

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

Media Division, Ministry of Information and the Arts, #36-00 PSA Building, 460  
Alexandra Road, Singapore 119963. Tel: 3757794/5

=====

EMBARGO INSTRUCTIONS

The attached press release/speech is EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY.

Please check against delivery.

For assistance call 3757795

=====

SPRINTER 3.0, Singapore's Press Releases on the Internet, is located at:

<http://www.gov.sg/sprinter/>

=====

SPEECH BY MR TANG GUAN SENG,

SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY

MINISTRY OF TRADE & INDUSTRY

AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF PRINTEC ASIA 99

AT SINGAPORE EXPO, 25 MAY 1999, 0900 HRS

Good morning,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. It gives me great pleasure to be here this morning to officiate at the opening ceremony of PRINTEC ASIA '99.

Significance of THE PRINTING INDUSTRY IN SINGAPORE

2. The Singapore printing industry has come a long way. During the pre-war

years, there were about 60 commercial printing houses in Singapore. By comparison, the industry has over 400 such houses today.

3. Despite the regional economic slowdown and its far-reaching impact on all industries, the printing industry in Singapore has grown to reach an output of S\$1.6 billion per year. In addition, the printing industry alone accounts for the employment of over 14,000 workers.

#### CHALLENGES FACED BY THE PRINTING INDUSTRY IN SINGAPORE – TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES

4. While the printing industry in Singapore has enjoyed good growth over the years, there are signs of stagnation. This slowdown in the industry is not due entirely to the Asian economic crisis. More pertinent is the intense competition faced by the industry that is affecting overall growth and viability.

5. The rapid advancement of technology in recent years, especially in the field of printing machinery and processing, has also placed tremendous pressure on the industry. Already, there are emerging trends with respect to printing technologies that are fundamentally changing the way in which the industry is run.

6. One such trend is the increasing use of digitalisation. This means text and graphic information are managed, transmitted and stored differently. But it also makes traditional means obsolete in the process.

7. The advent of Computer-to-Plate technology, for example, has also completely done away with the creating and casting of films. Hence, this technology has helped to reduce the number of man-hours required for each project.

8. Another important trend is the increasing use of the internet. This will not only affect the printing methods per se, but will also change the marketing aspects of the trade. Thus as more companies venture into e-commerce, a common, borderless international marketplace will be created. As a result, competition for printing jobs is no longer confined to local companies alone.

9. By the same token, local printing companies can also compete internationally. Increasingly, as customers realise that they can source the world, they will bypass establishments that are unable to offer them the same high-quality services in favour of faster, better and cheaper alternatives. Take the International Herald Tribune for example. The paper is laid out in Paris and then transmitted via satellite to the printing press in Singapore for same day delivery. There is clearly no compromise in standards and location is no longer an issue. The challenge for the industry is to adapt and embrace new technologies, to improve productivity and keep costs down.

Significance of PRINTEC ASIA '99

10. To meet these challenges and to take advantage of the latest printing trends, it is essential that industry players can come together to exchange ideas, to view the latest equipment as well as to network with each other. For these reasons, the inauguration of PRINTEC ASIA '99 in Singapore is timely. PRINTEC ASIA is a combination of DRUPA and IMPRINTA in Düsseldorf, which are leading events in their fields. Thus, PRINTEC ASIA can aspire to serve this region as the leading event in printing equipment and technology. In this way, its debut in Singapore is of significance to the exhibition industry as well.

SINGAPORE AS AN INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION CITY

11. Singapore has long been recognised internationally as an ideal venue for staging international trade shows in Asia. Already more than a third of Asian trade fairs that are endorsed by the Paris-based UFI are held in Singapore.

12. The exhibition industry is an important one, with important links to trade. Despite the Asian crisis, I am pleased to note that the exhibition industry in Singapore has been faring well. With our strategic location, pro-business environment and excellent infrastructure, Singapore remains an ideal meeting place for the world's business community. At the same time, the completion of this purpose-built Singapore Expo, together with the Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre and the World Trade Centre, means that we are now able to offer international exhibitors more than 100,000 square metres in total exhibition space.

13. In terms of software, Singapore has also put in place a reputable accreditation system to benchmark exhibitions according to international standards.

14. To develop this industry to its fullest potential, the Singapore Trade Development Board has in place the International Exhibition City (IEC) Programme. This programme is a strategic tool to nurture credible trade fairs in Singapore to become leading industry events in the region. The IEC programme also aims to attract renowned international events to Singapore and to identify events of international quality to be staged here.

15. I am pleased to note that PRINTEC ASIA '99 is one such event under the TDB's Programme. The strong support it has from over 200 exhibitors, visitors and related associations such as EUMAPRINT and Master Printers Association, makes PRINTEC ASIA an excellent example of the kind of quality events we hope to attract to Singapore.

16. Thus, besides being an ideal platform for the printing industry to exchange ideas and to showcase their goods and services, the presence of PRINTEC ASIA '99 will also help to contribute positively towards making Singapore an International

Exhibition City.

CONCLUSION

17. I would like to congratulate the organiser, Messe Düsseldorf Asia Pte Ltd, for its commendable efforts in taking the initiative to organise and to stage a new event of such high calibre and international appeal.

18. On this note, I wish all exhibitors and visitors a fruitful time. It is my pleasure to declare PRINTEC ASIA '99 open.

19. Thank you.

National Archives of Singapore