

COLUMN FROM MAYOR TIM SHADBOLT

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When Auckland becomes a super city and the first Mayor in New Zealand with executive power is created, I believe the first thing he or she should do is spend two days in Singapore. This city state of about 4 million people has solved the problem of traffic congestion. To buy a car you first need a COE (Certificate of Entitlement). This will set you back \$96,000. Then all over the city there are ERPs (Electronic Route Prices) which charge cars \$2.00 and trucks \$4.00 every time you pass one.

It sounds draconian but Singapore is so concerned about keeping clean and tidy that you are fined if you don't wash your hands after using a public toilet and chewing gum was made illegal until America stepped in and said this would be a breach of their free trade agreement. Eventually Singapore backed down but you can still only buy chewing gum with a doctor's prescription for medicinal purposes.

After a delightful lunch of chicken feet and braised duck tongues, followed by an interesting dessert of fried carrot cake with turnip sauce, I'm ready to face India. My first task will be meeting the New Zealand High Commissioner.

India is a nation with 320 million gods and 220 different languages. It has more millionaires than any country on earth and 330 million people live below the poverty line.

The hotel we were booked into, "The Raj" was recently blown up by Islamic terrorists, but I'm sure we will find other lodgings. Hare Krishna to you.