



LTA chief executive Yam Ah Mee will take over as PA chief executive director on June 1. ST PHOTO: TERENCE TAN



CHIEF'S SALUTE

"I salute the grassroots leaders who give up their time, effort and even money to serve their community. They are an inspiration to me and the staff, and we want to make sure that we never let them down.

"I am also amazed by the kind of staff we have, who work long and irregular hours, and yet make the sacrifices to stay the course.

"Over the last seven years, together we have developed a culture of continuous improvement, service excellence, and proactive planning and action, among staff and volunteers.

"We are now more customer- and results-oriented. We are clearer what outcomes we want to achieve, and how to get there, not mistaking the means for the ends."

Outgoing People's Association chief executive director Tan Boon Huat (above), on some of the highlights and achievements during his seven-year stint.

PA and LTA to get new chiefs

BY KOR KIAN BENG
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HIS job now involves connecting transport links. But soon, connecting people will be the key focus for Mr Yam Ah Mee.

The chief executive of the Land Transport Authority (LTA) will take over as chief of the People's Association (PA) on June 1.

He succeeds chief executive director Tan Boon Huat, 58, who retires that day after seven years heading the agency tasked with gelling Singaporeans across racial and social lines.

Mr Yam becomes chief executive director-designate on May 1.

Replacing him at the LTA will be Mr Chew Hock Yong, 45, the Community Development, Youth and Sports Ministry's (MCYS) deputy secretary.

He moves to the LTA on Sept 1. Before then, LTA deputy chief executive (infrastructure and development) Lim Bok Ngam will be acting CEO from June 1 to Aug 31.

The changes were announced jointly yesterday by the PA, MCYS and Transport Ministry.

Mr Tan's retirement will end a public service career spanning more than three decades, with stints at the Manpower and Finance ministries, Public Service Commission and Prime Minister's Office, among others.

The Colombo Plan Scholar and forestry graduate from Canada's University of British Columbia was deputy secretary at the Home Affairs Ministry before his move to the PA in late 2002.

PA deputy chairman Lim Boon Heng thanked Mr Tan for his dedication and leadership in "developing PA into a progressive organisation that has won the trust and confidence of Singaporeans".

Mr Tan told The Straits Times that anyone taking over as a chief executive prepares for his successor from the first day.

He is proud of many achievements including how two out of five homes here now hold the PAssion card, which offers a host of discounts and benefits.

Mr Yam, 52, graduated from the University of New South Wales with a first class engineer-

ing degree on a Singapore Armed Forces Overseas Training Award.

The air force brigadier-general joined the civil service in August 1998. He became the Transport Ministry's deputy secretary (sea & air) in June 2004 and LTA chief in May 2005.

He said the LTA stint will be handy at the PA: "In the LTA, we have worked very hard to put ourselves in commuters' shoes to better understand their needs and expectations. In the process, we know that in whatever we do, our job is about serving people better. The same holds true for the PA."

Transport issues will be a new area for Mr Chew. A recipient of Japan's Monbukagakusho scholarship, he graduated from the University of Tokyo with a degree in engineering (naval architecture).

He served in various ministries before moving to the MCYS in June 2004. His achievements there include helping secure Singapore's bid to host the Youth Olympics Games here.

He said Mr Yam left big shoes to fill but he is looking forward to the challenge.