

22 OCT 1986

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

Information Division, Ministry of Communications & Information, City Hall, Singapore 0617 • Tel. 3307269 / 3307270 / 3307271

Release No: 09/OCT
05-1/86/10/03

86-GCT-15

**SPEECH BY MR GOH CHOK TONG, FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
AND MINISTER FOR DEFENCE, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF
RAFFLES CITY, AT RAFFLES BALLROOM, ON FRIDAY
3 OCTOBER, 1986, AT 7.30 PM**

**CREATING A MORE COLOURFUL SINGAPORE
FOR BOTH SINGAPOREANS AND TOURISTS**

This piece of land on which Raffles City stands has a special meaning for me and many Singaporeans. For it was here that Raffles Institution proudly stood, for more than a century. And it was here that thousands of us spent many joyous years.

But proud as Rafflesians were of their old school buildings, they recognized that history must make way for prosperity. It was thus with more than a casual interest that they looked forward as to who would take the place of Raffles.

This evening it is my pleasure to officiate at the opening of Raffles City. It is indeed auspicious that the owners have decided to call this complex of modern towering buildings "Raffles City". For the name "Raffles" carries a big reputation of excellence. And Raffles City will have to live up to that reputation.

A Bold Concept

Raffles City is a "City within a City". Its concept is bold and courageous. It will link the throbbing central business district on the south side of the Singapore River

with the expanding tourist, shopping and entertainment belt that stretches from Marina Square to Orchard Road. The investments in time, effort, and money are enormous. As of now, it is the largest development project in Singapore.

All of us here tonight can see what a magnificent development this is. It has grand hotels, quality shops, and convention facilities for large conferences. Its completion has strengthened Singapore's position as a premier tourist and convention centre in this region. Those responsible for creating Raffles City, the owners, developers, planners, architects, engineers, and all the other professionals and workers, deserve our congratulations and praise. They had worked hard for this day and demonstrated their confidence and faith in the future of Singapore.

Faith and Confidence

This faith has not been misplaced, even though Raffles City may appear to be completed at an inopportune time. The number of visitors to Singapore is not growing as fast as it used to be. The prospects for the next 10 years are expected to be difficult. With slower world economic growth, people will travel less.

But we are not one to sit back and do nothing. Since the general forecast is for slower growth in tourist arrivals, our challenge is to increase it. More will be done to attract more visitors to Singapore. Indeed, our effort will be constrained only by the limit of our own creativity.

Earlier, a Tourism Task Force has been set up. Many of its recommendations are being implemented. For example, Haw Par Villa is being redeveloped into a Chinese mythological theme park. But even as these ideas are being translated into reality, the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board has started working on new ones.

New Ideas

It engaged a team of international consultants to do an independent comprehensive study of Tourism Product Development in Singapore. This team has already submitted its report. The report is still being studied by the various government agencies involved in Tourism Product Development. However, inputs and views from the private sector will be useful in determining which of the proposals are viable and which are not.

STPB will release the Report soon for review and discussion by the private sector.

For tonight, let me give you a glimpse of the recommendations of the consultants. As our tourism promotion philosophy, the consultants have urged that we:

- accentuate what we are;
- do not try to invent or imitate others;
- refine what we have.

In other words, "Stay Asian and Singaporean".

The Report recommends that our best strategy is to enhance our existing attractions, which are small and isolated, and weave them into larger themes so that they reinforce one another. This way, individual projects will become more viable, and the total interest in them increased. The Report recommends the development of attractions based on the following four themes:

Firstly, the Exotic East:

This includes the redevelopment of Haw Par Villa into a Chinese mythological theme park, Chinatown, Singapore River and other areas. Bugis Street, which seems to have a special appeal of its own, will be recreated.

Secondly, our Colonial Heritage:

The proposal here is to develop a Heritage Link to capture one aspect of Singapore's past. This link will stretch from Bras Basah Road and the Padang to the Singapore River and Fort Canning.

Raffles Hotel and the surrounding area will be upgraded.

A sound and light show will be produced to dramatise Singapore's history and developments.

Thirdly, Singapore can be advertised as a Tropical Island Resort. For this, resorts on Sentosa and Lazarus Island will be developed. So will marinas.

A tunnel link to Sentosa has also been proposed, but its economics will, of course, have to be studied carefully.

Fourthly, many tourists to Singapore are struck by our Clean and Green Garden City. To enhance this theme, Fort Canning Park will be redeveloped.

An Orchid Farm and a Spice Garden will be added.

In addition, Singapore will host international sporting and cultural events in Singapore.

These varied themes are intended to appeal to the different interests of visitors from all over the world.

The plan is to complete the above projects, with private sector participation, within the next five years. The Government will provide the infrastructure, leaving the private sector with their enterprise to create the super-structure. Even then, the infrastructure alone will cost at least \$1 billion.

Quality of Life for Singaporeans

Now, let me conclude by saying that we are enhancing our attractions not just to benefit the tourists alone. We are doing it for ourselves. All our efforts to develop and beautify are ultimately for our own gain. In fact, the projects we embark upon will add colour to our City. They will attract Singaporeans, involve their participation, and meet their cultural and leisure needs. Attractions built specially for tourists are not, by and large, of special interest to them. This is because, generally, tourists are inclined to go where locals go, and enjoy what locals enjoy. They want to know how Singaporeans live and play. Our tourist development projects will, therefore, proceed on the basis that they will be enjoyed and patronised by Singaporeans as much as our foreign visitors.

In the final analysis, tourism promotion and major projects like Raffles City have one objective - the enhancement of our national well-being and our national pride. Raffles City will contribute to our well-being and pride.

It is now my pleasure to declare Raffles City open.

- - - - -