singapore to showcase the boating, watersports and marine equipment industry. I am encouraged that, for the first time, Messe Düsseldorf, one of the big six fairs in Germany with a world-class Boat Show as one of its products, is joining forces with the other organisers to promote Boat & METS Asia. For Asia DIVE Expo, this marks the second year it is being held here in response to the growing dive industry and growing number of dive enthusiasts in the region. The two shows will once again provide many excellent opportunities for the industry to network and establish business contacts.

2 I am told that this exhibition will showcase the products and services of 450 international exhibitors from 37 countries. Thanks to the vision and hard work of the organisers, Boat and METS Asia has grown to be one of the region's largest and most important marine events of its kind. It has a role to play in our efforts to develop Singapore into an international maritime centre.

3 Singaporeans have shown a great interest in marine leisure activities over the last few years. The number of pleasure craft registered with the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore has increased more than tenfold, from 450 in 1986 to 5,715 in 1998. The current economic downturn does not seem to have dampened this trend. The number of people who have obtained the Powered Pleasure Craft Driving Licence rose by 8% to 21,210 last year.

4 The popularity of sea sports and boating activities in Singapore is partly due to the warm climate and tropical waters in the region. Located in the heart of Southeast Asia, Singapore's modern infrastructure also provides an excellent launching pad to the region's finest diving sites, some of which are amongst the best in the world. We should utilise these attributes to our advantage and build ourselves into the regional hub for sea sports and boating activities. Developments in this area will not only attract more investments in the marine leisure industry in Singapore, but also boost our tourism industry and create spin-offs for other industries as well.

5 A special highlight at Boat & METS Asia 99 is the island-wide Singapore Sea Sports Festival that was held with the support of 13 sea sports associations, yacht clubs and marinas. Open practically free of charge to the public, this festival will no doubt further promote and generate interest in recreational boating and sea sports activities among Singaporeans.

6 Another highlight at the show is the marine conservation showcase cum photo exhibition presented by the Nature Society of Singapore. This showcase is timely as it will serve as a useful reminder to all users of the sea to protect our marine environment while enjoying sea sports and boating activities. Marine conservation is essential to protect the abundance and diversity of marine life in the seas around us so that the generations after us can continue to enjoy and benefit from them.

7 In conclusion, I would like to congratulate the organisers for their combined efforts in this

jc19990415b

major event and I wish them and all the exhibitors every success in this exhibition. It is now my pleasure to

National Archives of Singapore