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Mass Call 2024 — Admission into a Profession that Serves the Public Good

Mass Call 2024 saw 436 newly appointed Advocates and Solicitors being called to the Bar over three sessions at the Supreme Court auditorium on 19 and 20 August.

The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon presided over the first session. In his address titled "The Legal Profession — A Community of Learned Friends", Chief Justice Menon mentioned the increasing acceptance of artificial intelligence (AI), and the responsibilities of being a member of an honourable profession. He highlighted the paradigm shift in lawyering resulting from AI and its implications on the practice of law, namely, the introduction and effective application of new tools; and alternative ways to train and develop junior lawyers.

Chief Justice Menon also underscored the commitment of the legal profession to serving the public good, which is ingrained in the revised declaration of Advocates and Solicitors, a recommendation from the Ethics and Professional Standards Committee and implemented from Mass Call 2024. Chief Justice Menon concluded



▲ Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon presiding over the first session of Mass Call 2024.



▲ Ms Lisa Sam, President of the Law Society of Singapore, addressing the audience.

his address by likening the practice of law to running a marathon, which demands unwavering perseverance and resilience. He assured the new lawyers that this would be well worth their efforts because the legal profession promises great fulfilment and purpose for those who stay the course and finish the race.

Ms Lisa Sam, President of the Law Society of Singapore, also spoke at the first session. She encouraged the new lawyers to pursue their passions and hobbies while discharging their professional duties, roles and responsibilities. Ms Sam said that being an accomplished lawyer goes beyond possessing knowledge and skills. It also requires one to have a growth mindset and a desire to learn, adapt and evolve continuously. She also reminded the audience that as members of an honourable profession, lawyers have a duty to behave towards third parties in a manner befitting of professional standing.

Judges of the Court of Appeal, Justices Tay Yong Kwang and Steven Chong presided over the second and third sessions respectively.



▲ Applicants making their declaration.



▲ Applicants celebrating a new milestone with family and friends.



Scan to read Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon's speech

go.gov.sg/cjmc2024

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon Visits Brunei Darussalam and India to Further Bilateral Judicial Cooperation

Visit to the Supreme Court of Brunei Darussalam

Following a Memorandum of Understanding signed between Brunei Darussalam and Singapore in 2023 to promote bilateral judicial cooperation between the judiciaries of both countries, Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and a delegation from the Supreme Court of Singapore visited Chief Justice of Brunei Darussalam Dato Seri Paduka Steven Chong Wan Oon and members of the Supreme Court of Brunei Darussalam from 3 to 5 July.



▲ Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon with Brunei Darussalam's Attorney General, Yang Berhormat Datin Paduka Dayang Hajah Nor Hashimah binti Haji Mohammed Taib. (Photo: Singapore High Commission in Bandar Seri Begawan)

During the visit, the two Chief Justices discussed how judicial cooperation between the Singapore and Brunei judiciaries could be further enhanced. Chief Justice Menon also shared with the Brunei judiciary the Singapore perspective on the role of the judiciary in promoting and supporting economic development on three levels: first, by deciding individual cases in a way that is sensitive to commercial realities and responsive to new developments in the wider operating environment; second, by providing efficient and appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms; and third, by supporting the broader transnational system of commercial justice that provides a sound legal framework for transnational commercial activity.

Besides meeting members of the Supreme Court of Brunei Darussalam, Chief Justice Menon also met with Brunei Darussalam's Attorney General Yang Berhormat Datin Paduka Dayang Hajah Nor Hashimah binti Haji Mohammed Taib. In addition, Justice Kannan Ramesh, who was part of the Singapore delegation, briefed Bruneian stakeholders and government agencies on Singapore's insolvency and restructuring regime. He spoke about Singapore's experience in reforming and modernising Singapore's legal frameworks for insolvency and restructuring, and in particular on Singapore's adoption of the UNCITRAL Model Law on Cross-Border

◀ Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon with Chief Justice Steven Chong Wan Oon of Brunei Darussalam. (Photo: The Supreme Court of Brunei Darussalam)



▲ The India-Singapore Judicial Roundtable serves as a platform for the exchange of knowledge, discussion of mutual areas of interest, and advancement of cooperation and collaboration between the two judiciaries.

Insolvency, and on the development of the Judicial Insolvency Network's Guidelines and Modalities.

Second Annual India-Singapore Judicial Roundtable

On 23 August, Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and a delegation from the Supreme Court of Singapore were in New Delhi, India to attend the annual India-Singapore Judicial Roundtable, which serves as a platform for the exchange of knowledge, discussion of mutual areas of interest, and advancement of cooperation and collaboration between the two judiciaries.

The judiciaries of Singapore and India discussed the impact of environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues on the liability of companies and their directors, and the issues arising from the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and AI-generated material.

Justice M. M. Sundresh from the Indian judiciary presented insights on the ESG issues that have emerged because of climate change, and how these have impacted the liability of companies and their directors, in the context of insolvency and restructuring. Singapore's response was articulated by Justice See Kee Oon.

The Singapore judiciary led the second topic of the Roundtable, which covered legal responsibility for harms caused by AI and the legal status of AI-generated material. Singapore's paper was presented by Justice Philip Jeyaretnam, while Justice A. Muhamed Mustaque offered the Indian judiciary's response.

“

The annual Roundtable afforded us a valuable platform for discussions on topics of mutual interest, in particular, issues relating to AI and climate change. These are important and timely topics which represent some of the most critical challenges that impact all of humanity today, and which have already given rise to new and often complex legal issues that transcend jurisdictional boundaries. The event underscores the ongoing commitment of both Singapore and India to deepen our judicial cooperation and to strengthen the rule of law in an increasingly interconnected world. I look forward to many more of such collaborations between our two judiciaries and I extend my deepest appreciation to Chief Justice Dhananjaya Yashwant Chandrachud for graciously hosting this second roundtable.”

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon
Supreme Court of Singapore

Supreme Court Hosts 5th Judiciary Insolvency Network Conference 2024

The Supreme Court hosted the 5th Judicial Insolvency Network (JIN) Conference on 12 and 13 June. The event was attended by 32 regional and international participants.

A number of topics central to the theme of cross-border insolvency and restructuring were discussed, such as a survey of landmark international insolvency judgments in the past three years, focusing on matters that have invoked the JIN Guidelines and Modalities and recent developments in the use of mediation in insolvency matters.

Formed in October 2016, the JIN is a network of insolvency judges from across the world. It serves as a platform for sustained and continuous engagement for the furtherance of the following objectives: to provide judicial thought leadership, develop best practices and facilitate communication and cooperation amongst national courts in cross-border insolvency and restructuring matters. JIN comprises insolvency judges from Australia, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, Canada, the Cayman Islands, England and Wales, Japan, Singapore, South Korea and the United States. Justices Kannan Ramesh and Aedit Abdullah from the Singapore Courts are two of the founding members.

Since the inaugural meeting of the JIN in Singapore in October 2016, the network has continued to promote the adoption of the JIN Guidelines to address the key aspects of and the modalities for communication and cooperation amongst courts, insolvency representatives and other parties involved in cross-border insolvency proceedings. The overarching aim of the JIN Guidelines was the preservation of enterprise value and the reduction of legal costs. To date, 18 jurisdictions around the world have adopted the JIN Guidelines.

The JIN recognised that some judges may prefer, as a prelude to JIN membership, to first observe and experience the JIN's deliberations. Adoption of the JIN Guidelines is not a prerequisite to membership in the JIN and, conversely, a court which does not have representation in the JIN may also adopt the JIN Guidelines. It is in this context that the 5th JIN Conference had worked towards and obtained the attendance of Bahrain, China, India, the Netherlands and a number of Southeast Asian courts. The presence of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand, in particular, signalled a strong foundation for the development of judicial cooperation in cross-border insolvency and restructuring matters in the region.



The attendees of the 5th JIN Conference 2024.



Justice Kannan Ramesh Featured on International Institute of Insolvency Global Perspectives Podcast

The International Insolvency Institute (III) released an episode of its Global Perspectives podcast "Legends & Leaders: A Conversation with Hon. Justice Kannan Ramesh". Justice Ramesh was appointed as the seventh President of the III for a two-year term with effect from 12 June 2023.

In an interview by the III's NextGen Chairperson, Adam Crane of Baker & Partners in the Cayman Islands, Justice Ramesh spoke about the various initiatives and developments in international insolvency in Singapore and how Singapore is at the cutting-edge of the international insolvency community, including leading initiatives such as contributing to the Judicial Insolvency Network Guidelines for communication and cooperation between courts in cross-border insolvency matters, and empowering the Singapore International Commercial Court to hear cross-border insolvency and restructuring matters.



Scan to listen to the podcast

go.gov.sg/spotify-podcast-kannan-ramesh



Justice Philip Jeyaretnam Addresses Transnational Issue Estoppel at IBA Symposium 2024

At the International Bar Association (IBA) Symposium held on 28 August in Singapore, Justice Philip Jeyaretnam delivered a thought-provoking keynote speech on “Transnational Issue Estoppel in the Context of International Arbitration”.

Justice Jeyaretnam’s address tackled the complex issue of transnational issue estoppel — how prior court decisions in different jurisdictions impact the enforceability of arbitral awards. His speech highlighted the challenges faced by national courts in balancing the need for finality in arbitration with the principles of justice and efficiency. He emphasised that the issue of relitigating questions already decided in other jurisdictions not only escalates costs but also risks delaying justice.

Justice Jeyaretnam pointed out that while there is an emerging approach to this issue in Singapore, a global consensus is still evolving. He called for bodies like the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) to address these concerns comprehensively. In the meantime, he underscored that it falls to national courts to navigate this complex terrain. His concluding remarks aimed to stimulate further discussion and reflection among delegates on this pressing topic.

The IBA Symposium 2024 was presented by the IBA Asia Pacific Regional Forum and supported by the IBA Arbitration and Litigation Committees, in association with the Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC). Other distinguished speakers at the



▲ Justice Philip Jeyaretnam’s keynote address not only enriched the symposium but also set the stage for ongoing dialogue and development in international arbitration practices. (Photo: International Bar Association)

Symposium included Judicial Commissioner Kristy Tan, Justice Anselmo Reyes of the SICC, and Justice Mimmie Chan of the High Court of Hong Kong, who provided valuable insights into various aspects of judicial involvement in arbitration. The event was attended by over 220 delegates from 27 countries.



Scan to read Justice Philip Jeyaretnam’s speech

go.gov.sg/pjiba24

Justice Philip Jeyaretnam discusses SICC’s work at Paris Conference



▲ Justice Philip Jeyaretnam speaking virtually to the participants of the Université d’été de Paris Place de Droit’s Summer Conference held at the Paris Commercial Court.

President of the Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC), Justice Philip Jeyaretnam, was invited to share about the SICC at the Université d’été de

Paris Place de Droit’s Summer Conference held at the Paris Commercial Court on 4 July.

Justice Jeyaretnam discussed the role of specialist commercial judges in the SICC, where Singapore judges work alongside international judges from diverse legal backgrounds. He explained the SICC’s jurisdiction and highlighted its flexible procedures, which are aimed at achieving timely and effective resolutions while embracing international representation.

The virtual sharing session was part of a plenary session of the Summer Conference, which highlights the importance of adapting and innovating in the constantly changing environment. The other panellists on the panel sharing about the comparative analysis of the international commercial chambers were Judge Duco Oranje, President of the Netherland Commercial Court, Judge Olivier Brossolette, Judge of Paris Commercial Court, Mr Daniel Barlow, President of the International Chamber of the Paris Court of Appeal, Professor Gustavo Cerqueira, University of Nice, and Ms Besma Boumaza, legal and compliance director at Accor.

Singapore Courts and Administrative Court of Thailand Hold Cybersecurity and e-Court Workshop

Under the auspices of the Singapore-Thailand Civil Service Exchange Programme, the Singapore Courts (SG Courts) and the Administrative Court of Thailand held their annual workshop on 21 May.

Themed “Cybersecurity and e-Court”, the virtual workshop saw SG Courts’ Ministry Chief Information Officer, Mr Toh Kon Sing, and Judges Chaiphath Thungthong and Chanwit Chaikan from the Rayong Administrative Court share about their respective courts’ cybersecurity challenges and mitigation programmes.



▲ Mr Toh Kon Sing (bottom right) conducted the workshop with judges from the Rayong Administrative Court.

State Courts Participate in 24th Online Dispute Resolution Forum



▲ District Judge Jasbendar Kaur delivering her presentation.

The State Courts were invited to participate in the 24th Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) Forum held in Prague, Czech Republic from 5 to 6 June. Organised by the National Centre for Technology & Dispute Resolution and PRK Partners, this forum brought together leaders and experts in the ODR arena, including scientists, product developers, lawyers, mediators and government officials.

District Judges (DJs) Jasbendar Kaur and Soh Weiqi represented the State Courts at this

international forum. As one of the members on the panel that discussed "ODR Around the World", DJ Kaur gave a presentation on "Advancing Access to Justice: The Singapore Experience in Online Community Justice". She spoke on the Singapore Courts' (SG Courts) mission to provide accessible justice to all court users through both online and offline channels and how the overall strategy has been to make court processes and the supporting ODR options and case management system for community and relational

disputes simpler and user-centric, in order to facilitate the just, expeditious and economical disposal of the cases.

In addition, DJ Kaur shared that the SG Courts regularly conduct reviews to refine, improve and enhance court processes, systems and services. One recent development is a Memorandum of Understanding reached with Harvey AI, a generative artificial intelligence (AI) legal services start-up, to explore the use of generative AI tools for the SG Courts.



▲ Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon delivering his opening address. (Photo: Singapore Prison Service)

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon: Care, Community, and Collaboration Bring Criminal Justice Ecosystem to Life

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon delivered an insightful opening address on "The Criminal Justice Ecosystem: Beyond Crime and Punishment" at the International Corrections and Prisons Association Annual Conference 2024 held in Singapore on 4 September. Hosted by the Singapore Prison Service (SPS), the conference, themed "Enabling Desistance: Beyond Recidivism", brought together professionals from the corrections and justice sectors to

examine progressive strategies for rehabilitation and reintegration.

In his opening address, Chief Justice Menon expanded the discussion beyond traditional notions of crime and punishment, emphasising a more holistic view



Scan to read Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon's address

go.gov.sg/cjyrctd

of the criminal justice system. The criminal justice ecosystem demonstrates great care for those members of the society who have transgressed, through a shared commitment to their rehabilitation and reintegration. That ecosystem is supported by a community of different stakeholders whose collaboration, at many levels and in many forms, enables the broader system to do its work and to achieve its aims.

He also commended the collective efforts of stakeholders dedicated to rehabilitation and reintegration, illustrating how their initiatives play a crucial role in preventing crime and ensuring societal order and peace. His remarks underscored the significant impact of these collaborative endeavours in achieving core criminal justice objectives.

In addition, Chief Justice Menon highlighted the importance of multi-faceted approaches and the need for continuous innovation in the field. He acknowledged the valuable contributions of the SPS and other partners in pioneering best practices and advancing the dialogue on desistance and recidivism.

Singapore Courts Discuss Technology and Environment Issues at “Conversations with the Community”

The fifth session of the Singapore Courts (SG Courts) “Conversations with the Community” series was held on 30 May at the Singapore University of Social Sciences. Justice Aedit Abdullah, judge in charge of transformation and innovation at the SG Courts, delivered the keynote address titled “Technology as a Bridge to Justice”.

In Justice Abdullah’s address, he discussed how the Courts have embraced technology to support lawyers and empower members of the public in navigating legal processes. By leveraging technology, the Courts aim to enhance accessibility, transparency, and efficiency within the legal system. Technology can also facilitate access to justice by allowing self-represented persons (SRPs) to navigate the legal system on their own without having to engage lawyers.

Justice Abdullah outlined the Courts’ efforts in exploring the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) to advance their mission of providing access to justice. To this end, the SG Courts have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Harvey AI, a start-up developing legal AI, to use AI to assist SRPs in navigating legal processes, starting with small value claims, as well as to assist Small Claims

Mr Tan Ken Hwee (left) moderated a panel discussion comprising Ms Cai Chengying, Justice Aedit Abdullah, Mr Alexander Woon and Mr Eugene Yan.

Tribunal magistrates in examining evidence, which can be voluminous. The Courts are also testing other generative AI models, including some developed by government agencies in Singapore.

The SG Courts’ Chief Transformation and Innovation Officer, Mr Tan Ken Hwee, moderated a panel discussion comprising Ms Cai Chengying, Head of Community Lawyering at Pro Bono SG, Justice Abdullah, Mr Alexander Woon, Lecturer in Law at the Singapore University of Social Sciences and Of Counsel with RHTLaw Asia LLP, and Mr Eugene Yan, Computing and Law undergraduate at the Singapore Management University.



Justice Aedit Abdullah delivering his keynote address.



Scan to read Justice Aedit Abdullah’s speech

go.gov.sg/cx8ym6

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY



Emeritus Professor Lye Lin-Heng (left) moderated a question-and-answer session with Associate Professor Jolene Lin, Justice Philip Jeyaretnam, Ms Michelle Chng and Mr Koh Min Ee.

The sixth instalment of “Conversations with the Community” took place on 26 July at the National University of Singapore (NUS), Faculty of Law, with Justice Philip Jeyaretnam delivering the keynote address titled “Advancing the Environmental Rule of Law — Roles and Responsibilities of the Community”.

Justice Jeyaretnam’s speech focused on the theme of environmental rule of law and explored how present circumstances contribute to the interpretation of legal rules. With the consistent and even-handed

application of laws, the environment is safeguarded, and the impact of climate change is transparent to the wider society.

During the session, Associate Professor Jolene Lin of NUS, Ms Michelle Chng, Head of the Climate Science Research Programme Office at the National Environment Agency, and Mr Koh Min Ee, Divisional Director of Environmental Policy at the Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment, presented their experiences and insights on topics centred around climate change. The question-and-answer session, moderated by Emeritus Professor Lye Lin-Heng of NUS, saw active discussion among the panel of speakers as they addressed questions from the audience.



Justice Philip Jeyaretnam delivering his keynote address.



Scan to read Justice Philip Jeyaretnam’s speech

go.gov.sg/owbi3n



Scan to watch videos of the “Conversations with the Community”

go.gov.sg/sgcourtsconvos

Students Attend “A Day in Court”



▲ Students exploring a courtroom.

Nearly 180 students from more than 20 secondary schools in Singapore participated in the eighth run of the “A Day in Court” seminar held at the State Courts on 4 July.

The annual seminar, which is designed to give Secondary 3 school students a better understanding of the role of the State Courts and the work that they do, focused on the topic of harassment, specifically, cyberbullying on social media.

In addition to the different types of harassment, the students learned more about the avenues to deal with the issue, and how the Courts manage harassment cases. A video depicting an incident of cyberbullying served as a case study for an in-depth group discussion before they learned — from one another and the programme facilitators — how best to respond to similar situations.

▼ Nearly 180 students participated in the annual “A Day in Court” seminar.

The half-day seminar also featured a fireside chat with two district judges. In addition, for the first time since the State Courts relocated to their current premises in 2019, a guided tour of a courtroom was incorporated in the programme to introduce the students to the layout and technology used in a courtroom, the role of the parties in a court proceeding, as well as courtroom etiquette.

The “A Day in Court” seminar is part of the Judiciary’s outreach efforts to enhance the community’s appreciation of the work and the role of the Courts, and aspects of the justice system. Since the seminar was first organised in 2014, the event themes have been calibrated to align with the evolving interests, consumption habits and social environment of today’s youth.



▲ Students engaged in lively discussions.



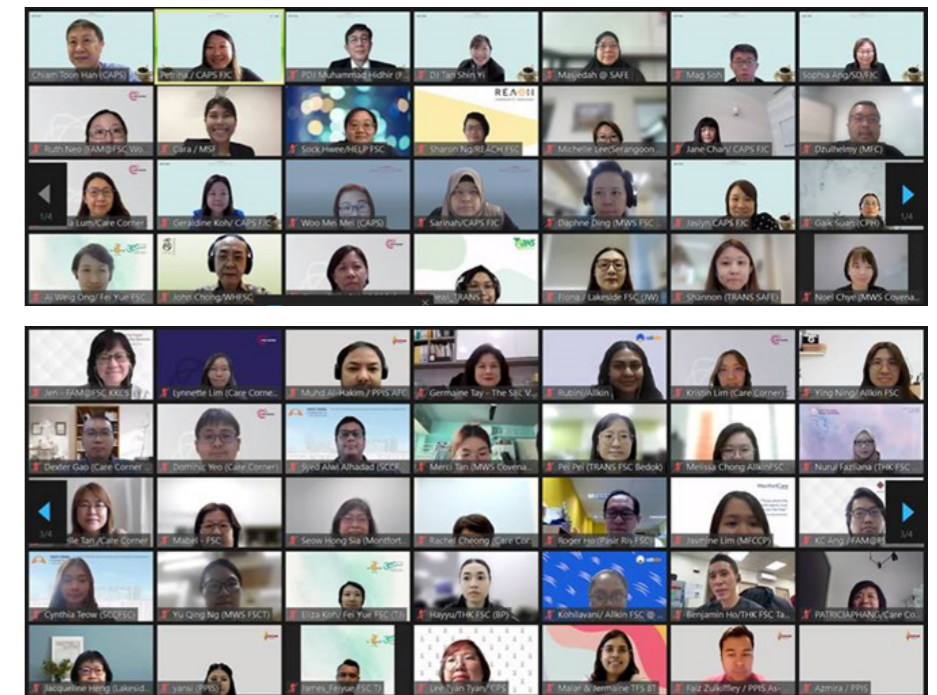
Social Service Agencies Gain Insights on Impact of Amended Family Violence Bill



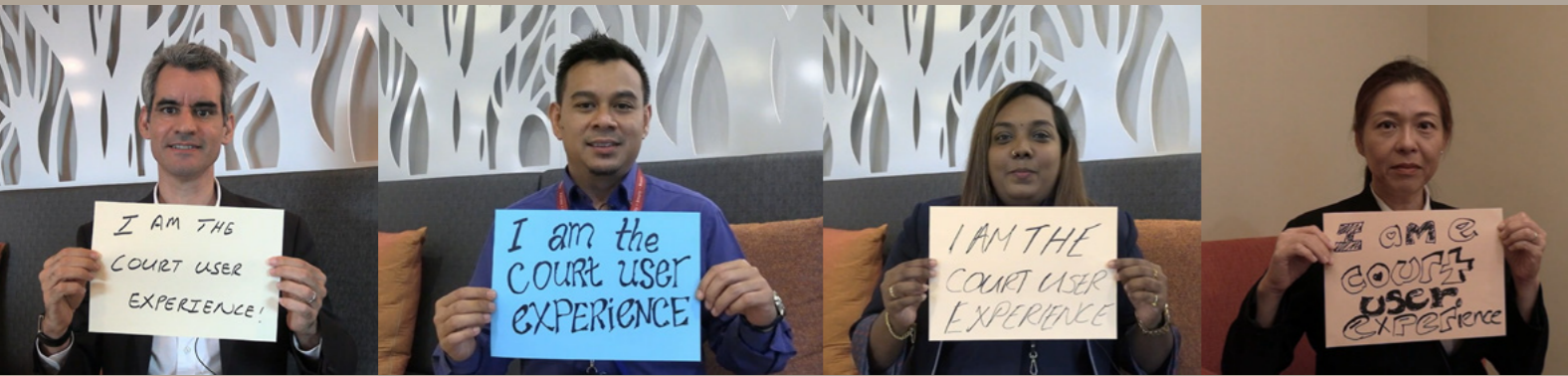
To improve the Family Justice Courts’ (FJC) collaboration with their partners, exchange information and knowledge, smoothen interface issues and enhance mutual understanding, the FJC has held a series of dialogue and sharing sessions with social service agencies (SSAs) since 2019. This series was branded as “KOPI TIME” in 2020.

On 5 August, the FJC held the 6th KOPI TIME virtually. District Judge Tan Shin Yi updated the participants on the Women’s Charter (Family Violence and Other Matters) (Amendment) Bill that will strengthen the protection of survivors and rehabilitation of perpetrators.

Through the session, 169 participants from 72 SSAs gained insights on how the changes may impact the families they serve, the operations of the SSAs, and the support that the SSAs could extend to the families.



▲ The Family Justice Courts held the 6th KOPI TIME for social service agencies to learn about forthcoming changes to the laws on family violence.



A2J Kick Off Townhall — “I am the Court User Experience”

On 17 July, judicial officers and court administrators of the Singapore Courts (SG Courts) attended the Access to Justice (A2J) Kick Off Townhall — “I am the Court User Experience” — to define the experience that they envisage for court users and renew their commitment to deliver excellent court services.

The Townhall is the first of a series of A2J events which aim to bring to life the concept of A2J to all officers in the SG Courts. Indeed, every officer has a part to play in ensuring access to justice, regardless of their roles. Guest speaker Senior Judge (SJ) Tan Siong Thye, a long-time advocate of customer-centricity, shared how he championed

and implemented initiatives to improve the court user experience during his tenure as the Chief District Judge of the then Subordinate Courts.

In his speech, SJ Tan highlighted the Judiciary’s dedication to fairness, accessibility, and integrity, emphasising the importance of leadership, empathy, continuous improvement, as well as leveraging technology to further court service excellence and enhance access to justice.

“

The task of enhancing access to justice is the solemn responsibility of everyone in the Judiciary. This includes front-line service officers, registry officers, judicial officers and even those in supporting functions such as human resources, finance, information technology, and so on. Everyone in the Judiciary has a stake in this endeavour.”

Senior Judge Tan Siong Thye
Supreme Court of Singapore

In a lively question-and-answer segment, SJ Tan shared his personal motivations for maintaining a positive and dedicated approach to service excellence. He offered valuable advice for staff who may face challenges when delivering services and suggested practical approaches to improving the court user experience. In line with the theme of the event, the Human Resources Department also launched its Digital Learning Campaign 2024, which focuses on service-related e-learning modules.



Scan to read Senior Judge Tan Siong Thye’s speech

go.gov.sg/sjtana2j

Senior Judge Tan Siong Thye shared that everyone in the Judiciary has a responsibility in enhancing access to justice.



FJC Officers Come Together to Prioritise People and Innovation

The Family Justice Courts (FJC) held their annual FJC All-In event on 2 August. The annual event provides a dedicated platform for the FJC to learn and share key initiatives and workplace innovations, seed ideas and develop actionable plans, and strengthen teamwork and collaboration with one another.

One of the highlights of the event was the FJC’s collaboration with GovTech’s Open Government Products (OGP) teams. The participants learned about FormSG’s Multi-Respondent Form, which could be introduced to applications that involve multiple parties. This could better streamline the FJC’s workflow and enhance the court user experience. In addition, the FJC had piloted “AskGov”, a digital platform for members of the public to have their questions about the FJC’s services and processes addressed.

Group photo at the FJC All-In 2024



Readying the Judiciary for Tomorrow: Judicial Education Re-imagined at the Singapore Judicial College

Tech Futures Series

The Singapore Judicial College (SJC) conducted a judiciary-wide Tech Futures series from March to May, to update judges on new and emerging technologies and the potential legal and social issues they present.

The first event, an interactive in-person roadshow “All Hands on Tech: A Hands-on Experience of Emerging Technologies” gave participants opportunities to experiment with cutting-edge but off-the-shelf technologies, for example, using artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots such as the now ubiquitous ChatGPT4, exploring the metaverse with haptic gear, and creating a shuriken, or Japanese throwing star, using a 3D printer. There were also holograms, deepfakes, and Loona, the inquisitive wandering Petbot.

Two online panels in April featured eminent domestic and international experts from



▲ Judges engage in guided play involving robotics, 3D printing, virtual reality and haptic technologies



▲ Participants of the Singapore Judicial College-National Judicial Institute of Canada Judgment Writing 201.

different disciplines. The first explored a number of potential tech-related legal issues: *Can you, for example, bring an action if your avatar is assaulted in the metaverse or if you trip over Loona, the Petbot, at the park?* The second examined the socio-legal impact of technology and the thorny associated issues of truth, transparency and trust.

Finally, “All Hands on Tech: Productivity Edition” shared tips and tricks to optimise one’s use of everyday technologies such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Teams.

Family Justice Courts Learning Week

The SJC collaborated with the Family Justice Courts (FJC) to present the FJC Learning Week in July. Adopting Therapeutic

Justice (TJ) as the thematic lens, with leading experts from Singapore and overseas, the focus for the week was on identifying and applying TJ-informed best practices to enhance TJ outcomes in resolving FJC disputes.

Judgment Writing 201

Also in July, the SJC collaborated with the National Judicial Institute of Canada to deliver two in-person judgment writing programmes. The first was an intensive two-day coaching clinic for mid-career judicial officers, built on SJC’s foundational judgment writing programme. This was followed by a Train-the-Trainer programme aimed at developing advanced skills-based training for the SJC’s Senior Faculty, Faculty, Subject-matter Advisory Panels and Judge-mentors through coaching and mentoring.

Singapore Courts Make a Difference in the Community

Staff members of the Singapore Courts (SG Courts) are passionate about making a positive impact in the community — one act of kindness at a time! Over the last few months, they stepped away from their desks to touch and enrich lives in meaningful ways — by spending time with underprivileged children and youth, cleaning up a segment of Changi Beach Park, and raising funds for charity on National Day.

Gardens by the Bay Outing with SHINE

On 5 June, 28 staff members from the SG Courts spent an engaging day at Gardens by the Bay (GBTB) with beneficiaries from the SG Courts’ adopted charity, SHINE Children & Youth Services (SHINE), which provides social and welfare support to underprivileged children and youth to nurture and develop their competencies and keep them positively engaged.



▲ SG Courts staff with SHINE beneficiaries at Gardens by the Bay.



▲ SG Courts staff at the annual beach clean-up activity.

Beach Clean Up with Boys’ Town

The SG Courts partnered with Boys’ Town (BT) for their yearly beach clean-up activity on 13 June at Changi Beach Park. BT works with children and youth from underprivileged backgrounds, helping them to develop skills to become active and responsible members of society.

National Day Charity Carnival

The SG Courts' annual National Day Charity Carnival (NDCC) began with online sales from 15 July and culminated in two on-site charity bazaars on 7 August at the Supreme Court and 14 August at the State Courts. More than \$64,000 was raised for their adopted charity, SHINE Children & Youth Services (SHINE).



▲ SHINE was invited to share its programmes for its beneficiaries.



▲ SG Courts staff set up booths to raise funds for SHINE.

At the on-site bazaars, there were booths set up by SHINE, as well as Boys' Town and the Community Chest. This gave SG Courts staff the opportunity to learn more about these organisations' causes and programmes for the less privileged communities.

Singapore Courts Conferred Champion of Good Award

The Singapore Courts (SG Courts) were recognised as a Champion of Good by the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) at its Company of Good (COG) Conferment ceremony on 18 July.

Under the NVPC's enhanced COG recognition system, companies were assessed under a framework that tracks an organisation's progress and impact across Corporate Purpose and five impact areas, including People, Society, Governance, Environment and Economic.

The SG Courts were one of 78 organisations, out of 290 conferred companies, that were recognised



▲ Deputy Chief Executive Mrs Clara Goh received the award, on behalf of the SG Courts, from the Guest of Honour, Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat.

as a Champion of Good, the highest of four tiers of recognition. This was a testament to the SG Courts as an organisation with outstanding contributions with multiplied impact for various stakeholders.

Courtesy Calls

The Right Honourable Helen Winkelmann, Chief Justice of New Zealand, called on Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon on 17 July. During the visit, Chief Justice Winkelmann was given briefings on access to justice, use of technology in courts and an introduction to the Singapore International Commercial Court.

Chief Justice Winkelmann also called on Presiding Judge of the State Courts, Justice Vincent Hoong, on 18 July.



▲ Chief Justice Helen Winkelmann (middle) was given a tour of the courtrooms at State Courts.

Mr Paul Lam, Secretary for Justice, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, called on Chief Justice Menon on 24 July. Chief Justice Menon and Mr Lam discussed issues of mutual interests, including judicial training, court digitalisation and access to justice.



▲ Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and Mr Paul Lam.

Visit by delegation from the People's Republic of China

A delegation from the People's Republic of China that included Vice President of the Supreme People's Court, Justice He Xiaorong, visited the State Courts on 20 June to learn about alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and how the State Courts

handle community disputes. The delegation was briefed by District Judges Joseph Yeo and Winston Man on Court Disputes Resolution in the State Courts, and Management and Resolution of Community Disputes respectively. The visit ended with an engaging discussion with Principal District Judges Victor Yeo and Thian Yee Sze.

The visit was part of the 4th Singapore-China Social Governance Forum, a key bilateral cooperation platform for Singapore and China to exchange views and share experiences on matters pertaining to social governance.

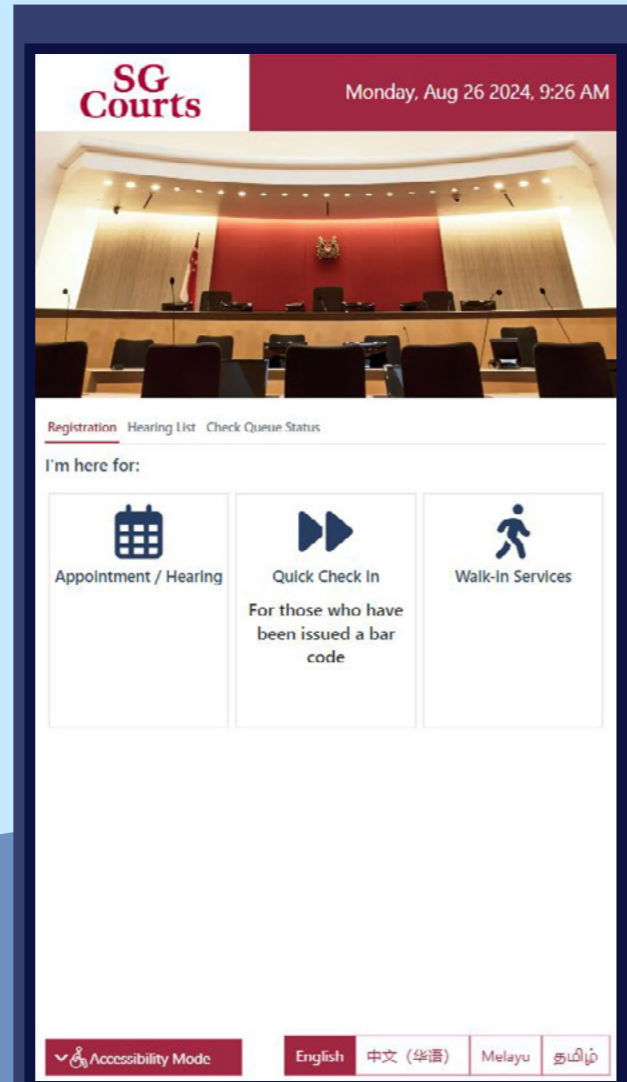


▲ A delegation from the People's Republic of China visited the State Courts.

New Judiciary Queue Management System for Singapore Courts

The new Judiciary Queue Management System (JQMS) was commissioned in July. The JQMS replaces two existing systems and is linked to the Judiciary's case management systems, thus allowing lawyers, litigants, and other court users to take queue numbers conveniently for selected services and hearings in all three Courts.

The JQMS kiosks feature a large, easy-to-read touchscreen and can be found on the ground floor of each court building and in the various registries. The new system has considered user feedback, and features a user-friendly layout with multi-language functionality and an accessibility mode for wheelchair users.



Timely Intervention for Domestic Violence Cases

On 1 August, the State Courts implemented new measures to address domestic violence (DV) cases. These measures aim to provide enhanced support for victims and timely interventions for accused persons.

There are now enhanced bail conditions for DV cases to limit the accused's contact with the victim while the case is pending, particularly in cases where there has been a breach of a personal protection order, the accused is a repeat offender, or where there is a high risk of reoffending against the same victim. In such cases, the accused may be required to secure alternative accommodation and promptly update the Court on any change of address.

DV cases are referred to the Centre for Specialist Services (CSS) for a Community Court Conference (CCC), where psychologists, social workers and counsellors will assess the accused's risk factors, evaluate the family's capacity to support the accused in receiving interventions, conduct safety planning for the victim, and coordinate with the relevant community agencies for support services. The CSS also monitors the progress of the case until sentencing and notifies the sentencing judge if a post-sentencing CCC might be necessary.

These proactive measures demonstrate the commitment of the Singapore Courts to effectively address DV, ensuring the safety and well-being of victims while holding perpetrators accountable.

Divorce by Mutual Agreement

The Women's Charter was amended in 2022 to introduce, among other things, divorce by mutual agreement (DMA) of the irretrievable breakdown of marriage as a sixth fact that parties may cite to show that their marriage has irretrievably broken down. For divorce applications filed on or after 1 July, DMA can be cited as a fact if both parties mutually agree that their marriage has broken down irretrievably.

To cite DMA as a fact, parties must submit the following to the Court:

1. The reasons leading the parties to conclude that their marriage has irretrievably broken down;
2. The efforts they have made to reconcile; and
3. Considerations given to the arrangements to be made in relation to the parties' children (if any) and financial affairs.

The existing five facts (adultery, desertion, unreasonable behaviour, and separation of three years with consent and four years without consent) will remain available for parties who prefer to rely on them.

Mandatory Co-Parenting for Divorcing Parties with Minor Children on Simplified Divorce Track

The Co-Parenting Programme (CPP) is extended to parties with children under 21 years old who file their divorce via the simplified divorce track on or after 1 July. Both parties will need to complete the CPP before filing their divorce application. This was previously a requirement only for parties on the normal divorce track.

The CPP encourages parents to make informed decisions that prioritise the well-being of their children and helps parents to work out co-parenting arrangements and the practical issues arising from a divorce. Parents will also receive support from a counsellor during the CPP consultations.

Behind the Scenes with the Court Facilities and Development Team



DAPHNE QUEK

Deputy Director



LING CHIH KANG

Assistant Director



SIM JINGYAO

Manager



**IZHARUL HAKIM
BIN RAZALI**

Senior Executive

The Court Facilities and Development team plays a crucial role in ensuring that all court hearings - whether in-person, virtual or hybrid - proceed smoothly. The team is responsible for the management of Audio Visual and Video Conferencing (AV-VC) systems used during a hearing, a task that has grown in importance since the COVID-19 pandemic, and ensures that each courtroom and chamber is equipped with a consistent suite of technologies capable of accommodating any type of hearing.

Beyond managing court and chamber hearings, the team also supports events, handles video recordings, and maintains the equipment for all meeting rooms and event spaces, ensuring that everything is up-to-date and functioning optimally.

In this issue, we interviewed four members of the team.

What are your key responsibilities?

Daphne: We aim to deliver efficient and reliable service to the Courts. This involves implementing standardised processes to achieve consistent service across all court operations. In 2023, our team successfully supported over 50 large- and small-scale events, including the Court of Appeal and Appellate Division Retreat and the Singapore International Commercial Court's hosting of delegates during the Singapore Convention Week.

Chih Kang: The Singapore Courts' online hearings are held mainly on Zoom. I manage the Courts' use of Zoom, and provide consultation to colleagues on its features. I also lead a team responsible for the setup of hearing venues and meeting rooms, ensuring that all requirements are met for smooth operations. In addition, I work with the AV team and contractors

to maintain courtroom equipment, plan technology upgrades, and handle replacements when necessary.

Jingyao: I oversee the AV-VC systems for hearings and events. I also manage the schedule for system maintenance.

Izharul: I work closely with court users and officers to ensure that courtroom facilities are ready and technical requirements are met for hearings and events. I also handle all aspects of virtual hearings and video conferencing platforms.

Are there any misconceptions about the work you do?

Daphne: A common misconception is that our work is all about troubleshooting technical issues. In reality, our responsibilities include contract management,



▲ The Singapore Courts' baseline courtroom facilities.

procurement, and asset management. We continually review and optimise operations and plan for new equipment purchases or upgrades as needed.

Chih Kang: Some may have the impression that because we handle AV equipment, we are well-versed in information technology (IT). However, there are fine distinctions between the IT and AV fields. I specialise in AV-VC technology, focusing on managing and optimising the AV aspects of court proceedings, especially video conferencing. But I'm always happy to help colleagues with general IT queries, if I am familiar with the topic raised.

What are some of the challenges that you face?

Daphne: It is to meet the unique needs and specific requirements of each Court. We strive to render the most effective support by tailoring solutions without affecting the efficiency of our processes.

Chih Kang: A key challenge in my role is balancing AV system design and deployment. We often need to decide between general-fit solutions and those tailored to specific needs, such as choosing between simple webcams or advanced pan-tilt-zoom cameras. The complexity of our large, multi-purpose venues necessitates flexible systems that can accommodate different setups while ensuring consistent performance. We also need to consider budget availability, space restrictions, and varying levels of user expertise. Our goal is to implement high-quality solutions that are accessible to all users, finding a balance between sophisticated technology and user-friendly interfaces to meet diverse needs and technical backgrounds.

Jingyao: We need to keep pace with evolving needs and changes in technology, court procedures and facility requirements, to provide the most efficient and effective services to court users.

Izharul: We sometimes encounter unexpected equipment failure and last-minute changes in technical requirements. We tackle these challenges by putting in place robust contingency plans to mitigate such unforeseen situations.

What keeps you going?

Daphne: What keeps me going is the chance to keep learning and growing by taking on new challenges. Working with a great team and seeing how we can make a difference keeps me excited and motivated about what we do.

Chih Kang: I love exploring new technology to enhance user experiences. I find satisfaction in using my technical knowledge to solve colleagues' issues and alleviate their pain points. Above all, I'm motivated by my great colleagues.

Jingyao: I enjoy the diversity of tasks and the dynamic nature of the job. Knowing that my work supports the judicial process and ensuring court proceedings run smoothly is my greatest motivation to remain dedicated to my role.

Izharul: Everyone in the team has been very helpful and positive in building one another's career growth. I believe I can still gain more valuable knowledge and experiences with the team and contribute more to the public service.

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Singapore 178879

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1 Havelock Square
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