

**Speech by Minister of State for Finance and Transport
Ms Josephine Teo at Media Conference on SMRT Situation
4.30pm, 1 December 2012**

- MOT's focus is to ensure that bus services remain operational and to minimise inconvenience to commuters.
- With the repatriation of the SMRT drivers, we are expecting a slight degradation of service. All bus services continue to run, with SMRT bus services expected to run at about 95 percent of normal levels.
- We have the support from SBST and private operators to maintain bus service levels during this period. These are experienced bus drivers with Class 4 licences. They have started their training today and will be ready to be deployed from a week's time. In the meantime, SMRT will be calling back off-duty drivers and its training instructors to maintain bus service levels. This arrangement will be in place for the next two to three months until SMRT is able to recruit more drivers and train them.
- This episode is regrettable but also a timely reminder that organisations such as SMRT, which provides essential public transport services, must handle its human resource matters carefully, provide open lines of communication with employees both local and foreign, and have open and proper grievance handling procedures in place.
- We are encouraged by the support from our public transport workers. We are grateful to the bus drivers who have agreed to help us maintain bus services for commuters, and the solidarity demonstrated by the public transport community, including private transport operators, who has rallied together to tide us through this period.