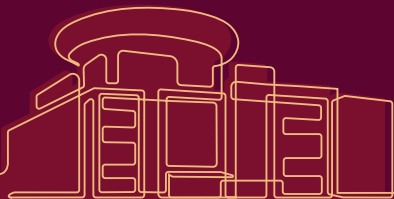


JUDICIARY TIMES



P2

Opening of the Legal Year
2021: Administering Justice in
the Face of Adversities

P3

Family Justice Courts
Workplan Seminar 2021:
A New Tomorrow

P4

State Courts Hold
IFCE Workshops for
ASEAN Judiciaries

HIGHLIGHTS

Opening of the Legal Year 2021: Administering Justice in the Face of Adversities 02

Family Justice Courts Workplan Seminar 2021: A New Tomorrow 03

State Courts Hold IFCE Workshops for ASEAN Judiciaries 04

EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

A One-stop Service Centre for Seamless Experience 05

Third Meeting of the Standing International Forum of Commercial Courts 06

The 2021 Standing International Forum of Commercial Courts Judicial Observation Programme 07

Singapore International Commercial Court Symposium 2021 08

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon Appointed as Member of the ICC Governing Body for Dispute Resolution Services 09

Justice Steven Chong Appointed as Expert Member of ICEC 09

Singapore and Rwanda Sign MOU on Judicial Cooperation and Money Judgments 10

FJC and ISCA Sign MOU on Setting Up Panel of Financial Experts 11

Engaging the Media 11

Family Judges' Learning Week 12

Celebrating Lunar New Year with the Singapore Cheshire Home 13

NOTABLE VISITS 14

TRANSFORMATION AND INNOVATION IN THE JUDICIARY 15

WHAT'S NEW? 16

BEHIND THE SCENES 19

Opening of the Legal Year 2021: Administering Justice in the Face of Adversities

On 11 January, the Opening of the Legal Year was streamed live from the State Courts' Havelock Hall to about 1,000 participants on Zoom. Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, Attorney-General Lucien Wong and President of the Law Society, Gregory Vijayendran, delivered their customary speeches at the annual event via video conference for the first time.

In his response, the Chief Justice outlined the Courts' key developments and work done in the past year. He covered aspects of the criminal justice system and highlighted that securing fairness in the system is crucial to the attainment of justice and order in society. He added

that the Courts, Prosecution and Bar play their part to administer justice.

The Chief Justice made observations on the post-pandemic legal landscape, which included how processes could be optimised through the use of technology and multi-disciplinary collaborations with stakeholders.

On the advancement of the Rule of Law, the Chief Justice outlined the work carried out in both the domestic and international spaces.

In closing, the Chief Justice encouraged the legal community to continue to embrace the spirit of trust and collaboration whilst preparing for the opportunities that were ahead.



Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon delivering his response at the Opening of the Legal Year 2021

A FAIR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The Courts, the Prosecution and the Bar play their part to administer justice. Each institutional player has specific and complementary responsibilities to uphold the integrity of the system. At the individual level, they approach their calling to administer justice with devotion and a sincere openness to identifying and remedying any shortcomings.

- A robust judicial structure with a system of corrective procedures such as appeals.**
- Singapore Judicial College has been developing a Judicial Competency Framework to enhance training in the necessary competencies of Judges and judicial officers.**
- Increasing opportunities for High Court Judges to mentor judicial officers in the State Courts and Family Justice Courts (FJC).**
- Establishment of cross-court knowledge management office to facilitate sharing of knowledge and best practices across the Judiciary.**

THE POST-PANDEMIC LEGAL LANDSCAPE

The Courts leverage technology to optimise our processes through multi-disciplinary collaboration with stakeholders.

- Opportunity to Re-imagine our Processes and Harness the Power of Technology**
 - Forthcoming enhancements to LawNet.
 - Re-examination of court processes and enhancing access to information by the public (e.g. single Judiciary Website, e-service for simplified track divorce applications).
- Multi-disciplinary Skillsets and Upskilling of the Profession**
 - Singapore Academy of Law, with the support of Ministry of Law and Singapore Institute of Legal Education, to launch SkillsFuture credit-eligible programme LIFTED-LinkedIn Learning Pathways.
 - Law schools and continuing education frameworks equip the profession to harness the transformational potential of technology.
- Shift Towards Dispute Avoidance or Containment Mechanisms**
 - Promoting alternative dispute resolution processes for peacebuilding and proportionality in dispute resolution.
 - Success of SGUnited Mediation Initiative.

INITIATIVES TO ADVANCE THE RULE OF LAW

Domestic Sphere

- Civil Justice**
 - Appellate Division has come into operation, allowing the Judiciary to utilise appellate judicial resources more optimally.
 - Forthcoming implementation of new Rules of Court.
 - Insolvency, Restructuring and Dissolution Act 2018 offers more affordable and efficient methods of restructuring and liquidation.
- Family Justice**
 - Advisory Research Council established to bring together international thought leaders to share perspectives on Therapeutic Justice.
 - FJC and Institute of Singapore Chartered Accountants to establish a Panel of Financial Experts.
 - Online portal to allow Litigants-in-Person to file for divorce by consent and connect with lawyer-mediators.
 - FJC is working with Ministry of Social and Family Development to strengthen the maintenance enforcement regime.
 - Revised Family Justice Rules to be implemented by mid-2022.

International Sphere

- Singapore International Commercial Court**
 - New standard-setting procedural rules in final stages of development.
- International Relations**
 - Continued contribution to international conversations and engagements.



Scan the QR Code for the full response by the Chief Justice
go.gov.sg/cj-oly2021-speech

Family Justice Courts Workplan Seminar 2021: A New Tomorrow



On 4 February, the Family Justice Courts (FJC) held its seventh annual Workplan Seminar. The theme this year was "A New Tomorrow", following the themes "Today is a New Day" in 2020, and "Every Outcome, A Way Forward" in 2019.

The Workplan was graced by the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon as the Guest-of-Honour and attended by staff and invited guests from the Judiciary by video conference.

In her address, Presiding Judge of the FJC, Justice Debbie Ong, outlined the various projects and initiatives to be undertaken by the FJC in the coming year, following the announcement of FJC's renewed vision on Therapeutic Justice (TJ) in 2020. She further shared FJC's statistical highlights for 2016 to 2020. Her broad observations on FJC's caseload for 2020 were:

- The caseload for 2020 fell due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- The proportion of divorce cases filed on the simplified track rose slightly to reach 60% in 2020, up from 58% in 2019;
- The average number of days required to conclude a divorce case decreased from 97 days in 2018 to 82 days in 2019; and

- The percentage of divorce cases that went through mediation and reached a full or partial settlement increased over the years to 90% in 2020.

On how parties could get to 'A New Tomorrow', Justice Ong suggested that this could be achieved through: facilitating successful transitions to post-breakdown life; facilitating parties to discharge their parental responsibility; and facilitating problem-solving and managing future issues or conflicts. She shared that these aspects tied in nicely with FJC's three strategic thrusts:

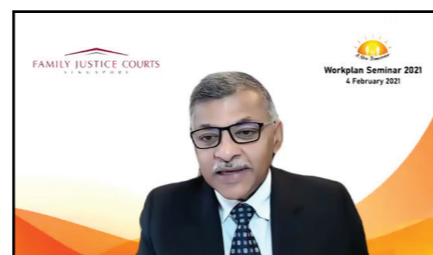
- Furthering TJ in a Multi-Disciplinary Environment;
- Facilitating Court Processes, Settlement, and Enforcement; and
- Fortifying Judges' and Lawyers' Capacity and Capability.

Justice Ong highlighted the FJC initiatives rolled out in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which included: simplifying and adapting our processes to meet the needs of court users; educating them on the use of virtual tools and providing 'Zoom rooms'; and having a 'Zoom by default' mode for suitable court events and proceedings.

Finally, Justice Ong paid tribute to the commitment, patience, resilience and 'can-do' spirit displayed by all FJC staff. She also expressed gratitude to the Chief Justice for showing the way in what



▲ Justice Debbie Ong, Presiding Judge of the FJC

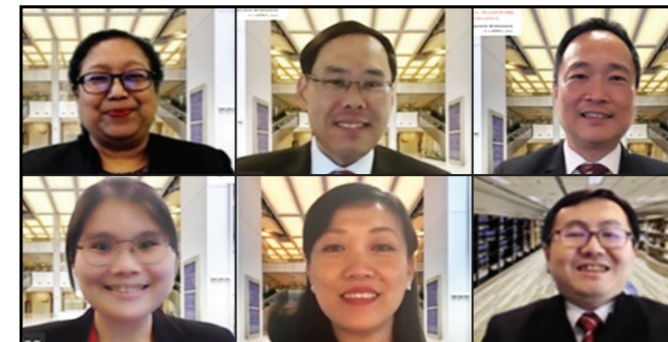


▲ Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon

it means to have 'hardware' and 'heartware' and for His Honour's constant encouragement towards fulfilling FJC's mission.

Following Justice Ong's Workplan address, FJC staff participated in a dialogue with the Chief Justice and Justice Ong, where FJC staff took this rare opportunity to engage the Chief Justice on his views pertaining to technological adoption, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Judiciary operations and the development of family law, amongst others. Two videos, one that showcased the resilience of staff in adapting to the hybrid model of working from home and at the courts, and another of their reflections on "A New Tomorrow" — what it meant to them — were screened.

State Courts Hold IFCE Workshops for ASEAN Judiciaries



▲ Ms Jennifer Marie, Deputy Presiding Judge of the State Courts (top left), Judges and senior court administrators from the State Courts delivered presentations covering the IFCE

Over 50 participants comprising judges and court administrators from the 10 ASEAN judiciaries attended the inaugural International Framework for Court Excellence (IFCE) Train-the-Trainer Workshop on 8 and 9 April.

The one-and-a-half-day workshop, which was organised by the State Courts, covered theoretical and practical aspects of the IFCE, including the

formation and development of the International Consortium for Court Excellence (ICCE), of which the State Courts are one of the founding members, the origins and evolution of the IFCE and its holistic approach to evaluate court performance and continuous improvement methodology.

The IFCE is a guide for the journey to court excellence and reinforces those values and aspirations internationally recognised as critical to an effective and publicly respected court. It was first developed in 2008 and has since undergone two revisions. Each edition builds on the foundation of the previous editions, with enhancements based on feedback obtained and updates to maintain its relevance in the present operating environment. The latest third edition was launched last year.

The IFCE Train-the-Trainer Workshop aimed to help build up a core team in ASEAN member states with IFCE expertise. In addition to the useful pointers on the implementation of the IFCE, it allowed for the exchange of ideas with members of the ICCE Executive Committee.

Workshop with the Administrative Court of Thailand

A one-day workshop held on 23 March served as a platform for the State Courts and the Administrative Court of Thailand to cover the latest developments of the IFCE and its application to court operations. District Judge Wong Li Tein from the State Courts shared the updates in the third edition of the IFCE and how it had guided the State Courts in overcoming the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Judge Siriwan Chullapo of the Supreme Administrative Court, and President of a Chamber of the Central Administrative Court, Ekkanut Jinasen, presented the implementation of the IFCE in three courts, covering the improvements achieved with a list of projects that had been undertaken to strengthen various areas under the framework.



▲ District Judge Wong Li Tein (top) presenting at the Workshop

A One-stop Service Centre for Seamless Experience



On 30 March, Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon had a first look at the prototype of the One-stop Service Centre (Centre), located within the Supreme Court building, which aims to provide a quick and seamless experience to court users.

Stepping into the shoes of a Litigant-in-Person (LiP) filing for bankruptcy, Chief Justice was brought through the processes before he was presented with the services to be provided in the Centre. The walkthrough not only showcased the experience from a court user's perspective, it also highlighted staffs' concerns and constraints in meeting court users' needs.

The project, which started in June 2020, saw the team and consultants actively engaging court users — lawyers and LiPs — to understand their pain points and to better streamline the user journey for them. Supreme Court staff were also engaged to give their perspective in dealing with court users. The Supreme Court hopes the success of the Centre will enforce in everyone the need to be user centric and to be empowered to do so.



Third Meeting of the Standing International Forum of Commercial Courts



(Top Row) Mr Justice Robin Knowles, Lord John Thomas of Cwmgiedd, Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, Chief Justice (Emeritus) Bart Katureebe, Rt Hon. Lord Ian Burnett of Maldon

(Middle Row) Hon. Chief Justice Andrew Cheung, Hon. Chief Justice Tom Bathurst, Hon. Chief Justice James Allsop AO, Hon. Loretta A. Preska, Hon. Justice Nallini Pathmanathan

(Bottom Row) Hon. Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya, Justice Madiyar Balken, Chief Registrar Amna Al Owais, Deputy Chief Judge Shen Hongyu, Hon Justice L. Nageswara Rao

The Supreme Court of Singapore hosted the third meeting of the Standing International Forum of Commercial Courts (SIFoCC) from 11 to 12 March. For the first time, the meeting, which involved participants from over 35 jurisdictions, was conducted virtually.

Chief Justices, Judges, senior judicial representatives, renowned speakers and distinguished delegates from 31 countries including Australia, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Qatar, Singapore, South Korea, The Gambia, Uganda, the United Kingdom and the United States attended the meeting. The meeting saw SIFoCC members

exchanging in-depth views and engaging constructively on topics that included third-party litigation funding, arbitration and the courts, enforcement of commercial judgments for money, international best practice in case management, and the use of technology such as artificial intelligence.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister for Finance and National Development, Ms Indraneel Rajah SC, delivered the opening remarks where she spoke about the impact of COVID-19 in relation to dispute resolution. She noted that technology had enabled the connection of courts and judiciaries and the opportunities to re-shape the face of commercial

dispute resolution amongst others. Minister for Culture, Community and Youth and Second Minister for Law, Mr Edwin Tong SC, spoke on commercial (third party) litigation funding, the impact of commercial litigation funding, the role of commercial litigation funders within a justice system, and international consistency in the regulation of third-party funding. Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon said: "It has been a privilege to host the third meeting of the SIFoCC, and I am delighted that we were able to do so virtually this year despite the many challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the years, the SIFoCC has established itself as an invaluable forum at which commercial judges and court administrators can come

continue on page 7

continued from page 6

together to exchange views and share best practices. I am confident that the continuing collaboration, cooperation and contact that the SIFoCC fosters amongst its members will enable commercial courts to better address the opportunities and challenges that will surely arise amidst the rapidly changing landscape of international commercial dispute resolution."

Lord John Thomas, Chair of the SIFoCC Steering Group

said: "The meeting provides a forum for the discussion of cross jurisdiction understanding in the commercial courts as well as technical development and it is an important step in the collaborative effort of Commercial Courts across the world. The third meeting of SIFoCC will provide a unique opportunity for judges to share experiences, post pandemic, on this scale. We are extremely grateful to the teams in London and Singapore for the work that has made the event possible."

With the growth in the volume of global trade and investment in recent years, it is imperative that judiciaries around the world keep pace with these rapid changes and collaborate to develop international commercial law and best practices to support the growth in international trade and businesses. The Supreme Court of Singapore remains committed to enhancing international commercial dispute resolution.

The 2021 Standing International Forum of Commercial Courts Judicial Observation Programme



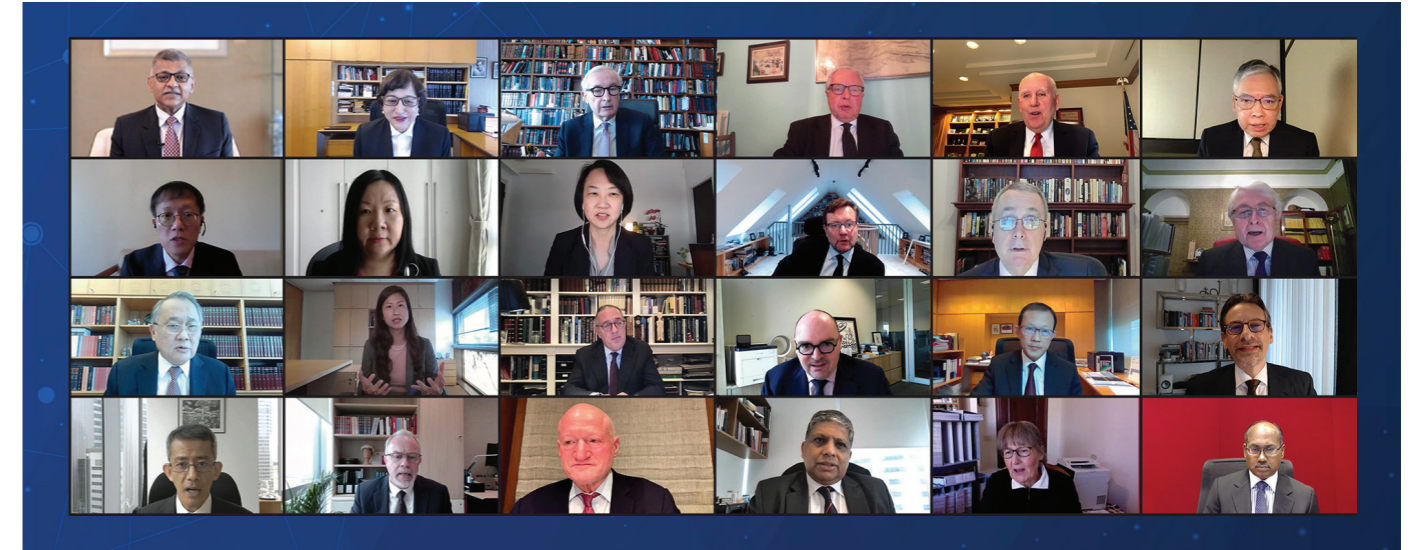
Participating Judges at the SIFoCC Judicial Observation Programme with Justice Vincent Hoong (bottom left) and Assistant Registrar Jacqueline Lee (top left)

In conjunction with the third meeting of the SIFoCC, the Supreme Court of Singapore hosted the virtual 2021 SIFoCC

Judicial Observation Programme from 4 to 5 March and from 8 to 9 March for Justice Anne Mugenyi from Uganda, Justice

Priyantha Fernando from Sri Lanka and Senior Principal Magistrate Elizabeth Tanui from Kenya (member countries of SIFoCC). The participating Judges were each attached to a High Court Judge appointed as their Judge Mentor, namely, Justice Ang Cheng Hock, Justice Kannan Ramesh and Justice Audrey Lim respectively and had daily dialogues with them. The participating Judges also observed court hearings as well as met up with senior management and registrars who shared with them the Court's structure, court practices and processes. At the programme, Justice See Kee Oon also shared with them the Court's case management and docketing systems while Justice Vincent Hoong shared on "How Singapore Courts responded to the COVID-19 pandemic".

Singapore International Commercial Court Symposium 2021



The Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC) Symposium 2021 was held as a live webinar on 10 March. The theme was "Trends & Developments in International Commercial Litigation".

Following the opening address that was delivered by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, a distinguished line-up of speakers from Singapore and overseas, including Chief Justices, Judges and legal luminaries in the field of international commercial litigation, shared their views and perspectives.

The Symposium comprised in-depth panel discussions on the forthcoming new procedural rules of the SICC, the emerging trends and opportunities for commercial courts and other dispute resolution options in a post-pandemic world, including in the area of commercial

and infrastructure disputes, the enforceability of court judgments and the role of commercial courts in cross-border insolvency disputes. The delegates also had opportunities for networking in a virtual lounge.

As a landmark event, the Symposium brought together key players in the international commercial dispute resolution landscape and exemplified the SICC's status as a leading court for the resolution of international commercial disputes and Singapore's status as a leading forum for legal services. Around 300 participants attended the Symposium including local and foreign delegates from the United Kingdom, Australia, Malaysia, South Korea, China, Germany, Jamaica, India, the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America, and Uganda among others.



Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon Appointed as Member of the ICC Governing Body for Dispute Resolution Services



Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon was appointed as a member of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Governing Body

for Dispute Resolution Services for a term of two years on 22 March.

The governing body is a formal committee of the ICC Executive Board and the driving force ensuring ICC dispute resolution services contribute to the achievement of principal business and organisational objectives. Chief Justice Menon will be amongst three members to the Executive Board subcommittee responsible for ICC Arbitration

and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) who will bolster ICC's commitment to making its leading dispute resolution services more accessible to users in Asia while supporting objectives to digitise services in line with user needs and COVID-19 safety protocols.

As an eminent figure in the dispute resolution field in the region, Chief Justice Menon's experience and leadership will also spur the strategic direction of ICC's Arbitration and ADR services.

Justice Steven Chong Appointed as Expert Member of ICEC

Justice Steven Chong was formally appointed as an expert member of the International Commercial Expert Committee (ICEC) of the Supreme People's Court of the People's Republic of China (SPC) on 8 December 2020.

The ICEC is established by the SPC to enhance international exchange and cooperation, particularly in relation to the resolution of

international commercial disputes, and to provide a vital international dimension to the expertise and resources available to the China International Commercial Court. ICEC members include international experts who are accomplished jurists and possess extensive experience in international arbitration, mediation and commercial law.



Justice Steven Chong at the video conference of the New Zealand Senior Courts Judges' Conference

Justice Steven Chong delivers presentation at the New Zealand Senior Courts Judges' Conference

On 16 April, Justice Steven Chong delivered a presentation via video conference at the New Zealand Senior Courts Judges' Conference. The theme of the Conference was "New Beginnings". At a session on "Implications for New Zealand of Developments in Asia" chaired by Justice Sally Fitzgerald of the High Court of New Zealand, Justice Chong shared the experience of the Supreme Court of Singapore in its engagement with the SPC.

Singapore and Rwanda Sign MOU on Judicial Cooperation and Money Judgments



Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon of Singapore and Chief Justice Dr. Faustin Ntezilyayo of Rwanda holding up the signed MOU for Judicial Cooperation and MOG as to Enforcement of Money Judgments

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon of the Supreme Court of Singapore signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Judicial Cooperation and a Memorandum of Guidance (MOG) as to Enforcement of Money Judgments with Chief Justice Dr. Faustin Ntezilyayo of the Supreme Court of Rwanda at a virtual ceremony held on 19 April. The agreements were the first of such between the two Courts. The signing was witnessed by Judges from both Courts and High Commissioner of Rwanda to Singapore, Australia and New Zealand, His Excellency, Mr Jean de Dieu Uwihanganye.

At the signing ceremony, the Chief Justices reaffirmed the warm friendship between the two Courts and exchanged views on issues of mutual interest, including the responses taken to manage the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following the ceremony, Chief Justice Menon hosted the High Commissioner to a meeting. They discussed areas of mutual interest including new areas for judicial cooperation between Rwanda and Singapore.

FJC and the ISCA sign MOU on Setting Up Panel of Financial Experts

On 30 December 2020, the Family Justice Courts (FJC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Institute of Singapore Chartered Accountants (ISCA) to form a Panel of Financial Experts (POFE). Comprising ISCA members who are public accountants or ISCA Financial Forensic Professional credential holders with relevant experience, the POFE is intended to provide the FJC Judges with neutral financial valuation reports to assist them and the divorcing parties at the ancillary matters stage, in dealing with the division of the matrimonial assets of divorcing parties under section 112 of the Women's Charter.

This project will enable the FJC to appoint a financial expert from the POFE to assist in particular, parties who are embroiled in complicated and contentious financial disputes. It is hoped

that the neutral financial reports will provide an equitable and objective valuation of the matrimonial assets under contest, thereby allowing justice to be administered more effectively and efficiently.

The first tranche of cases for the pilot programme of the POFE project commenced in the first quarter of 2021. The second tranche of cases will commence in the second quarter of 2021. Thereafter, the FJC and ISCA will review the POFE project and decide if this should be implemented on a long-term basis. If successful, the FJC will work with the financial experts through ISCA, to finalise the key documents required for the preparation of the neutral valuation reports, and on the fees payable to the financial experts under the POFE project.

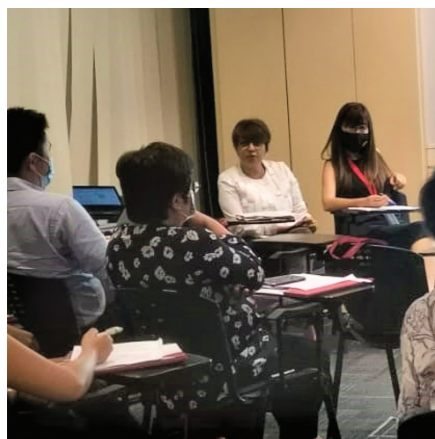


▲ Justice Debbie Ong, Presiding Judge of Family Justice Courts



▲ Mr Kon Yin Tong, President of Institute of Singapore Chartered Accountants ISCA

Engaging the Media



As part of the Judiciary's regular engagement with the media, Chief Executive (CE), Ms Juthika Ramanathan had a meeting with the local media editors and journalists on 24 March at the Supreme Court to share about the Judiciary's priorities, the upcoming initiatives to enhance access to justice, as well as the Judiciary's recent efforts in facilitating court reporting amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was a useful session for both CE and the media as they share candidly on ways to work together to educate the public on the role of the Judiciary and its processes. The Judiciary looks forward to collaborating with the media to promote a better understanding of Singapore's judicial system, thereby engendering greater public trust and confidence in the Judiciary.

Family Judges' Learning Week



▲ Family judges' attending the learning week via Zoom

Recognising that family judges are specialists in using the judge-led approach and in delivering Therapeutic Justice (TJ), the Family Justice Courts (FJC) continued to devote time, effort and resources towards equipping and training its judicial officers.

FJC held its second learning week for all its Judges on 22 to 26 February as part of its specialised training curriculum for family judges, with a focus on the concept and delivery of TJ and the multi-disciplinary approach to problem solving.

The learning week was conducted virtually and it was highly interactive and covered a deep range of multi-disciplinary subjects.

The topics covered included TJ practices and techniques on how to

engage parties in problem-solving instead of adversarial posturing in court, specialised skills such as when and how to talk to and listen to children, social science knowledge to understand parties and families better including basic child developmental psychology; parenting and the importance of co-parenting; mental illness and its impact on parenting; and family violence and child abuse. Judges were also taught the different types of support services located in the wider social services community and the different types of referrals that Judges may make. There were also topics that touched on judicial wellness, self-care, biases and transference.

The faculty comprised leading experts in different disciplines. Trainers included Presiding Judge of the FJC, Justice Debbie Ong, family law experts such as

Professors Leong Wai Kum and Chan Wing Cheong, Advisory Research Council (ARC) members who are experts on TJ including Professors Barbara Babb and Vicki Lens, psychiatrists such as Dr Daniel Fung and Dr George Fernandez from the Institute of Mental Health, psychologists including ARC member Dr Robin Deutsch as well as clinical forensic psychologist Dr Kenji Gwee, social science experts including Dr Sudha Nair from PAVE and Ms Ang Bee Lian from the Ministry of Social and Family Development and FJC's Judges and Court Family Specialists.

Celebrating Lunar New Year with the Singapore Cheshire Home

Despite the challenges brought about by COVID-19, the State Courts continued to reach out to the community through alternative means as part of their corporate social responsibility efforts. On 26 February, staff volunteers put together a virtual programme of performances and games to celebrate the Lunar New Year with residents of the Singapore Cheshire Home. A festive pack containing oranges and red packets that were specially prepared by staff were also distributed to them.

Through video greetings, Presiding Judge of the State Courts, Justice Vincent Hoong, said that the Lunar New Year is a time for families and friends to reunite and spend time together. He highlighted how the State Courts were delighted to celebrate the festive occasion with them. Deputy Presiding Judge of the State Courts, Ms Jennifer Marie, looked back on the meaningful activities and special events with the residents before the pandemic struck, and said that she looked forward to meeting them face-to-face again soon.

The State Courts celebrate the Lunar New Year with a charitable organisation every year in hope to bring cheer to its beneficiaries during the festive period.



About the Singapore Cheshire Home

A Residential Home for residents with muscular dystrophy/atrophy, cerebral palsy, etc., who receive nursing care, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, training in daily living skills as well as social and recreational activities.

“It is a tradition for the State Courts to celebrate the Lunar New Year with a charitable organisation, and we are delighted to do so with the Singapore Cheshire Home this year.”

—
Justice Vincent Hoong,
Presiding Judge of the State Courts



19 Feb

Courtesy Call on Chief Justice by Thai Ambassador to Singapore



Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand to the Republic of Singapore, His Excellency Dr. Suriya Chindawongse, called on Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon on 19 February. Chief Justice Menon was joined by Justice Steven Chong, Justice Lee Seiu Kin and Justice Pang Khang Chau at the call.

They had a lively discussion on a wide range of issues, including advancing judicial cooperation within the region and the impact of technological changes on the Judiciary.

05 Mar

Introductory Call on Chief Justice by High Commissioner of India to Singapore



High Commissioner of the Republic of India to the Republic of Singapore, His Excellency Periasamy Kumaran, called on Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon on 5 March.

At the call, they discussed, amongst other topics, the impact of technology on the administration of justice brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Launch of the SG Courts Mobile App

In December 2020, the SG Courts Mobile App was launched into public beta. eLitigation subscribers, judicial officers, and Judges are able to use the App to view their case files, court calendars and upcoming hearing lists while on the go. Users will need to log in to the App using their Corppass credentials.

The App is being developed in stages, and additional functionalities will soon be added. Users will be able to take queue tickets for court hearings via the App. In future, the App can integrate virtual and asynchronous hearing capabilities.

The launch of the App enables court users to transition to a mobile

work paradigm. The vision is that court users should be able to access information and carry out transactions anywhere, any time.

Users are invited to download the App from Google Play or the App Store and are welcomed to provide feedback on the App to help to improve the App's user experience.

1 CORPPASS REGISTRATION AND ONBOARDING

Your eLitigation Administrator will provide you with your Corppass credentials and enable mobile access.

2 DOWNLOAD THE APP

Scan the QR code to download the App



Apple App Store
go.gov.sg/sgcourts
mobile-via-appstore

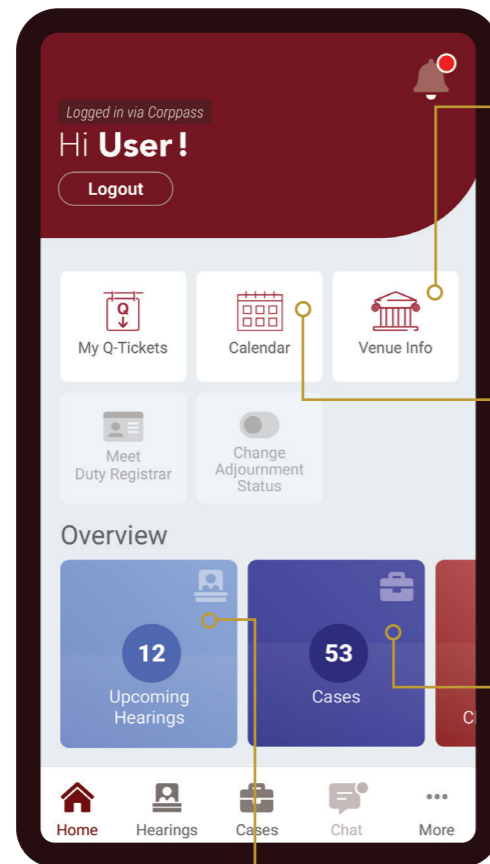


Google Play Store
go.gov.sg/sgcourts
mobile-via-google
playstore

3 SIGN IN

Click on the Corppass icon and sign in with your Corppass credentials.

Tip: Click on "More" at the bottom of the Home screen to enable Fingerprint / Touch ID / Face ID login



VENUE INFO
Shows your hearings by venue

CALENDAR
Displays your assigned hearings by Month, Week, or Day

MY CASES
Gives access to your case files in the eLitigation frontend. You can search by case number or case name

Click on the case number to view the case file in detail

Tip: Turn on Document Cache. This will speed up viewing of cached documents. Cached documents have a green icon displayed.

MY HEARINGS
Shows your assigned hearings for the day

New Singapore Courts Website (Beta)

On 25 January, a new Singapore Courts website was introduced. The beta website covers criminal law and selected civil law matters, with other information to be added progressively.

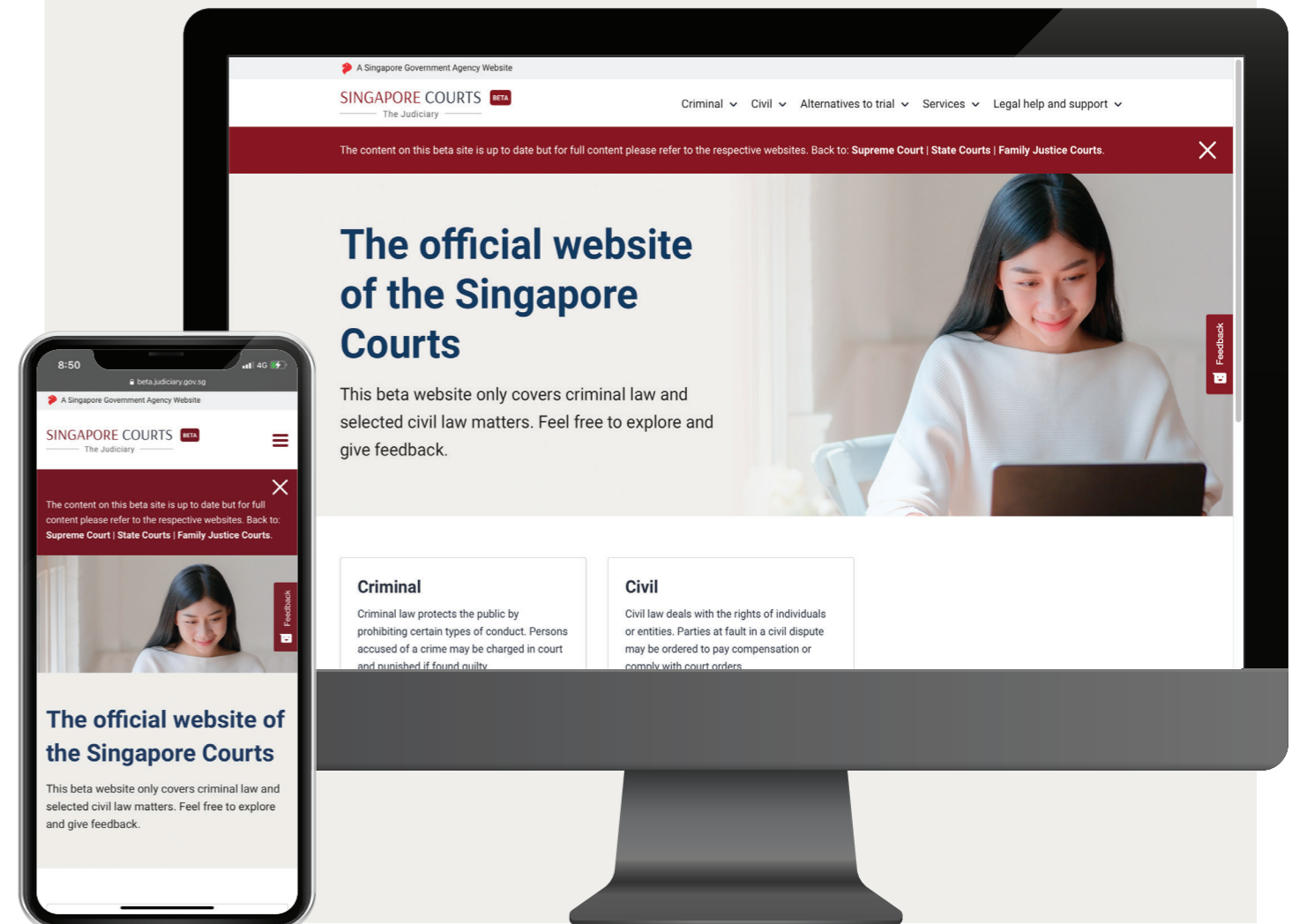
The official launch of the Singapore Courts website is expected in the third quarter of this year. It will provide users with seamless access to information on the Judiciary and court processes, integrating content from the websites of the Supreme Court, State Courts and Family Justice Courts. Users would be able to easily navigate the site through its intuitive interface and user-friendly features.

Until then, the existing websites of the respective Courts will remain the main gateway for information about the Courts.

Scan the QR Code to view the website and give feedback



go.gov.sg/
sgcourtsbeta

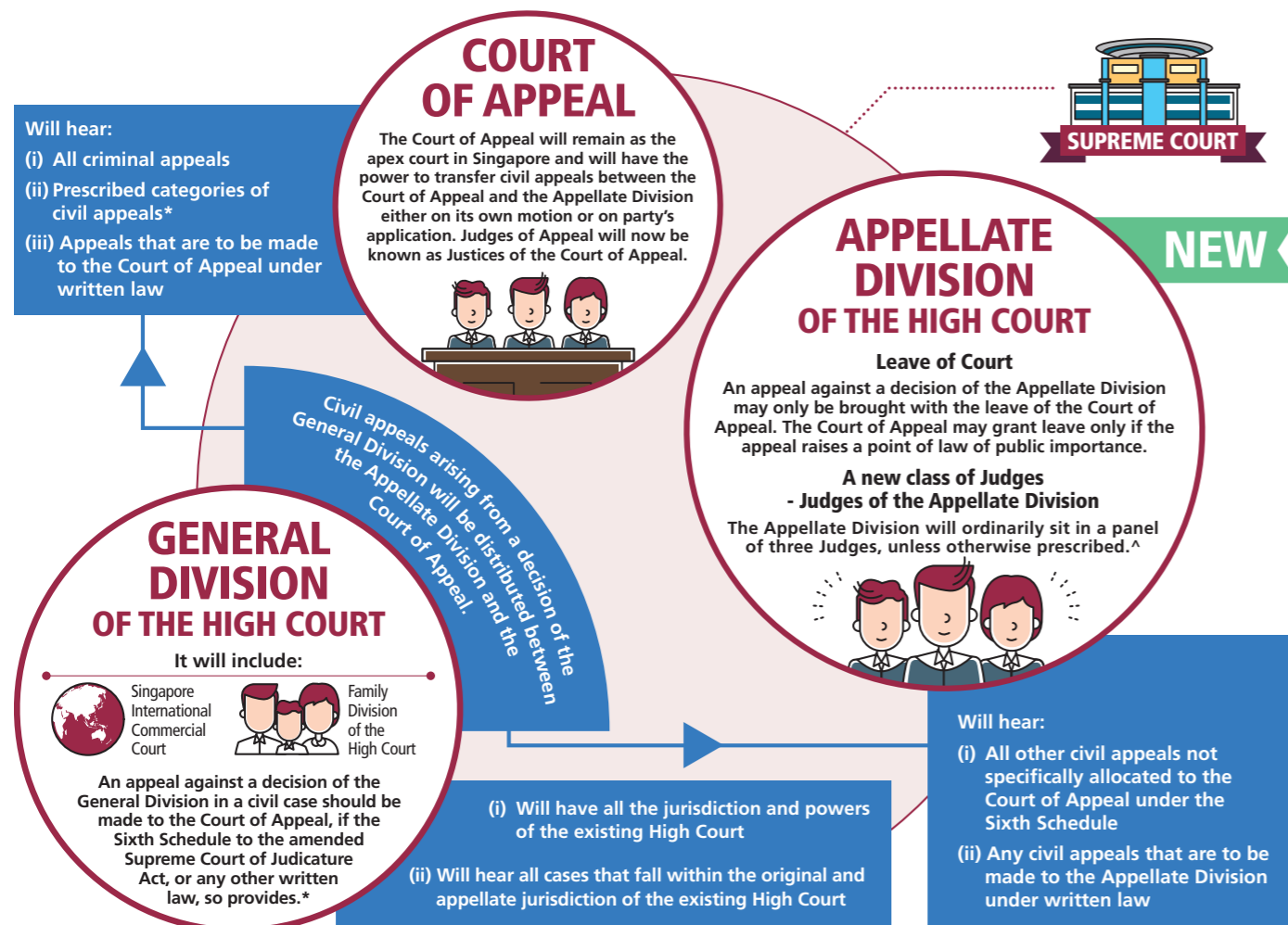


New Appellate Division in Supreme Court of Singapore

The Supreme Court, which consists of the Court of Appeal and the High Court, had restructured its High Court into two Divisions, i.e. the General Division and the Appellate Division (“AD”) with effect from 2 January. These structural reforms

were made against the backdrop of an increased appellate caseload in both volume and complexity in recent years. The establishment of the AD will enable the Supreme Court to better deploy judicial resources and manage the appeals

caseload that will be allocated between the existing Court of Appeal and the Appellate Division, thereby continually maintaining the high standards of access to justice and quality of justice.



*These categories will be listed in the Sixth Schedule to the amended Supreme Court of Judicature Act.
^Unless otherwise prescribed in the Seventh Schedule to the amended Supreme Court of Judicature Act.

Pilot of Remote Civil Trials



Following a successful pilot in November 2020, the Civil Trial Courts of the State Courts have started hearing trials that are conducted entirely by video conference. Other hearings involving examination of witnesses, including assessment of damages, can also be conducted by video conference if all parties consent. However, the Court retains full discretion to require one or more parties to attend physically in court.

During the pilot last year, a motor accident claim was brought before the Court and conducted entirely by video conference with counsel, the parties and an interpreter all appearing remotely. The parties gave positive feedback on the use of video conferencing for the conduct of the trial, which was broadcast in open court.

The use of video conference technology has been particularly useful during the pandemic,

in cases where plaintiffs are overseas and would otherwise not be able to pursue their claims.

Other processes, such as asynchronous court hearings and the dispensation of attendance at specified hearings, have been piloted by the State Courts to streamline the management of different types of cases and allow hearings to be conducted safely amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Practice Direction 52A (PD 52A)

The advent of COVID-19 has led to a marked increase in requests for foreign witnesses to give evidence in civil proceedings by way of video link. PD 52A, which was introduced in July 2020, streamlines the process of applying for foreign witnesses to give evidence in civil proceedings via video link. Such an application should be made by way of an inter partes summons with a supporting affidavit. The party making the application should satisfy the court that the relevant legislation in the foreign country or territory from which the witness is giving evidence has been complied with. This is because certain jurisdictions limit the ability of persons physically located within their borders from giving evidence in foreign legal proceedings.

Scan the QR Code to read PD 52A



go.gov.sg/pd52a

Behind the Scenes with Officers in the Infrastructure Department

In this issue, we learn more about managing the physical courthouse environment and infrastructure. We interview Kate Lim (**Kate**) who has supported the Supreme Court in infrastructure management since 2009, Adrian Lai (**Adrian**), who joined State Courts in 2008 with previous experience in the engineering field and Jenny Sim (**Jenny**), who joined Family Justice Courts (FJC) in 2017. Read on to find out more about the work they do.



Kate Lim

Assistant Director,
Infrastructure & Court
Services Directorate,
Supreme Court



Adrian Lai

Senior Assistant Director,
Infrastructure
& Security Directorate,
State Courts



Jenny Sim

Assistant Director,
Infrastructure & Court
Services Directorate,
Family Justice Courts

What are your responsibilities?

Kate: I formulate tenancy agreements and review rental polices as part of my duties. I am also working on environmental sustainability projects such as the "Bring Your Own Mug" movement that encourages officers to go green and the optimization of the air-conditioning system for Supreme Court to save energy used within the building.

Adrian: My main responsibility would be ensuring that the courthouse facilities are maintained and functioning optimally. This includes studying the life cycle for equipment replacement and repair, planning for maintenance work to be carried out, as well as coordinating and managing in-house contractors and external vendors. The job also requires

me to be on the ground during servicing and maintenance work, which could be scheduled after office hours or during the weekends.

Jenny: My portfolio comprises the development, management and implementation of the infrastructure projects in the FJC. I work closely with colleagues, external project consultants, contractors, and designers every day. I am currently working on the FJC Octagon Project, the future home of the FJC.

What are some of the challenges that you have faced?

Adrian: Managing the expectations for certain requests. For example, some may have the impression that our department stores furniture and equipment, which can be

used immediately to replace any damaged items. As we would have to follow the correct procurement approach for the replacement, certain requests may take longer to accommodate than expected. The COVID-19 pandemic has also brought about more expectations — for courthouse facilities to be maintained in accordance with safe management measures.

Jenny: COVID-19 brought about unprecedented project management changes. As safe management measures were put in place, consultations with external parties had to be conducted virtually. This impacted the project deadlines. As compared to physical meetings where spontaneous illustrations, clarifications or brainstorming of ideas can take place quickly, more time is needed

now. As such, it is extremely challenging to have the same level of productive collaboration that we had before the pandemic struck.

Kate: The initial challenge for me was managing my time amidst the sudden changes in work processes. Thankfully, the various departments in the Supreme Court work swiftly together.

Are there any misconceptions about the work you do?

Kate: Many have the impression that the Infrastructure Department includes a team of movers. As such, we do receive requests to move large furniture or equipment from one place to another for temporary set-ups. These requests are difficult to accede to as we do not have a dedicated team of movers in our department.

Jenny: People do think that we are a large team. However, we are actually a small team working with multiple vendors. For example, in the current Octagon Project, we work with a pool of 20 teams comprising consultants, specialists and contractors. Together, we work towards meeting the needs of FJC.

Adrian: Some may perceive us to be just the intermediary between the organisation and contractor. The fact is that we work very closely with our stakeholders on various types of projects. For example, I had the opportunity to work with the project managers, consultants and contractors of the State Courts Towers on several energy conservation and environmentally sustainable initiatives, including those in relation to motion sensors, NeWater systems and solar panels, which have garnered State Courts the BCA Green Mark Platinum Award and Green Mark Gold plus Healthier Workplace Award.

Share a memorable work experience.

Kate: I once had to design a mug to encourage staff, which also includes FJC staff, to reuse their mugs instead of using disposable ones in an effort to encourage officers to go green. The design process took months to complete involving conceptualising, carrying out the procurement process and finalising the design. Seeing my fellow colleagues using the mugs I had designed was a rewarding experience as it made me know that the hard work I had put in was all worth it.

Jenny: The tender for the Octagon Project's Addition and Alteration Works was awarded during the pandemic last year. We collaborated with the Office of Public Affairs and Strategic Planning and Research Department and brainstormed an alternative "groundbreaking" ceremony by producing an in-house video, inspired by TikTok. The entire process of putting together the various video clips which were separately taken by the principals (which includes senior management from the Supreme Court, FJC, consultants and contractors) was a light-hearted and enjoyable experience.

Adrian: The first scheduled electrical shutdown of the State Courts Towers for our annual servicing was one of the most memorable and rewarding experiences for me. The entire operation, which took more than 24 hours to complete, required months of preparation and the teamwork of about 100 contractors to ensure that everything went safely and smoothly without any electrical mishap.

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

Adrian: Communicating effectively has enabled me to collaborate and work more effectively. I have also gained invaluable experiences and knowledge through the State Courts Towers project, including having a better understanding of the working processes related to electrical systems, solar power systems, as well as fire alarm testing procedures for high-rise buildings.

Jenny: Over the years of working as a building project manager, I've learnt to approach matters arising from projects with an open mind. This skill helps me to understand varied views and concerns from each party and at the same time, manage conflicts and achieve progress for the projects on hand.

Kate: I have learnt through my years of experience that change is the only constant. Yesterday's solution may no longer be applicable today, and different situations call for different approaches.

What motivates you?

Kate: The beautiful building infrastructure that I so proudly manage and my fellow colleagues who give me the added push I need at work.

Jenny: The challenges I face when managing construction projects, and the self-fulfillment I get from overcoming these challenges.

Adrian: The thought of coming to the office every day to create and maintain a functional workplace and a conducive work environment for my fellow colleagues keeps me going. Compliments from appreciative colleagues following the completion of projects motivates me to continue striving for excellence.

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