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PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY MR LEE YIOK SENG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY,
(NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT), AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF
AYER RAJAH EXPRESSWAY (PHASE I)
ON SATURDAY, 10 MAY 1986 AT 10.30 AM**

Last September, I declared open the Keppel Viaduct which formed the first part of the Ayer Rajah Expressway. Today I am glad to be here again to declare open another section of the Ayer Rajah Expressway from Keppel Road to Alexandra Road.

The opening of this section of the Expressway will bring significant benefits to commuters. Those travelling from Jurong to the Central Area or to Changi Airport can now enjoy non-stop driving from Alexandra Road onwards. They will find that their normal travel time very much reduced. Residents in Bukit Merah, Telok Blangah and Radin Mas areas will also find their trips smoother because the volume of traffic along Jalan Bukit Merah, Telok Blangah Road and Alexandra Road will be reduced as a result of the opening of the Expressway. In short, all road users will save on fuel and travelling time.

Pedestrian safety is also foremost in the minds of PWD road engineers. PWD has designed and built three overhead pedestrian bridges to help pedestrians cross the six-lane Expressway as well as the nearby railway safely at three convenient locations. The first bridge is located near Lower Delta Road linking flatted factories at Lower Delta Road to the HDB estate at Telok Blangah Crescent. The second bridge is built near Henderson Road facilitating

residents in the HDB estate at Depot Road to go to the Bukit Merah Town Centre and Bus Interchange. The third bridge is located behind Hua Yi School, linking Jalan Kilang Barat and Jalan Bukit Merah to Hua Yi School and the JTC flatted factories at Depot Road. I would urge pedestrians use these conveniently located overhead pedestrian bridges to cross the Expressway safely.

Owing to the current economic slowdown, many contractors face difficulties in securing contracts in the private sector. The PWD has therefore accelerated its five-year road construction programme as a measure to help stimulate the economy. As of today, a total of 27 contracts worth about \$137 million have been awarded. These include another section of the Ayer Rajah Expressway from Alexandra Road to Clementi Road, the MacRitchie Viaduct at Lornie Road/Thomson Road/Braddell Road Junction, Coleman Bridge and the section of Central Expressway between Jalan Bukit Merah and Lower Delta Road. These projects are now under construction.

Over the next two to three months, many more contracts totalling more than \$120 million will be awarded for the construction of the Tampines Expressway, the Ayer Rajah Expressway, the Central Expressway and other major road projects. With all these forthcoming contracts, many of our contractors, consultants, sub-contractors, suppliers and transport operators would be kept busy over the next few years.

To enable developers, contractors and businessmen operate in a conducive environment in providing goods and services economically, efficiently and competitively, PWD has continually reviewed and simplified wherever possible its administrative requirements. I am happy to announce that private contractors who need to open up roads for utility service connections will no longer be required to

furnish the banker's guarantee of \$5,000/- to the PWD as a guarantee against improper reinstatement work. Instead, the contractors' works will be monitored and any contractor who continually produces substandard reinstatement work will face revocation of his permit. Likewise, the deposit of \$3,000/- connected with the construction of temporary drain crossings is now waived. For granite quarry operation, the security deposit of \$10,000/- has now been done away with. All these measures will help save significant time, cost and manpower for all the parties concerned.

Singaporeans should be thankful of what the Government has done in bettering the living standards of the lot of our people. Like in public housing, health care and education, Government has been investing heavily in providing a good road system for our people. \$950 million have been spent over the last five years in our road development programme. Another \$1,000 million will be spent over the next five years for road construction and improvement.

By the early 90s, our National Expressway Network will have been largely completed. There will be nine expressway totalling 135 km long. The Expressway Network will meet future travel needs up to the year 2000 and beyond. Singaporeans will be able to enjoy fast and smooth non-stop travel via expressways to most parts of the island.

Unlike many major cities in the world, our roads are relatively free of traffic jams. By spending less time in the traffic jams, Singaporeans can have more time at their disposal. For instance, they can have more time for their morning exercises before going to work as the travel time to work is now shorter. Similarly, they are able to get home earlier than before because of the fast and smooth traffic. So much so that many Singaporeans are beginning to take the smooth traffic flow for granted, forgetting the frustrating traffic snarls in the early 70s. Our road development

programme has come a long way in achieving what we have today. As long as our people understand and support our Government's policy on car ownership restraint, we can keep our traffic running smoothly on our roads.

The remaining sections of the Expressway from Alexandra Road to Jurong Town Hall Road are in various stages of planning and construction. When the entire Ayer Rajah Expressway is completed by early 1988, the perennial long traffic jams along Ayer Rajah Road that have frustrated many commuters will be a thing of the past. The Chinese have said it well "一寸光阴一寸金" or "Time is Money", a faster, more efficient and reliable road transport system to Jurong will greatly enhance productivity and hence the cost efficiency of doing business in Jurong because less time will be wasted on the road.

I now have pleasure in declaring this section of the Ayer Rajah Expressway open.

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