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Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY DR YEO NING HONG, MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS
AND INFORMATION AND SECOND MINISTER FOR DEFENCE (POLICY),
AT TOA PAYOH MRT STATION OPEN DAY
ON SATURDAY, 10 OCTOBER 1987 AT 9.00 AM**

I am very happy to see so many of you here this morning.

Toa Payoh Station is one of the first five stations that will be opened for public service on November 7. It was only two years ago that I performed the topping up ceremony at this station. Then it was only a concrete structure; a shell, hollow and uninviting.

Today, the station is completely refurbished. You will see for yourselves later, the colorful tiled wall mural, the bright yellow columns and canopies. They fill the station with joy and vibrance. The air-conditioning is on, the escalators are working. I hope all Singaporeans, particularly those living in Toa Payoh, Ang Mo Kio, and their vicinities will be able to visit their neighbourhood stations during the open days.

The MRT is a new mode of transport to many Singaporeans. So, the MRT Corporation, which is the builder and the Singapore MRT Ltd, which is the operator, have jointly decided to open some of the MRT stations to the public before the system comes into operation. Toa Payoh and Braddell Stations are the first of such stations to be opened.

The station visit will be a "hands-on" experience. Visitors will be able to see and try out the ticketing machines, the entry and exit gates, the public walkways, and the platform facilities. They will be able to see for themselves, the trains arriving and departing, as they will in normal daily service. This will give them a good feel of how fast and efficient our MRT trains can be. The trains are currently undergoing system testing daily. These tests are a vital and essential part of getting the system ready for passengers and to make sure that everything works every-time all the time.

For those who want to enjoy the excitement of a ride on our new MRT train as soon as possible, there will be a special opportunity to do so on November 7. You can be a pioneer and do a good deed at the same time. The SMRT has decided to celebrate its commencement of public service with a big charity drive. All the money collected on the first day will be donated to the Community Chest. MRT passengers taking the trains on the first day will use special tickets which will be returned to them at the exit gate for them to keep as a memento to commemorate the happy occasion. These special \$3 tickets will be available beginning today at MRT booths at 10 locations all over Singapore, including Toa Payoh Station.

Looking at it another way, we can think of this event as SMRT inviting members of the public to join hands with it on this happy occasion to donate to the Community Chest. As a token of appreciation, the donor gets a pioneer ride on the MRT train and a specially designed ticket to commemorate it. I understand there are only enough tickets for the first 120,000 donors. No doubt you will want to get your tickets early, so as not to miss this once in a life time experience.

It is fast becoming a norm for public organisations on their auspicious occasions to remember the less fortunate. This care and concern for others, and this desire to share should be encouraged. Such commendable acts are clear signs of Singapore's maturity, showing that we are truly fast becoming a middle class society.

May I now wish all visitors to the open day an enjoyable time, learning more about our new transport system, the MRT.

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