

# SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR CHAN CHEE SENG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
(SOCIAL AFFAIRS), AT THE COMMISSIONING CEREMONY FOR 5,000  
LINES OF TELEPHONE SWITCHING EQUIPMENT AT EAST TELEPHONE  
EXCHANGE AT KITCHENER ROAD ON 30 JUNE 1977 AT 9.55 A.M.

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Communication systems are the life-blood of a country and its people. In these days and age when countries are linked closely together for trade and commerce, for cultural and social exchanges and other areas of endeavour and inter-dependence, an effective and efficient telecommunication system will ensure progress and prosperity for the country, whereas an inefficient system will bring in its train, chaos and retrogression, to the ultimate detriment of the country and its people.

For us in Singapore, an island state with little natural resources and relying on our geographic and strategic position in South East Asia, our telecommunication services must be highly efficient and they must be maintained at all costs.

Both our domestic telecommunication services and international services have improved considerably over the years. In the domestic services, the number of telephone stations have increased almost four-fold since 1965 and telephone density have increased three-fold. More significant, perhaps, is the anticipated increase in telephone density in the late 1970s, which is expected to be 28 per 100 population with the construction of several new exchanges over the next few years.

As regards the international telecommunication services, Singapore now has direct telecommunication access to more than two-thirds of the world.

It is indeed encouraging to see a dynamic, forward-looking spirit which permeates into the field of telecommunication. It

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is, therefore, a great pleasure for me to officiate at the commissioning of 5,000 lines of telephone switching equipment at the East Telephone Exchange. This exchange, serves mainly the areas around Crawford Road, Beach Road, Jalan Besar, Farrer Park, Kallang and Geylang West. The need to set up this telephone exchange was to relieve the heavily loaded Central Telephone Exchange at Hill Street and to cater for the new development in this area.

East Telephone Exchange was first commissioned on 31 March 1973, with 5,000 lines of telephone switching equipment. A total of 4,300 Central Subscribers was subsequently transferred to East Telephone Exchange in April and October 1973.

The demand for telephone service in the area served by East Telephone Exchange has grown, as in other telephone exchanges, by leaps and bounds. New applications received in 1973, 1974 and 1975 averaged 180, 200 and 250 per month respectively. In 1976, this figure rose to 380 reflecting an increase of about 52% over the previous year (1975). Approximately 64% of the applications received are for residential telephones.

The average application rate per month has lately increased to a new peak of 500, a 100% increase over the 1975 figure. 70% of these are for residential telephones.

This drastic increase in demand is mainly due to the new HDB estates being completed in Sims Avenue, Geylang Square, Beach Road and the completion of office/shopping complexes in Beach Road and Jalan Sultan, viz, Woh Hup Complex, Golden Mile Tower, Textile Centre and Shaw Towers. Another reason for this increase in demand is probably due to the introduction of the Area Licensing Scheme in June 1975 and the consequent mushrooming of office premises outside the CBD area.

The East Telephone Exchange is also designed to continue taking over part of telephone subscribers working in Central Telephone Exchange area, to facilitate the Central Telephone Exchange Re-development Project now in progress and scheduled for completion in mid-1980. In addition, it also provides temporary relief to the urgent need for telephones in the newly developed

Geylang Serai Area before the completion of the proposed Geylang Serai Telephone Exchange in mid-1979.

To cope with such high demand for telephone service, Telecoms has put in additional effort to expand the switching equipment capacity in the East Telephone Exchange from 10,000 lines in 1973 to the present 30,000 lines, including 5,000 lines which are to be commissioned today. Installation of another 10,000 lines of switching equipment in this exchange is in progress now and is scheduled to be completed by February next year.

It is my great pleasure to declare open the commissioning of the new 5,000 lines of telephone switching equipment in the East Telephone Exchange.

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