

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY MR LIM HNG KIANG,
ACTING MINISTER FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE KRANJI EXPRESSWAY
ON SATURDAY, 4 MARCH 1995 AT 11.15 AM**

Many cities in the world are beset by traffic congestion on their roads. Traffic is reduced to a snail's pace and sometimes grinds to a stop. This has made driving in these cities an exasperating experience. In Singapore, motorists are fortunate to enjoy smooth and comfortable travel on the roads.

This pleasant situation has not come about by chance. It is a result of our careful and long-term planning and development of transport infrastructure, and the adoption of sound transportation policies.

Road development forms an important component of the strategy to meet our growing traffic needs. Over the years, we have developed a comprehensive road network. We started building expressways about 20 years ago. Now, we have a network of expressways criss-crossing the island. The Public Works Department (PWD) has also widened existing roads and built more multi-lane roads and flyovers. A computerised traffic light system was introduced to ensure smoother traffic flow.

We are determined to keep traffic free-flowing, even as more cars come on the road as a result of Singaporeans' affluence and growing aspiration to own a car. Our roads are like the arteries in the body. They support Singapore's economic growth. In cities with massive traffic jams, valuable time is lost each day. Office workers and goods vehicles are stuck on the road for

hours. Even little school children commuting in public buses are not spared the ordeal. Our economy will be badly affected if our roads are choked with heavy traffic. No point in having an efficient port and airport to clear people and goods if they are to be stuck on the road thereafter.

Our expressways have served us well in meeting our traffic needs. Today, we launch our eighth expressway - the Kranji Expressway, or KJE in short. Costing \$154 million, this 8.4 km expressway serves the North-western part of the island. Motorists using the KJE will take a shorter time to travel from Woodlands in the north to Choa Chu Kang, Bukit Batok or Jurong in the West. They no longer need to wind through Woodlands Road or Choa Chu Kang Road or Bukit Batok Road. Travel along these roads will also be smoother as traffic is diverted to the KJE. Residents in Choa Chu Kang New Town, in particular, can look forward to a smoother ride in and out of their town via the KJE.

The KJE is built with a special feature. The entire stretch of the KJE is paved with a new type of anti-skid asphalt mix. We have invested in this costlier mix because it makes for safer travel, especially during rainy days. Following field trials along one kilometre of the Ayer Rajah Expressway, PWD first laid the mix in a stretch of eight kilometres along the Pan-Island Expressway (PIE) extension to Tuas. Motorists are pleased with this safety feature, which recently won the Innovators Merit Award for PWD from the Institution of Engineers, Singapore. I congratulate PWD's engineers and technical staff for their achievement.

We will continue to invest heavily to expand the capacity of our road network. In the last five years, we have spent \$1.13 billion on roads. We will spend another \$1.9 billion in the next five years.

Right now, we are pumping \$535 million into 30 road projects. Among other things, we will expand the flyover at the

junction of Bukit Timah Road, Farrer Road and Adam Road, and build a three-tier flyover at the junction of Holland Road, Queensway and Farrer Road. We will also extend the Tampines and Seletar expressways and turn Jalan Ahmad Ibrahim into an expressway.

While we will do what we can to increase road capacity within our land constraints, I must also remind Singaporeans that we cannot go on building new roads and expanding existing ones. Our land supply is finite, even with land reclamation. Building more roads is not the answer to easing traffic congestion. It is only one component of our multi-pronged approach. We also need to manage the growth of vehicle ownership and the use of cars, to adopt new technology to maximise the use of our valuable road space, and to improve the public transport system.

The Certificate of Entitlement (COE) system is unpopular, but effective and necessary. Electronic road pricing, which will be introduced in a few years' time, will further help us to maximise the use of our scarce road space. Systems to track vehicle movements on the road hold promise for a more efficient public bus system. The Government is now looking into the introduction of light rail transit systems. To encourage Singaporeans to use more of our public transport system, we are building covered walkways. This will make their walk from the home to the bus stop and MRT station, and their final destination a pleasant one.

While allowing more Singaporeans to own cars, we have, through a combination of measures, succeeded in preventing our roads from being clogged up. Apart from lubricating our economic growth, our efficient land transportation has given Singaporeans a quality living environment. In a study of 118 cities by the Geneva-based Corporate Resources Group, an international business group, Singapore came up tops in Asia in terms of the quality of living. Good land transportation was one of the factors considered in the study.

The road ahead presents us with greater challenges, as our economy continues to grow and Singaporeans become more affluent. We will strive to meet their aspirations to own a car. At the same time, Singaporeans should be encouraged to make greater use of our public transport.

It now gives me great pleasure to declare the new Kranji Expressway open.

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