

Manpower portfolio for Tan Chuan-Jin

Major changes to Cabinet with first-termers given key responsibilities

By **CHUANG PECK MING**

[SINGAPORE] Major changes have been made to the Cabinet that will see three first-termers helming a ministry.

One of the more significant moves sees first-term Tan Chuan-Jin taking over as Acting Minister for Manpower from Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam who is relinquishing the portfolio. Mr Tharman will remain as Finance Minister and chairman of the Monetary Authority of Singapore.

This comes against the backdrop of the government's efforts to reduce dependence on cheap foreign labour and push for a rise in productivity. At the same time, the government has been signalling the delicate balance that needs to be maintained so that growth is not compromised.

Mr Tan slipped into his new role almost immediately, indicating in the ministry's blog the task that lay ahead. "It would be difficult not to be affected by global economic uncertainties," he wrote.

The changes, the first since last year's general elections in May, came earlier than many expected. They also reflect the government's concerns about building stronger families and providing social safety nets to the needy; engaging young Singaporeans; and improving communications and engagement with the public.

Come Nov 1, two of the ministries that currently deal with these "increasingly important" issues will be split into three to sharpen the focus on them.

The Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS); and the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA) will be reamped to form three new Ministries - the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF); the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY); and the Ministry of Communications and Information (MCI).

Two of the three new and renamed ministries will be headed by first-termers Chan Chun Sing (MSF) and Lawrence Wong (MCCY).

Lui Tuck Yew will also give up his Second Minister for Foreign Affairs (MFA) post to concentrate on the Ministry of Transport, where he already has his hands full. His MFA position will go to Grace Fu who has been promoted to full minister, the second woman in Singapore to hold such a post, after Lim Hwee Hua who was defeated in last year's election.

In addition to her new post as Second Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms Fu will also become Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister for the Environment and Water Resources. Commenting on Ms Fu's promotion, Nominated Member of Parliament Eugene Tan said she will lead what is probably the biggest women presence in the Cabinet so far.

"The changes will have a signalling effect," said Professor Tan, a law lecturer at

Key changes



Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam relinquishes his appointment as Minister for Manpower but retains the Finance portfolio

Grace Fu Hai Yien promoted to full minister. She becomes Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, 2nd Minister for Environment and Water Resources and 2nd Minister for Foreign Affairs



Tan Chuan-Jin becomes Acting Minister for Manpower and Senior Minister of State in the Ministry of National Development





Chan Chun Sing relinquishes his appointment in Mica and becomes Senior Minister of State for Defence. On Nov 1, he will become Acting Minister for Social and Family Development

Lawrence Wong relinquishes his appointment in the Ministry of Defence and becomes Senior Minister of State in Mica. On Nov 1, he will become Acting Minister for Culture, Community and Youth



the Singapore Management University. He added that they were probably introduced ahead of schedule in response to the quickening pace of events.

Lawyer Indraneel Rajah is another woman who will play a bigger Cabinet role by taking on a new appointment as Senior Minister of State in the Law and Education ministries. Amy Khor, Minister of State for Health and Mayor of South West CDC, will double as Minister of State for Manpower.

Halimah Jacob will become Minister of State at MSF, which is currently MCYS.

Some of the changes will take effect today while others will happen on Nov 1.

Lawrence Wong will leave his appointment in MinDef and be appointed SMS in MICA. He will continue as SMS in MOE until Nov 1, when he takes on the role of Acting Minister of MCCY, which will assume MCYS's current roles "in strengthening community bonds, promoting volunteerism and philanthropy, engaging youth and developing the sports". It will also take over MICA's arts, heritage and national resilience functions. Additionally, he will also be SMS in MCI.

In a Facebook posting yesterday, Mr Wong said he looks forward to meeting with many young people, the arts and sports groups, as well as the civic and community volunteers in the coming months to get their ideas and views on how to keep Singapore strong.

MSF (renamed from MCYS) will zero in on building strong families, develop-

ing social services and looking after those in need of social support.

Chan Chun Sing will relinquish his position in MICA and be appointed SMS for Defence, concurrent with his appointment as Acting Minister for MCYS. He will become Acting Minister for MSF on Nov 1.

With its renaming from MICA, MCI will oversee, among other changes, the government's information and public communication policies.

MICA Minister Yaacob Ibrahim will continue as MCI Minister.

➔ New roles for Perm Secs soon at newly formed ministries, Page 2