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**SPEECH BY S DEANABALAN,
MINISTER FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
AT THE OPENING OF THE CENTRAL EXPRESSWAY TUNNELS
AT THE CENTRAL EXPRESSWAY TUNNEL
ON SATURDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 1991 AT 10.30 AM**

In July 1988, I was here for the Ground Breaking Ceremony of Phase II of the Central Expressway (CTE). It was a historic moment as it marked the start of our first attempt at placing roads underground to beat the traffic congestion in the city areas.

Now, three-and-a-half years later, the tunnels are a reality. Soon we will be able to drive through both of them - one measuring 0.7 km in length, and the other 1.7 km. The tunnel, from Bukit Timah Road to Cairnhill Circle, will be known as Kampong Java Tunnel. The other tunnel, from Kramat Road to Chin Swee Road will be called Chin Swee Tunnel. Their completion, together with the connecting surface roads of the Central Expressway, means that our 16-km Central Expressway is now fully completed and connects the Seletar Expressway to the Ayer Rajah Expressway. Motorists, particularly those living in Yishun, Ang Mo Kio and Toa Payoh, can now enjoy a faster and more convenient access to the Central Area.

Building roads underground in the developed area of the city has many advantages. It enables us to preserve the cityscape without marring it with visually obtrusive viaducts. The space above the underground roads can also be developed for other uses. This means that less land would be sterilised. The tunnel solution also helps to reduce the impact of traffic noise and air pollution on the environment.

We are, therefore, studying how much more our roads can go "underground". PWD has already started a feasibility study on the possibility of constructing such an underground road network. If found feasible and cost-effective, we will use the road tunnel solution to free our valuable land for other uses. Underground roads will also help to minimise the wide-scale acquisition of private properties for road widening, especially in heavily built-up areas.

As we move towards the next lap of Singapore's development, we will continue our efforts to make traffic move smoothly at a reasonable speed on our roads. We will also continue, without any let-up, our efforts to provide a balanced transport system, taking into consideration the needs of both motorists and users of public transport.

We will also continue to upgrade existing roads while building new flyovers and tunnels. The Central Expressway is one of the most difficult and challenging civil engineering projects completed by PWD. With this experience, there is no doubt that PWD has the capability to make improvements to our road system to provide a modern, efficient transport network.

Many have worked tirelessly these past three-and-a-half years to complete this project. I would like to congratulate PWD and the Contractor, the joint venture of M/s Bocotra Construction Pte Ltd, Lee Kim Tah Pte Ltd, Metrobilt Construction Pte Ltd and L&M Prestressing Pte Ltd, for the completion of this last section of the Central Expressway.

Several government departments and statutory bodies have been generous in their help. Our thanks goes to them as well. Above all, I would like to single out the travelling public who put up with the inconvenience of road diversions and occasional traffic jams, the residents of buildings in the vicinity of the Central Expressway site, and the Citizens' Consultative Committees and the Management and Residents' Committees, for

their support, co-operation and forbearance throughout the duration of this project.

It is now my pleasure to declare open the last section of the Central Expressway together with the Kampong Java Tunnel and the Chin Swee Tunnel.

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