

# Singapore Government

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SPEECH BY DR YEO NING HONG, MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION AND SECOND MINISTER FOR DEFENCE AT THE MRT TALK AT BUKIT HO SWEE COMMUNITY CENTRE ON 30 JULY 1985 AT 7.45 PM

Thank you for joining us this evening at this presentation about our MRT system. Most of you have followed newspaper stories. So you are aware of how far the project has progressed. The purpose of these face-to-face sessions is to give residents the opportunity to ask questions and clear up any concerns that they may have. The MRT Corporation has shown that it wants to work with residents to ensure the success of the project. That is why this forum has been organized. We are pleased to see so many of you here tonight. I want to extend a special welcome to my colleagues, Mr Ch'ng Jit Koon, Minister of State for Community Development and MP for Tiong Bahru Constituency, and Mr Lai Tha Chai, MP for Henderson Constituency, who are here tonight to participate in this session. They have been helping the MRTC in explaining details about activities to their residents. I welcome also residents from Tiong Bahru and Henderson as well as constituents in Kim Seng. Residents from these three constituencies will be using Tiong Bahru Station when it is completed. In the meantime we will all be affected by the construction process.

All of us in Singapore have participated in this period of start-up and construction of the MRT. We have watched the project evolve from studies, plans, maps, and diagrams to physical excavations and constructions. Today, more than two dozen construction sites stretching from Yio Chu Kang in the north to Clementi in the west are currently in active progress. Twenty months after our first ground breaking ceremony at Shan Road, our objective of running the first train by early 1988 is still firmly on target.

We can look at the progress of the MRT from the variety of events which were held to mark the achievement of significant milestones in the project. Just a few weeks ago we had our first tunnel breakthrough - a double breakthrough, in fact. The two tunnels were started from the Tiong Bahru site. They have completed some of the longest drives in the entire system, through difficult soil conditions and reached Outram Park at the end of May. Since then, a second contractor has had a breakthrough from Orchard to Somerset. These breakthroughs will become more frequent from now on, because progress at all sites continues to be rapid.

Next week we will celebrate another landmark event - the completion and topping up of the civil works at one of our stations. Again, this event will be followed shortly by a series of similar achievements, as the civil work of more and more of Phase 1 underground stations are completed. In fact, by the end of this year, the entire Phase 1/1A system will be 42 per cent complete - nearly half way.

Tiong Bahru is the final underground station in the first phase MRT system. West of the station, the trains will begin to rise to the surface, and gradually move above ground to the elevated viaduct structure, which will eventually go all the way to Jurong. Here at Tiong Bahru MRT construction has been underway for more than a year. This site has an access shaft for the tunnelling activities to Outram Park I mentioned earlier.

New construction activities for the station itself will start very soon. The level of activity will increase dramatically. Some dust, noise and inconvenience can be expected because large scale excavation will now be undertaken.

There will also be some road diversions and other disruptions. But MRTC will do their best to keep these down to a minimum, as they have done so at the other construction sites. And just as our friends in other parts of Singapore have been supportive of the MRT construction since 1983, I know the residents of Kim Seng, Tiong Bahru, and Henderson will also cooperate to ensure the success of this important national project. With the project moving so swiftly along, the period of inconvenience will also pass quickly. Before you know it, you will be riding one of the most modern and safest rapid transit systems in the world.

I hope you will all take the opportunity tonight to ask as many questions as possible. Then later, move around and meet and get to know the public relations and engineering staff from the Corporation. They are also the people who are ready to help you at any future date to resolve any problem that may arise. This MRT is being built to serve all Singaporeans. For it to succeed, the support of all Singaporeans is necessary. Hence, the MRTC's motto - Moving Ahead With You. It is an exciting time for all in Singapore and we look forward to our first ride on the MRT trains, providing us with fast congestion-free travel. Thank you for joining us tonight and I wish you a pleasant, enjoyable and fruitful evening.

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