

*Senior Minister
Singapore*

28 September 2010

Dr Ma Swan Hoo
98 Gerald Drive
Singapore 799026

Dear Mrs Balaji

My wife and I are saddened by the news of Balaji's passing. I had, with a heavy heart, expected this as PM Lee told me in Parliament two weeks ago about Balaji's condition and that he had decided to go home instead of staying in hospital. I did not see Balaji in Parliament then but I had at least the satisfaction of last having lunch with him in May. Please accept our deepest condolences.

In 2001, I had, along with some of my colleagues, interviewed Balaji to be a candidate of the PAP. He was eminently suitable, given his high intellect, character and sincerity. But he was also a distinguished neurosurgeon. We weighed the pros and cons carefully and decided that he could make a bigger contribution to Singapore than being a neurosurgeon. The risks were for him to decide as there was no guarantee that he could make it as a full Minister. He decided to serve in whatever position we assigned him. It was a great sacrifice for him personally, and also for the neurosurgery speciality in Singapore. As Prime Minister then, I was impressed by Balaji's attitude of service and grateful that he had stepped forward to be counted.

In government, Balaji served with dedication in his various appointments in the Ministries of Environment, Education, Health, Transport, Foreign Affairs, and the Information, Communications and the Arts. His friendly and approachable manner, and his sincerity and dedication endeared him to the community leaders and Cheng San-

Seletar residents. He always tried his best to help those who needed his assistance. Even while his own health was declining in the past two years, he continued to place his constituents' needs above his own.

Dr Balaji's passing is a loss not just for you and your family, but also for his friends, his constituents and Singapore.

My wife and I offer you and your family our deepest sympathy.

Yours sincerely



GOH CHOK TONG