

CABINET RESHUFFLE

Grace Fu promoted to Minister in PMO

Indranee Rajah also promoted, will be Senior Minister of State for Law and Education

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SINGAPORE – Some 14 months after former Cabinet minister Lim Hwee Hua’s two-year spell as the first woman minister ended, Singapore will have a new woman minister: Ms Grace Fu, 48, who was formerly Senior Minister of State, was promoted with effect from today to Minister in the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO).

She will also be Second Minister for Environment and Water Resources and Foreign Affairs, and will assist Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean on population matters.

She told Channel NewsAsia: “People are Singapore’s greatest resource. I am very privileged to be given this opportunity in NPTD to look into our population issue, with its far-reaching impact that directly affects Sin-



Ms Grace Fu at the Jurong Lake Run last month. TODAY FILE PHOTO

gapore’s make-up and economic competitiveness.”

“I particularly look forward to having discussions with Singaporeans on marriage and parenthood policies and other important decisions relating to our population.”

Before she entered politics in 2006, Ms Fu was Chief Executive for PSA International (South-east Asia and Japan).

Singapore Management University law lecturer Eugene Tan, who is also a Nominated Member of Parliament, noted that Ms Fu’s promotion to full minister was “not a question of whether, but when”, given that Mrs Lim’s exit from politics last year — following the General Election — meant there were no women ministers in the Cabinet.

However, political analysts TODAY spoke to felt women were still under-represented in the Cabinet.

Institute of Policy Studies Senior Research Fellow Gillian Koh pointed out that “it’s about time that somebody was appointed as a woman minister, for those people who do that kind

of accounting in terms of gender”.

Apart from Ms Fu, Tanjong Pagar Group Representation Constituency MP Indranee Rajah was the other woman politician who was promoted.

Ms Indranee, 49, will be appointed — with effect from Nov 1 — as Senior Minister of State in the Law and Education ministries.

The Senior Counsel is currently a director at Drew and Napier.

Ms Indranee told TODAY she was “very excited” about her appointment, and that the hardest part was “giving up the practice of the law”.

While SMU Political Science Professor Bridget Welsh felt the People’s Action Party Government “needs to be more forward looking with the inclusion of women (as office holders)”, Dr Koh noted the quality of current women political appointment holders, citing Ministers of State Josephine Teo, Amy Khor and Halimah Yaacob and Senior Parliamentary Secretary Sim Ann.

“You now have a very good crop of women political leaders at office holder level,” she added.