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Singapore Government **PRESS RELEASE**

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**SPEECH BY DR YEO NING HONG, MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS
AND INFORMATION AND SECOND MINISTER FOR DEFENCE (POLICY),
AT THE OPENING OF THE OPERATIONS CONTROL CENTRE OF
THE SINGAPORE MRT SYSTEM
ON TUESDAY, 30 AUGUST 1988 AT 10.30 AM**

I am happy to be here this morning to officiate at the opening of the Operations Control Centre of the MRT system. Many commuters have been enjoying the comfort and convenience of the MRT over the past 10 months. But they may not be aware of the existence of this Control Centre or the complexity of the system. This is understandable. The Operations Control Centre plays a critical role in the smooth and safe operation of the MRT trains. All computerised movements of the trains and signalling systems are initiated from here. That is why we need highly trained and dedicated men and women at the critical positions of the Operations Centre and elsewhere in the MRT system. Without them, the MRT system will grind to a halt or worse.

Similarly some people seeing the smooth running of our economy and armed forces, our hospitals, our schools, junior colleges, tertiary institutions, do not realise the complexity of Government that supports all the activities. Without good honourable and dedicated people in Parliament, in Government, and in Cabinet, we must expect these processes also to grind to a halt and collapse. Indeed, this is exactly what happens in so many countries. A short trip overseas is all that we need, to convince ourselves that this is true.

Our MRT is one of the most advanced in the world. Even the hardened, worldly-wise foreign pressmen, who covered the British Prime Minister's recent visit to our MRT, were impressed. But we must strive to do better, to do more, to improve the quality of life for even more Singaporeans. To this end, we are pressing on with Phase II of our MRT system, to serve residents in the eastern and western parts of Singapore.

Let me give you a progress report of the MRT system. Jurong East, Chinese Garden, and Lakeside - barring unforeseen circumstances, we expect them to be completed and opened for public service on 5 November 1988. These three stations will serve those living in Jurong and the surrounding areas. Shortly, thereafter, Khatib and Yishun stations, serving residents in Nee Soon Central, Nee Soon East and Nee Soon South will also be ready. The eastern line all the way to Tampines New Town will serve the residents of Kampong Glam, Jalan Besar, Aljunied, Paya Lebar, Eunos, Kembangan, Bedok, and Tanah Merah. Barring unforeseen circumstances, they will be ready by the end of next year. Shortly thereafter, we can have the MRT to Bukit Batok, Bukit Gombak, and Choa Chu Kang.

Beyond Phase II, we would be planning for Phase III - the North-east line. Work will begin soon to study the soil conditions to map out the best possible route and the best locations of stations in a manner to best serve residents living in the North-east sector.

Such long term planning requires political stability and continuity, which is a prerequisite for good economic growth. Without economic growth, we would be unable to afford such a large investment. Without political stability and economic growth, all our plans would be like those in so many other countries - wishful thinking and empty promises. It is up to all of us as citizens to help make our dreams come true.

All the achievements in Singapore over the past 30 years are possible only because there has been a hardworking population giving full support to an honest and efficient Government, which has been planning, managing, and supervising all these major complex projects. Without an honest and efficient Government, massive projects such as the MRT would not be possible, much less completed on time and within budget. Least of all ahead of schedule and below budget, which is what we are achieving in Singapore. To all Singaporeans, I say - "We are on the right track. Let's stay on it, for many more good years to come."

On this note, I take great pleasure in declaring the Operations Control Centre of the MRT system officially open.

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