

THE PRIME MINISTER'S ADDRESS AT THE OFFICIAL
OPENING OF PULAU BRANI NAVAL BASE, SATURDAY,
26 JANUARY, 1974

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Singapore has one of the biggest harbours in the world. It is the fourth largest in the world in tonnage of ships calling.

It is our intention to develop a flotilla of patrol craft and MGB (missile gun-boats) to help patrol the approaches to our harbour. This base in Pulau Brani is ideally situated. It is sited right opposite our harbour. It is an agreeable site, with excellent facilities for the stationing and training of the personnel Maritime Command.

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In December last year, 150 HSC students enlisted for national service were posted to the navy to assess their suitability for the Midshipman School which is being set up with help from the Royal New Zealand Navy. Some of the better students will be encouraged to become regular officers in Maritime Command.

However, the government is aware that SAF officers and regulars are very conscious of opportunities for promotion and comparable rewards between all branches of the SAF and the private sector. Up till now, those serving in Maritime Command believe they have been at a slight disadvantage compared to those in the army and the air force, where expansion has been faster. I take this opportunity to assure those in the navy that their interests will advance in step with those of the army and the air force. In fact, for the immediate future, it will be necessary to select and train high calibre officers for senior staff and command appointments of Maritime Command for it to take its rightful place among the other services of the SAF.

Those who do not make to senior staff and command positions will have alternative sea careers in ships engaged in regional or world trade. SADC pilots will have a choice in mid-career to convert to civilian work, in Singapore

Airlines. For Maritime Command officers, arrangements can likewise be made for them to get their Foreign-going Master's Certificate, Home Trade Master's Certificate, or Local Trade Master's Certificate, to work on ships belonging to Neptune Orient Lines, and other Singapore shipping lines.

Singapore makes more than half its living by the sea. The Maritime Command must reflect the importance of the sea to our livelihood. In co-

operation with our neighbours, we must play our part to keep down unlawful activities like smuggling and piracy.

Now, I declare this Naval Base formally open.

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