

**Key Points of the Ministerial Statement on the Disruption of MRT Train Services on 15 and 17 December 2011**

***The Government Takes a Serious View of the Incidents***

1. The incidents of 15 and 17 December were unprecedented in terms of severity and scale of disruption in our history of running the MRT system. Although fortunately no one was seriously injured, the Government takes a very serious view of the incidents and their impact on the general public. The Minister for Transport has convened a Committee of Inquiry (COI) to investigate the incidents.

***The COI has full latitude to investigate the incidents independently and will hold public hearings***

2 Under its Terms of Reference, the COI will conduct an independent investigation into both the technical and non-technical aspects of the incidents of 15 and 17 December. It will hold its hearings in public, be supported by its own investigation team to enable it to carry out primary fact-finding, and will take a comprehensive approach to determine the underlying causes. It will also make recommendations to minimise the recurrence of similar incidents, as well as improve the management of such incidents. A full report will be submitted and be made public.

3 The COI's investigation is separate and distinct from LTA and SMRT's own investigations. Both LTA as the regulator, and SMRT as a public transport operator, clearly have the duty and responsibility to find out what went wrong, especially for those areas that they are accountable for, and rectify any shortcomings. Together with the COI's more holistic findings, the Government will thoroughly review the regulatory and penalty framework, and its oversight over the operators' maintenance regimes to strengthen it where necessary.

***Measures Are In Place to Ensure the System's Safety***

4 As part of the ongoing efforts of LTA and SMRT, measures have already been put in place to minimise the possibility of a recurrence of the incidents of 15 and 17 December even as the COI takes its course. Since excessive vibrations were identified as a possible factor, SMRT has also checked other vulnerable structures in the tunnel that could be affected by extensive vibrations. SMRT has engaged a Professional Engineer to inspect and confirm the infrastructure integrity of the tunnel fixtures and mountings. In addition, SMRT has also secured all claws along the NSEWL with cable-ties, and intensified inspections on the third rail and on the trains' current collector devices (CCD) to ensure the integrity of the system.

***Measures taken to strengthen crisis response***

5 The disruptions have exposed gaps in emergency preparedness and crisis response. Therefore, even as the COI conducts its investigations, immediate measures have been put in place by Government agencies and the operator to improve crisis management plans.

a) *Improved Communication to Commuters:* To ensure that commuters receive timely and accurate updates in the event of a train stalling, SMRT has implemented changes to enable its Operations Control Centre (OCC) to broadcast directly to passengers. LTA is also working with operators on having emergency announcements made in other languages besides English. SMRT's Twitter account has been set up to provide timely information on service delays, and in addition to traditional media, LTA and the operators are also exploring alternatives like the use of mass SMS broadcasts to alert commuters to service disruptions.

b) *Improvements to Bus Bridging Plans:* LTA has reviewed SMRT and SBST's bus bridging plans to ensure that bus routing and passenger boarding and alighting points are updated, logical and sufficient to cater to the volume of passengers expected. SMRT has taken additional measures to ensure that drivers are clear about their routes, including the deployment of an officer with every bus convoy whose drivers may be unfamiliar with the route to guide them

along. Signages for evacuation routes and bus bridging points have also been improved. Overall, as the regulator, LTA is also working with both operators to improve contingency plans, including a more integrated and holistic approach to incident management and service recovery.

c) Improved coordination between Government agencies and operator:

Coordination between Government agencies and the operator has been further enhanced, and communication protocols have been streamlined so that operators can alert LTA, SPF and SCDF more quickly if assistance is required. Government agencies are also reviewing and refining response protocols and emergency procedures with the operators.

***Restoring Confidence and Trust in the MRT System***

6 The findings from the Committee of Inquiry and the separate investigations of SMRT and LTA will help us improve the overall resilience and robustness of Singapore's public transport system. While the investigations continue, immediate measures have already been taken to prevent a recurrence of the incidents of 15 and 17 December and to strengthen the crisis response. The Government will continue to work with the public transport operators to improve the MRT system, and rebuild the confidence and trust of commuters.

*EMBARGOED TILL AFTER DELIVERY  
PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*

Ministry of Transport  
9 Jan 2012