

# JUDICIARY TIMES



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President Tharman  
Shanmugaratnam Officially  
Opens the Family Justice  
Courts Building

On 23 July, President Tharman Shanmugaratnam officiated the opening of the Family Justice Courts (FJC) Building. To mark the official opening, the FJC hosted an open house showcasing its work through mock court hearings, interactive activities and guided tours. Over 1,600 guests attended the event, including Minister for Social and Family Development Mr Masagos Zulkifli, Minister for Law Mr Edwin Tong SC, Senior Minister of State for Law and Transport Mr Murali Pillai SC, and Attorney-General Lucien Wong SC. Key partners and stakeholders in the family justice ecosystem were also present, along with approximately 270 junior college and secondary school students.

The building, formerly housing the State Courts, has been extensively refurbished and repurposed to support a therapeutic approach to family justice, with features such as purpose-built child-friendly facilities, quiet rooms where distressed adults can find calm without staff intervention, warm tones, and artworks by youths from the Singapore Boys’ and Girls’ Homes displaying messages of hope and restoration incorporated in the building.

During his tour of the FJC Building, President Tharman observed how the physical environment seeks to foster healing and resolution for families facing challenging legal situations.



▲ President Tharman Shanmugaratnam being briefed on the Therapeutic Justice model.

HIGHLIGHTS

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The refurbished courthouse reflects the Family Justice Courts’ commitment to supporting families and children on their journey of healing and transformation. Therapeutic justice is critical, not just to help resolve disputes, but to rebuild relationships and give families a stronger footing for the future.”

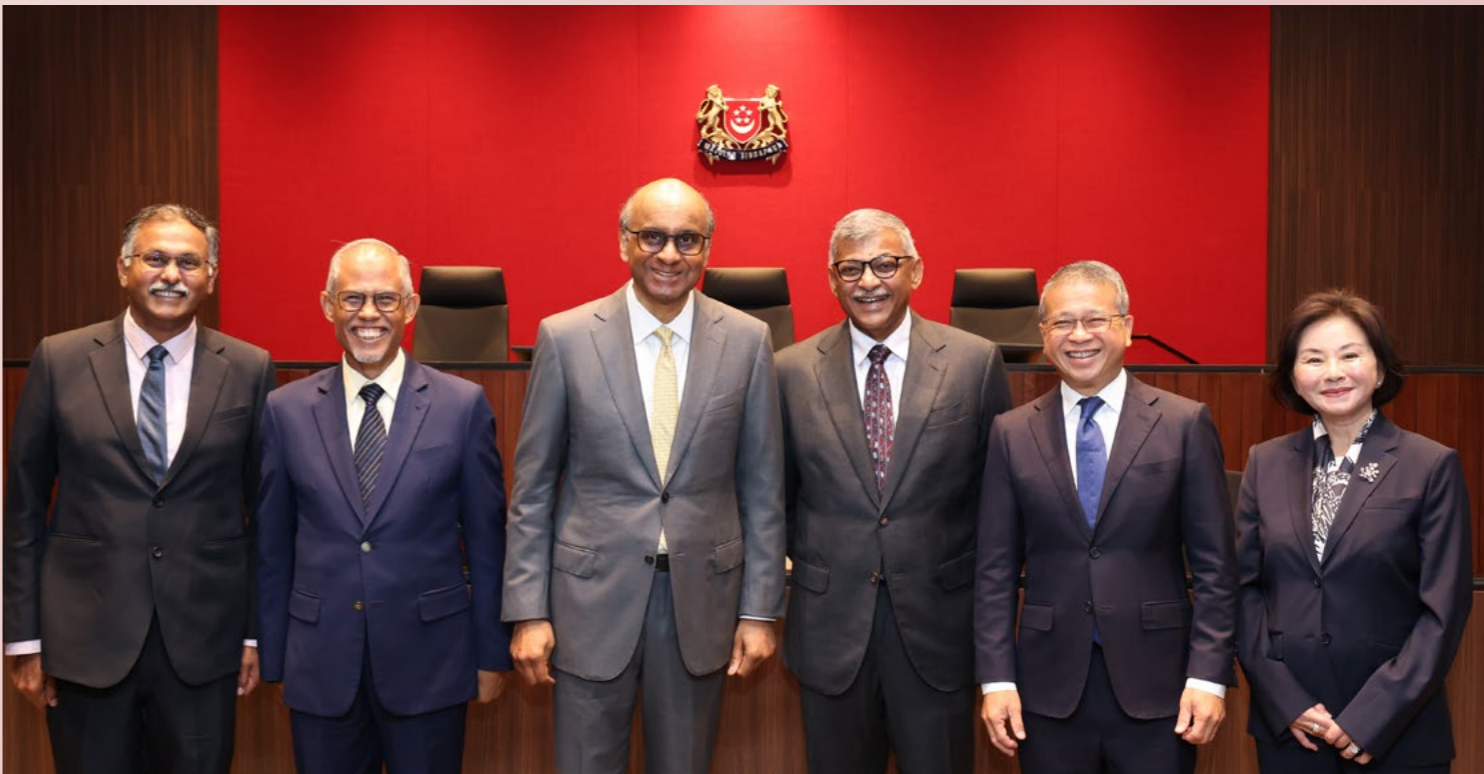
Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon  
Supreme Court of Singapore

In his Opening Address, Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon announced the extension of the therapeutic justice approach to proceedings in the Youth Courts. The Youth Courts will explore the use of a Visionary Map to guide youth offenders through structured reflection on their past choices and encourage change; deploy multi-disciplinary teams to manage selected cases more holistically and encourage timely referrals to therapeutic



▲ Visitors observing a mock court hearing.

support services; and adopt a “whole of community” approach where the courts, parents, social workers, educators and community partners will come together to support every child or young person who is a subject of those court proceedings.



▲ (From left) Mr Murali Pillai SC, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Law and Ministry of Transport, Mr Masagos Zulkifli, Minister for Social and Family Development, President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, Mr Edwin Tong SC, Minister for Law, and Justice Teh Hwee Hwee, Presiding Judge of the Family Justice Courts, in a courtroom in the refurbished FJC Building.

## Family Justice Courts Host International Meetings to Facilitate Cross-border Cooperation in International Family Disputes

From 19 to 23 May, the Family Justice Courts (FJC) hosted 68 family judges and members of the judiciary from 40 jurisdictions who were in Singapore for a series of meetings that aimed to enhance cross-border cooperation in international family disputes, particularly those involving children.

### Fourth Global Meeting of the IHNJ

The Fourth Global Meeting of the International Hague Network of Judges (IHNJ), organised with the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH)

Permanent Bureau, began with a formal welcome event on the evening of 19 May. Over the course of the next two days from 20 to 21 May, the members discussed issues related to international cooperation, such as direct judicial

communication, and concluded with a set of conclusions and recommendations on cross-border child abduction and protection matters. This was the first time that the Global Meeting of the IHNJ was held in Singapore.



▲ Participants of the Fourth Global Meeting of the International Hague Network of Judges.

### Inaugural HCCH Judicial Roundtable and Third ASEAN Family Judges Forum

On 22 May, the inaugural Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH) Judicial Roundtable was held in conjunction with the Third ASEAN Family Judges Forum. This meeting brought together IHNJ members and ASEAN delegates to share about the HCCH 1980 Child Abduction Convention and HCCH 1996 Child Protection Convention.



▲ The inaugural Hague Conference on Private International Law Judicial Roundtable was held in conjunction with the Third ASEAN Family Judges Forum.

“

An international outlook is especially important today because of the rise of the phenomenon that we refer to as the international family ... But this increased mobility of people has also meant that the breakdown of such international families generates a variety of new legal and very practical issues that themselves transcend jurisdictional boundaries, and which often cannot be meaningfully or effectively resolved by a single jurisdiction working on its own.”

**Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon**  
Supreme Court of Singapore

“

As a signatory to the Child Abduction Convention, as well as an ASEAN member state, Singapore is honoured to host this inaugural Hague Conference on Private International Law Judicial Roundtable together with the Third ASEAN Family Judges Forum. The combined events reflect a longstanding commitment to judicial cooperation ... It is through gatherings like this that we identify synergies and plant the seeds for future co-operation in areas that may bear fruit for the common good.”

**Justice Teh Hwee Hwee**  
Presiding Judge of the Family Justice Courts



▲ Meeting of the Council of ASEAN Chief Justices' (CACJ) Working Group on Cross-Border Disputes Involving Children.

### CACJ Working Group Meeting on Cross-Border Disputes Involving Children

On 23 May, the FJC hosted the 11th meeting of the Council of

ASEAN Chief Justices' (CACJ) Working Group on Cross-Border Disputes Involving Children to facilitate discussions on cooperation within the ASEAN region. At the meeting, the ASEAN

delegates discussed potential collaboration on therapeutic justice and the provision of information on procedural matters to enhance access to justice.

## Singapore International Commercial Court and London Commercial Court Hold Inaugural Roundtable

The inaugural Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC) – London Commercial Court (LCC) Roundtable was held virtually on 8 July. Among the participants were Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, Sir Geoffrey Vos, Master of the Rolls, and Lord Justice Snowden, from the Court of Appeal of England and Wales.

Opening the session, Justice Philip Jeyaretnam, President of the SICC, emphasised the importance of bilateral dialogues in promoting best practices and furthering the rule of law. This was followed by presentations and discussion around three key topics.



▲ Singapore International Commercial Court representatives (from left) Justice Ang Cheng Hock, Justice Philip Jeyaretnam, Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, Justice Valerie Thean and Justice Andre Maniam.



▲ London Commercial Court representatives (from left) Lord Justice Snowden, Sir Geoffrey Vos, Mr Justice Henshaw and Mr Justice Foxton.

- **The Increasing Complexity and Size of International Commercial Disputes, and the Challenges of Managing Them**

Justice Ang Cheng Hock and Mrs Justice Cockerill, High Court Judge and former Judge in charge of the Commercial Court of England and Wales, highlighted the transformation in commercial litigation in recent years, addressing challenges in digital evidence management, technical complexity in cryptocurrency cases, and cross-border jurisdictional issues.

- **Court Support for International Arbitration: Is the Right Balance Being Achieved?**

Justice Andre Maniam and Mr Justice Henshaw, High Court Judge and Judge in charge of the Commercial Court of England and Wales, explored the balance between court intervention and arbitral autonomy, with both jurisdictions demonstrating commitment to minimal curial intervention while maintaining appropriate oversight.

- **Preparing the Next Generation of Commercial Advocates**

Justice Valerie Thean and Mr Justice Foxton, High Court Judge and former Judge in charge of the Commercial Court of England and Wales, addressed the challenges of training future advocates in an artificial intelligence-driven world, discussing structured mentoring while considering the needs of the younger generation, and maintaining ethical foundations while embracing technological change.

At the close of the Roundtable, Chief Justice Menon and Lord Justice Snowden noted the meaningful and useful nature of such dialogues in advancing commercial law practice and justice across jurisdictions and emphasised the importance of maintaining this momentum of exchange between the two courts.

## Singapore International Commercial Court Leads Discussions on Cross-border Dispute Resolution

The Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC) strengthened its position as a leading voice in international commercial dispute resolution through two strategic fireside chats held in August that brought together senior judiciary members and legal practitioners to address evolving challenges in cross-border dispute resolution.

### Resolving Cross-border Business Disputes in the SICC

On 21 August, the SICC partnered with the Association of Corporate Counsel Singapore to co-host a fireside chat themed "Resolving Cross-border Business Disputes in the SICC". The panellists Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and SICC President Justice Philip Jeyaretnam touched on Singapore's position as a trusted dispute resolution hub, the significance of the Bahrain International Commercial Court (BICC) that will be officially launched later this year, and the global importance of judicial independence.

In his opening remarks, Justice Jeyaretnam also shared the SICC's distinctive approach to resolving complex, cross-border commercial disputes. The event held at the Supreme Court was attended by about 70 in-house counsel, many of whom were from international businesses with their regional headquarters in Singapore.



▲ The fireside chat with the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) Singapore attracted 70 in-house counsel from across a broad range of industries. (Photo: ACC Singapore)

### Breaking New Ground in Transnational Commercial Justice: A Partnership of International Commercial Courts

Building on that momentum, the SICC partnered with the BICC on "Breaking New Ground in Transnational Commercial Justice: A Partnership of International Commercial Courts" on 25 August.

Featuring candid and thought-provoking insights from Chief Justice Menon, SICC President Justice Jeyaretnam, and BICC President Professor Jan Paulsson, the fireside chat moderated by Ms Gitta Satryani included topics such as the BICC, emerging trends in commercial disputes across Asia and the Middle East, and the innovative appeal route from the BICC to the International Committee of the SICC. About 100 local and overseas guests from the legal community attended the event at the Supreme Court.



▲ Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon speaking at the fireside chat, co-organised with the Bahrain International Commercial Court.

These events collectively demonstrate Singapore's commitment to advancing international commercial dispute resolution. The SICC's proactive engagement with both local practitioners and international courts positions Singapore at the forefront of evolving transnational commercial dispute resolution mechanisms, reinforcing its status as a leading forum for resolving cross-border disputes.

## Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore Courts Share Solutions for Future-Readiness at Eighth Joint Judicial Conference



▲ Participants of the Eighth Joint Judicial Conference.

On 28 May, Singapore hosted the Eighth Joint Judicial Conference (JJC) with 62 participants from the judiciaries of Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and Singapore. Established in 2011, the JJC serves as a platform for the three judiciaries to strengthen ties and deepen relationships. The theme of this year's conference was "Building a Future-Ready Judiciary" and featured three panel discussions focusing on key aspects of judicial excellence in a rapidly changing world.

- **Judicial communication and cooperation in cross-border disputes**

In the first panel discussion on enhancing judicial communication and cooperation in cross-border disputes, Justice Kannan Ramesh shared insights on frameworks such as the Judicial Insolvency Network's guidelines, which facilitate court-to-court communication and joint hearings in cross-border insolvency cases. These frameworks have become crucial for managing the growing number of complex cross-border disputes.

- **Judicial education, wellbeing and evolving role of judges**

The second panel discussion, moderated by Justice Kwek Mean Luck, examined judicial education, wellbeing, and the evolving role of judges in a modern judiciary. This session explored how judges could be equipped and supported to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex judicial landscape while upholding justice and administering the law.

- **Role of technology in providing access to justice**

Justice Aidan Xu discussed how technology enhances access to justice, highlighting how generative artificial intelligence (AI) assists self-represented persons with small value claims process. Justice Xu also shared that the Small Claims Tribunals had recently implemented complimentary AI-driven translation services, enabling court correspondence to be translated into Chinese, Malay and Tamil.

## Singapore and Mongolia sign Memorandum of Understanding for Judicial Cooperation

On 4 July, the Supreme Court of Singapore and the Supreme Court of Mongolia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote bilateral judicial cooperation.

The MoU formalises the agreement between the two Courts to continuously strengthen the levels of exchanges and expand the scope of cooperation

between the two judiciaries. Cooperation will be enhanced in areas such as judicial training, use of technology, and capacity building.

The signing of the MoU took place after a bilateral meeting between Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and Chief Justice Ganzorig Damdin of Mongolia at the Supreme Court in Singapore.



▲ Chief Justice Ganzorig Damdin of Mongolia (left) and Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon signing the Memorandum of Understanding to promote bilateral judicial cooperation.

## Singapore Courts Go to the Heartlands to Raise Awareness of Remedies for Family Violence and Harassment

The Singapore Courts (SG Courts) were at Woodlands Regional Library on 17 May to raise public awareness of the remedies available to victims of family violence and harassment.

“Know Your Rights: Family Violence and Harassment Matters” was an inaugural event organised under the SG Courts’ *Justice Awareness @ Heartlands* community outreach programme, which comprises a series of talks that will provide useful and relevant information on specific types of cases handled by the courts, and the related services and support provided by the courts and the community. It is organised in partnership with the Ministry of Social and Family Development, the Law Society of Singapore, Pro Bono SG, and PAVE.



▲ Visitors finding out more about the services and support related to family violence and harassment.

▼ Participants engaging the panellists from Eden Law Corporation, Lee & Lee, PAVE and the SG Courts and in a question-and-answer session.



## Justice Vincent Hoong: Achieving Equilibrium in Sexual Offence Trials – a Shared Commitment

On 2 July, Justice Vincent Hoong, Presiding Judge of the State Courts, delivered a keynote address on “*Navigating the Sensitivities of Cross-Examining Complainants in Sexual Offence Cases*” at the Criminal Justice Forum, organised by the Criminal Justice Working Group of the Singapore Academy of Law’s Professional Affairs Committee. His address examined the evolving legal and ethical dimensions of cross-examination in sexual offence cases and called for a shared commitment across the criminal justice system to ensure that it remains a tool for the pursuit of truth and not an instrument of harm.

Justice Hoong highlighted the delicate task of balancing the accused person’s right to a fair trial with the need to protect complainants from further trauma that may arise from the trial process. He emphasised that cross-examination must be focused, respectful and firmly anchored in relevance, observing that “the courtroom is not a battleground, and the witness stand is not an arena for humiliation.”

Justice Hoong outlined Singapore’s multi-pronged approach to upholding this balance, including statutory restrictions on offensive or irrelevant questioning, judicial guidance and institutional reforms. These include the establishment of a specialist list of judges for sexual offence cases and the implementation of enhanced pre-trial protocols to address sensitive evidential issues at an early stage. Such measures aim to ensure that cross-examination remains both rigorous and respectful.

Justice Hoong also underscored the ethical duties of counsel, cautioning against the use of stereotypes, victim-blaming or demeaning lines of inquiry. He urged advocates to uphold the dignity of the trial process, noting that “the pursuit of justice should never compromise the dignity of the individuals who participate in it”. Respectful advocacy, he stressed, is not a sign of weakness, but a hallmark of professionalism. He added that “Cross-examination that is true to its purpose prioritises the pursuit of truth while preserving the dignity of all involved.”

In conclusion, Justice Hoong highlighted that the delicate equilibrium is not achieved by chance, but through judicial oversight, thoughtful preparation, ethical discipline by counsel and a collective recognition that fairness and dignity are not competing ideals, but mutually reinforcing foundations of a legitimate justice system.



▲ Justice Vincent Hoong (centre), with panellists from the Singapore Judiciary, Attorney-General’s Chambers and Criminal Bar, following a panel discussion at the Criminal Justice Forum. (Photo: Singapore Academy of Law)



Scan to read Justice Vincent Hoong’s full speech

[go.gov.sg/jvhsalcjf](https://go.gov.sg/jvhsalcjf)

Presiding Judge of the State Courts, Justice Vincent Hoong, delivering the keynote address at the Criminal Justice Forum. (Photo: Singapore Academy of Law)



# Singapore Courts Expand Outreach to Students

This year, the Singapore Courts (SG Courts) expanded their outreach efforts to engage the youth and enhance their understanding of the role of the courts in society. In addition to the annual "A Day in Court" seminar, the SG Courts ventured to secondary schools with a brand-new series of assembly talks.

## Students learn to be F.A.I.R. but Not Square

This year, the SG Courts are visiting secondary schools to increase students' knowledge about the Judiciary and the courts' roles.

Through games and quizzes in the assembly talks hosted by deejays from radio station Kiss92, students find out what the SG Courts' core values of Fairness, Accessibility, Integrity and Respect mean, and learn to be F.A.I.R. in a mock court case of theft. Playing the role of a judge in the case, they learn that the courts provide access to all parties, arrive at fair

decisions with integrity, and treat everyone with respect regardless of their background. The deejays from Kiss92 also give tips on creative writing which the students then apply by taking part in a contest to write a radio advertisement sharing their newly acquired knowledge about the SG Courts. Besides receiving prize vouchers, the winning team also gets to step into Kiss92's studio to record their advertisement and have it aired on radio.

To date, the SG Courts have visited 3,000 students from Naval Base, Bedok View, Juying and Springfield secondary schools.



▲ The talks introduce the SG Courts' core values of Fairness, Accessibility, Integrity and Respect.



▲ Kiss92 deejays giving out prizes to Bedok View Secondary School students for their participation.



▲ Students from Juying Secondary School recording their winning script in the Kiss92 studio.



Scan to watch snippets of the assembly talks on the SG Courts' Instagram page

[go.gov.sg/ndcgnc](https://go.gov.sg/ndcgnc)

## Students play out courtroom roles at "A Day in Court" seminar

An immersive courtroom roleplay was the highlight at the annual "A Day in Court" (ADIC) seminar held at the State Courts on 4 July. Students assumed the various key roles in a courtroom, such as a judge, counsel, witness and court officers, and played out a script based on a case study that they had worked on in an earlier segment of the seminar.

The ADIC seminar was attended by about 200 secondary three students from 43 schools. Amid

the growing visibility of student bullying incidents on social media, the theme of this year's seminar was harassment. The participants were introduced to the legal measures and remedies available under the Singapore law for victims of harassment and how the courts manage harassment cases. They also took away some tips on what they can do, should they find themselves or someone they know in similar situations.

The seminar also featured interactive games and quizzes which let the students learn

about the different types of cases handled by the State Courts. Through a case study, they took on the role of a judge, deliberating and deciding the most appropriate outcome for a mock stalking and cyberbullying case. In a fireside chat with District Judges (DJ) Sandra Looi and Diana Ho, they discovered the various considerations that judges make before arriving at an outcome for a case such as the one that they worked on. DJs Looi and Ho also shared invaluable advice and insights with those aspiring to be lawyers and judges.



▲ A student assuming the role of a defence counsel in the courtroom roleplay activity.



▲ Principal District Judge Thian Yee Sze in lively conversation with students.



▲ A student posing a question to District Judges Sandra Looi and Diana Ho in a fireside chat.



▲ Students all smiles at the "A Day in Court" seminar.

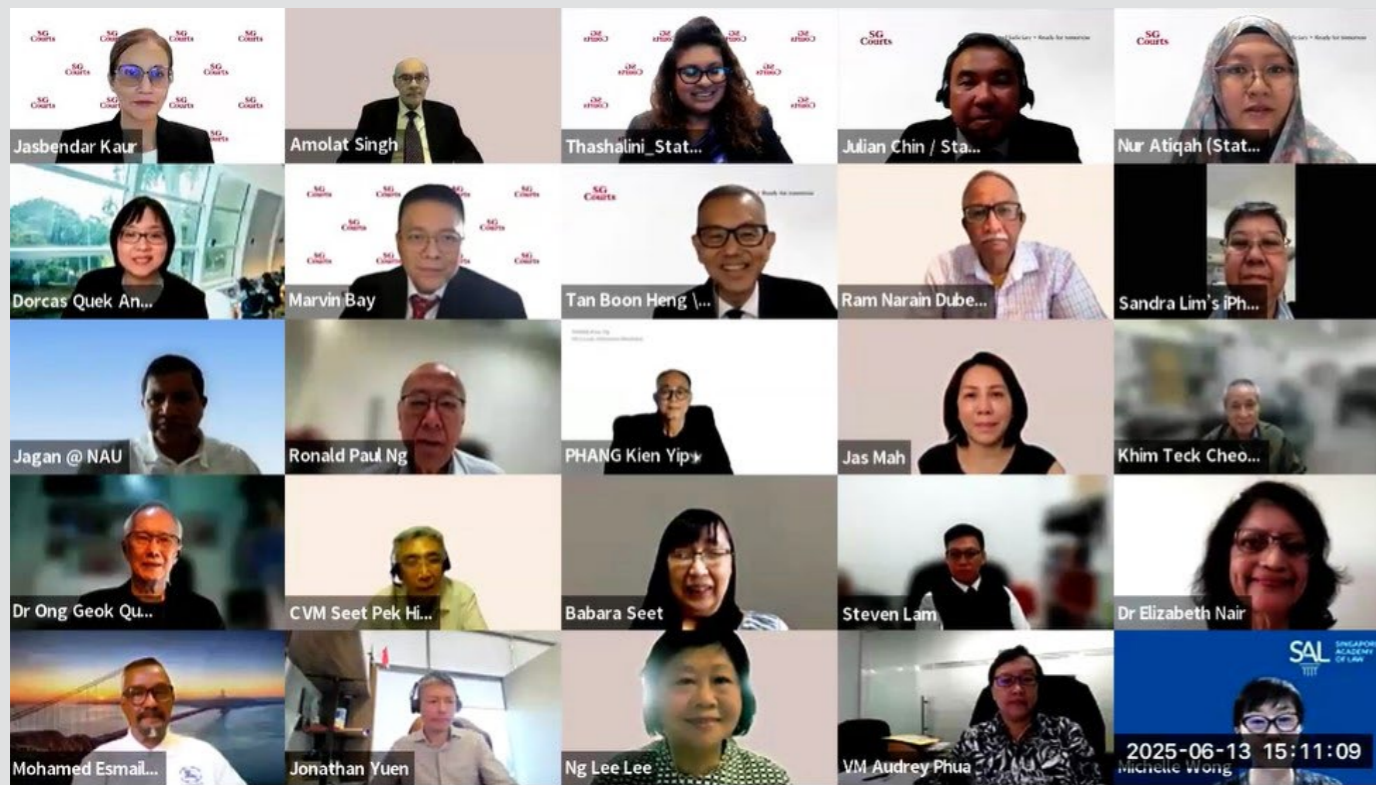
## Respect – the Key Takeaway at Training for Court Volunteer Mediators

The **respect** accorded to parties and their counsel by the mediator, regardless of the communication mode, would facilitate positive outcomes for the parties. This timely reminder emerged as the key takeaway from the panel discussion at the first mediation training session of the year, held by the State Courts, for 52 Court Volunteer Mediators (CVMs).

Drawing from a recently published [article](#), “Fitting the Communication Forum to the Mediation Fuss: Choosing the Appropriate Communication Mode for Mediation in the Post-Pandemic World”, the trainer of the session, Associate Professor (A/P) Dorcas Quek Anderson from the Singapore Management University’s Yong Pung How School of Law, highlighted some research findings on the issue of choosing the appropriate communication

channel and how dispute resolution outcomes are impacted by different communication modes, which include face-to-face, videoconferencing, audio calls, text messaging, or a combination of several modes. She also shared the preliminary findings of an extensive study, which she had initiated, involving 400 individuals negotiating across four different communication modes.

The training session also featured a panel discussion with A/P Anderson, Mr Amolat Singh, a lawyer and experienced CVM, Deputy Principal District Judge Jasbendar Kaur and District Judge Julian Chin, and moderated by District Judge Marvin Bay. The lively discussion concluded that **respect** by the mediator plays a critical role in facilitating a settlement between disputing parties.



▲ A group photo of some of the Court Volunteer Mediators at the first training session of the year on 13 June.

## Singapore Courts Take Flight with New E-Learning Modules and Service Excellence Training

In July, the Singapore Courts (SG Courts) introduced learning initiatives to improve service delivery and elevate the court user experience, reinforcing their commitment to enhancing access to justice for all.

By combining specialised legal training with proven customer service principles, the courts are positioning themselves to better serve the diverse needs of court users while maintaining the highest standards of service.

### New E-Learning Modules

The SG Courts unveiled two new e-learning modules at the launch of their new learning space hosted on the Civil Service College’s online LEARN platform for public officers. The “I Enable Access to Justice” module equips court staff with a deeper understanding of access to justice principles and the challenges faced by court users, while the “Data Management”

module highlights the crucial role of data management in court operations.

The refreshed Judiciary learning space now offers 30 specialised modules, comprising 16 general modules and 14 modules specially designed for judicial officers. The learning space was launched at a roadshow that also showcased various e-learning initiatives for court staff.



▲ The SG Courts unveiled a new e-learning module “I Enable Access to Justice” for court staff to improve their service delivery.



▲ SG Courts staff at the Access to Justice Kick-Off Event, committed to elevating the court user experience.

### Access to Justice Kick-Off Event — “Enhancing the Service Experience”

At the Access to Justice Kick-Off Event titled “Enhancing the Service Experience”, SG Courts staff welcomed guest speaker Mr Adrian Lim from the Singapore Airlines

Academy. With over 25 years of customer service experience with the airline, Mr Lim provided insights into the fundamental principles of exceptional service delivery. He shared the critical role of empathy, composure, and professionalism when handling challenging situations and building public

trust. Drawing on his extensive experience, he demonstrated how moments of tension can be transformed into opportunities for meaningful engagement and trust-building, providing court staff with practical strategies to serve court users more effectively.

## Singapore Courts Champion Community Causes

The Singapore Courts (SG Courts) demonstrated their commitment to community service through three meaningful projects. Starting with a beach clean-up in June, the SG Courts then championed literacy in July with the National Library Board's Read for Books campaign, before culminating with two National Day charity bazaars in August that raised funds for charity.



### Beach and Inland Clean Up

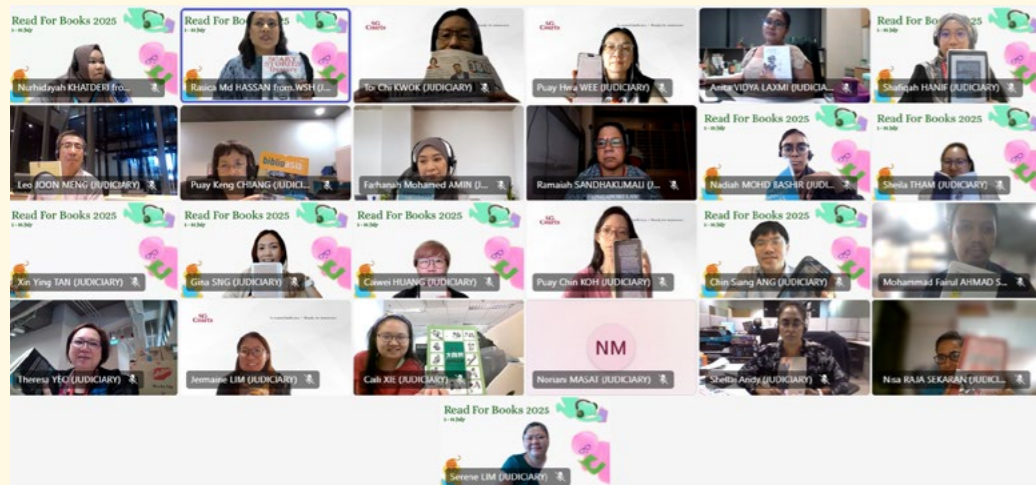
In support of the World Environment Day, SG Courts, together with environmental social enterprise, Green Nudge, held a beach and inland clean-up on 11 June at East Coast Park. Besides clearing nearly 40kg of waste from the park, the 26 staff volunteers from SG Courts gained valuable insights into urban and marine litter sources and learnt the practical approaches to sustainable living.

SG Courts staff volunteers cleared 40kg of waste from East Coast Park in a beach clean-up, in support of World Environment Day.

### Read for Books

Throughout July, SG Courts participated in the National Library Board's *Read for Books* campaign — a meaningful initiative that transforms reading into book donations for the less privileged. For every 10 people who read for at least 15 minutes, one book is donated to beneficiaries: Calvary Community Care, kidsREAD, MINDS and SHINE Children & Youth Services.

SG Courts staff embraced the campaign through various formats: virtual group sessions, individual reading logs, and physical read-together huddles. Every page turned helped make a difference — 121 entries were received, totalling 132 hours and 45 minutes of reading time, which translated to 53 books donated to the beneficiaries.



SG Courts staff clocked a total of 132 hours and 45 minutes of reading time, which raised 53 books for the less privileged in the *Read for Books* charity book drive.

### National Day Charity Carnival

The SG Courts' annual National Day Charity Carnival (NDCC) raised more than \$65,000, a record amount to date, for their adopted charity, SHINE Children & Youth Services (SHINE). Fundraising began with online sales on 14 July and culminated in lively bazaars at the Supreme Court on 6 August and the State Courts and Family Justice Courts (FJC) on 13 August, and a charity concert at the FJC on 14 Aug.

At the bazaars, there were also booths set up by SHINE, the Community Chest and Yong-En Care Centre. This enabled SG Courts staff to learn more about these charities' causes and programmes for the less privileged communities.



SG Courts staff browsing handmade crafts from Yong-En Care Centre and learning about their programmes.



SG Courts staff set up booths to raise funds for SHINE Children & Youth Services.

SG Courts staff lent their talents to a charity concert to raise funds for SHINE Children & Youth Services.





▲ (From left) Mr Zac Toh, CEO and Founder, Citysprouts Pte Ltd (Member of Judging Panel), Mr Tony Soh, CEO, National Volunteering and Philanthropy Centre, Ms Shirley Cheong, Vice President, People Team Changi Airport Group (Member of Judging Panel), Ms Nur Aqilah Kasim and Ms Colina Kee.

## Court Interpreters Recognised for Innovation in Enhancing Access to Justice

Ms Colina Kee and Ms Nur Aqilah Kasim, court interpreters from the Singapore Courts, have been honoured with a Special Commendation Award for their groundbreaking initiative to improve access to justice.

Ms Kee and Ms Nur Aqilah received the recognition in August after completing the National Volunteering and Philanthropy Centre's Company of Good Fellowship programme. Their collaborative action project focused on simplifying legal terminology and enhancing the service journey for both court users and interpreters. Their innovative approach features a two-stage

implementation plan – first, developing a hardcopy quick guide featuring translations of legal terms; and next, converting it into an artificial intelligence-powered translation platform. The project aims to help court users and staff navigate legal processes more efficiently while ensuring accurate information delivery. The initiative has been proposed for implementation in the State Courts.

The Company of Good Fellowship is a 16-week programme that is designed to cultivate changemakers from private and public sectors to drive meaningful community impact through their organisations.

## NOTABLE VISITS

### Courtesy Calls

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon received courtesy calls from distinguished visitors and engaged in meaningful discussions on areas of mutual interest, such as access to justice, judicial education and emerging technologies in court proceedings.



▲ 21 April with then-Chief Justice of India, Sanjiv Khanna, and his delegation.

▼ 23 April with British High Commissioner to Singapore Nimesh Mehta OBE.

▼ 2 July with French Ambassador to Singapore His Excellency Stephen Marchisio.



▼ 15 May with Dr Bence Tuzson, Minister for Justice of Hungary, and his delegation.



# Notable Visits

The Singapore Courts welcomed delegations and distinguished visitors, and facilitated exchanges on judicial innovation, international cooperation, and best practices in court administration.



From 10 to 11 April, a 10-member delegation from the Hong Kong Judiciary Administration, led by Judiciary Administrator Ms Esther Leung, visited the Supreme Court on a study trip. Officers from both judiciaries engaged in discussions on court infrastructure and technology, talent attraction and retention in the Singapore Judicial Service, judicial education, access to justice, social media and communications, and family justice.

On 20 May, Ms Astrid Puentes Riaño, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, visited the Supreme Court, and was briefed by Justice Philip Jeyaretnam.



On 23 May, Mr Nicolas Lüscher, Secretary-General of the Federal Supreme Court of Switzerland, led a delegation to visit the Supreme Court. The visit included briefings by representatives from the Singapore International Commercial Court and the Office of Transformation and Innovation.



On 29 May, a delegation led by Armenia's Minister of Justice, Srubuhi Galyan (third from right) visited the Supreme Court, where President of the Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC), Justice Philip Jeyaretnam (fourth from right), shared the SICC's experience and its role in anchoring Singapore's alternative dispute resolution ecosystem. The visit was organised by the Asian Development Bank.



On 30 May, Mr Miao Qingwang, Member of the Standing Committee of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Party Committee and Secretary of the Political and Legal Affairs Commission, and his delegation visited the Supreme Court. Registrar Jill Tan shared Singapore's experience to promote the improvement of judicial efficiency and the development of mechanisms to resolve international commercial disputes.

On 12 July, Tun Tengku Maimun Binti Tuan Mat, former Chief Justice of Malaysia, was in the State Courts for a fireside chat with representatives from the Singapore Courts. This was part of the programme of the Singapore Academy of Law's Annual Lecture, where Her Excellency was the guest speaker.



On 22 July, as part of the 14th Forum of Small States (FOSS) Fellowship Programme, Permanent Representatives to the United Nations visited the Supreme Court to learn about Singapore's judicial system, in particular the Singapore Courts' pioneering use of digital systems and technology to enhance the administration of justice.

# Behind the Scenes with the Therapeutic Justice Transformation Office

The Therapeutic Justice Transformation Office (TJTO) plays a pivotal role in implementing and advancing the Family Justice Courts' (FJC) therapeutic justice (TJ) initiatives. Following the FJC's 2020 commitment to delivering TJ and the official launch of the FJC TJ Model in October 2024, the TJTO serves as the central coordinating body for implementing TJ initiatives through three key TJ Processes.

1

Joint Triage Checklist (JTC) for initial case assessment to provide the court with a preliminary view of the case.

2

TJ Cooperative Conference (TJCC) where the judge establishes a cooperative tone from the outset and finds as much common ground as possible.

3

Assignment of cases to the multi-disciplinary Teams track, where a dedicated team comprising a mediation judge, hearing judge and Court Family Specialist (counsellor, psychologist, or social worker) will manage a case to ensure continuity and comprehensive case management.

The TJTO officers support the implementation of these new TJ Processes which promote amicable resolution, reduce conflict, address underlying family issues, and provide timely therapeutic interventions. Through their careful monitoring, process refinement, and stakeholder engagement, TJTO officers strive to help families achieve better outcomes and build a foundation for cooperative post-divorce relationships.

In this issue, we speak to three officers from the TJTO.



**MEGAN LEE**

Senior Assistant Director



**PATRICK TAY**

Manager



**LIM MING SHUANG**

Senior Executive

## What are your key responsibilities?

**Megan:** My responsibilities are both strategic and operational. My primary responsibility is to oversee work processes and ensure compliance with the TJ framework as well as support the various TJ change management initiatives.

Concurrently, I serve as Team Manager, supporting judges in the effective case management of their cases. This requires regular liaison with judges, as well as close coordination with other court divisions.

**Patrick:** I perform two primary roles: front-end filing processing and case management. In front-end processing, I review divorce cases that are routed to TJTO to ensure that they are ready for the TJCC, coordinate these conferences, and manage urgent filings. I help maintain the case assignment roster for accurate case tracking and distribution.

As Team Manager, I support judges through effective case management, ensuring proper coordination of related cases. I also assist judges with court correspondences, particularly in managing complex cases involving self-represented parties (SRPs) and ensure that the court's directions are followed up on.

**Ming Shuang:** My key responsibilities consist of both operational and back-end work. Besides providing administrative support, I also maintain a database for TJ cases and extract the necessary data for case monitoring and reporting purposes, when required.

## What are some of the challenges that you face?

**Megan:** There are intense time management pressures in balancing my job responsibilities. Both strategic and operational work can be time-sensitive requiring quick turnaround and/or urgent and immediate attention. In carrying out my duties, I also have to interact with, and manage, a wide range of internal and external stakeholders. I therefore have to constantly stay calm and prioritise competing demands on my time.

**Patrick:** One of the key challenges is integrating the relatively new TJ Processes into the established operations of the FJC. As TJ is still evolving and being refined, we need to work carefully with FJC's existing processes. This involves redefining boundaries and workflows with various divisions within FJC to ensure that cases are properly adopted into the TJ framework.

**Ming Shuang:** Continual enhancement of data collection presents its own unique challenges.

This involves dedicating time to self-learning and experimenting with new formulas and features, while performing other duties. While this can be demanding, the resulting improvements make the efforts worthwhile.

## Are there any misconceptions about the work you do?

**Megan:** There may be a misconception that the roles I need to carry out are straightforward. In reality, balancing my dual roles requires effective organisational skills and the ability to think quickly, manage stakeholders, and react promptly under pressure. This is compounded by the volume and complexity of cases that need to be managed under the TJ Processes which are often time-sensitive.

**Patrick:** A possible misconception is that TJTO operates in isolation. In reality, we work closely with various divisions within FJC to support the "One Team One Family" approach to TJ cases. Regular collaboration is essential as divorce cases often have related matters and need to be managed carefully to ensure that families receive comprehensive support.

**Ming Shuang:** A common misconception about data collection is that it is a dry and manual exercise. In reality, it is a combination of careful analysis and understanding of each case, problem solving and an eye for design. The dynamic nature of cases and the different reporting requirements demand thoughtful consideration of what information to record and how to present the data.

## What keeps you going?

**Megan:** Knowing that my efforts directly impact families' lives and support the TJ mission provides a meaningful purpose to the daily challenges faced.

**Patrick:** What keeps me going is not being afraid to reach out to others, even if it means having to be "thick-skinned" sometimes. By being open to asking questions and working closely with colleagues from other divisions, I have built better working relationships over time. My colleagues understand more about what we do in TJTO, making it easier for us to work together.

**Ming Shuang:** It is the continuous opportunity for learning and growth. The satisfaction of seeing the application of new Excel techniques after multiple trials and errors motivates me to keep learning and going.

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