

JUDICIARY TIMES

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ASEAN Chief Justices
Meeting

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Visits the
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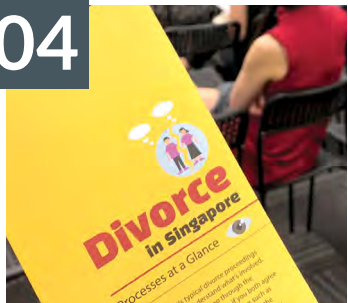
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6TH COUNCIL OF ASEAN CHIEF JUSTICES MEETING

The Supreme Court of Singapore hosted the 6th Council of ASEAN Chief Justices (CACJ) Meeting on 27 July. A series of fruitful closed-door sessions were held to discuss the work of the six working groups of the CACJ. The meeting concluded with the ASEAN Chief Justices and their representatives adopting the Singapore Declaration which sets out the agreed mandates on the future work of the CACJ. Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon also took over the chairmanship of the CACJ from Brunei Darussalam.

The ASEAN Judiciaries Portal (AJP) was officially launched on the same morning of the 6th CACJ Meeting by Chief Justice Menon, the Norwegian Ambassador to ASEAN, Morten Høglund and Justice Dato Paduka Haji Hairol Arni Bin Haji Abdul Majid from the Supreme Court of Brunei Darussalam (representing the Chief Justice of Brunei Darussalam, the former CACJ Chair). The first of its kind, the AJP provides accessibility to information on ASEAN judicial and legal systems, leading to improved knowledge on the application of the rule of law within the ASEAN region. A members-only secure section within the portal also provides CACJ members a platform for knowledge sharing and communications amongst ASEAN Judiciaries. Funding for the portal was obtained from the Norwegian-ASEAN Regional Initiatives Fund. The Launch was attended by about 150 guests including ASEAN Chief Justices and Judges, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Social and Family Development and Second Minister for National Development, Mr Desmond Lee, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for Community and Corporate Affairs, Dr AKP Mochtan and Ambassadors or their Representatives from ASEAN.



On 26 July, Chief Justice hosted a Welcome Dinner at the Istana for the 6th CACJ Meeting participants, ASEAN Law Association (ALA) Office Holders and their accompanying spouses. The Guests-of-Honour at the dinner were Her Excellency President Halimah Yacob and Mr Mohamed Abdullah Alhabshee.

The 13th ALA General Assembly and ASEAN Law Conference were held on the sidelines of the 6th CACJ Meeting from 25 to 28 July. Chief Justice Menon was elected President of the ALA at elections held at the closing of its general assembly, a position he would hold for a term of three years.



5TH WORKING GROUP MEETING ON CROSS-BORDER DISPUTES INVOLVING CHILDREN



The 5th Working Group (WG) on Cross-Border Disputes involving Children was held in the afternoon of 26 July at the Supreme Court. The meeting was co-chaired by Justice Debbie Ong, Presiding Judge of the Family Justice Courts and Judge Angelene Mary Quimpo-Sale of the Philippines. Judges and officials from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam were also present.

The meeting discussed the follow-up to the 4th WG meeting that was held in Manila on 25 and 26 October 2017. These included –

- A set of common procedures when ASEAN Member States have cross-border disputes involving children.
- A non-binding Code of Conduct and Protocol to deal with cross-border disputes involving children within ASEAN.
- The adoption of a Country Profile template to be filled in by each ASEAN Member State to facilitate the collation of the applicable laws and reciprocal arrangements they may currently have.
- The proposed organisation of the 2nd ASEAN Family Judges Forum (AFJF) in Singapore to be held on the day before a Hague Conference that is scheduled to take place in Singapore in March 2019.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the WG agreed to adopt a common procedure for dealing with cross-border disputes involving children within ASEAN where appropriate and to work on a non-binding Code of Conduct and Protocol to deal with such cases. The proposed Country Profile template and flow chart were adopted and each ASEAN Member State will populate the content for their respective countries.

THE PRESIDENT VISITS THE SUPREME COURT



The Supreme Court was honoured to receive President Halimah Yacob and Members of the Council of Presidential Advisers (CPA) on 4 July. President and the CPA Members were brought on a tour of the Supreme Court and briefed on the work of the the Judiciary. Chief Information Officer of Supreme Court Mr Santhanam presented on the Judiciary’s digital journey and the initiatives of the Courts of the Future.

Justice Quentin Loh shared on the structure and procedures of the Singapore International Commercial Court while Justice Lee Seiu Kin and Justice Debbie Ong elaborated on the work of State Courts and Family Justice Courts respectively. Chief Justice and members of the Bench then hosted President and the CPA members to a lunch reception.

FAMILY CONFERENCE 2018



The Law Society of Singapore (LSS) organised an inaugural Family Conference on 8 and 9 May at the Marina Bay Sands Convention Centre. The Conference was spearheaded by LSS's Family Law Practice Committee in collaboration with the Probate Practice and Succession Planning Committee and the Muslim Law Practice Committee, attracting some 215 delegates.

The 2-day event was uniquely designed with panel and workshop segments relevant to both senior and junior practitioners. The Conference encompassed family law practice holistically with the aim of benefitting delegates with a breadth of knowledge from experts in their field, who spoke on topics including private wealth, mental capacity, inheritance and succession planning, matrimonial matters, adoption and fostering, Islamic estate planning,

updates on Syariah family practice, conflict management and mental health issues.

Keynote Speaker for the Conference, Ms Indranee Rajah, SC (Second Minister for Law) called on the legal profession to transform itself in tandem with the changes in our family justice system -

"I would urge all practising lawyers here to know and understand that you are not just a family lawyer. You are specialist lawyers. You will need to become a specialist lawyer in your own right... We are at the point of time where we are transforming family law... You are at the vanguard and the forefront of this transformation. In the context of family law, you have to be peacemakers. You have to be the problem solvers and to some extent, the people who also have to counsel... There are some types of cases where you really need the professionals to step in. But I think as lawyers, you need to understand what the underlying issue is and very often the issue is not legal".

The Family Conference 2018 was strongly supported by the Family Justice Courts with many Judges fielded as moderators and speakers. The Conference was a resounding success with participants sharing that they are looking forward to the next one, scheduled for July 2019.

PUBLIC TALK ON DIVORCE



The Family Justice Courts (FJC), in collaboration with the Law Society Pro Bono Services (LSPBS) and the Community Justice Centre (CJC) have started a series of pro-bono Talks entitled "Divorce and You". Tailored to help individuals who are contemplating divorce or going through divorce, the Talks cover the divorce process and procedure as well as offer information on the help services available to them at various stages. Scheduled in the evenings for the convenience of those working, the Talks will be held every other month at LSPBS.

The inaugural Talk, held on 13 July was well attended. Assistant Registrar Jinny Tan opened the session by explaining the four different types of divorce proceedings in Singapore. This was followed by an overview on Singapore's divorce law by family lawyers Ms Susan Tay and Ms Amy Lim. CJC also took the opportunity to introduce the attendees to the third module of their recently launched Automated Court Document Assembler which litigants can use for their simplified divorce. The Talk concluded with an engaging Q&A session with the panel of speakers.

Commenting on the Talks, Deputy Presiding Judge and Registrar of the FJC Mr Chia Wee Kiat said, "These Talks will offer practical and useful knowledge to individuals, who are thinking about or have taken steps to file for divorce, and help them better navigate the often stressful situation to make informed decisions on divorce matters." He added that "Divorce is one of the most stressful events in a person's life. The decision to do so will irrevocably change the lives of all family members, particularly children. Thus it is important for individuals thinking of divorce, to consider carefully, and try all other avenues of help to resolve the conflicts before starting a divorce proceeding."

Registration details for the next talk can be found on page 14.

STATE COURTS HOST PUBLIC SERVICE WEEK LEARNING JOURNEYS

As part of the Public Service Week, State Courts conducted two Learning Journeys titled Court Innovation: Leveraging Technology in the Delivery of Justice. A total of 52 public officers from various agencies attended the programme on 5 and 12 July, where they learned about the different uses of technology in the courts, to further the delivery of justice.

These technologies include the Integrated Criminal Case Filing and Management System (ICMS), video-conferencing facility for vulnerable witnesses, Speech Transcription System (STS), Video Remote Interpretation (VRI), Resource Management System (RMS), Automated Collection System (ACS) kiosk, and Community Justice and Tribunals System (CJTS).

Participants were not only given a background on each of the innovations, but they also had a hands-on experience with some of the technologies. For instance, they were given the opportunity to read an actual charge sheet, which the STS was able to transcribe in real time. The STS, which is currently at a proof-of-concept stage and is expected to be completed in 2019, is an automated real-time transcription system that operates in a multi-party environment.

Another State Courts innovation that attracted great interest was the ACS kiosk, a customised payment kiosk that can accept cash, nets, credit and debit card, as well as cheque payments through an unmanned interface.

Through Virtual Reality goggles, participants even got an exclusive first look at State Courts' future courtrooms. In their feedback, they indicated that the learning journey was interesting and that they appreciated the chance to experience the courts.



STUDENTS ATTEND STATE COURTS' ANNUAL A DAY IN COURT SEMINAR



The State Courts' A Day in Court seminar for student leaders was held on 31 May. A total of 95 students from 48 schools that included Co-Curricular Activity leaders, school prefects and student council members between 14 and 16 years old attended the seminar.

Participants learned about aspects of the criminal justice system, the restorative justice model adopted by the courts for cases involving youth, as well as how alternative dispute resolution methods can be used to amicably resolve disputes. As part of the seminar, the students were also given the opportunity to role-play in the courtroom and in chambers.

In court, they got to role-play as either the Judge, Prosecutor, Defence Counsel or the Accused, in a case involving "John", a teenager who had been charged in court for unlawful assembly. Through the different roles, they learned more about different considerations to determine an accused person's suitability for probation and for sentencing.

In chambers, participants were able to develop their mediation skills through a simulated case involving neighbours in dispute. They took turns to play the role of the mediator and learned the appropriate methodologies used to resolve disputes.

The full-day programme also included an exclusive fireside chat with some of the State Courts' Judges and a tour of the State Courts at the end of the seminar.

In their feedback, all participants said that the role-play sessions gave them a better understanding of court and mediation processes, and the roles of the parties involved. Some reflected how the conflict-resolution skills learned will benefit them as school councillors and leaders of tomorrow, while others shared how they have been inspired to consider law as a career.

"The seminar is a well-organised and well-thought through programme that lets young student leaders learn the structure of a court, and it appeals to students who want to be part of the judicial system"

- **Carlos Camilo,**
Anglo-Chinese School (Barker Road)

The A Day in Court seminar, which is part of the State Courts' outreach efforts to enhance the community's understanding of their work, saw the highest participation since it was first introduced in 2014.

JUDICIAL OFFICERS PARTICIPATE IN WELLNESS PROGRAMMES

The Singapore Courts organised a series of Judicial Wellness Programmes for Judicial Officers (JOs) between April and May. The aim of the sessions is to provide time and space for JOs to have a candid and constructive period to engage on issues affecting judicial stress and well-being.

The programme covered topics such as identifying and sharing aspects of judicial work that could impact one’s psychological well-being, strategies on managing stress and developing skills in evidence-based practices to improve overall psychological well-being.

The sessions were conducted on separate occasions for the three courts by Judicial Well-being Adviser, Ms Carly Schrever and Organisational Psychologist, Ms Maryanne Mooney from the Judicial College Victoria.



FOREIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS ATTEND TRAINING WORKSHOP



language interpreters training workshop on 1 June. A total of 56 freelance foreign language interpreters attended the workshop, which covered topics like basic interpretation skills and court processes. The training workshop provided them with the tips, tools and knowledge to interpret in court efficiently, effectively and confidently.

A mass oath taking ceremony, presided by District Judge Christopher Goh, was also conducted for all the active freelance foreign language interpreters at the end of the workshop.

In their feedback, participants expressed their appreciation for the content covered and their gratitude for the comprehensive training that was provided to them.

“It was a good refresher course and it certainly helped me catch up with the many procedural changes that have taken place since my retirement”

– Mr Ajmer Singh, freelance Punjabi / Hindi interpreter

The State Courts have 54 in-house Language Officers to provide interpretation in Mandarin, Malay, Tamil or other local dialects to accused persons who do not speak or have limited proficiency in the English language. When the need arises, freelance interpreters are engaged to provide court interpretation for non-vernacular languages such as Hindi or Tagalog.

To ensure that high standards of court interpretation are maintained, the State Courts conducted a foreign

SUPREME COURT HOSTS LUNCH AND DIALOGUE WITH THE CRIMINAL BAR



The Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, hosted the annual lunch and dialogue session with the Criminal Bar on 12 July.

The event was attended by Attorney-General Lucien Wong, President of the Law Society, Mr Gregory Vijayendran, Presiding Judge of the State Courts, Justice See Kee Oon, and key stakeholders from Supreme Court, the Criminal Bar, and the Criminal Law Practice Committee (CPC) of the Law Society of Singapore. During the session, Chief Justice



led a lively panel discussion, engaging the guests on pertinent topics centered on criminal law, such as the impact of sentencing guidelines and the involvement of *amicus curiae* from the CPC to assist the court. After the session, Mr Wendell Wong, Co-chairperson of the CPC, thanked Chief Justice for hosting members of the Bar, noting that the platform provided an excellent opportunity for members in the Criminal Law sector to engage the Supreme Court and Attorney-General's Chambers on issues and challenges pertaining to criminal law.

MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY ATTEND TRIPARTITE LUNCH



Over 100 guests, including members of the Bench, the Bar, Prosecution, Attorney-General's Chambers and the Law Society attended the Tripartite Lunch that was hosted by the Law Society on 16 July in the Orchid Ballroom at The Central, Clarke Quay. The Lunch provided a platform

for networking and an engaging discussion between Chief Justice and the various stakeholder groups. The Law Society also shared a video highlighting the recent Criminal Bar Charity Gala that raised a total of \$525,000 for the Yellow Ribbon Fund on 6 April.

STATE COURTS PARTICIPATE IN CSR ACTIVITIES



Since the beginning of the year, the State Courts have organised and participated in some 10 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities. These include collaborations with non-profit social-enterprises, programmes that give back to the community, as well as fundraising for adopted charities.

In April, the State Courts collaborated with Soles4Souls, an American-based non-profit social-enterprise, to organise a shoe donation drive where a total of 450 pairs of pre-loved footwear in good condition were collected from staff.

Blankets, soft toys and clothing were also collected over 3 days in June for the Global Ehsan Relief Recycle Drive. These donation drives helped to rally staff together to do their part for the less privileged.

Staff volunteers never fail to support the CSR activities that the State Courts organise. In July, about 35 staff volunteers spent their afternoon at East Coast Park to perform a beach clean-up, where they collected trash and helped to spruce up the environment for the enjoyment of all.

Adopted charities are specially chosen and will not only have activities and exclusive events organised for them, but is also the beneficiary for the annual State Courts' National Day Charity Carnival. Earlier in the year, staff volunteers got together to paint another mural installation for their adopted charity of two years - the Singapore Cheshire Home.

The newly adopted charity for this year is the Singapore After-Care Association (SACA), which is a key aftercare agency providing welfare and rehabilitation services for discharged offenders and their families. Activities that have been lined up for SACA include movie screenings and other fundraising programmes to help keep their services going.

Formed in 2014, the State Courts' CSR committee comprising judicial officers and court administrators from across all divisions, has continued to organise events and activities that encompass the spirit of volunteerism and teamwork, whilst raising awareness regarding the needs of our society. Their CSR committee has lined up more activities in the coming months and also look forward to co-organising the annual Judiciary Cares event with the Supreme Court and Family Justice Courts in December.

VISIT BY AMBASSADOR OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA



Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Singapore, His Excellency Hong Xiaoyong made an introductory call on Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon on 9 May. Much was discussed at the call, including opportunities for China and Singapore to deepen legal and judicial cooperation.

VISIT BY NATIONAL JUDGES COLLEGE, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA



A delegation from the National Judges College, Supreme People's Court, People's Republic of China, led by Vice President Ms Feng Wenli visited the State Courts and Family Justice Courts (FJC) on 9 May. They were received by District Judge Victor Yeo and District Judge Seah Chi-Ling at the State Courts and District Judge Yarni Loi at the FJC, who presented an overview of the two courts respectively. The visit was part of a 3-day exchange programme that SJC organised.



VISIT BY VIETNAMESE DELEGATION



On 10 May, officials from the Central Commission for Internal Affairs, Communist Party of Vietnam, led by Deputy Secretary General of the Supreme People's Procuracy of Vietnam, Mr Bui Manh Cuong, visited the State Courts. They were received by District Judge Ong Hian Sun, District Judge Victor Yeo, District Judge Wong Peck and District Judge Chay Yuen Fatt, who presented on case management and how corruption cases are handled in the State Courts.

VISIT BY SEOUL BANKRUPTCY COURT & MOU SIGNING



A Seoul Bankruptcy Court delegation, led by Chief Judge Kyung Chun Lee, Presiding Judge Jin Woong Lee and Judge Young Seok Kim, visited the Supreme Court on 16 May. They were briefed on the Singapore International Commercial Court by Senior Director (Business Development), Mr Laurence Wong and the Court's Practice for Insolvency and the Judicial Insolvency Network Guidelines by Assistant Registrars Ms Karen Tan and Ms Norine Tan. The delegation also called on Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, before a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which aimed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of transnational insolvency proceedings by encouraging cooperation, was signed between both courts. The MOU was signed by Judge of Appeal, Justice Steven Chong representing Supreme Court and Chief Judge Kyung Chun Lee of the Seoul Bankruptcy Court, with Chief Justice witnessing the ceremony. Judges from the Company, Insolvency and Trusts list were also invited to attend the MOU signing ceremony.



NOTABLE VISITS

VISIT BY DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION BUREAU, SUPREME PEOPLE'S COURT, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA



In support of the NUS Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy Masters in Public Management – Internship and Masters in Public Administration and Management – Externship programmes, the Supreme Court hosted Director of the International Cooperation Bureau, Mr Han Feng, from the Supreme People’s Court of the People’s Republic of China, to three briefings on 25 June. They included a briefing on an overview of the judiciary by Assistant Registrar Ms Zeslene Mao, a briefing on a fair and independent judiciary by Director and Deputy Director, Strategic Planning & Policy, Ms Shirlynn Loo and Mr Kevin Tang and a briefing on court technology by Chief Information Officer, Mr Santhanam. Senior Director (Business Development), Mr Laurence Wong also gave a briefing on the Singapore International Commercial Court.

JUDICIAL OFFICERS FROM FIJI VISIT THE SUPREME COURT AND STATE COURTS



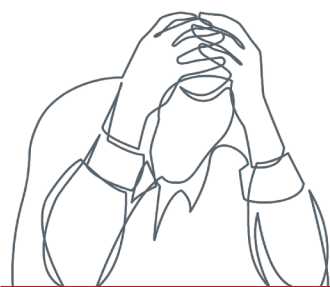
On 26 July, Justice Mohamed Ajmeer Mohamed Haniffa and Magistrate Deepika Prakash from the Judicial Department of Fiji visited the Supreme Court and State Courts to learn about the Singapore Judicial System. The delegates observed civil and criminal proceedings in court and in chambers. They rounded off their visits with discussions on practical work matters led by Assistant Registrar Ms Janice Wong at the Supreme Court, and District Judge Wong Peck and District Judge Luke Tan at the State Courts.

VISIT BY CHANCELLOR OF THE JUDICIARY OF GUYANA



A delegation led by Chancellor of the Judiciary of Guyana, Madam Justice Yonette Cummings-Edwards, visited the Supreme Court on 6 and 7 August, and the State Courts on 8 August. They were received by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon at the Supreme Court and Presiding Judge of the State Courts, Justice See Kee Oon and Deputy Presiding Judge and Registrar, Ms Jennifer Marie at the State Courts. The delegation learned about Supreme Court’s digital journey, eLitigation and also met with the Singapore Judiciary College Dean, Mr Foo Chee Hock and Executive Director, Mr Paul Quan, at the Supreme Court. At the State Courts, District Judge Constance Tay presented on the court’s use of technology, before the delegation went on an extended court tour that showcased the case management systems used and IT facilities like the Automated Collection System.





VULNERABLE ADULTS ACT PASSED IN PARLIAMENT



The Vulnerable Adults Act was passed in Parliament on 18 May to safeguard persons above 18 years of age who suffer from a physical or mental disability, against abuse, neglect or self-neglect. Under the Act, the Court has authority to make orders which include:

- Placing the vulnerable adult in alternative care arrangements
- Protection-related orders; e.g. to restrict a third-party's access to the vulnerable adult
- Orders that ensure that the vulnerable adult resides in a safe living environment

Such applications will be made by the Director of Social Welfare or Adult Protector from the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) who are also empowered under the Act to step in and assess the situation, to ensure the safety of such individuals. Protection-related orders can also be applied for by the vulnerable adult and specified persons.

The Act is intended to strengthen the existing adult protection framework and laws, the effectiveness of which is contingent upon the family, the community and the state playing a complementary role. The Act is expected to be implemented in the last quarter of 2018 with applications being made to the Family Courts via iFAMS.

MAGISTRATE'S COMPLAINTS SECTION HAS MOVED



The Magistrate's Complaints Section at the State Courts has relocated from the Crime Registry to the Community Justice and Tribunals Division (CJTD) with effect from April 2018.

Magistrate's Complaints are filed by a private individual when he wishes to pursue criminal legal proceedings against someone who has committed a criminal offence against him. Magistrate's Complaints often involve

allegations of harassment and/or disputes between neighbours. Besides criminal sanctions, civil remedies for such matters are also available under the Protection from Harassment Act (POHA) and the Community Disputes Resolution Act (CDRA).

With the relocation, court users will now experience the convenience of having all their available options evaluated and explained to them at the CJTD.

CHANGE IN FJC'S REGISTRY OPERATING HOURS



All registries at Havelock Square are closed on Saturdays with effect from 4 August 2018.

Operating hours on weekdays remain unchanged.

AWARDS & ACCOLADES

THE JUDICIARY WINS 24 PUBLIC SECTOR TRANSFORMATION AWARDS

The Singapore Courts were recognised for their commitment to service delivery, innovation and best practices, and organisational excellence at the Public Sector Transformation Awards 2018 held at Resorts World Sentosa Convention Centre on 4 July. A total of 24 awards were received by the judiciary this year.

Supreme Court bagged a total of 10 awards, including four Star Service Individual Awards, two Star Service Team Awards, one Star Manager Award and three ExCEL Innovation Project Awards. Additionally, two lawyers, Mr Adrian Tan and Mr Bryan Ghows, received Letters of Commendation under the Star Customer Award Category, for contributing feedback on new courtroom design and assisting with the creation of educational videos.

State Courts brought home 12 awards which comprised six Star Service Individual Awards, three Star Service Team Awards, one Star Manager Award, one ExCEL Innovation Project Award, and one ExCEL Innovation Champion Award.

Family Justice Courts (FJC) received one Star Service Individual Award and one Star Service Team Award, which was awarded to the team who worked on the Integrated Family Application System (iFAMS).

Trivia: ExCEL stands for Excellence through Continuous Enterprise and Learning!



Star Service Award	
Supreme Court	Haryati Binte Jumahat Jazz Ng Yi Jia Mattias Low Kheng Wei Soh Hui San
State Courts	Caliph Md Sufiyan Bin Moezar Jackie Chong Keng Lai Kalai Selvi Rajendran Puvana Ramasamy S Nachamai Subramanian Tan Jia Hui Cherie
Family Justice Courts	Chiam Toon Han

ExCEL Innovation Champion	
State Courts	Ha Yeong Sheng

ExCEL Innovation Project	
Supreme Court	<p>Competency Interpreted! Jack Lim, Ivy Neo, Lim Cher Yeow, Wong Hee Huang, Elsie Chee, Soh Hui San, Nooreini Bte Atan, Rageswari Suppiah, Suhana Bte Salleh, Tay Hee Chew and selected interpreters</p> <p>Idea Brewers Leung Shun Yee, Ryan Koh, Suleiman Shariman, Marina Wang, Sandiraleka Kannandan, Nurfarhana Md. Rehan</p> <p>The TPCians James Elisha Lee, S Raventhiran, Elyse Ang Wee Wee, Sherelyn Khoo, Jailani Jayos</p>
State Courts	<p>Community Justice & Tribunals System Ow Yong Tuck Leong, Wong Li Tein, Anne Durray, Ha Yeong Sheng, Balasubramaniam Tharmalinggam, Rita Anthony, Kenny Tan, Ryan Quek, Tan Hua Kiang, Goh Poo Choo</p>

Star Manager Award	
Supreme Court	Deviki Rengupillai Ramiah
State Courts	Noran Farhana Binte Mohammed

Star Service Team Award	
Supreme Court	<p>SPPD- ians Shirlynn Loo, Lee Mei Teng, Kevin Tang, Noah Chan Yee Loong</p> <p>Supreme Court Legal Directorate Records Counter Jazz Ng Yi Jia, Santhi Pannirselvam, Saimah Yahah</p>
State Courts	<p>Automated Collection System Team Erwin Chew, Bradley Tan, Mark Tay, Puvana Ramasamy, Aston Chow, Gary Chiang, Leong Pui Kwan, Shakilah Muttalib, Iskandar Abbas, Winnie Thong, Tan Kiat Boon, Josephine Tan, Chia Wan Leng, Richard Tan</p> <p>State Courts Employment Claims Tribunals Working Group Soh Tze Bian, Wong Li Tein, Sandra Looi, Dorothy Ling, Carolyn Gin, Ha Yeong Sheng, Pandiyan Vellasami, Edith Tan, Wong Su Ann</p> <p>Statistics and Analysis Section Shen Qinghui, Kalai Selvi Rajendran, Looi Siew Yuen, Huang Caiwei, Nur Huda Abdul Hamid, Desmond Tan, Geoffrey Lim</p>

Family Justice Courts	<p>FJC Integrated Family Application Management System Muhammad Hidhir Abdul Majid, Colin Tan, Geraldine Kang, Wendy Yu, Goh Kiat Yi, Daniel Chiah, John Heng, Sarah Salim, Noraini Hanifah, Jacqueline Kwa, Lee-See Fong Pheng, Cynthia Teo, Tay Hee Chiew, Suhana Salleh, Leow Bee Ling, Lee Meng Chung, Lim Soon Aik, Winston Cheng, Tan Hong Ean, Ong Hui Eng, Marcus Lum, Henny Fang</p>
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STATE COURTS WIN AWARDS FOR NEW TOWERS



The State Courts received the following at the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) Awards ceremony on 22 May: (1) BCA Green Mark Award (Platinum) for the State Courts Towers; (2) BCA Green Mark Award (Platinum) for New Data Centres for the State Courts Towers Network Room; (3) BCA Universal Design Mark Award (GoldPlus) for the State Courts Towers.

The annual event for Singapore's built environment sector honours firms and individuals for achieving excellence

in the areas of safety, quality, user-friendliness and productivity.

The State Courts Towers are slated to be operational in 2020. It will comprise two towers, each standing at a height of 178 metres, and with a combined area of 113,000 square metres. They will be connected by a series of link bridges that enable the controlled circulation of court visitors and State Courts staff.

UPCOMING EVENTS



FAMILY JUSTICE PRACTICE FORUM 2018

FAMILY JUSTICE: A CALLING OF KINDRED

The Family Justice Courts (FJC) will be jointly organising the annual Family Justice Practice Forum (FJPF) on 2 October 2018 together with the Ministry of Social and Family Development, Ministry of Law and The Singapore Law Society. The FJPF is FJC's landmark event for the various stakeholders in Singapore's family justice system to exchange views and deepen understanding of the various upcoming reforms and initiatives. Three years after the establishment of FJC in October 2014, it is timely to take stock. Thus this year's forum, themed "Family Justice – A Calling of Kindred", will focus on reviewing the new family justice paradigm and consider possible improvements to further enhance the system within the Courts and in the community.

DIVORCE AND YOU



Date of : 21st September 2018
 upcoming talk
 Registration: <https://bit.ly/FJCpublictalk>
 (See attached QR code)
 Time: 5pm – 7pm
 (registration starts at 4.30pm)
 Location: Law Society Pro Bono Services,
 17 Phillip Street, #08-00 Grand Building
 Singapore 048695

BEHIND THE SCENES WITH COURT INTERPRETERS



Nooreini Bte Atan



Yeo Ai Fern



Masilamany Gnanaraj

Court Interpreters are an integral part of the judiciary and play an important role in the courtroom. In Singapore, all court proceedings are conducted in English, and these officers provide interpretation for court users who are not conversant in English, thereby ensuring that language barriers do not impede the administration of justice.

Besides interpreting the court proceedings, they assist in translating court documents and are also appointed as Commissioners for Oath to administer oaths or affirmations for documents that are to be submitted to the courts.

Court Interpreters are held to a high standard of proficiency. Since May 2017, to professionalise the role, newly appointed Court Interpreters are required to pass the Certification Examination for Professional Interpreters, conducted by the Singapore University of Social Sciences.

In this issue, we interviewed **Nooreini Bte Atan** from the Supreme Court, **Yeo Ai Fern** from the State Courts and **Masilamany Gnanaraj** from the Family Justice Courts, who collectively have over 90 years of experience as Court Interpreters.

How did you start your career as a court interpreter?

Nooreini: I was a nursing student before my passion for the Malay language inspired me to pursue a career as an interpreter in the courts. I started as a Student Interpreter in August 1984 and was the first female Malay language Interpreter to be transferred to the Supreme Court Malay Interpreters Section in 1992.

Ai Fern: My natural inclination towards the Chinese language and my strong command of the Hokkien dialect drew me

to the role and landed me the job 20 years ago. Before that, I had not given much thought about the important role of interpretation in court. It was an exciting opportunity to be in a dynamic, unique and challenging environment and I have never looked back.

Masilamany: At the age of 22, I started my career as a Court Interpreter at the then Subordinate Courts after my National Service in 1977. (Ed: This is his first job!)

What is a typical work day for you?

Ai Fern: I get my assignments for the day every morning. These could be to provide interpretation in court, in chambers, at the tribunals, at mediation sessions, or to explain court processes or legal procedures to court users at the registry counters. An assignment can take as little as an hour, to as long as a day, or even several days. Before the assignments, I would prepare myself by reading up on specialised terms or the subject matter and make my own case notes.

Nooreini: Beyond our assignments, we also take part in regular sharing sessions amongst our colleagues that allow us to exchange best practices and share our experiences on more challenging cases. We also use these sessions to broaden our language skills. For example, we may try to decipher documents in printed and handwritten Jawi writings from a different era to be exposed to different writing and language styles.

Masilamany: As the Head of the Indian language section, my main responsibility is to ensure that all daily requests for Tamil interpreters are met. While attending to day-to-day assignments, I also attend to administrative matters pertaining to the officers in my charge and play a supportive role to the senior management of the Family Justice Courts. As an interpreter I also fulfil my core duty by interpreting in trials and other court matters.

What are the main challenges you face?

Nooreini: There are times when there is no equivalent word in English to represent the vernacular term used, or when I have to deal with witnesses who may be overwhelmed by fear and are unable to articulate their thoughts well. I have to be very careful not to use words that could be taken out of context and have to remain professional in all situations. Once, I had to interpret the human anatomy, which can be somewhat awkward but I'm glad I was able to maintain my professionalism.

Ai Fern: For many people, there is much at stake when they come to court, and it is not uncommon for them to vent their frustrations on the interpreter or make accusations when faced with an unfavourable outcome. They can turn violent and spew vulgarities in court, or a next-of-kin may wail in grief during a coroner's inquiry. When faced with such emotional outbursts, it is important to remain calm and composed.

Tell us about your most memorable case and how you handled the situation?

Masilamany: I recall interpreting in my first murder trial in the Supreme Court in 1988. I was nervous but I kept calm and did my best. At the end of the trial, he was found guilty and sentenced to be hanged. Being my first such experience, I was quite shaken when I was interpreting the death sentence to the accused. As a young interpreter you may wonder how your interpretation played a part in the eventual outcome; in this case, he was sent to the gallows. The Tamil-speaking defence counsel and my senior colleague who had observed the proceedings assured me that my interpretation was professional and accurate throughout the trial, and that assurance gave me the confidence I needed to persevere.

Nooreini: There are light-hearted moments too, one that I can vividly remember was when a party was asked to produce a "short witness" before the court adjourned for lunch. He then went on to line all the witnesses up according to their heights and instructed the shortest witness to proceed to the witness stand. Subsequently, it was clarified that it meant a witness who could testify in the shortest period of time.

What keeps you going?

Ai Fern: The satisfaction of learning and experiencing new things every day, meeting people from all walks of life and knowing that I am doing a meaningful job by breaking down language barriers.

Masilamany: I love languages and the challenge of the unpredictable nature of the job. When I step forward to interpret, I would never know what would be uttered by the witness. Functioning like a thesaurus, finding English equivalents for colloquial terms while stringing the utterances into a cogent sentence on the spot has provided me with the excitement to keep me going in this profession.

Any advice for people considering a career in this line?

Masilamany: You need to have a strict sense of ethics and be at ease when interacting with strangers.

Nooreini: A passion for the language is the key to being a good Court Interpreter.

Ai Fern: Besides language proficiency, you also need soft skills to be able to deal with different court users.

Jointly brought to you by:



1 Supreme Court Lane
Singapore 178879
E Supcourt_QSM@supcourt.gov.sg



1 Havelock Square
Singapore 059724
E contact@statecourts.gov.sg



3 Havelock Square
Singapore 059725
E FJCourts_QSM@FJCourts.gov.sg