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Opening of the Legal Year 2025: Chief Justice Outlines Ethics Focus and Court Enhancements

In his response at the Opening of the Legal Year (OLY) 2025 on 13 January, The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon spoke about ethics and the future of the legal profession, enhancement of court processes and the future readiness of the profession.

“

As we celebrate our nation’s 60th, we in the legal profession must do all we can to ensure that the next 60 years and more will tell the story of new generations of women and men with the character, ability and mettle to continue to serve Singapore and our legal system with distinction.”

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon
Supreme Court of Singapore

Chief Justice Menon presented the Ethics and Professional Standards Committee’s Final Report and its latest findings. This follows the Interim Report’s 13 recommendations, which he had previously accepted. The Final Report details the implementation progress and introduces eight new recommendations, which aim to strengthen the profession’s institutions in three key areas: ethos, learning, and the profession.

Chief Justice Menon also announced the implementation of new measures to enhance the management of cases involving sexual offences and said that “these cases require careful handling because of the impact the trial process can have on both complainants and accused persons.”

On the international front, he highlighted the establishment of the International Committee of the Singapore International Commercial Court (ICSICC) as “perhaps the most groundbreaking development in the past year” and an important landmark for the Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC). The catalyst for the creation of the ICSICC was the signing of a bilateral treaty between the Government of Singapore and the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain in March 2024, to collaborate in the establishment of the Bahrain International Commercial Court, appeals from which may be heard by the ICSICC.

Chief Justice Menon also noted that 2025 marks the tenth anniversary of the SICC, and said that “the SICC today is a well-respected commercial court known for its efficiency, procedural flexibility and fairness, and the use of innovative procedures compatible with and responsive to the realities of international commerce”.

More than 400 members of the legal fraternity attended the annual ceremony to mark the OLY 2025.



Scan to view an infographic of Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon’s full response

go.gov.sg/oly25



Scan to learn more about the International Committee of the Singapore International Commercial Court

go.gov.sg/icsicc



Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon delivering his response at the Opening of the Legal Year 2025 ceremony.



Decades of Excellence: Singapore International Commercial Court, Singapore Judicial College and Small Claims Tribunals Mark Their Anniversaries

2025 marked a key milestone for the Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC), Singapore Judicial College (SJC) and Small Claims Tribunals (SCT). The SICC, which was established on 5 January 2015 as a division of the Singapore High Court to provide a neutral forum for handling cross-border commercial disputes, including those governed by foreign law, commemorated a decade of excellence with a conference held on 14 and 15 January, while the SJC, which was also set up on 5 January 2015, to institutionalise judicial training for the Singapore Courts, continues to blaze a trail in judicial academia. The SCT, which was established on 1 February 1985 to provide an avenue for consumers to seek quick redress against errant merchants in a less formal and inexpensive forum, commemorated its 40th anniversary with a symposium and the launch of new initiatives.

SICC Conference on Transnational Commercial Justice and Dispute Resolution

The SICC Conference “Transnational Commerce in a Shifting World” examined how international commercial courts can complement other dispute resolution options such as international commercial arbitration and play a role as a neutral arbiter.

Featuring a stellar list of about 30 speakers and panellists from Singapore and overseas, the conference saw more than 430 local and international delegates from 19 jurisdictions in attendance. In a compelling fireside chat, then Singapore’s Minister for Law and Home Affairs, Mr K Shanmugam SC, emphasised the critical relationship between effective governance and the rule of law. Senior Minister of Singapore, Mr Lee Hsien Loong, who was the Guest-of-Honour for the conference dinner, said that in creating the SICC, Singapore believed the court would facilitate international commerce by offering an additional forum for businesses to resolve complex, high-value, cross-border commercial disputes. He highlighted the strategic partnership

with the Bahrain International Commercial Court as a model for future international collaborations.

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon delivered a keynote address on the topic “The Emerging Architecture of Transnational Commercial Justice”, where he outlined the key trends in commercial disputes – the growing internationalisation and complexification of commercial disputes, as well as the exponential growth of high-stakes commercial disputes.

In his welcome remarks, Justice Philip Jeyaretnam, President of the SICC, highlighted the SICC’s role in international arbitrations seated in Singapore. He also announced an upcoming commemorative publication that would chronicle the SICC’s first decade.



▲ Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon delivering the keynote address at the SICC Conference 2025.



▲ (From left) Justice Dominique T. Hascher, International Judge, Justice Philip Jeyaretnam, President of the SICC, Senior Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon at the SICC conference dinner.

SJC@10: From Ideas to Action

The SJC’s evolution over the past decade is not one of leaps and bounds by a few, but of the dedicated, curious and courageous steps of many – sometimes cutting a path where none existed. This ethos of turning bold ideas into meaningful action drives SJC’s work. Here are several recent initiatives.

• Innovating Pedagogy

How you learn is as important as *what* you learn. Hence the SJC explored different pedagogies for its programmes. In April, the SJC rolled out a new programme “Deliberation and Decision-making” for mid-career judicial officers. Drawing on the literary trope of the “unreliable narrator”, it explored the Rashomon Effect (i.e. the evidentiary limitations of eyewitness testimony) and the challenges of deliberating and deciding when the evidence is ambiguous or equivocal. Building on this work, in its inaugural SJC International Fellows programme which was led by retired Canadian Supreme Court Justice Rosalie Abella in May, the SJC explored, through a range of literary works, themes including Judicial Integrity, Judicial Compassion and Judicial Learning.

• Demonstrating Thought Leadership

It is publish or perish in academia, and the SJC is publishing. Its research arm, the Institute of Judicial Studies, kicked off its in-house research and publications with an article by its staff member, Ms Yeo Mui Lin. Titled “The Online Court and Remote Hearings”, the article was published in the peer-reviewed Singapore Academy of Law Journal. More scholarly pieces by Justice Kwek Mean Luck, Chair, SJC Board of Governors, Professor Natalie Skead, Dean, SJC, District Judge Justin Yeo, Executive Director, SJC, and Mui Lin, which contribute to the global discourse on judicial education and development, are in the pipeline.

• Elevating Curriculum

As part of its continuous improvement and review of its curriculum, the SJC regularly updates its foundational programmes, leveraging advice from its Subject Matter Advisory Panels and feedback from its learners. In the first quarter of 2025, its 101 programmes (Judgment Writing, Assessing Credibility and Engaging Self-Represented Parties) were enhanced with refreshed activities, resources, and a learning journey to the Singapore Courts’ service hubs and the Community Justice Centre.

• Articulating Purpose

It takes shared purpose to transform ideas into action. In December 2024, the SJC team gathered to articulate the SJC’s vision, mission and values to guide the team as the SJC reflects on its decade of achievements and steers into the years ahead.

OUR VISION

To be a world-class institute that nurtures and inspires judicial excellence through future-focused judicial education and research.

OUR MISSION

To build inclusive and engaged communities of lifelong learners and educators, foster curiosity, leverage innovative pedagogical approaches and technology, and empower and equip forward-thinking Learning Judges.

OUR VALUES

Curiosity Resilience Excellence Adaptability Trust Empathy

Small Claims Tribunals Mark 40th Anniversary with Symposium and New Initiatives

To commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Small Claims Tribunals (SCT), the State Courts held a symposium on 16 April, honouring the achievements and contributions of the SCT over the past four decades.

The event marked several significant milestones, including the signing of a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the SCT and the Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE). The MoU marked a significant step towards enhancing access to justice for consumer disputes, as it aims to strengthen institutional practices in handling consumer-related claims and enhance collaboration on public education efforts.

The State Courts also launched a commemorative publication at the symposium. This first-of-its-kind resource, authored by officers from the State Courts, traced the genesis and evolution of the SCT, featuring forewords by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and Professor S Jayakumar, Senior Legal Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.



Presiding Judge of the State Courts, Justice Vincent Hoong presenting the commemorative publication to Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon.

In his keynote speech titled "The SCT and the Delivery of Justice: The Past, Present and Future", Chief Justice Menon explored the SCT's journey through three broad themes: practicality, proportionality, and purpose. He highlighted the essential contributions of the SCT to the justice system as an effective dispute resolution forum and a driver of access to justice. Chief Justice Menon highlighted that the SCT's experience has demonstrated how the justice system can be designed to deliver justice even in the smallest of claims, and that seemingly simple procedures and innovations can have a tremendous impact on the administration of justice.



Chief Executive of the SG Courts, Ms Juthika Ramanathan, and President of CASE, Mr Melvin Yong signing the Memorandum of Understanding between the Small Claims Tribunals and the Consumers Association of Singapore.



(From left to right) Principal District Judge, Ms Thian Yee Sze, then-Minister of State for Law and Transport, Mr Murali Pillai, Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, Presiding Judge of the State Courts, Justice Vincent Hoong, and Registrar of the State Courts, Mr Edwin San cutting a cake to mark the 40th anniversary of the Small Claims Tribunals.



Scan to watch a commemorative video of the Small Claims Tribunals' 40th Anniversary

go.gov.sg/sct40th

Presiding Judge of the State Courts, Justice Vincent Hoong highlighted, in his welcome remarks, the key developments in the SCT, including the Community Justice and Tribunals System which enables parties to proceed from filing to adjudication without physically travelling to the court. In collaboration with generative artificial intelligence (AI) legal services startup Harvey AI, the SCT now offers complimentary AI-driven translation services that convert court documents from English language to Chinese, Malay, and Tamil languages.

Supreme Court Admits 353 Non-Practitioner Lawyers in Inaugural Mass Admission Ceremony

The Supreme Court admitted 353 Lawyers (Non-Practitioner) (LNPs) at the Mass Admission Ceremony 2025 ("Mass Admission"), which was held over three sessions on 21 and 22 April, each presided over by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and Justices of the Court of Appeal Tay Yong Kwang and Steven Chong respectively.

The inaugural Mass Admission for LNPs under a new admission framework marked a significant milestone for the Singapore legal system. In his address, Chief Justice Menon traced the genesis of the new admission framework to the report of the Committee for the Professional Training of Lawyers. The report contained three key structural recommendations: i) raise the standard of the Part B examinations to ensure the high quality of the local Bar; ii) decouple admission to the Bar from the completion of a practice training contract (PTC), where only those who wish to be advocates and solicitors (A&S) following the completion of the Part B examinations are now required to complete a PTC; and iii) lengthen the practice training period for aspiring A&S from six months to one year. He also discussed the centrality of trust in the legal profession, where "all lawyers – whether practising or non-practising – are officers of the court

who carry with them significant duties and responsibilities, and the fundamental obligations traditionally associated with advocates and solicitors continue to apply to all LNPs in many significant ways."

Speaking at the first session, Ms Lisa Sam, President of the Law Society of Singapore, discussed the practice of law, which is multifaceted, and often opens surprisingly diverse career paths. She also mentioned that legal practice is an art, where practice is required to perfect the practice of law. Ms Sam concluded her speech by encouraging the applicants to find a mentor to guide them, with hopes that one day, the applicants would also become mentors themselves, or undertake the role of reverse mentoring their seniors.



Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon presiding over the first session of the Mass Admission Ceremony 2025.



Non-practitioner lawyers making their declaration.



Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon mingling with non-practitioner lawyers at the tea reception.

Singapore Courts Strengthen Bilateral Judicial Cooperation with New Zealand, Japan and Korea

In the first quarter of 2025, Singapore's judiciary strengthened its international ties through three key engagements. The inaugural Singapore-New Zealand Judicial Roundtable in Auckland fostered dialogue on pressing issues including climate change and court technology. This was followed by the first virtual SICC Singapore-Tokyo Business Court Japan Roundtable, which facilitated knowledge exchange on transnational commercial disputes and artificial intelligence in justice systems. Completing this series of collaborations, Singapore's Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon led a delegation to the Supreme Court of Korea in March, marking the first visit since the 2020 Memorandum of Understanding between the judiciaries of Singapore and Korea, and encompassing extensive engagement with various Korean judicial institutions.

Singapore-New Zealand Judicial Roundtable

The first Singapore-New Zealand Judicial Roundtable took place in Auckland, New Zealand on 7 February. Hosted by the Courts of New Zealand, the Roundtable created a valuable platform for both judiciaries to engage in direct dialogue. The discussions centred on four key areas of mutual interest: Access to Justice, Climate Change, Technology and the Courts, and Lifecycle and Wellbeing of the Judge.

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon led the discussion on the topic of climate change. He spoke about the development of a bespoke model of justice for climate disputes and the importance of international judicial collaboration in this area. He opined that the traditional adversarial model of civil litigation might often not be best suited to providing the most meaningful resolution of climate disputes, and suggested that climate disputes call for a new model of justice informed by therapeutic justice. Such a model would be a powerful tool for the

facilitated resolution of conflict because it would be restorative, holistic, and forward-looking in its approach. Chief Justice Menon also stressed the need for international judicial collaboration in respect of climate disputes, given their cross-jurisdictional elements that may not be able to be resolved by any single jurisdiction alone.

“

I express our deepest gratitude to Chief Justice Winkelmann and her team for hosting this inaugural Roundtable between our two judiciaries. Today, our courts operate within a global environment that is increasingly dynamic and interconnected, and we are likely to be confronted with ever more complex and challenging legal issues that will often transcend jurisdictional boundaries. As we navigate these challenges, platforms like this Roundtable offer an immensely valuable opportunity for us to learn from one another's experiences and perspectives. We had a very fruitful discussion at the Roundtable, and I look forward to many more discussions like these in the future.”

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon
Supreme Court of Singapore

Chief Justice Menon also spoke at the Pacific Judicial Conference 2025 “Strengthening the Institution of the Judiciary – Kia Tū Pakari ai te Whare Whakawā”, which took place in Auckland from 9 to 12 February. The programme featured a moderated dialogue on “The Future Shape of Courts” between Chief Justice Menon and Justice David Goddard of the Court of Appeal, Aotearoa/New Zealand. Their discussion explored the forces shaping the future of courts and examined approaches to guide this evolution.



Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon (fourth from left) led the delegation from Supreme Court to the inaugural Singapore-New Zealand Judicial Roundtable hosted by Chief Justice Helen Winkelmann of New Zealand (sixth from left).



Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and Justice David Goddard in a moderated conversation on “The Future Shape of Courts” at the Pacific Judicial Conference 2025.

SICC Singapore – Tokyo Business Court Japan Roundtable

The inaugural Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC) Singapore – Tokyo Business Court Japan Roundtable took place virtually on 17 February. Co-hosted by the Singapore Courts and the Tokyo District Court (Business Court), the Roundtable serves as a useful dialogue platform to facilitate idea exchanges and foster stronger ties between the two judiciaries.

Justice Philip Jeyaretnam presented the opening remarks and shared how the various experiences and expertise in different legal traditions coming together to adjudicate transnational commercial disputes has made the SICC unique and special.

Justice Hri Kumar Nair gave a speech during the first session of the Roundtable about the impact of artificial intelligence on the justice system and the substantive laws. He ended his speech by stating that “the path ahead requires a careful balance of embracing technological advances without losing sight of our ultimate role to serve the public and the public interest.”

In his address titled “Case Management of Complex Cases”, Justice S. Mohan focused on the use of expert evidence and alternative dispute resolution. He said that “The exact types of procedural tools and the manner in which they are utilised, will differ across jurisdictions. But this may be an area where opportunities for creativity, experimentation, and mutual learning are ripe.”



SICC representatives (from left) Justices S. Mohan, Philip Jeyaretnam (President of SICC) and Hri Kumar Nair engage in an inaugural virtual meeting with Tokyo Business Court judges Ide Masahiro, Nakashima Motoyuki, Suzuki Kenya, Sasamoto Tetsuro and Ito Keiko.

Visit to the Supreme Court of Korea

On 11 March, Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and a delegation from the Supreme Court visited the Supreme Court of Korea. This was an inaugural visit since the two judiciaries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2020, against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, to promote the efficient administration of justice in the respective jurisdictions. The delegation was hosted by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Korea, Jo Hee-de.

While in Korea, the Singapore delegation also visited the Seoul Bankruptcy Court, Judicial Research and Training Institute, Judicial Policy Research Institute, Supreme Court IT Center, and Intellectual Property High Court. These visits provided the Singapore delegation with deep insights into the Korean judiciary's commitment towards judicial excellence.

At a separate event organised jointly by the SICC and the Korean Council for International Arbitration (KOCIA) on 12 March, Justice Philip Jeyaretnam, President of the SICC, delivered a speech titled

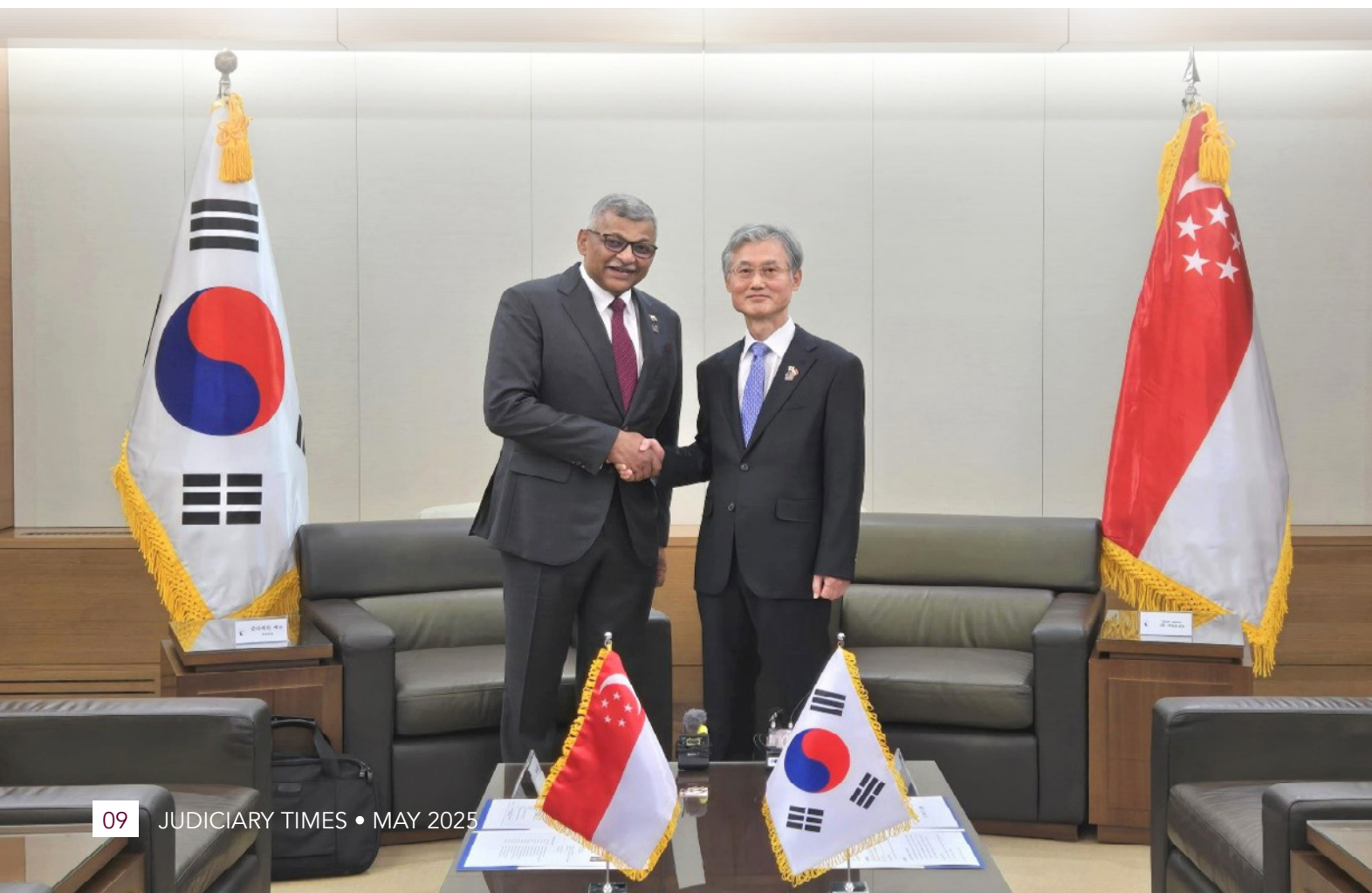
"The SICC and International Arbitration", where he addressed the role of the SICC in the context of transnational justice, highlighting the Court's instrumental role in supporting international arbitration. This concluded with a dialogue session between Chief Justice Menon, Justice Jeyaretnam and the participants, allowing the participants to gain a better understanding of the SICC's role in international dispute resolution.



▲ Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and Justice Philip Jeyaretnam addressing questions from participants at the SICC-KOCIA talk.



Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and Chief Justice Jo Hee-de meeting at the Supreme Court of Korea.



Court Interpreters Enhance Capabilities and Deepen Understanding of Their Work in Language Community

"Technically Speaking...": Innovative Training Equips Court Interpreters with Specialised Knowledge

On 12 December 2024, the Singapore Courts (SG Courts) launched "Technically Speaking...", a knowledge-sharing initiative aimed at enhancing court interpreters' proficiency in technical terminology through direct engagement with industry experts. The inaugural session "From the Emergency Room to the Witness Stand" brought together medical professionals – Dr Fahamy Koenitz, Resident Physician, Sengkang General Hospital, Dr Kau Chung Yuan, Orthopaedic Surgeon, Synergy Orthopaedic Group, and Dr S.S. Sathappan, Medical Director & Senior Consultant, Farrer Park Medical Centre – to share their expertise. The court interpreters benefitted greatly from the sharing by these medical experts, as they could discuss the medical terminology in the various vernacular languages, consult the experts in their mother tongues, as well as share the linguistic challenges they face when interpreting in court.

The success of the inaugural session of "Technically Speaking..." paves the way for further sessions which could cover other fields such as banking, forensic pathology, and civil engineering that court interpreters frequently come across. This initiative to enhance court interpreters' proficiency in technical terminology complements the SG Courts' commitment to enhance court users' access to justice.



▲ Guest speakers (front, from left) Dr Fahamy Koenitz, Dr Sathappan and Dr Kau Chung Yuan with court interpreters at the inaugural session of "Technically Speaking..."

Court Interpreters Share Expertise Through Immersive Learning Journeys

The SG Courts' interpretation team hosted two immersive learning journeys, offering participants from the language community valuable insights into the specialised world of court interpretation.

- On 27 September 2024 for students from Nanyang Technological University's (NTU) Linguistics and Multilingual Studies programme
- On 8 November 2024 for Citizen Translators from the Ministry of Digital Development and Information

These learning journeys aimed to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of court proceedings, direct engagement with court interpreters, and hands-on experience in court interpretation. This initiative also sought to shed light on the crucial yet often overlooked role of court interpreters.



▲ Students from NTU's Linguistics and Multilingual Studies programme with State Courts district judges and interpreters.

Each learning journey began with a brief introduction to the criminal court process, where the participants witnessed interpreters in action during mention proceedings. The NTU students' experience was further enriched when they observed a plead guilty mention presided over by District Judge (DJ) Christopher Goh. Post-mention, the students had the additional opportunity of engaging with DJ Goh,

the Deputy Public Prosecutor and Defence Counsel. The participants then had a hands-on experience in a mock court session, where they practised court interpretation in an actual courtroom setting with guidance from court interpreters. The event concluded with an insightful question-and-answer session with senior interpreters, DJ Goh and DJ Julian Chin.

These learning journeys gave the participants a comprehensive overview of court interpreting and offered practical experience in a realistic setting. They also connected students, volunteer translators, and professional court interpreters which helped to increase their understanding of court interpreters' work in the SG Courts.

▼
Citizen Translators from the Ministry of Digital Development and Information with State Courts' interpreters.



State Courts Participate in Symposium on Access to Justice by Individuals with Invisible Disabilities

The State Courts participated in the inaugural Access to Justice Symposium, organised by Pro Bono SG, a registered charity providing legal aid for the vulnerable and disadvantaged, on 26 March. Themed "Management, Treatment, and Sentencing of Persons with Invisible Disabilities within the Criminal Justice System", the Symposium brought together about 400 participants, comprising legal practitioners, mental health and social service professionals, policymakers, and members of the Singapore Courts, to discuss critical intersection of invisible disabilities and the justice system.

Deputy Principal District Judge Kessler Soh was a panellist at two of the six sessions of the Symposium. He spoke about ensuring a fair hearing for offenders with invisible disabilities, the sentencing of such

offenders, as well as the specialist services available at the courts to help identify and address the root causes of offending.



▲ Deputy Principal District Judge Kessler Soh (second from left) at the inaugural Access to Justice Symposium.

Singapore Courts Contribute to the Community

The Singapore Courts (SG Courts) are committed to enriching the lives of the less privileged and supporting efforts that enhance access to justice. Over the past few months, their staff members stepped out of the courts to organise and participate in meaningful programmes for the different communities in their midst.

Bringing cheers to SHINE beneficiaries

On 13 December 2024, the SG Courts organised a heartwarming mini carnival at the State Courts for 58 beneficiaries from their adopted charity, SHINE Children & Youth Services. SHINE provides social and welfare support to underprivileged children and youth to nurture and develop their competencies and keep them positively engaged. The participants took part in creative art jamming activities and were

treated to a magic show. Before the event, the SG Courts staff volunteers had attended training for interacting with children with learning disabilities or special educational needs. This preparation enabled them to meaningfully interact with and engage the beneficiaries, to give the children a memorable day with SG Courts.



▲ SG Courts staff with beneficiaries from SHINE Children & Youth Services.

Walking and fundraising to enable access to justice

In support of Pro Bono SG's annual fundraising event for increasing awareness of and enhancing resources for its legal aid programmes, 20 SG Courts staff members demonstrated SG Courts' commitment to access to justice by participating in Pro Bono SG's *Just Jalan* walkathon, which had a virtual component

and a physical walking event held on 8 February at OCBC Square, Singapore Sports Hub. Pro Bono SG is a registered charity providing legal aid for the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

▼ SG Courts staff members at *Just Jalan*, Pro Bono SG's annual fundraising event.



Spreading Chinese New Year joy and well-wishes with Yong-En Care Centre

SG Courts joined hands with Yong-En Care Centre to spread Chinese New Year joy and well-wishes to the senior community in the central part of Singapore. They presented 200 blessing bags filled with festive treats and essential items to more than 60 households and 90 seniors across Bukit Merah, Chinatown and Jalan Kukoh. On 12 February, SG Courts staff volunteers spent an afternoon at Yong-En Active Hub at Jalan Bukit Merah, leading the elderly beneficiaries in a session of singing and fun quizzes. Yong-En Care Centre is a registered charity which provides person-centred care services to support seniors, disadvantaged individuals, and families in Chinatown and surrounding areas. Its core programmes include dementia and home care, family support and financial assistance, and youth development services.



▲ SG Courts volunteers brought festive cheer to beneficiaries at Yong-En Active Hub.

Singapore Courts Conferred Bronze Supporter Award

On 28 March, the SG Courts were conferred the Bronze Supporter award at Pro Bono SG's second annual awards ceremony. The award recognised the SG Courts' valuable contributions to Pro Bono SG's efforts and activities.



▲ Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Chairperson Mr Phang Tsang Wing with CSR Committee Programmes Manager Ms Yvonne Leung accepting the award on behalf of SG Courts.

Visit by Daegu District Court Judge Sohn Young-Eon

Judge Sohn Young-Eon, Presiding Judge of the Andong Branch of Daegu District Court of the Republic of Korea, visited the Supreme Court on 6 January. He was hosted by Senior Assistant Registrar Cheng Pei Feng who shared about the Supreme Court's practices in trial procedures, and the use of artificial intelligence in trial processes.



▲ Judge Sohn Young-Eon in a discussion with representatives from the Supreme Court.

Visit by Minister of Justice for the State of Lower Saxony Dr Kathrin Wahlmann

On 19 February, the Minister of Justice for the State of Lower Saxony Dr Kathrin Wahlmann led a delegation to visit the Supreme Court. The Singapore Courts' (SG Courts) Chief Transformation and Innovation Officer, Mr Tan Ken Hwee, shared with the delegation the SG Courts' digitalisation efforts. During a tour of the Supreme Court building, the delegation was also shown the facilities that were born out of these efforts.



▲ A delegation from the Ministry of Justice for the State of Lower Saxony led by Dr Kathrin Wahlmann receiving a briefing from Mr Tan Ken Hwee.

Visit by Tokyo District Court Judge Hiroki Okubo

Tokyo District Court Judge Hiroki Okubo visited the State Courts on 26 February. Judge Okubo observed court proceedings and received a briefing on virtual court hearings by representatives from the Community Courts and Tribunals Cluster.



▲ Judge Hiroki Okubo receiving a briefing on virtual court hearings from Mr Mark Khng, Director, Community Courts and Tribunals Cluster, State Courts.

Study Visit by India Judicial Delegation

Ms R Arulmozhiselvi, Officer on Special Duty (Registrar) & Member (Human Resources) from the Supreme Court of India led a delegation to visit the Supreme Court on 18 March to learn about the SG Courts' digitalisation efforts. They were hosted by Mr Tan Ken Hwee.



▲ A delegation from the Supreme Court of India at the Supreme Court.

State Courts' New Self-help Resources to Enhance Access to Justice

The State Courts have introduced new self-help resources to improve court users' access to justice. These resources provide clear guidance and are available in different formats and languages to ensure that all users, regardless of their legal representation status, can effectively navigate the judicial system.

Getting Help Made Easier: The Community Resource Navigator

Court users can now easily find help through the new Community Resource Navigator (CRN). It is a comprehensive list of community resources that self-represented persons (SRPs) can refer to if they need assistance for their non-legal needs, such as financial assistance, employment support, counselling, and crisis intervention. The CRN can be accessed through the QR codes below and displayed outside Courts 4A, 4B, 18A, and 18C of the State Courts.

Community Resource Navigator

Scan the QR codes to access information about community resources that may be beneficial to you.



Disclaimer:
This leaflet is for informational purposes only. While we aim for accuracy, the mentioned services and resources may change, and their availability or suitability cannot be guaranteed for every individual. Inclusion in this leaflet does not imply endorsement or recommendation. Users are encouraged to verify details and seek professional advice where necessary. This leaflet is not a substitute for professional advice or emergency assistance. For urgent matters, please contact the relevant authorities or service providers directly.
Centre for Specialist Services, State Courts

English



中文



Bahasa Melayu



தமிழ்



Getting SRPs Ready for Trial: Guide to Preparing Civil Trial Documents

For most SRPs, preparing documents for a civil trial can be daunting. To help them navigate and understand the rules and procedures for preparing trial bundles, the State Courts have produced a user-friendly guide entitled "Guide to Preparing Trial Documents".

- ✓ Uses simple English instead of complex legal terms
- ✓ Shows what documents are needed in a civil trial
- ✓ Gives clear examples and pictures
- ✓ Provides step-by-step instructions
- ✓ Links SRPs to the required forms



Scan to read the Guide to Preparing Trial Documents

go.gov.sg/gtptd

SG Courts | STATE COURTS SINGAPORE

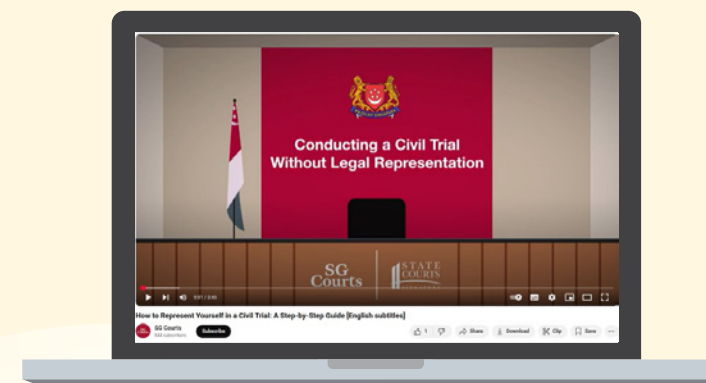
GUIDE TO PREPARING TRIAL DOCUMENTS



Preparing SRPs for Trial: Video Guides to Civil Trials

The State Courts are developing a video series that aims to demystify the civil trial process. The first video in this series "Conducting a Civil Trial Without Legal Representation", is designed to help SRPs understand court proceedings better as it walks them through what happens during a civil trial.

- ✓ Shows SRPs what to expect in court
- ✓ Explains each part of the trial in simple terms
- ✓ Comes with subtitles in English, Mandarin, Malay, and Tamil



The other videos in the series will be released over three phases from the third quarter of 2025 to the first quarter of 2026.



Scan to watch the video

go.gov.sg/how2cvl

Behind the Scenes with Officers from Innovation, Technology and Transformation

Office of Transformation and Innovation



RACHEL GAN
Deputy Director



OOI YEE MUN
Senior Assistant
Director

Information Technology Department



PRADEEP KAUR
Digital Services
Manager



KENNY TAN
Business Application
Consultant

The Office of Transformation and Innovation (OTI) and Information Technology Department (ITD) work in tandem to drive the Singapore Courts' (SG Courts) digital transformation, to ensure that the SG Courts are always future ready. While OTI maintains strategic oversight of transformation initiatives and monitors technological developments, ITD serves as the technical backbone by developing and maintaining the SG Courts' digital infrastructure, including electronic filing, case management systems and cybersecurity measures. Together, both departments collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to enhance access to justice through technological innovation and ensure the smooth delivery of digital court services. In this issue, we interview four officers from these departments.

What are your key responsibilities?

Rachel: I do both operations and policy-related work. On the policy side, examples include drafting the Guidelines on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Court Users and AI-related internal papers. I am currently working on developing the Internal Guidelines on the use of Generative AI. On the operations side, I drive OTI-led technology initiatives and provide input on initiatives that are led by other departments. As I'm legally trained, I help to translate legal requirements into technological jargon and logic flows, with prototyping where necessary.

Yee Mun: I bring different approaches, methods and tools from service and interaction design, systems thinking and creative collaboration into projects and initiatives with other departments, and our day-to-day work at OTI. Combined with

my background in law, I take a holistic approach in looking at and reframing the way we do things, from legal requirements, technological and design considerations, to behaviours and experiences of the people involved. I am currently creating training materials to enable our colleagues to adopt innovation as part of their work.

Pradeep: I lead a team of project managers and business analysts overseeing key information technology (IT) systems in SG Courts. These include the Integrated Case Management System (ICMS), Integrated Family Application Management System (iFAMS), Data Hub, Sentencing Information and Research Repository (SIR) and Online Dispute Resolution System (ODR). Combining technical expertise with product management skills and strategic thinking, I ensure our existing services run

efficiently and securely while working collaboratively with various stakeholders to drive innovation in SG Courts.

Kenny: I lead a team that manages several key IT systems including the Community Justice and Tribunals System (CJTS), Integrated Finance Administration System (IFAS), and the SG Courts website. I ensure that these essential platforms are always operationally ready, enabling both court officers and the public to access them. Working closely with our business users, we strive to enhance and improve the functionality of these systems that serve as vital touchpoints for the administration of justice.

All: The biggest project we are working on now is the Judiciary's next generation case management system. Our team aims to go beyond just consolidating and harmonising our four existing systems. We want to also build a system that is flexible, responsive and revolutionary in terms of how it enables court staff to work and self-represented persons (SRPs) to gain access to justice.

What are some of the challenges that you face?

Rachel and Yee Mun: A big challenge is encouraging people to envision future possibilities amidst the hustle and bustle of their daily work. Another challenge is getting people to share their pain points at work. Staff should not feel pressured to provide solutions – we want to hear about problems first and journey through the solutioning process with them.

Pradeep and Kenny: Effective technological products thrive on shared ownership. When stakeholders become partners in creation rather than being just end-users, we co-develop products that truly serve their needs and transform their work. However, gathering input from busy stakeholders – including subject matter experts (SMEs), SRPs, lawyers, and partner agencies – can be challenging. We try to respect their time while making sure that we consult thoroughly in order to create good products and policies.

Are there any misconceptions about the work you do?

Rachel: I'll highlight two common misconceptions. The first is that "transformation and innovation" necessarily means "technology". Transformation and innovation are actually more about looking at something from a different perspective to see how

it can be made better. It does not always involve technology. The second is that we do our work in silo. In actual fact, we actively reach out to SMEs and stakeholders to gather their input so that we can develop effective solutions.

Pradeep: To add to Rachel's observations, there's a misconception that IT systems are purely owned by the IT department. Successful digital solutions/products require co-ownership between business units and IT teams. Business units bring vital domain expertise and user insights, while IT teams bring technical knowledge to realise these capabilities.

Yee Mun: The design aspect of the work we do in transformation and innovation goes beyond making things look nice or coming up with user interface/user experience fixes in our systems. Design is a rigorous, systematic problem-solving approach that involves qualitative research with people to understand how and why they do things, mapping out processes across different channels, facilitating alignment and decision-making conversations with stakeholders and users, prototyping potential solutions to validate their desirability, feasibility and viability, among other things. All these are done in collaboration with users and stakeholders, and take into consideration the wider context of the people involved.

What keeps you going?

Rachel: The access to justice elements in my work motivate me. The work here has helped so many SRPs directly in terms of making it easier to start court applications, understand the law and manage their court cases better.

Yee Mun: The opportunity to keep discovering new perspectives and to help reframe existing contexts so that the people I work with can also find new possibilities in what might seem familiar or routine.

Pradeep: What drives me is seeing how our digital solutions make a real difference in people's lives. And since the technology landscape never stands still, there's always something new to figure out or a better solution to a problem.

Kenny: It brings me great joy and pride in seeing any innovative product, especially those I have participated in, successfully implemented with satisfied users.

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