

Singapore Government **PRESS RELEASE**

Media Division, Ministry of Information & The Arts, 36th Storey, PSA Building, 460 Alexandra Road, Singapore 0511. Tel: 2799794/5.

Release No.: 28/OCTOBER
02-1/92/10/22

**SPEECH BY PRIME MINISTER MR GOH CHOK TONG
AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF BRANI TERMINAL
ON THURSDAY, 22 OCTOBER 1992, AT 10.00 AM**

Modern Singapore began as a port on the banks of the Singapore River.

In 1823, Raffles declared:

"...the Port of Singapore is a Free Port
and the Trade thereof is open to ships and
vessels of every nation free of duty
equally and alike to all..."

His free trade policy laid the foundation for Singapore's development. It gave the impetus for the growth of the riverine port. Chinese junks, Indian opium clippers, Thai Wangkangs and Indonesian Palaris began to drop anchors here. By 1827, exports from Singapore reached \$45 million. The population then only numbered 11,000.

This trade continued to grow and more and more ships came. By 1965, Singapore was the world's fifth busiest port, in terms of shipping tonnage. By 1982, it became the world's busiest. Two years later, it became the world's top container port, overtaking Hong Kong. And for the last five years, the

Asian Freight Industry has voted Singapore "The Best Port in Asia".

Singapore is now more than a world-class port. It is a global maritime hub, living up to Raffles' vision. This offers considerable advantages to our businessmen. They can bring in and send out their products from and to all parts of the world easily, quickly and cheaply. With many shipping lines and sailings to choose from, they save time, stocks and money.

Our well-connected port also benefits our neighbours. By using Singapore as their hub port, their exports enjoy the same advantages as Singapore's. Indeed, this was what an Indonesian Minister told me recently when I was in Jakarta for the Non-Aligned Movement Summit. He said that the efficiency of our port and the availability of numerous sailings helped their exports.

Our port has become a global maritime hub because of farsightedness. The Port of Singapore Authority (PSA) took a long view. It planned and built ahead of demand. Its forecast of cargo traffic turned out right and its efficiency helped to make it so.

The Brani Terminal is a good example. Though the project was given the go-ahead in 1988, it was conceptualised more than 10 years ago.

Today, even as we formally open the terminal, work is already underway for its Phase Two Development. The entire Brani project is scheduled to be completed in 1994.

But that is not the end of the story. For Singapore to stay ahead, it must plan way ahead. Two years ago, PSA

started to plan yet another new container terminal, bigger than Tanjong Pagar and Brani put together. It will be located at Pasir Panjang.

The Pasir Panjang project will make Singapore a mega-port. It will be designed to handle up to 36 million twenty foot equivalent units (TEUs) (container units) a year, nearly three times the current total container handling capacity of the PSA. It will serve Singapore well into the 21st century.

The project will be carried out in phases over many years. Phase I, which will begin next year, will cost more than \$2 billion. By comparison, the Brani Terminal, when fully developed will cost \$1.4 billion. PSA will reclaim 129 hectares of land off the West Coast to build eight container berths. The first three berths should be ready by 1997.

The transformation of our port, from riverine, to conventional, to container, is made possible only because our port workers are willing to be trained and re-trained, and are capable of acquiring new skills and new technologies. The port worker of today has a very different job from the early immigrant coolies and lightermen in the harbour. He does not have to break his back and walk precariously on planks. The Singapore port is one of the most advanced in the use of Information Technology. Almost all documentation on shipping and cargo are now transmitted electronically. Computerised expert systems are used to plan, monitor and manage the operations in the port. The port worker is now therefore more computer-literate and multi-skilled.

This mega-port will be a high-tech port. The new Pasir Panjang Terminal will be automated. PSA is spending millions of dollars on research and development to introduce unmanned operations for this terminal.

Singapore is one of the top ports in the world. I congratulate the management and workers for gaining us this reputation. Those in charge have shown that they possess the same vision and faith that Raffles had in Singapore. I have every confidence that Singapore will remain one of the great free ports in the world, open to all ships and vessels of every nation that come to trade.

It now gives me great pleasure to officially declare the Brani Terminal open.

- - - - -