

Dear Editor,

DE/247/93/MY

PRESS STATEMENT FROM THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

Attached are the press statement from PMO and the letter from the Prime Minister to Dr Ahmad Mattar. Please note that the statement is embargoed for 6.00 pm, 7 June 1993.

**MEDIA RELATIONS SECTION
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND THE ARTS**

07 JUNE 1993

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STATEMENT FROM THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

Resignations

Dr Ahmad Mattar, Minister for the Environment & Minister in-charge of Muslim Affairs, and Dr Ong Chit Chung, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Labour, have both asked to relinquish their offices. The President has accepted their resignations.

Dr Ahmad Mattar first wrote to the Prime Minister in September 1991, asking that his current term in Cabinet and Parliament be his last. He had intended to step down in 1993 had the General Election not been called in 1991. He wrote again on 16 April 1993 asking to step down from Cabinet this year.

Dr Ong Chit Chung also wrote on 5 April 93 that he wished to join the private sector.

The Prime Minister has agreed to both Dr Mattar's and Dr Ong's requests. Their last day in their respective office will be 30 June 93.

The Prime Minister places on record his deep appreciation for Dr Ahmad Mattar's significant contribution to the leadership of the Malay community, as well as to the Government and to Singapore. His letter of 29 May 93 to Dr Mattar is attached.

He also thanks Dr Ong Chit Chung for his brief but valuable service as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Home Affairs and the Minister for Labour.

Appointments

Mr Mah Bow Tan, Minister for Communications will be appointed concurrently the Minister for the Environment on 1 July 93.

Mr Abdullah Tarmugi will be appointed Minister of State for the Environment with effect from 1 July 93. He will also be in charge of Muslim Affairs. He will attend Cabinet meetings.

He will relinquish his post of Deputy Speaker.

Mr Ho Peng Kee will be appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Law and Home Affairs on 1 August. He will be on leave from the National University of Singapore for a period of two years.

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

7 June 1993

29 May 93

Dr Ahmad Mattar
Minister for the Environment &
Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs
Ministry of the Environment
40 Scotts Road, Environment Bldg
Singapore 0922

Dear Ahmad,

Refer to your letter of 16 Apr 93 asking that I allow you to retire as Minister.

When you first wrote in September 91 to tell me that you would like this to be your last term, both in Cabinet and in Parliament, I replied that that was not the time to talk about leaving the Government. We had just fought the General Election. I was disappointed that we did not secure a higher percentage of votes. I wanted you to help rally the ground. I said that I would reconsider it nearer 1996.

You have now asked again to leave Cabinet this year for personal reasons. It is with regret that I accept your resignation.

You have contributed significantly to the rapid progress of the Malay community. This progress has been primarily due to the efforts of Malay Singaporeans themselves. But it would have been much slower without realistic, rational, and able leaders to guide the community forward to join the mainstream of Singapore society. Your consistent exhortations to Malay/Muslim Singaporeans to pay greater attention to education and vocational and technical training, and your personal involvement in founding and leading MENDAKI, have made for progress. Your role in uplifting the Malay/Muslim community has been your signal contribution to Singapore.

You also presided over a period of 16 years the planning and construction of mosques. You brought honour to Singapore when you were invited to serve as a Member of the World Supreme Council for Mosques, Saudi Arabia.

You were first appointed Parliamentary Secretary in 1972. In 1977, you joined the Cabinet, first as Minister for Social Affairs and later as the Minister for the Environment. You have done well in both Ministries.

You have been an absolutely reliable member of my team. I want to place on record the Government's and my deep appreciation for your 21 years of dedicated and valuable service to the Government and to Singapore.

I wish you all the best.

Yours sincerely,

(SIGNED)

GOH CHOK TONG