

PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY MR MAH BOW TAN,
MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS,
AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF
THE TANAH MERAH FERRY TERMINAL
AT TANAH MERAH FERRY TERMINAL
ON FRIDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 1995 AT 3.30 PM**

About three years ago in April 1992, we attended ground preparation ceremonies for the Tanah Merah Ferry Terminal and the Teluk Sebong Ferry Terminal. In November last year, we commissioned the Teluk Sebong Ferry Terminal. Today, I am pleased to jointly officiate the official opening of the Tanah Merah Ferry Terminal with His Excellency, Pak Haryanto, the Minister of Communications of Indonesia.

Build at a cost of \$29 million, the Tanah Merah Ferry Terminal will further expand our physical links with our neighbours. The new Terminal complements the four regional ferry berths at World Trade Centre which the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA) built in 1992 and provides yet another connecting point to the Riau Islands and the east coast of West Malaysia. It boasts of airport-style facilities such as duty free shops, travel agencies, a cafeteria-cum-seafood restaurant and other retail outlets.

Prospects for the regional ferry traffic look bright. Since 1990, the number of regional ferry passengers passing through Singapore has grown at 16 per cent a year and this year, we expect to handle three million passengers. The Tanah Merah Ferry Terminal alone can handle 1.5 million passengers a year, with a provision to expand to two million passengers a year.

To cope with the rapid growth in passengers, PSA has invested about \$80 million in cruise and ferry terminal

facilities over the last five years. These are substantial investments in infrastructure that will boost tourism in the Growth Triangle and promote the development of industrial and leisure projects in Batam and Bintan. In particular, I am confident that the Tanah Merah Ferry Terminal will contribute to Bintan's bright future. It will serve as the main gateway to the Bintan Beach International Resort and Bintan Industrial Estate.

The new terminal benefits both ferry operators and passengers. It allows ferry operators to increase the frequency of their services to destinations in Riau Islands and the east coast of West Malaysia. The shorter travelling distance means that operators save on fuel costs. As the Tanah Merah Ferry Terminal is equipped with bigger berths, ferry operators can deploy larger ferries, and enjoy economies of scale.

As for ferry passengers, Tanah Merah Ferry Terminal offers an alternative gateway to the Riau Islands and to West Malaysia's east coast. Passengers not only benefit from a wider choice of services, but also from shorter travel times. The terminal's location in eastern Singapore reduces travelling time from Singapore to Bintan and Batam by about 30 minutes. Further, the deployment of newer ferries improves the safety and comfort of sea travel. During the year, a total of 12 ferries have been commissioned, six of which are new additions bringing the total fleet size to 55 ferries servicing the region.

Finally, I would like to say that the development of the Tanah Merah Ferry Terminal and the Teluk Sebong Ferry Terminal is a concrete demonstration of the close ties that exist between Singapore and Indonesia. That is why we have Pak Haryanto as our Guest-of-Honour this afternoon. I am confident that the warm relationship between our countries will bring about many more opportunities for co-operation for the mutual benefit of our two countries.

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