

# PRESS RELEASE

Information Division, Ministry of Culture, City Hall, Singapore 0617. TEL: 3378191ext: 4269, 4270, 4271 / 3362207 / 3362271

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**SPEECH BY DR YEO NING HONG, MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND  
INFORMATION AND SECOND MINISTER FOR DEFENCE,  
AT THE OUTRAM PARK MRT TUNNEL BREAKTHROUGH CEREMONY  
ON MONDAY, 27 MAY 1985 AT 9.15 AM**

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It is my pleasure to be here this morning to join you in celebrating yet another milestone of achievement in our MRT project - our first tunnel breakthrough.

The MRTC staff and the contractor, the Ohbayashi Okumura Joint Venture, deserve special credit for this success. This has not been an easy set of tunnels to construct. Work on digging the shaft at Tiong Bahru got underway in March last year. The actual tunnelling operations started in June. Since then, it has been a round-the-clock effort, with shifts working seven days a week. More than 100 men have worked each day in the two tunnels from the Tiong Bahru site. They have done a fine job and maintained a good safety record.

Many obstacles have had to be overcome in constructing the tunnels for our MRT. Rapid progress under a tight construction schedule for all construction sites has to be made so that our first MRT train can run in early 1988. This tunnel has been driven through difficult ground. The soil is soft and wet, and seems to change every few metres. Conditions like this demand the best in management and engineering skills. I, therefore, want to congratulate everyone who has played a part in this project, from the workers up to the project managers.

In a special way, this ceremony is also for the residents of Outram Park and the surrounding communities. They have contributed a great deal to our early success today. Like Singaporeans near all our construction sites, Outram Park and Tiong Bahru residents have demonstrated their support for the MRT project by their cooperation and understanding during the construction process. I am sure they must find today a cause for celebration. It means the day is coming even closer when their environment will be back to normal. They can also look forward to the new convenient MRT system which they can all enjoy. I, therefore, want to take this opportunity to thank these residents for their patience and understanding and to assure them that the project is progressing rapidly and smoothly. I am pleased therefore that many of the community leaders in this area are present with us this morning to join in our celebration.

This year and the next will see several other tunnels breaking through. We have accomplished a great deal in the short time since groundbreaking. But there is still much more to be done before we achieve our primary goal: to open the MRT system to the public on time. With continued co-operation from all Singaporeans it would not be long before we will enjoy the benefits of more convenient and efficient public transport which the MRT will provide.

On this note, I wish the MRTC and the Ohbayashi Okumura Joint Venture success in the completion of this project.

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