

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR LIM KIM SAN, MINISTER FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AND COMMUNICATIONS, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY OF THE
'RADIOCOMMUNICATIONS' EXHIBITION ON WEDNESDAY, 17 MAY '78
AT 2.35 PM AT THE NATIONAL STADIUM.

This Exhibition is held to celebrate the 10th World Telecommunication Day and the theme selected by the International Telecommunication Union for this year is 'Radiocommunications'.

Radiocommunications began in 1895 when Marconi made the world's first experimental radio transmission. In Singapore, radio broadcasting commenced in 1934 with the establishment of a transmitting station at Kim Chuan Road. This was however limited to short- and medium-distance transmissions.

An important application of radiocommunication which has benefited us is microwave technology. Today, we have two microwave links to Malaysia. The first link was installed in 1959. The second link, installed in 1973, has a capacity of 1,800 speech channels or three times that of the first. To cope with increasing traffic between the two countries, a third link also with a capacity of 1,800 speech channels is expected to be installed next year. The Singapore terminal for this new link will be located at the new Telecoms headquarters building at Exeter Road.

Microwave radiocommunications is also being utilized to develop our offshore telephone services. Such services are presently available to Sentosa, Pulau Merlimau and Pulau Ayer Chawan. Next year, these telephone services will be extended to Pulau Tekong.

A highly significant contribution by radiocommunications has been the development of satellite communications. With the commissioning of the first earth satellite station at Sentosa in 1971, and its second antenna in 1974, we are now directly linked by telephone, telegraph, telex and television to most parts of the world.

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In addition to its uses in establishing point-to-point communications through microwave and satellite links, radio is indispensable for mobile communications. Government organisations like the Singapore Fire Brigade, the Customs and Excise Department and the Police all subscribe to the Telecoms mobile radio service, in which each organisation operates its own private radio network.

Another service provided by Telecoms is the radio telephone service whereby motor vehicles and harbour craft can call into the national telephone network. There is also the radio paging service to which there are currently some 2,800 subscribers.

Many of us may not be aware that the ships at sea were the first to send and receive messages by radiocommunications. Maritime mobile telecommunications were already available at the turn of the century. The Coast Station at Yio Chu Kang operated by Telecoms communicates regularly with the vessels of more than 250 international shipping lines operating into Singapore. With the introduction of the use of maritime satellites by Telecoms last year for our maritime telephone, telex and telegraph services, the international shipping community has been able to enjoy practically world-wide communication coverage as well as a better quality of service.

Radiocommunications also plays a vital role in the various aeronautical and airport services. From aircraft ground handling and airport fire services on the ground to airport traffic control and radio navigation in the air, all these services will not have been available without radiocommunications.

The latest technological developments in this field will be provided at the new Changi International Airport. A long-range air surveillance radar and a short-range approach control radar code-named 'LORADS', will be integrated into the system. Computers will be used to process the integrated radar and flight plan information to improve the standard of our air traffic services.

In the field of meteorology, a sophisticated meteorological satellite earth station is being planned. This will provide the Meteorological Services Department with more accurate facsimile pictures of weather information at more frequent intervals so that weather forecasts can be improved.

This Exhibition sponsored by staff of Telecoms is intended to give us some idea of the many uses of radiocommunications. Their impact on our daily lives is considerable -- whenever you lift the phone to call an overseas friend, see an aircraft arrive or enjoy a television programme. Viewing the exhibits presented here will be a rewarding experience.

It now gives me great pleasure to declare the Radio-communications Exhibition open.

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