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SPEECH BY MR. LIM KIM SAN, MINISTER FOR DEFENCE
AT THE OPENING OF THE SINGAPORE GENERAL AVIATION
SERVICE CO. PRIVATE LTD. ON 30TH OCTOBER 1969 AT
10.00 A.M. AT R.A.F. SELETAR, SINGAPORE

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

In an address delivered some months ago at the keel-laying ceremony of one of our boats, I had occasion to say that "the injection of defence spending into industrialisation will act as a catalyst in developing new skills and technology to the benefit of the nation".

This then helps to explain the establishment of the Singapore General Aviation Service Company Private Ltd. which will engage in the development of the aviation industry in Singapore.

With the rundown of the British bases in Singapore, the R.A.F. handed back to the Singapore Government part of Seletar airfield which is now named Seletar West Camp. The facilities handed over included the air-control tower, the runway, hanger accommodation and some buildings for general engineering and workshops. These facilities are now being used by the Singapore Armed Forces Flying Training School for training our pilots. These activities, however, do not provide for maximum use of the airfield and its facilities and other alternate uses have had to be found especially when the rest of the airfield is returned to the Government by 1971.

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It is proposed therefore that Seletar should become a small airport catering for the smaller type of aircraft which are likely to use Singapore. This would have the added advantage of providing a facility which could develop and produce revenue in the future. It would enable Paya Lebar to be cleared of smaller aircraft and concentrate upon international scheduled services. Seletar would take on all types of aircraft which could operate from its short runway; this would include charter services, helicopters, training aircraft, etc.

To enable Seletar airfield to meet this role it will be necessary to make some renovations to the airfield to comply with civil aviation requirements. To develop Seletar along these lines it is necessary to have a supporting engineering and maintenance service. Hence the idea was mooted that a commercial company with Government participation be formed to not only provide these facilities but also to engage in other activities of the aviation industry.

To-day we see the crystallisation of this idea as we meet at this ceremony to mark the opening of the Singapore General Aviation Service Company Private Ltd. - a joint enterprise between the Government of Singapore and Hawker de Havilland Australia Proprietary Ltd.

The objectives of the company briefly, are to carry on business in the provision of services to corporations and individuals engaged in general aviation activities in South-east Asia and elsewhere, this will include among other things, airport ramp services, airframe overhaul and maintenance, the servicing of avionics equipment, the overhaul and servicing of aircraft engines, etc.

The company will also undertake work for the Air Defence Command of the Singapore Armed Forces.

To-day we see in substantial terms Singapore's first concerted effort to enter the aviation industry and in a small way to gain a toe-hold in the space age.

As the aviation industry in Singapore develops, so too, will the level of technological sophistication. This in turn will provide opportunities for our young men and women to engage in many, many, exciting and challenging fields of technology.

We aim to be not only the servicing station of South-east Asia but also a centre of ideas for development and progress. Our success, we hope, will encourage others, and thus help bring peace and prosperity to this part of the world.

It gives me great pleasure, ladies and gentlemen, to declare open the Singapore General Aviation Service Company Private Ltd., and on your behalf and that of the Government, I wish the Company every success and prosperity.