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PRESS RELEASE

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Release No.: 09/FEB03A-1/96/02/09**SPEECH BY MR MAH BOW TAN,
MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS,
AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF TAMPINES MALL
ON 9 FEBRUARY 1996 AT 5.00 PM**

I would like to thank the owners of Tampines Mall for inviting me to open Tampines Mall this evening.

This event marks another significant milestone in the Government's plan to develop Tampines into the financial and business centre for the eastern part of Singapore.

The concept of regional centres was first proposed by the Government in 1991 as a way to lessen overcrowding in the Central Business District and Orchard Road. Its aim is to bring jobs, shopping and entertainment closer to the homes of people, so that we can save travel time and ease traffic congestion.

Today, five years later, that vision is quickly becoming a reality. Tampines is now a thriving regional centre, with a population of close to 200,000 people. It has many of the amenities that you can expect to find downtown in Shenton Way, including a Finance Park, which services the backroom operations and data centres of banks; a Telepark, which is specially equipped to house the communications and computer systems of large companies; and the Central Provident Fund (CPF) Branch Office which serves CPF members in the eastern region.

In addition, there are commercial and community amenities like the town centre, Tampines Library, shopping malls and cineplexes. The opening of Tampines Mall will add to the shopping, leisure and recreational choices for the residents in Tampines and its surrounding areas. In future, a cultural centre with theatres and art centres will be added to give even more colour to the lives of Tampines residents.

Tampines Mall is opening at a very exciting phase of Tampines' growth. More companies are realising the potential of Tampines and the advantages of setting up offices or businesses here. Following DBS Bank's move here in 1993, Tat Lee Bank and Overseas Union Bank have also already announced plans to move part of their operations to the regional centre. Recently, two more land parcels in Tampines Finance Park were sold by tender for development of office blocks to house more finance-related businesses.

As more housing units are being added to Tampines and the surrounding areas, Tampines regional centre will eventually serve a population of about 800,000 people. The Government therefore plans to attract more private enterprises and industries to Tampines and to develop more facilities for the community.

The new Eastern General Hospital is expected to be ready next year 1997, a new secondary school is scheduled for completion by 1999, and road improvements will be carried out to cater for the increase in traffic due to the rapid developments in the area. This includes extension of Upper East Coast Road to join the Pan-Island Expressway (PIE) and a new road to connect PIE with Tampines Expressway.

Residents of Tampines can look forward to living in modern and lively new town, with the convenience of jobs, food, recreational, shopping, banking and business facilities, almost at their doorstep. With the advantage of being served by the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT), expressways, a good network of roads, the Government's vision of Tampines as the premier regional centre of the east is fast becoming a reality. No wonder Tampines New Town is becoming a popular place to live in.

But good facilities alone do not make a good home. Ultimately it is still the people who live and work here who will determine how Tampines develops, whether it continues to be clean and safe and friendly, or whether it deteriorates into an urban jungle - dark, dirty and dangerous.

It has not happened in Singapore, because of the extraordinary care and attention paid to the management and maintenance of housing estates by the Housing and Development Board (HDB), Town Councils and grassroots leaders. But here and there, we can see signs of lapses. You have seen reports of new upgraded neighbourhoods being spoilt by littering.

Here in Tampines, the Town Council recently built a new neighbourhood park. When I went to inspect the park soon after completion, I felt very angry and sad when I saw how some people had abused and dirtied the new park. Lights were broken, plants were pulled out and litter was everywhere. Residents suspected it was the work of a small group of people. It took only a few anti-social people to spoil the whole neighbourhood. Some residents even suggested that the Town Council should not repair the broken lights and replace the plants just to make a point. In the end, the Town Council did make the necessary repairs, at extra cost of course. This episode

taught us several useful lessons - that our job is not done when the project is completed, that a lot of work must go into maintaining it, that residents must stand up and be counted to look after their own neighbourhood if they want to enjoy the full benefits of a clean, green and healthy neighbourhood.

On this occasion of the opening of Tampines Mall, I take this opportunity to welcome the owners and the tenants to Tampines. As this town grows, so will your business grow. Tampines Mall, with its strategic location, proven management and good tenant mix, should do well even in a very competitive retail market. I hope that, together with its neighbouring businesses, Tampines Mall in turn will contribute significantly to enrich the lives of Tampines residents, and support the Government's efforts to create a vibrant and stimulating environment for people of Tampines to live in.

On this note, I would like to congratulate the owners of Tampines Mall, namely DBS Land, Pemas Sdn Bhd and NTUC Fairprice, on this special occasion, and wish all at Tampines Mall much success in their new and exciting venture.

On behalf of the residents of Tampines, I thank the owners of Tampines Mall for their contribution of \$50,000 to the Tampines East Citizens' Consultative Committee Education and Welfare Fund. We appreciate this very kind gesture to help the CCC in their worthy cause.

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