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# PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR HO KAH LEONG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
(COMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION), AT THE PRESS BRIEFING  
TO LAUNCH THE PRACTICAL MANDARIN LESSONS  
AT PSA BUILDING ON SATURDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 1989 AT 11.00 AM

This year, we are celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Speak Mandarin Campaign. In addition to the usual multi-media promotional activities, a number of special projects have also been lined up to add colour and give new impetus to the Campaign.

These include the Inter-Ministry Mandarin Quiz sponsored by the Singapore Pools (Private) Limited, the publication of the 10th Anniversary Souvenir booklet "A Decade of Mandarin", an anthology of Mandarin Campaign Launching Speeches over the years and a booklet on Mandarin terms of common household and office items. Of special significance is the new series of telephone Mandarin lessons we are launching this afternoon.

The first series of telephone Mandarin lessons was launched as a joint project by the then Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and Telecoms in 1983. This was introduced as a new channel to encourage and facilitate the learning of Mandarin amongst those who wished to learn the language at their own pace and convenience. The second and the third similar series were launched in 1984 and 1985 respectively.

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These telephone Mandarin lessons proved to be very popular. Throughout the three-year period (1983-85) when the lessons were transmitted by phone, an average of over 5,000 call attempts were made per hour by the public to listen in to the lessons.

In 1987, another series of Mandarin lessons was developed. This was the Zhongyuan Jie (7th Moon Festival) Mandarin Lessons transmitted during the festival month of that year. A total of 640,000 calls were made for the Mandarin lessons transmitted. Again, this was a joint project by the Mandarin Campaign Secretariat, the Ministry of Education and the Telecoms to promote the Use of Mandarin at the 7th Moon Festival auctions.

Last year, the Ministry of Health, in conjunction with the Telecoms and with assistance from the Mandarin Campaign Secretariat, developed and transmitted another series of telephone Mandarin lessons on medical terms and health topics. A total of 350,000 calls were made during the Mandarin Campaign Month when the lessons were transmitted by phone.

Since telephone Mandarin lessons have proved to be so popular and effective, the Mandarin Campaign Secretariat of my Ministry, the Ministry of Education and Telecoms have again embarked upon another joint project to develop and transmit by phone a new series of Mandarin lessons - the Practical Telephone Mandarin Lessons. These are lessons on major Chinese festivals and human relations.

For the first time, cultural elements and traditional values have been injected into the telephone Mandarin lessons. The idea is to promote a better understanding of our cultural heritage and appreciation of our traditional values. In this way, it is hoped that the telephone Mandarin lessons will be made more interesting and meaningful.

Altogether, there are 17 lessons in this series - nine on Chinese festivals and 8 on human relations. The lessons on Chinese festivals explain the origin and significance of these festivals. Those on human relations cover topics like friendship, good-neighbourliness, mutual respect and public-spiritedness. The lessons will be transmitted by phone 24 hours a day from today through the Mandarin Campaign Month in October until 2 November this year. Each lesson of about two-minute duration will last two days to facilitate learning and revision.

The texts of the lessons have been translated into English and Hanyu Pinyin has also been provided. For the convenience of learning, we have written to the local newspapers to request them to consider publishing these texts according to the schedule of the telephone transmission. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those which have agreed to assist in this project as a community service.

This project is planned and co-ordinated by Mr Lee Seng Giap, Head, Mandarin Campaign Secretariat. The lessons are written by Mr Chua Chu Bok and Mr Lim Seng Chiok, Chinese language teachers from the Ministry of Education. They are now working on another series of telephone Mandarin lessons for next year on Chinese proverbs. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them, the Ministry of Education and the Telecoms for their contributions to the Speak Mandarin Campaign.

I now have pleasure in launching the Practical Telephone Mandarin Lessons.

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