

JUDICIARY TIMES



THE FOURTH
SINGAPORE - CHINA
LEGAL AND JUDICIAL
ROUNDTABLE

FJC ALL-IN 2020:
REDEFINING THE
"NEW NORMAL"

JUDICIARY
HONOURS 43 COURT
VOLUNTEERS

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THE FOURTH SINGAPORE - CHINA LEGAL AND JUDICIAL ROUNDTABLE

The fourth Singapore-China Legal and Judicial Roundtable (the Roundtable) was held on 30 November. The Roundtable was co-chaired by The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and the Chief Justice of the Supreme People's Court (SPC) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), His Excellency Zhou Qiang.

For the first time since the inaugural Roundtable in 2017, the Roundtable was conducted entirely in a virtual format. Chief Justice Menon and Chief Justice Zhou welcomed the videoconference as a 'virtual bridge' for the two courts' commitment to legal and judicial cooperation, which is especially useful in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Roundtable kicked off with a bilateral meeting, during which the two Chief Justices held a constructive discussion on existing as well as new areas of joint collaborations. This was followed by an exchange of perspectives, best practices and experiences by Judges from the Supreme Court of Singapore (SupCt) and the SPC. Four key topics anchored this year's Roundtable discussion:

- The Courts' Best Practices in Dealing with COVID-19 / Challenges COVID-19 Posed to the Courts and the Profession;
- How to Unify the Legal Application Standards Through Similar Cases and Precedents;



- The Application and Limitation of General Legal Principles in International Commercial Disputes; and
- Court Procedural Rules - Features Relevant to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Led by Chief Justice Menon, the SupCt delegation included Justice Steven Chong, Justice Quentin Loh and Justice Ang Cheng Hock. The SPC delegation was led by Chief Justice Zhou, and included Justice Yang Wanming, Justice Liu Guixiang and Justice Chen Fengchao.



Launch of "A Compendium of Singapore-China International Commercial Cases Curated for their Relevance to the Belt and Road Initiative"

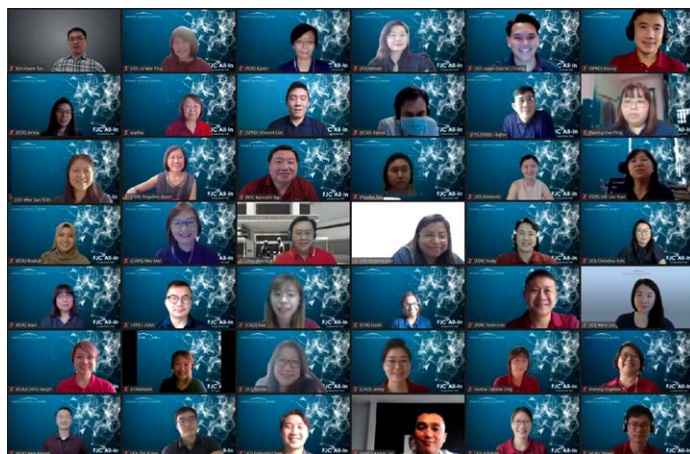
The two Chief Justices launched "A Compendium of Singapore-China International Commercial Cases Curated for their Relevance to the Belt and Road Initiative". The Compendium, jointly published by SupCt and the SPC, is the culmination of a dedicated team effort by a stellar panel of editors as well as expert commentators from Singapore and the PRC. Coordinated by the Singapore Judicial College and the China National Judges College, the Compendium comprises selected international commercial cases from both Singapore and the PRC courts that are useful for readers who are keen to find out more about cases relevant to the BRI. The Compendium symbolises the deep commitment of both courts in the pursuit of mutual understanding of each other's laws and legal systems, as well as advancing the rule of law in the region.

FJC ALL-IN 2020: REDEFINING THE "NEW NORMAL"



The Family Justice Courts (FJC) held its FJC All-In virtually on 25 September. This annual affair was the second largest event held together with all staff and invited guests from Supreme Court in the virtual mode amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The first being the FJC Workplan Seminar in May during the Circuit Breaker. The half-day event saw everyone coming together to stock take on FJC's work and to re-imagine how FJC would be like post-COVID.

The FJC All-In 2020 began with an opening by the Presiding Judge, Justice Debbie Ong. She thanked everyone for their "heart" work during this trying period, and shared that this calling had reaffirmed the importance of the work at FJC, as well as how fulfilling it was to be part of FJC's work.



Encouraging all in FJC, Justice Ong shared that: "Our core aspirations are evergreen and fundamentally important. COVID-19 or no COVID-19, FJC's mission remains the same. Our key workplans need mindset change and a refreshing way of approaching family justice. It will take some time, maybe a couple of years, but we should not rush."

Following Justice Ong's Opening Remarks, the event began with the video on "The Impact of COVID-19" showing how the world has rapidly changed since the pandemic struck. A second video titled "The Future of Our Work" ensued which featured a futuristic view on how the FJC might look like in 2035 with the rapid global technological advancement.

Attendees were then assigned to breakout groups to consider the implications of the "new normal" and discussed the post-COVID environment from the perspectives of a judicial officer, a court administrator, and a court user. In the process, insightful feedback was collected.

The event concluded with Deputy Presiding Judge, Mr Chia Wee Kiat giving his Closing Remarks. Reminiscing how far FJC had come and had been vested, he shared how FJC All-In was conceived as an expression that everyone in FJC matters and as a reminder of the great trust and responsibility that has been vested upon the FJC in the administration of family justice.

He said, "Today, the world we used to know has changed dramatically. We are going through a challenging period, but so is the rest of the world. In some future FJC All-In, I am confident that we will look back on this day with pride, and say that we have made it through together, stayed true to our mission and emerged stronger than before. So, let us keep our spirit high, stay focused now and put our best foot forward, to be the best that we can be for each other, for families in distress."

The COVID-19 pandemic has undelibly changed the way we work and conduct our lives. Until the world has the virus under tight control, let us continue to take care of ourselves and our families.

JUDICIARY HONOURS 43 COURT VOLUNTEERS



Forty-three volunteers of the Supreme Court, State Courts and Family Justice Courts were honoured for their steadfast commitment to pro bono work amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Among the robust 330-strong court volunteer pool, three Outstanding Court Volunteer Awards and 40 Long Service Awards were conferred to recognise volunteers for their outstanding contributions, commitment and dedication to support the work of the Judiciary.

These awards give recognition to volunteers in various vocations, including pro bono criminal defence in a capital matter, mediation, committee and project contributions, for their time and dedication in supporting the work of the Courts.

To ensure the safety and well-being of court volunteers, the annual Judiciary Volunteers Appreciation Dinner was dispensed with this year. In order to express appreciation to the court volunteers, cookies baked by the Yellow Ribbon Industries Bakery with a message from Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon were delivered to them.

Expressing his deep appreciation in the message, Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon said "Justice, of course, is not confined to the traditional modes of dispute resolution. Equally important are the peace-building processes that help foster enduring restorative solutions ... All of you play a critical role in supporting the Judiciary and I express my heartfelt thanks for your selfless dedication to the worthy cause of ensuring that justice remains accessible to all".



Award Recipients:

Outstanding Court Volunteer Awards 2020

- conferred by the State Courts

- Advocate and Solicitor Category: Mr Rengarajoo Rengasamy Balasamy*
- Open Category: Mr Indu Kumar Vasudevan
- Student Category: Mr Jordan Lim Zi Rui

*Mr Rengarajoo concurrently received the Long Service Award

LASCO Long Service Award

- conferred by the Supreme Court

- Mr James Bahadur Masih
- Mr Mahendran Mylvaganam

Long Service Award

- conferred by the State Courts

- Mr Amolat Singh
- Mr Cheong Aik Chye
- Mr Abdul Salim Ahmed Ibrahim
- Ms Anjali Muniandy
- Mr Balasubramaniam Appavu
- Mr Chan Jin Han
- Mr Chen Nan Chung Burton
- Mr Cheng Sun Cheok Alvin
- Mr Chew Kei-Jin
- Mr Choo Chih Chien Benjamin
- Mr Daryl Ong Hock Chye
- Mr Goh Choong Sien, Aloysius
- Ms Goh Mia Yang
- Mr Kamalarajan Malaiyandi Chettiar
- Mr Kang Kim Yang
- Dr Karunanithy Ramasamy
- Mr Lam Kuet Keng Steven John
- Ms Lim Ching Ching Sandra
- Ms Lim Lei Theng
- Mr Lim Tat
- Mr Lim Wei Loong Ian
- Dr Loke Chi Wei Peter
- Associate Professor Lum Kit Wye
- Mr Mathavan Devadas
- Mr Melvin Chan Kah Keen
- Ms Neoh Sue Lynn
- Mr Nicholas Philip Lazarus
- Mr Patrick Tan Tse Chia
- Mr See Chern Yang
- Mr Seet Pek Hian Harold
- Mr Sim Chong
- Mr Tan Heng Khim
- Mr Tan Lam Siong
- Mr Wan Kwong Weng
- Ms Wong Su-Hsien Audrey
- Mr Yuen Djia Chiang Jonathan

Long Service Award

- conferred by the Family Justice Courts

- Mr Ng Ngiap Kiang, Francis

FIRST VIRTUAL BILATERAL MEETING BETWEEN SUPREME COURTS OF SINGAPORE AND SOUTH KOREA

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and Chief Justice of the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Kim Myeongsu, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Judicial Cooperation at the first Singapore – South Korea Virtual Bilateral Meeting on 19 October.

Reaffirming the strong bilateral relationship between the two judiciaries, the two Chief Justices had an insightful exchange on the respective Judiciary's commitment towards maintaining access to justice during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as new areas of cooperation towards court excellence in the administration of justice. The bilateral

meeting ended on a positive note with both Chief Justices pledging their commitments to deepen judicial cooperation.

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon also delivered an online lecture entitled "Judging and the Judiciary: Challenges and Lessons in the Age of Technology" to judges from South Korea and Singapore. The lecture was jointly organised by the Singapore Judicial College and the Judicial Research and Training Institute of the Supreme Court of Korea.



Chief Justice of the Republic of Korea
Kim Myeong-Su

Chief Justice of Singapore
Sundaresh Menon

Virtual handshake between the Chief Justice Kim of South Korea and Chief Justice Menon of Singapore at the bilateral meeting

SECOND MEETING OF THE SUPREME COURT OF SINGAPORE – SUPREME PEOPLE'S COURT OF CHINA WORKING GROUP

The Supreme Court of Singapore (SupCt) – Supreme People's Court of China (SPC) Working Group to Develop Legal Infrastructure in Support of the Belt and Road Initiative was established in 2018. Set up under the auspices of the Singapore-China Legal and Judicial Roundtable (the Roundtable), the SupCt-SPC Working Group identifies areas of cooperation between the two Courts. Following the successful inaugural meeting in 2019, a second meeting was convened on 4 November over videoconference.

Justice Steven Chong, Judge of Appeal, of SupCt and Justice Yang Wanming, Vice President of SPC, co-chaired the Working Group meeting, and had a fruitful discussion on exploring new areas of cooperation and preparing for the Roundtable that was to be held in end-November.



Justice Steven Chong, Judge of Appeal,
Supreme Court of Singapore

Justice Yang Wanming, Vice President,
Supreme People's Court of China

Co-Chairs of the Working Group delivering opening remarks at the Second Meeting of the Supreme Court of Singapore – Supreme People's Court of China Working Group to Develop Legal Infrastructure in Support of the Belt and Road Initiative on 4 November.

THIRD EDITION OF THE IFCE LAUNCHED

On 23 September, the third edition of the International Framework for Court Excellence (IFCE) was launched at a webinar organised by the International Consortium for Court Excellence (ICCE).

The webinar titled "Responding to Challenges in a Pandemic" was hosted by the ICCE Executive Committee. They discussed the challenges brought about by COVID-19 and how the IFCE can guide courts to respond to the situation with more orderly and considered changes in court procedures.

The ICCE Executive Committee

- Mr Daniel Hall, ICCE Chair and Vice-President, US National Center for State Courts (NCSC)
- Mr Laurence Glanfield, Deputy President, Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration
- Ms Jennifer Marie, Deputy Presiding Judge of the State Courts
- Ms Beth Wiggins, Director of Research Division, US Federal Judicial Center
- The Honourable Chief Justice Carl B. Ingram, High Court of the Republic of the Marshall Islands



The webinar included the NCSC's approach to helping the courts manage a crisis and develop long-term plans; Chief Justice Ingram speaking about how the Marshall Islands applied the IFCE's continuous improvement methodology to identify areas that courts should be focused on for court functions to resume smoothly and safely; Ms Jennifer Marie emphasising the importance of nurturing a committed and competent workforce against the backdrop of a global pandemic.

About 250 ICCE members and international participants from 30 countries attended the inaugural webinar. More information on the third edition of the IFCE can be found at www.courtexcellence.com.

IFCE Colloquium

On 28 October, more than 100 members of judiciaries from ASEAN countries participated in an online colloquium that was organised by the State Courts, a founding member of the ICCE.

In addition to an introduction on the IFCE that was provided by Mr Daniel Hall, Ms Jennifer Marie presented the updates to the third edition of the IFCE, highlighting the richer content and increased user-friendliness to improve its effectiveness. Participants also observed a demonstration on using the new scoring guidelines in the IFCE.

Judge Sorawit Limparangsri, Chief Judge of the Office of the President of the Supreme Court of Thailand, and Dr Prim Haryadi, General Director of Directorate General, General Court of Indonesia, also shared their experiences of using the IFCE in their respective judiciaries. The IFCE Colloquium was held in conjunction with the eighth Meeting of the Council of ASEAN Chief Justices.



EIGHTH COUNCIL OF ASEAN CHIEF JUSTICES MEETING

The annual meeting of the Council of ASEAN Chief Justices (CACJ) was hosted by the Supreme People's Court of Vietnam on 5 November. The eighth CACJ Meeting was a historic one as it was the first CACJ Meeting held via videoconference. The CACJ was originally scheduled to meet in Hanoi in September but the meeting was rescheduled and adapted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. All ten ASEAN Judiciaries participated in the virtual meeting and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen regional judicial cooperation even in times of regional and global challenges.

At the meeting, the Honourable Nguyen Hoa Binh, President of the Supreme People's Court of Vietnam, was elected as the Chair of the CACJ. The CACJ discussed at length the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic on the ASEAN Judiciaries and identified possible solutions to cope with the effects of the pandemic while ensuring the continued administration of justice. The CACJ agreed to strengthen regional judicial cooperation by sharing and showcasing in the ASEAN Judiciaries Portal (AJP) the responses of the ASEAN Judiciaries to the COVID-19 pandemic. It also discussed the reports and updates from the six Working Groups of the CACJ: the Working Group on the AJP, the Working Group on Facilitating Service of Civil Processes within ASEAN, the Working Group on Case Management and Court Technology, the Working Group on Judicial Education and Training, the Working Group on Cross-Border Disputes Involving Children, and the Working Group on ASEAN+ Meetings. In particular, Singapore updated on the successful completion of all system enhancements on the AJP and the colloquium on the latest edition of the International Framework for Court Excellence that was conducted earlier in the year.

The CACJ deliberated and agreed on the work agenda and events for the coming year as encapsulated in the *Hanoi Declaration* signed by all attending Chief Justices and Heads of Delegations at the close of the meeting. These included judicial training, court excellence, development of regional legal frameworks, and strengthening engagements with regional partners.

The next annual meeting of the CACJ will be hosted by Indonesia in 2021.



WINNERS ANNOUNCED FOR THE INAUGURAL 'HACKATHON FOR A BETTER WORLD 2020' BY DBS X SG JUDICIARY



'Live' virtual judging of the 'Hackathon for a Better World 2020' at TechLaw.Fest

After three gruelling months of research and solutioning, the inaugural 'Hackathon for a Better World 2020' by DBS x SG Judiciary wrapped up with an Awards Day that was held virtually on 13 October, with Justice Aedit Abdullah gracing the event as the Guest-of-Honour.

Four teams, namely, White Hat Hackers (DBS Bank), LAB Legal Tech (Legal Aid Bureau), Access and Opportunity (Allen and Overy LLP) and Aid-in-Person (State Courts), emerged as the overall winners after impressing the judges with their innovative proposals, incisive analysis and empathy for various stakeholders' needs.

Team	Award	Description of Solution
White Hat Hackers (DBS Bank)	Most Innovative	A convenient and streamlined process where bereaved family members can centrally access all financial institutions, which hold assets of the deceased, for probate/administration purposes.
LAB Legal Tech (Legal Aid Bureau)	Most Feasible	A one-stop platform with self-help tools for wives facing family violence.
Access and Opportunity (Allen and Overy LLP)	Most Life-Changing	An easy-to-use, downloadable, online platform containing information in different native languages for migrant workers.
Aid-in-Person (State Courts)	Most Human-Centred	To harness community resources and technology so that accused persons can navigate the criminal justice system and be empowered to conduct their own cases.

This 'slow-burn' hackathon, which kicked off in July, saw close to 40 teams "hacking" problem statements specially curated by DBS and the Singapore Judiciary, to foster among them, a better understanding of social justice and to find creative ways to improve access to justice in Singapore.

In a joint press release by the Singapore Judiciary and DBS Bank on 19 October, Justice Abdullah said, "What is especially significant for me is that this is the first such collaboration between the Singapore Judiciary and an established private corporation. The level of enthusiasm and passion amongst the teams, as they innovate to enhance access to justice, is inspiring. I believe that these solutions hold great potential for positive impact in the community and look forward to seeing these ideas come to fruition."

On the role of technology in the legal industry, Mr Tan Ken Hwee, Chief Transformation and Innovation Officer for the Singapore Judiciary, said, "Transforming court processes through innovation can certainly enhance access to justice for the man in the street."

EVENTS & INITIATIVES



COURT VOLUNTEER MEDIATORS ATTEND ANNUAL TRAINING SESSIONS ONLINE

Mediating in the Shadow of COVID-19

On 5 June, about 120 Court Volunteer Mediators attended the annual training by the State Courts Centre for Dispute Resolution (SCCDR). Aptly titled "Mediating in the Shadow of COVID-19", the webinar covered topics pertinent to the challenges brought about by the pandemic and the shift from physical, face-to-face hearings to remote hearings conducted via videoconferencing. The Q&A segment also provided the opportunity for participants to share their insights, learn from personal experiences and discuss issues relating to online mediation.

Understanding Common Mental Health Issues

On 20 November, 89 Court Volunteer Mediators attended a second webinar that focussed on mental health. The session included sharing by Senior Court Counsellors from State Courts' Centre for Specialist Services, covering topics about understanding common mental health issues, recognising mental health disorders and managing court users with mental health issues.

The SCCDR conducts these training seminars every year to ensure that the knowledge and skillsets of Court Volunteer Mediators are kept relevant and up to date.

OVER \$33,000 DONATED THROUGH JUDICARES

Every year, judges and staff from the three Courts would volunteer to participate in JUDICARES to support meaningful causes or give back to society.

As part of Judiciary Cares (JUDICARES) 2020, members of the Singapore Judiciary and their families participated in a virtual walkathon from 13 to 20 September in support of the Samaritans of Singapore (SOS).

The #HOWRU Virtual Walkathon was organised by SOS and held in conjunction with suicide prevention awareness month. It served as a platform to bring together the community to share a voice for suicide prevention and show solidarity with people who are struggling to cope with the challenges of adapting to the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Judiciary contributed a total of \$33,333 to the cause through participation and donations.



About SOS

A non-profit organisation dedicated to providing emotional support to individuals facing a crisis, thinking about or are affected by suicide.

EVENTS & INITIATIVES



DIVORCE REGISTRY GOES REMOTE

If anyone were to ask the staff of the Divorce Registry at the Family Justice Courts about their most memorable transformation in 2020, the likely reply would be serving court users over a virtual counter and the issuance of electronically certified copies of pre-2020 divorce court documents.

Prior to the Circuit Breaker put in place by the Government to curb the COVID-19 situation in Singapore, the Divorce Registry operated a physical counter and walk-in court users could expect services such as case searches, payment and collection of certified true copies of court documents and case-related enquiries.

In its efforts to reduce footprints to the registry and safeguard the health of court users and registry officers amidst the escalating COVID-19 situation, the Divorce Registry re-engineered its full suite of counter services.

Through the collaborative efforts of the Divorce Registry, Finance Directorate and the Office of Transformation and Innovation, electronically certified copies of divorce court documents ("e-CTC") were rolled out in time to replace hard copies with embossment during the start of Circuit Breaker period. This service allows court users to make payments via online banking and receive the electronically certified court documents over email. e-CTC has brought much convenience to court users as many of them needed their divorce documents for urgent applications during the Circuit Breaker period, such as extending their PR status, seeking reliefs arising from the Circuit Breaker and HDB housing.

The Divorce Registry went on to introduce a full-fledged virtual counter service for court users who have no means to get in touch with the Divorce Registry via phone or email, or are already in the court premises.

The vast majority of court and chamber hearings moved to Zoom by default after the Circuit Breaker period. To help court users unfamiliar with technology, "Zoom rooms" were set up for litigants in person to connect to Zoom hearings from FJC's premises. However, the registry soon realised that a number of the court users are not tech savvy and have limited command of the English language. These court users could not understand the written instructions, operate the Zoom app and/or self-help themselves to the correct informational leaflets placed at the counter. It was challenging for the registry officers to handle the remote calls as they tried to adapt to the virtual counter while still carrying out their daily duties of supporting judicial officers on remote hearings and case management work.

These challenges however presented the Divorce Registry with opportunities to refine and develop a sustainable virtual counter service; they also made the registry officers more resilient and creative in coming up with solutions. If court users were to visit the physical counter at the Divorce Registry today, they will be greeted by pictorial instructions. They only need to press one button on the counter telephone to connect with the registry officer. If a verification of identity is required, the registry officer can easily activate Zoom calls to the court users without any need for them to know how to operate Zoom. All the leaflets at the counter are now colour coded to make it easy for court users to be directed to the right information. A CCTV has also been set up for the registry officer to manage the queue and assess the situation on the ground remotely.

Today, the enquiries/calls from the virtual counter are remotely channelled to 14 registry officers who handle them off-site. More than 500 enquiries/calls were attended to since its launch in August 2020.

KOPI TIME WITH FAMILY SERVICE CENTRES

Family Service Centres appreciate the growing collaboration with FJC

Since last year, Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS) has been helping a series of dialogue sessions with Family Service Centres (FSCs) to promote networking and mutual understanding between these community agencies and FJC. The sessions, spread through the year, hoped to generate ideas on how FJC and FSCs can work better together.

This year, CAPS organised five sessions, branded as KOPI Time, and they were attended by a total of 41 centre directors and senior staff from 35 FSCs. Challenged by COVID-19 which prevented face-to-face sessions, three out of the five sessions were conducted remotely via Zoom so that these important opportunities would not be lost. Despite the challenges, CAPS managed to reach out to a comparable number of FSCs this year (37 FSCs attended in 2019).



Another new aspect of KOPI Time this year was the special focus on introducing Therapeutic Justice (TJ) to the FSCs. Key Judges were invited to KOPI Time to lead the discussions on TJ with the FSCs. Some FSC Directors were moved by an inspirational TJ video shown, resonating with many of its values and principles. Others affirmed that TJ was a step in the right direction and showed interest to be part of TJ where possible.

Over the five sessions, Judges (including the Principal District Judge) and CAPS' senior staff fielded several questions and clarifications on legal proceedings. Matters concerning Personal Protection Order (PPO) remained the focus, as FJC and FSCs work most closely to ensure families are kept safe.

FSC directors appreciated that communication between FJC and FSCs had improved significantly over the years, which bode well for their clients. One director shared her experience of CAPS jumping into action upon hearing from the FSC about the potential risk that a respondent posed to a complainant during a court session. Working closely with the court administrators and security officers, CAPS quickly arranged for one party to leave before the other party to ensure safety.

Given that COVID-19 has disrupted many court processes, FSC directors affirmed the importance of strong communication of FJC's business continuity plans.

FSC directors also hoped their staff could visit FJC or sit in court sessions so that they would be more familiar with FJC processes. With a better understanding, they would be able to better support their clients who may be undergoing court proceedings.

Overall, the sessions were well-received and the participants were appreciative and keen for more of such sessions.

"Thank you (for) organizing the Kopi Time session and your sharing! It has been helpful for us to understand more about one another's work and enhance our partnership. Look forward to the future collaboration. Thanks!"

Principal Social Worker,
Hougang Sheng Hong FSC

"Thank you for the platform for community partners to understand the TJ and the court services"

Senior Director, PPIS

DEVELOPMENT IN THE COURTS POST-CIRCUIT BREAKER

The Circuit Breaker gave us many opportunities to re-think how the courts and justice system should work. In the light of this, here are three areas that the courts can look into developing.



Access to justice

Reducing barriers to obtaining information about the law is a key aspect in providing greater access to justice. A single website to replace the individual websites of the Supreme Court, State Courts and Family Justice Courts is being developed. Deliberately focused on providing information about court proceedings without "legalese", this new website will be a "one-stop" shop for all matters pertaining to the courts. The existing sites will no longer exist after the new website is ready.

Use of standard mechanisms, such as SingPass (for secure logging into court systems) and Singapore Quick Response Code Payment (for e-payment) will also be increased. Both of which were not in existence when the court systems were first built.

In time, litigants-in-persons may even be able to attend hearings remotely, via an app, once their identity can be securely confirmed using the National Digital Identity mechanism.



Efficiency

During the Circuit Breaker, directions for case management were given by way of correspondence or electronic means, often without the attendance of the counsel. An asynchronous hearing facility that can be used for all case types, to allow parties and the court to communicate via formal text messages, without needing to be online and "meeting" at a common time is being developed.



Data

More data will be captured as "machine processable" data to make better use of and share data more effectively and securely with government agencies. This will allow for more automated or assisted processing of matters.

COVID-19 has shown that the courts and lawyers can work well using remote tools. This could well dovetail in the idea that courts can function more as a "service" rather than as physical locations.



NEW APPOINTMENTS TO THE SINGAPORE JUDICIAL COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon has made appointments to the Board of Governors of the Singapore Judicial College for a new 3-year term from 1 November 2020 to 31 October 2023. Justice Andrew Phang chairs the Board with Justice Quentin Loh and Justice See Kee Oon as Deputy Chairs. The Governors provide guidance and consultation to the College on a variety of its work, including the Empirical Judicial Research initiative. We congratulate the Governors on their appointments.



Chairman
Justice Andrew Phang
Judge of Appeal
Supreme Court of Singapore



Deputy Chairman
Justice Quentin Loh
Judge in charge of Singapore
International Commercial Court



Deputy Chairman
Justice See Kee Oon
Judge
Supreme Court of Singapore



Justice Debbie Ong
Presiding Judge of the
Family Justice Courts of Singapore



Justice Vincent Hoong
Presiding Judge of the
State Courts of Singapore



Justice Ang Cheng Hock
Judge
Supreme Court of Singapore



Justice Anselmo Reyes
International Judge
Singapore International
Commercial Court



Professor Joseph Weiler
University Professor
New York University
School of Law



Professor Goh Yihan
Dean, School of Law
Singapore Management
University



Professor Jeffrey Pinsler SC
Faculty of Law
National University of
Singapore



Foo Chee Hock SC
Dean
Singapore Judicial College



Paul Quan
Executive Director
Singapore Judicial College

RE-OPENING OF SUPREME COURT AND STATE COURTS LIBRARY

From 1 December, the libraries located at Supreme Court and State Courts will be opened on Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) at the following times.

Location	Operating Hours
Supreme Court	Monday to Friday: 10.00 am to 12.00 pm
State Courts	Monday to Friday: 8.30 am to 12.30 pm

As a safe management measure, the libraries can only accommodate up to 20 persons at a time. Other safe management measures will also be in place to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission.



Supreme Court Library

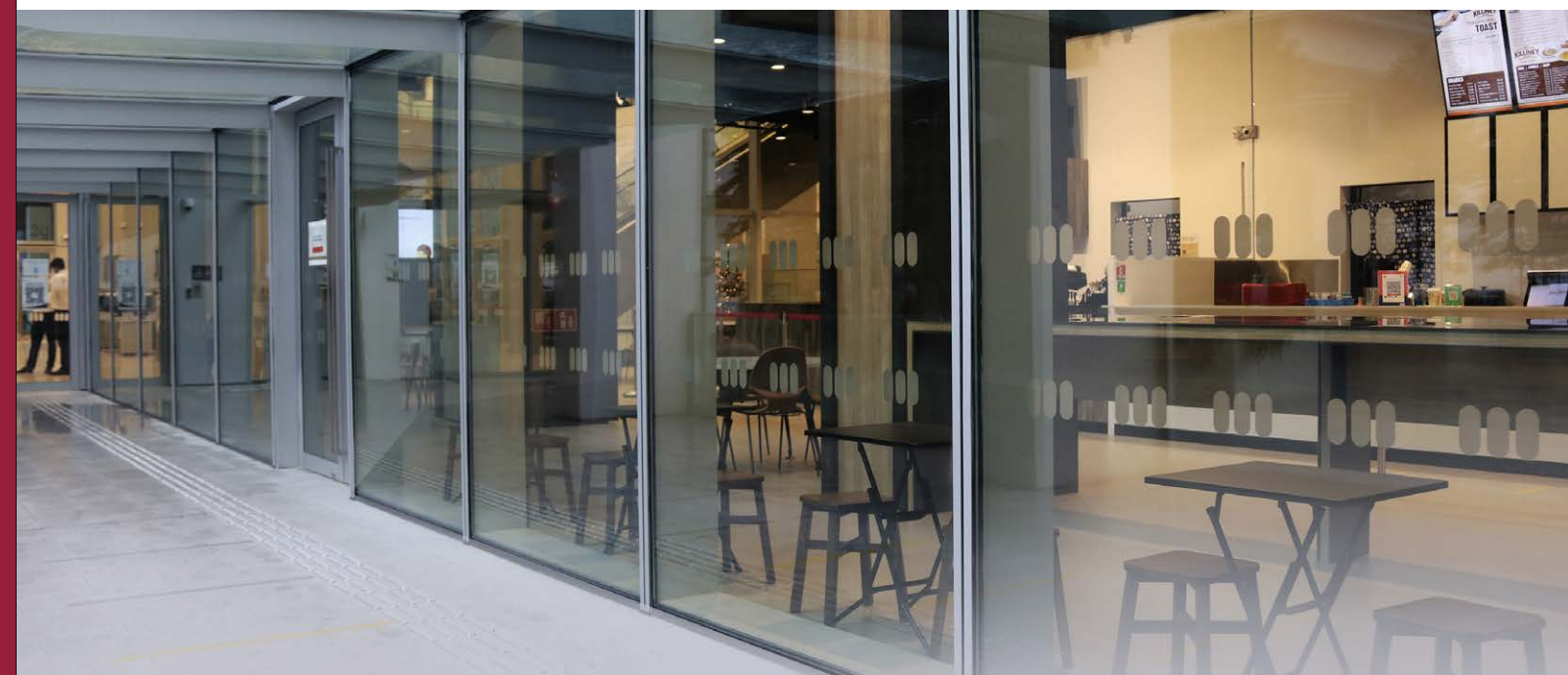


State Courts Library

NEW CAFÉ AT STATE COURTS

Location	Operating Hours
Level 1, State Courts	Monday to Friday: 7.30 am to 7.30 pm • Saturday: 7.30 am to 1.00pm

To minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission, safe management measures will be in place.



JUDICIARY NATIONAL DAY AWARDS INVESTITURE 2020

The National Day Award Investiture (NDAI) Ceremony was held on 30 October to honour officers who received the National Day Awards in 2020. The NDAI recognises various forms of merit and service to Singapore. A total of 18 recipients from the Supreme Court, State Courts and Family Justice Courts received the National Day honours in six award categories this year.

Award Recipients

Public Administration Medal (Silver)

Supreme Court

Edwin San, Senior Assistant Registrar
Jack Lim, Director (Infrastructure & Court Services)

Family Justice Courts

Kevin Ng, District Judge

Public Administration Medal (Bronze)

State Courts

Renuka Thanabalan, Deputy Director (Court Services - Language Services)

Commendation Medal

Supreme Court

Kate Lim, Assistant Director (Infrastructure)

State Courts

Daphne Quek Yi-Ching, Senior Assistant Director (Infrastructure)

Public Service Medal

Supreme Court

Tan Ken Hwee, Chief Transformation and Innovation Officer (awarded in his capacity as Chairman, LawNet Legal Research Committee)

Efficiency Medal

Supreme Court

Deviki D/O Rengupillai Ramiah, Senior Case Manager (Insolvency)

State Courts

Shanti d/o Ramakrishnan, Senior Executive (Service Excellence)

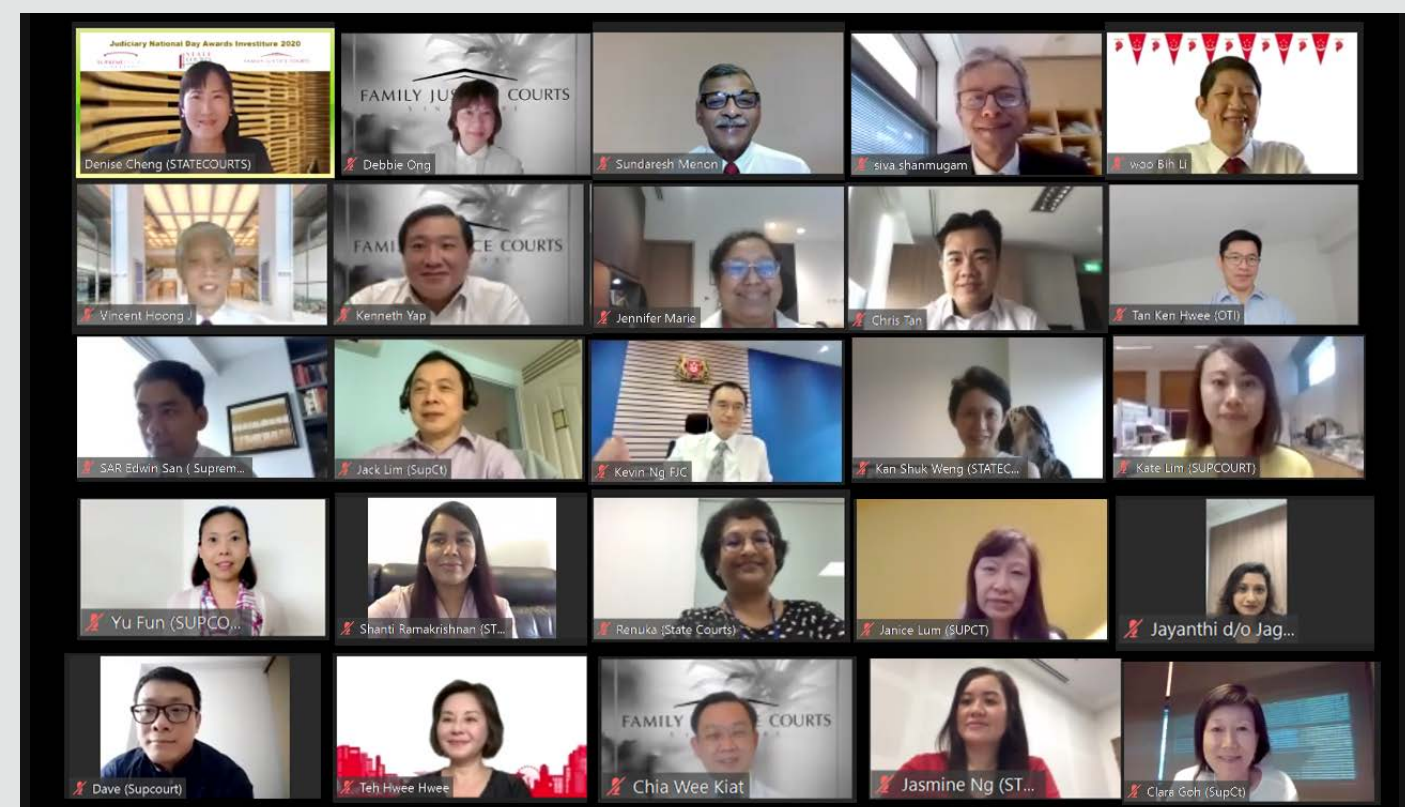
Long Service Medal

Supreme Court

Dave Lee, Assistant Director (Civil Matters)
Leong Yu Fun, Personal Secretary to Judge
Wong Yen Peng, Case Officer (Insolvency)
Mohamad Hisham Bin Samsudin, Operations Support Officer (Records)

State Courts

Kan Shuk Weng, District Judge
Jasmine Ng Mui Lian, Language Executive
Jayanthi d/o Jaganathan, Senior Language Executive
Wahidah Banu d/o Abu Bakar, Senior Executive (People Development & Planning)
Siti Aishah Bte Ali, Operations Support Officer (Crime)



STATE COURTS RECOGNISED AS A CHAMPION OF GOOD 2020

The State Courts were named a Champion of Good by the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre on 19 November. They were among 74 organisations that were recognised for their extraordinary contributions to various social causes and beneficiary groups.

The State Courts were first conferred the Champion of Good status in 2018. As leaders and ambassadors of corporate giving, the State Courts have organised numerous corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities such as fundraisers and outings with beneficiaries of different charities every year. They have also implemented meaningful initiatives like Food for Good and Book Nook, which encouraged the community to give back to society. In the light of the COVID-19 situation this year, they reached out to front-line personnel and disadvantaged families, leaving a positive impact on the lives of many in the most challenging of times.

The State Courts believe that CSR activities not only promote the spirit of volunteerism and cultivate the culture of giving back to society, it is also a good way to foster bonds as everyone comes together for a good cause.

"As a public organisation, we strive to contribute to the betterment of society and make a positive impact on the community, over and above performing our core functions."

State Courts



UPCOMING EVENTS

SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL COURT SYMPOSIUM 2021: TRENDS & DEVELOPMENTS IN INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL LITIGATION

The Singapore International Commercial Court Symposium 2021 will be held as a live webinar on 10 March 2021.

Hear from the Chief Justice of Singapore, the Judges of the Singapore International Commercial Court and other experts in the field of international commercial litigation on the latest trends and developments in this area.

The programme includes an exciting line-up of in-depth discussions on the forthcoming new procedural rules of the Singapore International Commercial Court, 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.

There will also be opportunities for interactive networking to enable delegates to reconnect with old friends and make new contacts.

Please scan the QR code for more information

<https://go.gov.sg/siccsymposium2021>



BEHIND THE SCENES WITH HR OFFICERS



Gina Sng,
Senior Assistant Director
Supreme Court and Family Justice Courts



Jessica Chouw,
Senior Executive
People Development & Planning,
State Courts

Officers in the Human Resources (HR) department are largely responsible for the management of all matters related to employees, which may go beyond just the practice of hiring.

In this issue, we interviewed Gina Sng (**GS**) who has been supporting both the Supreme Court and Family Justice Courts in HR management since 2016, and Jessica Chouw (**JC**), who joined State Courts' People Development and Planning Directorate in 2018.

Read on to find out more about the work they do and how COVID-19 may have impacted them.

What are your responsibilities at work?

GS: My current portfolio comprises recruitment, staff benefits, discipline, job design as well as manpower-related matters. I am also part of the team that formulates and reviews policies and guidelines, including the communication and implementation of HR policies and initiatives across both Courts.

JC: One of my main responsibilities is to conduct recruitment to ensure that the organisation is adequately and suitably staffed. To that end, I actively coordinate information with the departments that are recruiting and work with my team to organise and manage recruitment-related matters. Besides that, I handle ad-hoc internal communications of HR policies and staff engagement initiatives.

How has COVID-19 impacted your duties/roles in HR?

GS: COVID-19 has significantly transformed the HR management processes that we were familiar with and used to. The pandemic has inevitably forced us to reconsider different methods of engagement with our stakeholders, to ensure that our services do not grind to a halt and thus, affecting our service level.

We have reviewed our processes to enable them to be managed remotely. In the new normal, recruitment and induction processes have gone online. Officers are also encouraged to leverage self-service options on our existing systems and Intranet for information. We also found that timely communication in such uncertain times is more critical than ever.

JC: We had to leverage digital technologies to ensure that recruitment can continue in spite of the COVID-19 situation. We have likewise transited from in-person interviews to video interviews. This has become a commonplace for many organisations and has in turn introduced new challenges, such as the mitigation of technological barriers and disruptions. How we interact with one another has changed too. We have a new e-learning on-boarding module for new officers for self-orientation and to provide them with key information about the organisation.

What are some of the challenges that you face?

JC: With the shift to digital platforms for remote meetings and interviews, we must help candidates through the technical issues that they may face. Sometimes, these issues may be encountered midway during an interview and it may be challenging to troubleshoot with candidates who are less tech-savvy.

Some candidates may also feel daunted when they are asked to attend a video interview for the first time. However, we would always ensure that their concerns are addressed, and we would be there to guide them through any technical difficulties.

GS: Seeking a balanced approach with our stakeholders to manage issues as well as to come up with the best solution to achieve a win-win outcome.

I also need to catch up with digital transformation of our processes as well as delivery of the HR experience in the "new normal" working environment.

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

GS: The ability to adapt, change and learn on the job as change is constant. The need for flexibility and HR agility in responding to changes and the transformation of our processes is more crucial now than ever.

JC: People may feel that an HR officer's job simply involves the relaying of information from one party to another. Over the years I have learnt that there is more to this job and our mindset is the determinant of how much we can contribute to the organisation that we are in. I believe in value-adding to my organisation and I do not hesitate to provide input where necessary.

Why are you passionate about your job?

JC: I believe in the integrity of the public service, and the public value of the Courts in serving justice in society. This promotes safety and security for the community where our loved ones live in.

GS: The people aspect of my job excites me and the opportunity to be able to specialise in a complex but also important field of work that supports the rest of the functions in an organisation is what inspires me, in particular the work that the Courts do and the colleagues whom I have an opportunity to work with. HR work may be challenging but it is also immensely rewarding.

What will be your advice to a new HR officer?

GS: Be curious and never stop un-learning and re-learning.

JC: Hold fast to your passion and values - you can influence another to do not only the right things, but to do them right.

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