

JUDICIARY TIMES



P2

Valedictory Reference Held in Honour of Justice Andrew Phang

P4

Sentencing Conference 2022

P5

Court Volunteers Honoured by the Singapore Judiciary

HIGHLIGHTS

Valedictory Reference Held in Honour of Justice Andrew Phang 02
 Sentencing Conference 2022 04
 Court Volunteers Honoured by the Singapore Judiciary 05

EVENTS & INITIATIVES

One-stop Service at Supreme Court Service Hub 06
 Launch of the Inaugural Judicial Executive Programme 07
 State Courts Host Second Run of Annual Training for Court Volunteer Mediators 08
 Webinar on the Small Claims Tribunals 08
 Family Conference and Family Justice Practice Forum 2022 09
 Launch of Revised Panel of Financial Experts Scheme 10
 Shining a Light on the Visually Handicapped 11
 Tenth Council of ASEAN Chief Justices Meeting 12
 Rwanda Deepens Judicial Cooperation with Singapore 13
 Fourth Meeting of the Supreme Court of Singapore – Supreme People’s Court of China Working Group with Singapore 13
 New SICC Rules of Court 14
 Best Practices in International Commercial Dispute Resolution 14
 2022 SICC Asia Conference: The Era of International Commercial Courts 15
 Trends and Developments in the SICC and Third-Party Funding 15
 SICC-INSOL Conference 16
 Singapore to host the next IACA Conference in 2024 16

Valedictory Reference Held in Honour of Justice Andrew Phang

On 28 November, a valedictory reference was held at the Supreme Court in honour of Justice Andrew Phang, who has retired as Justice of the Court of Appeal from 15 December 2022 after 18 years of distinguished service in the Judiciary.

In the ceremony at the Supreme Court auditorium, The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon delivered the opening address, followed by tributes to Justice Phang from six speakers – Minister in the Prime Minister’s Office, Indranee Rajah; Attorney-General Lucien Wong; Judicial Commissioner Goh Yihan; Law Society of Singapore President Adrian Tan; Senior Counsel Davinder Singh; and Deputy Senior State Counsel Scott Tan. Justice Phang also gave an address, where he extended his appreciation to his family and colleagues who have ‘inspired him all his life’.

The ceremony was followed by a reception at Level 1 Atrium where a book-lined backdrop took centre stage. A book titled “Pursuing Justice and Justice Alone – The Heart and Humanity of Justice Phang’s Jurisprudence” celebrating his judicial work was launched. More surprises were in store for Justice Phang with Goh Yihan JC and Mr Scott Tan presenting him with two mementos - a photo book and a book consisting of a collection of personal tributes.

“The Meritorious Service Medal conferred by the President on Justice Phang earlier this year speaks volumes of his signal contributions to Singapore law and legal scholarship over the course of 40 years, first in academia where he has written extensively on contract law, and later as a Judge where his considerable experience has been an invaluable asset to the Bench. He will be missed by all on the Bench for his keen legal judgment, wise counsel, humanity and humility.”

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon



▲ Seven addresses were made in tribute to Justice Andrew Phang.



▲ Contributors of the book “Pursuing Justice and Justice Alone” gathered on stage for a commemorative photo.



▲ Mr Scott Tan presenting Justice Andrew Phang with the photo book.

“I am honoured and humbled by the generosity of Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon to mark my tenure of 18 years of full-time service as a Judge... The faith and trust placed on me to serve society then as a law professor and more recently as a judge, is a constant reminder to myself that the law is a powerful tool for the good of society and we in Singapore are blessed to see this.”

Justice Andrew Phang

Scan the QR code for Chief Justice Menon’s speech

Scan the QR code for Justice Phang’s speech

Sentencing Conference 2022

**SENTENCING
CONFERENCE
2022**
CYBER EDITION

Sentencing Frameworks
Instructive | Communicative | Consistent Outcomes
31 October & 1 November 2022

The State Courts and the Singapore Academy of Law (SAL) jointly organised the Sentencing Conference 2022 (cyber edition) on 31 October and 1 November to promote the development of standards and best practices in sentencing. About 250 members of the criminal justice system attended the conference, including judges, prosecutors, criminal defence lawyers and providers of rehabilitation services.

Titled "Sentencing Frameworks – Instructive, Communicative and Consistent Outcomes", the two-day virtual conference was opened by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, and the Presiding Judge of the State Courts, Justice Vincent Hoong.

The conference featured international and local speakers and panellists from the Bench, the Bar, academia and various specialist agencies, who discussed the integral role of sentencing frameworks in securing consistent outcomes in discrete cases and recent developments in the sentencing landscape in Singapore.

Sentencing frameworks issued by the Court of Appeal and the General Division of the High Court form a critical part of Singapore's sentencing jurisprudence. In his Keynote Address at the conference, Chief Justice spoke on the place of sentencing frameworks in the sentencing process, against the backdrop of the rise of sentencing discretion, the courts' role in sentencing and the objectives and end goal of sentencing. He said that sentencing guidelines and frameworks are best understood as means to enable the sentencing court to strike the right balance between imposing a condign sentence on the individual offender while ensuring broad consistency in sentencing outcomes to achieve fairness across offenders.

Similarly, Justice of the Court of Appeal Steven Chong, who delivered a special guest lecture at the Conference, spoke about the benefits that sentencing frameworks bring. He said that while sentencing is "not a scientific exercise and does not demand mathematical precision", some degree of structure and broad consistency is essential for the coherent development of Singapore's sentencing jurisprudence.

The conference concluded with closing remarks by Justice Hoong, who highlighted that it is the duty of a sentencing judge to ensure that the sentence also fits the offender. He added that alternative sentences which promote rehabilitation, when employed appropriately and with proper resourcing, may be more effective in reducing recidivism.



▲ Participants took part in discussions, plenary sessions and experiential learning at the conference.

Court Volunteers Honoured by the Singapore Judiciary

About 200 court volunteers attended the Judiciary Volunteers Appreciation Lunch at Furama City Centre on 29 November. Hosted by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, the event was held to recognise court volunteers who have contributed towards the work of the judiciary.

The outstanding court volunteer awards were given out to three volunteers for their commitment and dedication to pro bono work. They were: Dr Ong Geok Quee, a passionate learner in his 70s who had embraced technology to further his capabilities as a professional mediator; Ms Miranda Tan, a fresh law graduate who had spent more than 50 volunteer-hours assisting unrepresented accused persons to ensure that they were fairly heard; and Ms Deborah Koh Leng Hoon, a lawyer who actively serves in the State Courts despite her busy practice.

The long service awards were also presented to 12 volunteers who have worked with the Singapore Courts for at least 10, 15, and 20 years.

Addressing the volunteers in person for the first time in over three years, Chief Justice expressed his heartfelt appreciation towards all volunteers for dedicating their time to the important cause of access to justice in Singapore, even as they faced disruptions in their own daily lives due to the pandemic.

Court volunteers take on a range of work, from conducting mediation to assisting litigants who cannot afford legal representation. Comprising members of the Bar, professionals and individuals from diverse backgrounds, they play an important role in the delivery of justice in Singapore.

Scan the QR code for Chief Justice Menon's speech

Award Recipients

OUTSTANDING COURT VOLUNTEER AWARD

- Ms Deborah Koh Leng Hoon (Advocate and Solicitor Category)
- Dr Ong Geok Quee (Open Category)
- Ms Miranda Tan (Student Category)

LONG SERVICE AWARD – CONFERRED BY THE FAMILY JUSTICE COURTS

- Mr Moiz Tyebally (10 years)
- Ms Cheryl Lim Li (15 years)

LONG SERVICE AWARD – CONFERRED BY THE STATE COURTS

- Mr Cheong Khim Teck (20 years)
- Mr Chia Ah Sah (20 years)
- Mrs Chia Swee Tin (20 years)
- Mr Chng Beng Guan (20 years)
- Mr Choo Si Sen (20 years)
- Mr Jamshid K Medora (20 years)
- Mr Koh Lian Huat (20 years)
- Mr Kong Mun Kwong (20 years)
- Prof Low Cheng Hock (20 years)
- Mr Shriniwas Rai (20 years)



▲ 20-year Long Service Award Recipients.



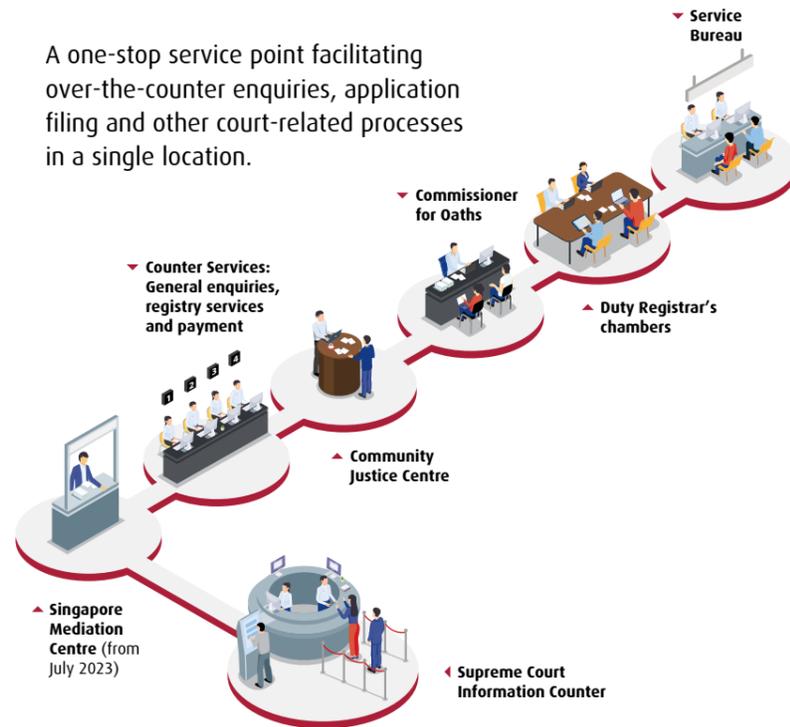
▲ Outstanding Volunteer Award Recipients Dr Ong Geok Quee and Ms Miranda Tan receiving their award from Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon.

One-stop Service at Supreme Court Service Hub

From 17 October 2022, all services and filing of applications related to cases heard in the Supreme Court are consolidated at the Supreme Court Service Hub located on Level 1. This provides court users with a one-stop service for their transactions, as well as enquiries on the Singapore Courts' processes. Self-help terminals are also available for users who wish to access the Singapore Courts' case management systems.

SUPREME COURT SERVICE HUB

A one-stop service point facilitating over-the-counter enquiries, application filing and other court-related processes in a single location.



Operating Hours

► **Monday to Thursday**
8.30am to 1pm
2pm to 5.30pm

► **Friday**
8.30am to 1pm
2pm to 5pm

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The Supreme Court Service Hub is a manifestation of our commitment to cater to the needs of our court users, especially self-represented litigants, and to help them navigate the justice system. It is only by continuously improving our court users' experience in this way that we can maintain the public's trust in the judiciary.”

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon



▲ On 29 November, Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon officiated the opening ceremony for the Service Hub.

Launch of the Inaugural Judicial Executive Programme

The Singapore Judicial College conducted its inaugural Judicial Executive Programme (JEP) from 14 November to 2 December. A premier 'go-to' judicial leadership programme in the region, it welcomed 12 judicial leaders from nine countries from Asia, Africa and the Caribbean.

The JEP's unique twinning pedagogy featured five academic modules, two addresses by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and the Minister for Home Affairs and Law K Shanmugam SC, two Roundtables, four learning journeys, 11 plenaries and a fireside chat with the Chief Justice.

University Week

"University Week" saw the participants receive expert instruction at the Singapore Management University (SMU) from the JEP academic faculty in five focus areas - leadership, innovation and change, regional economic integration, international dispute resolution, as well as law and technology.

Court Week

The participants then entered "Court Week" with the judiciary faculty led by the Chief Justice, his judges and senior administrators. They contextualised the head knowledge they had received at SMU through the lens of leadership and governance, dispute resolution, technology and innovation, cross-border



▲ Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon with participants of the JEP.

integration, as well as delivering justice in a COVID-19 world against a judicial setting.

The Court Week was also infused with learning journeys at the tri-courts where participants saw firsthand justice in action. At Maxwell Chambers, the participants interacted with industry faculty from the Financial Industry Disputes Resolution Centre, the Singapore International Arbitration Centre and the Singapore International Mediation Centre.

Attachment Week

Finally, "Attachment Week" further augmented the participants' experiential learning by giving them an opportunity to interact with judicial leaders and shadow members of their teams.

The centrepiece of the JEP was the "project of judicial leadership" to secure trust in our judiciaries, which the Chief Justice exhorted the participants to bear in mind in his welcome address. Participants unpacked aspects of this project with the Chief Justice at the closing lunch and fireside chat, with the benefit of the primer on the rule of law in Singapore which Minister Shanmugam highlighted in his keynote address.

The Singapore Judicial College partnered SMU through its Yong Pung How Law School and its Law Academy to deliver the JEP, as well as the Technical Cooperation Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which supported the attendance of some JEP participants.

Scan the QR code to view address by Chief Justice Menon

State Courts Host Second Run of Annual Training for Court Volunteer Mediators

How do mediators help parties to negotiate constructively and effectively towards a settlement?

That was what 95 Court Volunteer Mediators (CVMs) and judicial officers came together to find out on 11 November.

Jointly organised by the Court Dispute Resolution Cluster and the Community Courts and Tribunals Cluster, participants were brought through an online session led by Mr David Lim, an accredited mediator and former District Judge.

Mr Lim shared how mediators could add value to the communication and understanding between

parties to keep negotiations progressive, constructive and effective. He explained what the mediator could do during caucus with each party that would nudge them into a candid, but objective discussion. Mr Lim also provided suggestions on how parties could be coached in their choice of language and use of words when formulating settlement proposals.

At the Q&A segment facilitated by District Judge Dorothy Ling, District Judge Sheik Umar, District Judge Ang Feng Qian and CVM Mr Kamalarajan Chettiar joined Mr Lim to respond to the questions raised and comments made, ending a lively session with a frank and open exchange of ideas.

Webinar on the Small Claims Tribunals

In conjunction with the Singapore Academy of Law, the State Courts conducted a virtual webinar "An Overview of the Law and Practice of the Small Claims Tribunals" on 5 October.

The objective of the seminar was to equip legal practitioners with information and knowhow on the legal framework, civil procedures and practices of the Small Claims Tribunals (SCT). This will enable them to effectively advise clients and members of the public who seek legal assistance at pro-bono legal clinics on alternative dispute resolution processes, and whether their claims fall within the SCT's jurisdiction.

The webinar covered the legislative framework and processes designed to facilitate the speedy and cost-efficient resolution of small value disputes. It also highlighted the nature of disputes commonly heard in the SCT, as well as the common legal issues faced by litigants in the SCT, where legal representation is not permitted.

The webinar is part of the Community Courts and Tribunals Cluster's public education efforts to demystify the law, processes and practices of judicial tribunals, thereby enhancing access to tribunal justice.



▲ The moderator, panellists and presenters of the webinar.



Family Conference and Family Justice Practice Forum 2022

Held virtually on 13 and 14 September, the Family Conference and Family Justice Practice Forum 2022 was combined for the first time to allow stakeholders of the family justice ecosystem to share their invaluable insights on the latest developments.

Co-organised by the Law Society of Singapore, the Ministry of Social and Family (MSF) and the Family Justice Courts (FJC), the conference's aptly themed "Essentials for the Journey into New Frontiers" saw participants delving into the family litigation process against the backdrop of the recent procedural and law changes.

Justice Choo Han Teck delivered the CJ Koh Lecture on Day 1, where he outlined family law through the ages and reiterated that ultimately, family law needs to speak to the public "in clear unequivocal language, in a tone that is empathetic and conciliatory...". Presiding Judge of the FJC, Justice Debbie Ong delivered introductory remarks on Day 2 and set the stage for two plenary sessions discussing the topics "IT and other enablers for Access to Family Justice" and "New Collaborative Projects in the Family space".

The conference was well attended with more than 400 participants, with speakers from FJC, MSF, the Legal Aid Bureau and the Community Justice Centre.



▲ Justice Debbie Ong delivered the introductory remarks on Day 2.



▲ District Judge Kevin Ng helping the session on new collaborative projects in the family justice ecosystem.

Launch of Revised Panel of Financial Experts Scheme

On 15 September, the revised Panel of Financial Experts (POFE) Scheme was launched by the Family Justice Courts (FJC) and the Institute of Singapore Chartered Accountants (ISCA).

In 2020, FJC collaborated with ISCA to identify and form the POFE. The purpose of the panel was to provide financial valuation reports to help divorcing parties better understand their financial situation. The POFE also assisted the Court by providing equitable and objective valuations of the matrimonial assets under contest.

Under the POFE Scheme, a pilot programme commenced in 2021, where FJC worked with the assigned financial experts in the panel on valuation reports for selected cases. FJC and ISCA reviewed the pilot and determined that the initiative can be implemented on a long-term basis, along with some enhancements to the scheme.

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The FJC's collaboration with ISCA has been a fruitful one. FJC is committed to working with our stakeholders such as ISCA, to support our aspiration that proceedings for the division of matrimonial assets can be conducted in a non-adversarial manner. The revised POFE Scheme arrives at a very opportune time, as it will empower our divorcing parties to resolve their differences in a more amicable and efficient way.”

Justice Debbie Ong
Presiding Judge of FJC

New features of the revised POFE Scheme



Introduction of a fast-track process

Allows valuations to be completed with a shorter time frame, for specific situations where only non-complex single entities or residential or commercial property in Singapore are involved



Inclusion of probate applications

To be made available to contentious probate applications to facilitate resolution of such cases



Expanded panel of financial experts

Includes the Singapore Institute of Surveyors and Valuers (SISV) members with valuation expertise in real estate



Improved process flow and documentation

Shining a Light on the Visually Handicapped

The Singapore Courts once again found ways to give back to society. The State Courts organised a tour to Dialogue in the Dark Singapore (DIDsg) on 7 December to raise awareness on the visually-handicapped in Singapore.

Twenty court administrators participated in the experiential tour. Led by a visually-handicapped guide, participants experienced some of the daily challenges of a visually-handicapped person. At the end of the tour, participants engaged in a reflection exercise where they discussed the importance of empathy and creating a more inclusive society for everyone.

On the same day, the State Courts arranged for a group of qualified, visually-handicapped masseurs from Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH) to provide massage services at the State

About Dialogue in the Dark Singapore (DIDsg)

DIDsg is an exclusive collaboration between Ngee Ann Polytechnic and Dialogue Social Enterprise. Founded in Germany, Dialogue in the Dark is a worldwide enterprise that aims to promote social inclusion of the disabled and disadvantaged. It employs visually-impaired individuals as guides, workshop trainers and motivational speakers.

Courts. The mobile massage service allows the masseurs to put into practice their acquired skills so that they can remain employable and gain self-reliance and independence.

A total of \$480 was raised for SAVH through the massage services, with another \$550 pledged through donation. The events were organised as part of the SG Cares Giving Week from 1 to 7 December.



Tenth Council of ASEAN Chief Justices Meeting

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon led a delegation to the 10th Meeting of the Council of ASEAN Chief Justices (CACJ) on 4 November and the inaugural ASEAN+3 Meeting on 5 November.

At the 10th CACJ meeting, Chief Justice of Malaysia, the Right Honourable Tun Tengku Maimun binti Tuan Mat was elected as Chair of the CACJ.

Held in person for the first time since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chief Justices, Heads of Delegations, and senior judicial officers of the ASEAN judiciaries held wide-ranging discussions on core areas of judicial collaboration, such as:

- establishing a social media taskforce based on an approved constitution and terms of reference to consider the use of social media as an additional platform for public engagement;
- adopting a common set of values and principles for ASEAN judiciaries in cases of cross-border child disputes within ASEAN;
- working towards developing a new online learning management system for ASEAN judges; and
- continuing to engage the judiciaries of the People's Republic of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea to explore further areas of collaboration, and to explore opportunities with other jurisdictions for the ASEAN+ More Meetings.

Finally, the CACJ agreed on new initiatives to be explored, including establishing a framework for holding Special Interest Group Meetings, establishing a new Working Group on the Conduct of Videoconferencing Hearings chaired by the Philippines and holding an inaugural CACJ Retreat in 2023 to reflect on CACJ's milestones over the past ten years and chart its strategic agenda for the next ten.

At the close of the meeting, all attending Chief Justices and

Heads of Delegations signed the Kuala Lumpur Declaration.

At the ASEAN+3 Meeting held in a hybrid format, the Chief Justices and representatives of the People's Republic of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea discussed areas of technological developments and the use of technology to facilitate access to justice.

The CACJ will next meet in September 2023 for the inaugural CACJ Retreat hosted by Malaysia.



▲ ASEAN Chief Justices gathered in Kuala Lumpur for the 10th Council of ASEAN Chief Justices Meeting.

Rwanda Deepens Judicial Cooperation with Singapore

On 13 October, a virtual meeting was convened among the Supreme Court of Singapore, Singapore Mediation Centre (SMC), and the Rwanda Bureau of Court Annexed Mediation Advisory Committee.

The meeting was held in the spirit of mutual learning and cooperation fostered under the auspices of the Memorandum of Understanding for Judicial Cooperation signed between the Supreme Courts of Singapore and Rwanda, with the Rwandan Judiciary expressing an interest to learn more about Singapore's experience in court-annexed mediation and alternative dispute resolution (ADR).

SMC shared its mediation structures, ADR framework and training programmes. The Supreme Court Registry also briefed the Rwandan judiciary on the

Supreme Court's case management practices for ADR and mediation.

Justice Belinda Ang, as the Chairperson of SMC, and Justice Andre Maniam, as a member of the SMC Board of Directors, shared their perspectives and steered discussions.

Chief Justice Emeritus Professor Rugege Sam, the President of the Bureau of the Court Annexed Mediation Advisory Committee of Rwanda, and Justice Dr Muyoboke Karimunda Aimé, the Bureau's Vice President, led discussions on behalf of the Bureau.



▲ Justice Belinda Ang and Justice Andre Maniam attending the meeting with SMC and the Rwanda Bureau of Court Annexed Mediation Advisory Committee.

Fourth Meeting of the Supreme Court of Singapore – Supreme People's Court of China Working Group



▲ The two judiciaries at the fourth meeting, led by Justice Steven Chong and Justice Yang Wanming.

The fourth Meeting of the Working Group of the Supreme Court of Singapore and the Supreme People's Court (SPC) of the People's Republic of China was held on 1 December over video conference. Justice of the Court of Appeal, Justice Steven Chong and Vice President of the SPC, Justice Yang Wanming, co-chaired the Working Group meeting.

Justice Chong opened the meeting by reaffirming the long-lasting commitment of the two courts

to strengthening bilateral judicial cooperation, through and beyond the pandemic.

The Working Group meeting discussed preparations for the upcoming sixth Singapore-China Legal and Judicial Roundtable, which will be held on 7 February 2023. To engender longer-term cooperation, the two judiciaries will develop a roadmap to take stock of past and existing projects and identify new initiatives in areas of mutual interest.

New SICC Rules of Court

The Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC) (Amendment No. 2) Rules 2022 and the Legal Profession (Representation in Singapore International Commercial Court) (Amendment No. 2) Rules 2022 took effect from 1 October.

The new Rules were introduced for SICC to deal with cross-border corporate insolvency, restructuring and dissolution matters, and offer restructuring outcomes that would appeal to both debtors and creditors.

The Legal Profession (Representation in Singapore International Commercial Court) (Amendment No. 2) Rules 2022 facilitate the participation of foreign lawyers in corporate insolvency, restructuring and dissolution proceedings before the SICC.

The SICC is uniquely positioned to deal with foreign law issues, which commonly arise in cross-border matters, and has a robust framework for international dispute resolution that reinforces Singapore's ability to serve as a preferred nodal jurisdiction. The legislative changes mark an important step in the development of the restructuring and insolvency landscape in Singapore and across the broader region.



Best Practices in International Commercial Dispute Resolution



On 31 August, the Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC) organised a seminar themed "Best Practices in International Commercial

Dispute Resolution" as part of the Singapore Convention Week. The seminar moderated by Mr Paul Tan (Gibson Dunn) featured

a distinguished panel comprising Tony Landau KC (Duxton Hill Chambers), Ms Margaret Joan Ling (Allen & Gledhill LLP), Ms Olga Boltenko (Fangda Partners), Ms Rachel Lee (UBS) and Mr Laurence Wong (SICC).

They discussed aspects of international best practices which straddled international litigation and international arbitration. In particular, they delved into SICC's flexible rules and procedural features of the SICC Rules 2021 as well as future developments that can better serve the needs of the global commercial community.

2022 SICC Asia Conference: The Era of International Commercial Courts



The Singapore International Commercial Courts (SICC) in collaboration with Nishith Desai Associates, hosted the "2022 SICC Asia Conference: The Era of International Commercial Courts" on 8 October at their Blue Sky Thinking and Research Centre in Maharashtra, India.

Some of the eminent speakers for the panel include Justice M. R. Shah (sitting judge of the Supreme Court of India), Justice A. K. Sikri (International Judge at SICC and former judge of the Supreme Court of India) and retired Justice L. N. Rao (former judge of the Supreme Court of India).

The two-hour event began with an opening note by Mr Nishith Desai, followed by an introduction to the SICC by its Senior Director, Mr Laurence Wong. He elaborated on key features of the SICC, including the availability of a distinguished panel of international judges, open proceedings and ability to seek foreign representation.

Justice Sikri shared his experience as an international judge at the SICC and explained several benefits of International Commercial Courts (ICCs) over arbitration, such as the greater availability of precedents and legal literature.

The panel also discussed various challenges faced by ICCs such as the need for support from local governments and the desirability of having a strong national component to such ICCs.

Trends and Developments in the SICC and Third-Party Funding

On 28 October, the Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC) in collaboration with Clifford Chance, Cavenagh Law LLP and Hereford Litigation to organise a fireside chat on "Trends and Developments in the SICC and Third-Party Funding" at the Supreme Court Viewing Gallery.

Moderated by Mr Victor Yao (Clifford Chance), the chat featured an esteemed panel comprising Mr Nish

Shetty (Clifford Chance), Dakis Hagen KC (Hereford Litigation), Mr Ben Mays (Hereford Litigation) and Mr Laurence Wong (SICC).

The panellists discussed recent developments in the SICC including the new procedural rules in commencing claims before the SICC, as well as how third-party funding and conditional fee arrangements can help corporates manage litigation risk.

SICC-INSOL Conference



On 22 September, the Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC) and INSOL International Asia Hub jointly presented a conference themed "Debt Restructuring in the Asia-Pacific: Successes, Challenges and the Expanded Role of the SICC".

The conference featured a line-up of eminent local and international speakers and panellists, including Minister for Culture, Community and Youth and Second Minister for Law, Edwin Tong SC, Justice Kannan Ramesh, International Judge Christopher Sontchi and President of INSOL International, Scott Atkins. Together with Ms Corinne Ball (Jones Day), Mr Patrick Ang (Rajah & Tann Asia) and Mr Tai-Heng Cheng (Sidley Austin LLP), they exchanged in-depth views on the international debt restructuring landscape in the Asia-Pacific, the role of the SICC and the future for nodal jurisdictions such as Singapore.

Singapore to host the next IACA Conference in 2024

Between 17 and 20 October, a delegation led by Chief Executive Juthika Ramanathan travelled to Helsinki, Finland for the International Association for Court Administration (IACA) Conference 2022. The conference theme was "People-centred Justice in the New Normal" and consisted of over 20 plenary and breakout sessions. Ms Ramanathan led a session on the professionalisation of the Singapore Court Administration profession.

For the next IACA Conference in 2024, members will congregate in Singapore where the Singapore Courts will be the event host.



▲ The delegation led by Chief Executive Juthika Ramanathan at the gala dinner organised by the IACA Conference.

About IACA

Established in October 2004 in Slovenia, IACA is a global association of professionals who share a common interest in promoting improved administration and management in justice systems throughout the nations of the world.

Courtesy Call on CJ by the Chief Justice of Bahrain



On 27 October, Chief Justice Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa called on Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon. They exchanged views on the growing importance of international dispute resolution centres and cross-jurisdictional coordination as well as discussed how a strong judiciary would anchor a successful dispute resolution ecosystem.

◀ Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and Chief Justice Shaikh Khalid exchanged gifts at the courtesy call.

Courtesy Call on CJ by the New Secretary-General of the PCA



The new Secretary-General of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), Dr Hab. Marcin Czepelak, called on Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon on 17 November. They exchanged ideas on promoting the uptake of mediation and conciliation in dispute resolution. Dr Czepelak lauded Singapore's success in building itself into a major dispute resolution hub and noted the progress made by the Singapore International Commercial Court.

◀ Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon presenting a gift to Dr Marcin Czepelak.

Visit by Chief Justice of Canada



▲ Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and Chief Justice Richard Wagner at the Supreme Court.

On 16 and 17 November, Chief Justice of Canada Richard Wagner visited the Supreme Court and the State Courts, as part of his trip to Singapore to deliver the Singapore Academy of Law's Annual Lecture.

At the meeting, the two Chief Justices shared their approaches in building public trust through ensuring openness and transparency in the justice system and exchanged ideas on public communications. After a fruitful discussion, the two Chief Justices agreed to deepen judicial relations between Singapore and Canada in areas of common interests, such as judicial training and education.

On 17 November, Chief Justice Wagner called on the Presiding Judge of the State Courts, Justice Vincent Hoong. Justice Hoong and Chief Justice Wagner discussed the role of technology in the Canadian and Singapore judiciaries' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.



▲ Chief Justice Richard Wagner enjoying a tour of the courtrooms at State Courts.

They also discussed the theme of judicial mediation and Singapore's International Judicial Dispute Resolution Network initiative, to which Justice Hoong expressed Singapore's appreciation for Canada's participation. Justice Hoong also shared the International Framework for Court Excellence, which was developed by the International Consortium for Court Excellence. The visit ended with a tour of the State Court Towers.

Visits by the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Justice and Judicial Policy Research Institute



▲ The delegation from the Korean Ministry of Justice at the State Courts.

On 1 September, a delegation from the Office of Criminal Justice Information System from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) of the Republic of Korea (ROK), led by Senior Superintendent Ju Seung Eun, visited the State Courts. In the process of building their next generation of criminal justice information system, the ROK MOJ had a fruitful visit learning about the courts' digitalisation efforts. Principal District Judge Toh Yung Cheong provided an overview of the Integrated Case Management System and the various initiatives implemented by the courts to enhance civil and criminal proceedings.



▲ The Judicial Policy Research Institute delegation at the Supreme Court.

On 11 November, a delegation from the Judicial Policy Research Institute led by Presiding Judge of the Seoul High Court and Chief Researcher Lee Jaekweon visited the Supreme Court to learn about Singapore's experience with court technology and judicial research. Chief Transformation and Innovation Officer Tan Ken Hwee shared the Singapore Courts' digital transformation journey as well as ideas to improve the court user's experience. The delegation also met with the Singapore Judicial College and was given a tour of the courtrooms where officers from the Infrastructure and Court Resources Division brought them through the design planning behind their technological features.

Visit by the SIFoCC Secretariat



On 17 October, the Standing International Forum of Commercial Courts (SIFoCC) Secretariat led by Justice Robin Knowles stopped over in Singapore enroute to Sydney, Australia, to attend the fourth SIFoCC Meeting. Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon hosted the Secretariat to lunch and discussed matters ahead of the Meeting. Justice Knowles also called on the Presiding Judge of State Courts, Justice Vincent Hoong. The visit ended on a positive note, with Justice Knowles' observation that Singapore has been a positive influence on how judiciaries think about transformation and innovation.

◀ Justice Robin Knowles and Justice Vincent Hoong at State Courts.

Visit by the Supreme Court of Mauritius



On 16 November, Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Mauritius, Justice Aruna Devi Narain, visited the Supreme Court and met with Judge in-charge of technology and innovation Justice Aedit Abdullah and Chief Transformation and Innovation Officer Tan Ken Hwee. They exchanged experiences in the respective courts' digitalisation efforts.

◀ Justice Aedit Abdullah with Justice Aruna Devi Narain at the Supreme Court.

Judiciary National Day Awards Investiture 2022

The Judiciary National Day Awards Investiture 2022 was held on 11 November to honour officers who received this year's National Day Awards. These awards pay tribute to officers for their service to the nation. A total of 27 recipients from the Singapore Courts as well as the Judicial and Legal Service Commission received the National Day honours in seven award categories this year.

NATIONAL DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL

Supreme Court

- Justice Andrew Phang, Justice of the Court of Appeal

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION MEDAL (GOLD) (BAR)

State Courts

- Ms Jennifer Marie, Former Deputy Presiding Judge

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION MEDAL (SILVER)

Family Justice Courts

- Ms Toh Wee San, District Judge

Supreme Court

- Mr Paul Quan Kaih Shiu, Executive Director (Singapore Judicial College)

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION MEDAL (BRONZE)

Legal Service Commission Secretariat

- Ms Joyce Loh Ping Yee, Deputy Director (Career Development)

COMMENDATION MEDAL

Singapore Courts

- Mr Lai Chee Ming (Adrian), Deputy Director (Infrastructure & Court Resources)

Family Justice Courts

- Ms Ng Siew Siew, Jaslyn, Senior Assistant Director (Counselling and Psychological Services)

EFFICIENCY MEDAL

Legal Service Commission Secretariat

- Ms Tan Beng Hong (Jane), Senior Deputy Head

State Courts

- Ms Belinda Chng Peiyun, Senior Executive (Community Courts and Tribunals)

LONG SERVICE MEDAL

Singapore Courts

- Ms Tang Wee Ling, Director (Finance & Procurement)
- Ms Tasmin Begum Bte Shumsudin, Senior Language Executive (Infrastructure & Court Resources)
- Ms Sandiraleka d/o Kannandan, Interpreter (Infrastructure & Court Resources)

Supreme Court

- Mr San Ong Kyar, Edwin, Senior Assistant Registrar
- Mrs Ismaniza Binte Mohamad Ibrahim, Case Officer (Insolvency)
- Ms Yogeswari d/o N Vadivellu, Operations Support Officer (Disciplinary Tribunal Secretariat)
- Ms Rammiah Supulethimi, Operations Support Officer (Records)
- Mr Zulkarnain Bin Mohamed Salleh, Executive (Office of the Chief Justice)
- Mr Low Chung Kong, Court Orderly
- Mr Sim Boon Hee, Court Orderly

State Courts

- Mr Tan Pheng Wee Christopher, Deputy Presiding Judge / Registrar
- Ms Thian Yee Sze, Principal District Judge
- Ms Tan May Tee, District Judge
- Mr Adam Nakhoda, District Judge / State Coroner
- Ms Dalbir Kaur d/o Jeet Singh, Director (Court Dispute Resolution)
- Mr Balasubramaniam s/o Tharmalinggam, Senior Assistant Director (Community Courts and Tribunals)

Family Justice Courts

- Ms Yong Fook Ling Catherine, Maintenance Mediator (Family Dispute Resolution)
- Mr Low Khee Por, Manager (Family and Protection Support)

Four teams win at “Hackathon for a Better World” 2022

The third iteration of the “Hackathon for a Better World” (H4BW) by DBS x SG Courts, held in partnership with the National Crime Prevention Council, concluded with an Awards Day in October.

After two months of intense research and solutioning from a total of 27 teams, four teams emerged as the overall winners for

their creative solutions in response to this year’s theme of building a scam-resilient society. The winners were recognised at a presentation event, with Justice Aedit Abdullah gracing the event as one of the Guests-of-Honour.

Justice Abdullah said at the awards ceremony, “We are pleased to be a part of this social-purpose

Hackathon for the third successive year to explore and encourage creative solutions to combat increasingly sophisticated scam activities. I never cease to be amazed by the creativity of the ideas and enthusiasm displayed by the participants, and we are delighted to recognise the winning teams for their achievements. We look forward to implementing promising and innovative solutions in the near future.”

H4BW adopts a unique ‘slow-burn’ format, where participants work on their problem statements through an iterative process. This unconventional approach was designed to give participants the space to develop sharper, more meaningful responses to the complex challenges before them.



▲ The winners of H4BW 2022 with Justice Aedit Abdullah (ninth from left).

Summary of the winning pitches

TEAM	AWARD	SOLUTION
Incognito (Singapore Management University)	Most Innovative Idea	Uses machine learning algorithms to analyse and verify the legitimacy of the inputted job offer. Also includes a gaming element to practise identifying scams.
Code of Conduct (Clifford Chance)	Most Feasible Idea	A one-stop platform designed to influence its users’ psyche vis-à-vis phishing attempts through exposure to realistic phishing simulations, and by delivering personalised micro-training of bite-sized anti-scam knowledge.
Moo (Singapore Management University)	Most Life-Changing Idea	An app and web app that builds on ScamShield to implement an easy reporting system, a call and text scam detector, an automated scam checker and an interactive chatbot operator.
Red Flag (Singapore Police Force)	Most Human-Centred Idea	An experiential-learning mobile game where players can learn about the psychological tactics utilised by scammers.

Guide to Virtual Court Hearings

The Singapore Courts have produced a guide for self-represented parties to prepare for virtual court hearings. The guide, titled “Taking Part In Video Hearings Without A Lawyer” explains what to take note in a court hearing or session conducted via video conferencing.

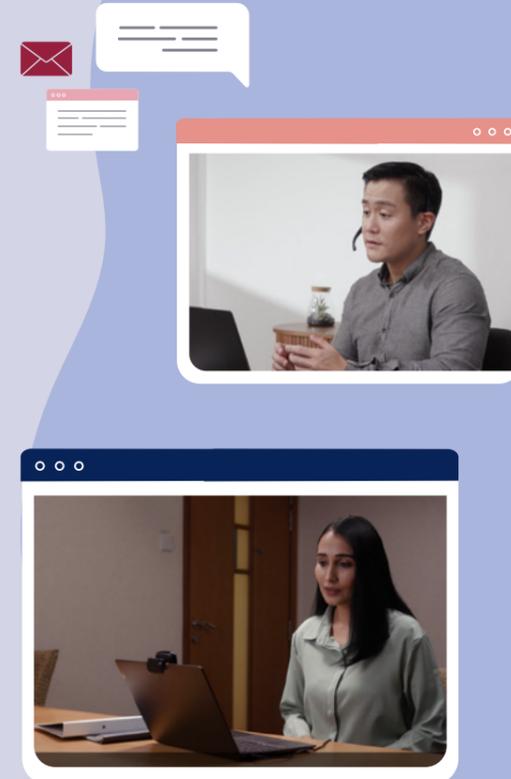
Accompanied with colourful illustrations and text, the guide listed 10 questions for self-represented parties before attending a virtual court hearing.

Commonly asked questions such as ensuring video conferencing equipment in proper working order, how to position the camera and dress code are covered in the guide.

The guide is available in video and infographic formats.

[Watch the video](#)

[View the infographic](#)



Getting to know our Court Administrators

Many of us are familiar with Judges and their role in the judiciary, but did you know that court administrators are crucial in the smooth day-to-day running of court operations? To provide insight into their diverse roles, the #GettoKnow video series featuring eight court administrators from different divisions was rolled out earlier this year on the SG Courts social media platforms.

Scan the QR code to view the videos online

Behind the Scenes with Court Mediators



AWYONG LEONG HWEE

Assistant Registrar,
State Courts



TAN PECK CHENG

Mediation Specialist,
Family Justice Courts

Court mediators facilitate discussions and guide parties to negotiate a mutually acceptable settlement without going to trial. In this issue, we interviewed Awyong Leong Hwee and Tan Peck Cheng from the State Courts and Family Justice Courts respectively. Leong Hwee joined the State Courts in 2013 while Peck Cheng took on her role in 2017 after decades of experience in the legal service and as a District Judge.

What are your responsibilities as a mediator?

LH: I am an Assistant Registrar (AR) and concurrently a Tribunal Magistrate at the Small Claims Tribunals (SCT). In addition to dealing with case management and interlocutory matters, I conduct mediation with a view to help parties achieve a settlement. If the dispute remains unresolved, I brief the parties on preparation of documents for trial before setting the matter down for hearing.

PC: I conduct mediation for divorce and ancillary matters as well as applications for maintenance and variation of orders of court at the Family Justice Courts to assist parties to resolve their cases amicably. I also assist in drafting the draft consent order when there is a settlement.

Describe a typical day at work.

LH: When a claim is filed in the SCT, both the claimant and the respondent are to appear before the AR for a session known as a "Consultation". On a typical day, I conduct Consultations and see parties in 10 or more cases. As lawyers are not allowed to represent the parties in SCT proceedings, I will explain the general processes and procedures. In appropriate cases, I conduct mediation and if the parties reach a settlement, I will record a consent order. Otherwise, directions are given to them to prepare necessary documents for hearing.

PC: Each day, I conduct mediation on my assigned cases. At the start of each mediation, I will explain the mediation processes and the main ground rules. I facilitate the parties' discussions and assist in their negotiations to arrive at a settlement. I also manage situations when parties are emotional or in distress, and where necessary request a Court Family Specialist to support them.

If parties can reach an agreement, I will go through the draft consent order with them to ensure that they understand and fully agree on its terms. Depending on the complexity of the issues, mediation can stretch beyond the allotted time, sometimes going into lunch time and after office hours.

What are some valuable skills or lessons that you have learnt?

LH: I use active listening to ascertain if the party has personal issues with the other party and try to first address them. Sometimes I ask probing questions to facilitate a discussion between the claimant and respondent to understand their respective interests and help parties craft a win-win solution.

When parties are unable to settle, I use "reality testing" to get them to consider and evaluate their evidence for a few days. This allows them the chance to withdraw their claim, resolve it amicably or prepare their documents for hearing. Mediators also need to be sensitive to the parties' needs and show the same care and consideration for every case, regardless of the quantum of the claim.

PC: I think that it is necessary for a mediator to possess a lot of patience and empathy. This is especially important for self-represented persons who will typically need more explanation and guidance from the mediator. Experience and keeping abreast of the law and regulations are also necessary to enable a mediator to suggest workable options to the parties to resolve their issues.

What was one memorable case you've come across?

LH: Earlier this year, there was a case where both parties had applied to dial in from overseas via Zoom for the first consultation, to accommodate their different time zones in Europe and Asia.

This was memorable for me because it was the first time I did a Zoom consultation across different jurisdictions. Even though both parties were initially argumentative and hostile, I was able to hear them out and convince them that it was in both their best interests to resolve this matter amicably. Within an hour, I managed to record a consent order.

PC: I had a case where parties came for mediation for divorce. The husband did not agree with the

particulars of his unreasonable behaviour alleged in the wife's Statement of Particulars. During mediation, he proposed changes to every paragraph. Although the wife agreed to all the changes, he still wanted to contest the divorce. I had no choice but to give directions for the matter to proceed to trial. While the case was still ongoing in court, I received news that the husband attacked and killed the wife when she was returning to her mother's home, where she was staying. The husband then returned to his home and killed himself.

This incident was tragic and most unexpected. There was nothing untoward in the husband's behaviour during mediation. It shows how much trauma and pain some parties go through even if they do not display outward signs of distress in front of the mediator or judge.

What are some of the challenges that you face?

LH: I am mindful that most self-represented persons are not legally trained and may not know how to frame or express their issues properly. As such, I need to be patient and handle their matters tactfully while at the same time exercise caution in ensuring that whatever conveyed is not deemed as legal advice.

PC: One main challenge is having parties come unprepared for mediation. I would have to draw the relevant information out from them little by little, at the expense of time for exchange of proposals and negotiations. The other challenge is when parties are highly emotional. They can be acrimonious and aggressive during mediation. They can also be crying and cannot remain composed even after they are given time to calm down.

What motivates you?

LH: I find it satisfying to be able to use my legal knowledge and mediation skills to help self-represented persons resolve their disputes in a timely, efficient and cost-effective manner. I find my job fulfilling as it contributes to the administration of tribunal justice in Singapore.

PC: It makes me very happy and gives me tremendous job satisfaction when I help parties to settle their cases and move forward. I have seen cases where parties had stopped talking to each other due to misunderstandings, but mediation helped them to clear the air and re-establish communication.

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