

For immediate release**Chief Justices of Supreme Court of Singapore and Supreme People's Court of China strengthen bilateral ties at the seventh Singapore-China Legal and Judicial Roundtable**

The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon led a delegation of Judges and senior officers from the Supreme Court of Singapore on a four-day visit to Beijing for the seventh Singapore-China Legal and Judicial Roundtable. Co-chaired by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and the President and Chief Justice of the Supreme People's Court (SPC) of the People's Republic of China, His Excellency Zhang Jun, the Roundtable convened on 28 November 2023.

2 This year's Roundtable was especially meaningful for both Chief Justices, given Chief Justice Zhang's appointment as President of the SPC in March 2023. This was also the first time the Roundtable returned to an in-person setting after three years of virtual meetings when COVID-19 had precluded face-to-face interactions. The two Chief Justices took the opportunity to deepen the strong bilateral ties between the two judiciaries and expand the scope of judicial cooperation. Since the inaugural Roundtable in 2017, the Supreme Court of Singapore and the SPC have taken turns to host the event.

3 A clear testament to the enduring friendship between the two judiciaries and their commitment to enhance the delivery of justice in their respective jurisdictions, the Supreme Court of Singapore and the SPC have signed a total of four Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and one Memorandum of Guidance (MoG) between 2017 and 2023¹. The two judiciaries also jointly launched a compendium in 2020, in which international commercial cases from both courts were curated for their relevance to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). More recently, in early 2023, a Strategic Roadmap on judicial cooperation, which set out five pillars of partnership to chart the next steps in the bilateral journey, was established to guide the course of future Roundtables.

4 In his opening remarks at the seventh Roundtable, Chief Justice Zhang reiterated that relations between the two countries were forward-looking, strategic and exemplary. Both countries had agreed to upgrade bilateral relations to an "*All-Round, High-Quality, Future-Oriented Partnership*" when Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong met with President Xi Jinping in March 2023. This was a significant milestone for the two countries as it charted the direction for the development of bilateral relations in a new era.

¹ These include the MoU on cooperation (2017); MoG on recognition and enforcement of money judgments in commercial cases (2018); MoU on advancing continuing judicial education between the Singapore Judicial College and National Judges College of the People's Republic of China (2019); MoU on cooperation on information on foreign law (2021); and MoU on cooperation on the management of international commercial disputes in the context of the BRI through a Litigation-Mediation-Litigation framework (2023).

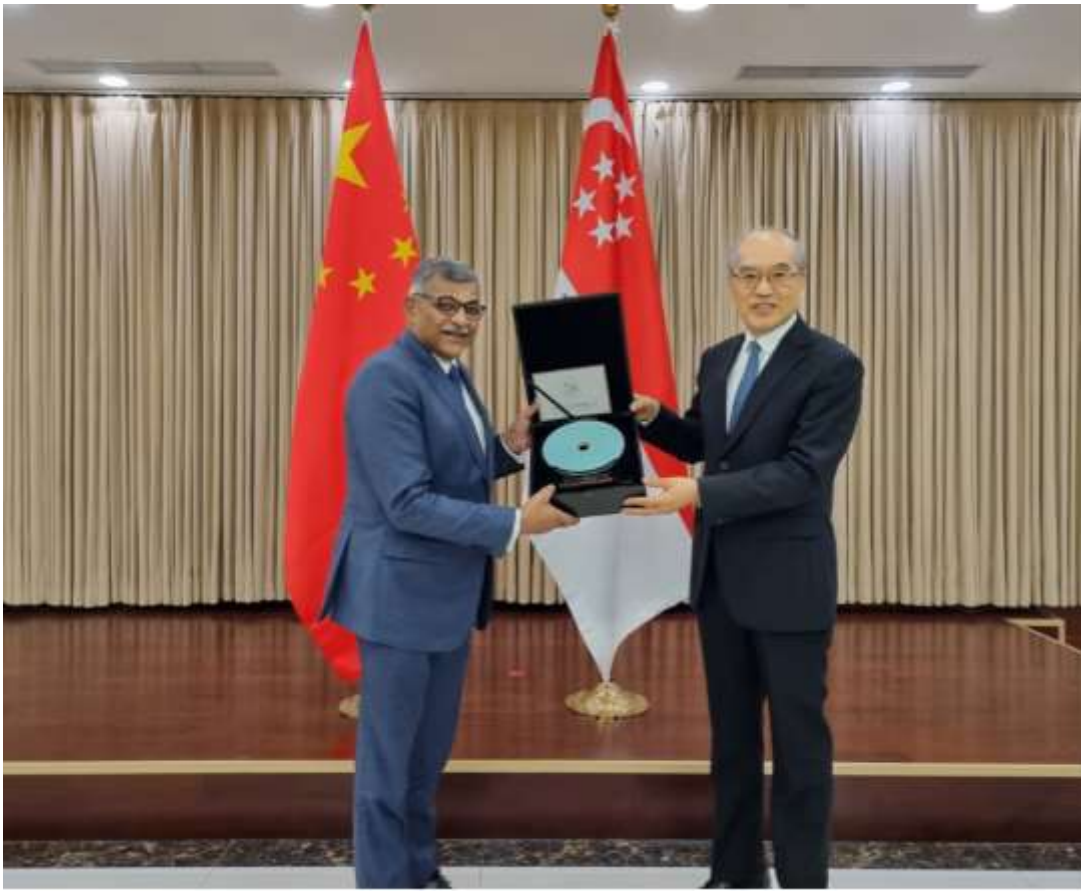
Chief Justice Menon, in his opening remarks, emphasised the significance and status of the Roundtable in the strong relationship between the two judiciaries. In the six years since its inception, the Roundtable has established itself as a valuable platform for judicial cooperation and the exchange of ideas and experiences between the two courts. Both judiciaries see the Roundtable as a mutually beneficial forum for judicial exchange on topics of considerable interest.

5 At the seventh Roundtable, both courts shared their best practices and exchanged their perspectives on four topics:

- a. The role of judiciaries in building a transnational system of commercial justice;
- b. Technical fact-finding mechanism for intellectual property cases;
- c. Recent developments in the recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments; and
- d. Effective and speedy resolution of cases concerning the judicial supervision of arbitration.

6 Chief Justice Menon shared his perspectives on the first topic, touching on two key ways in which judiciaries, taking a systemic view of transnational commercial dispute resolution, have a central role in building the transnational system of commercial justice (TSCJ). First, as *adjudicative bodies*, judiciaries can develop a coherent and consistent body of legal rules to support the TSCJ and ensure its smooth operation. Second, as *institutions in a global network*, judiciaries can drive inter-jurisdictional dialogue and collaboration in a way that ensures the continued relevance and resilience of the TSCJ.

7 During the trip, Chief Justice Menon met with the Secretary-General of the Political and Legal Affairs Commission of the Communist Party of China, Mr Chen Wenqing, and visited the Supreme People's Procuratorate, the Ministry of Justice, the Beijing Internet Court and the Beijing Intellectual Property Court. Chief Justice Menon also visited the National Judges College and delivered a lecture on "Transnational Commercial Law and the Development of the Modern-day *Lex Mercatoria*". The central thesis of Chief Justice Menon's lecture was that, by adopting a systemic approach to transnational commercial disputes and issues, the institutions of the TSCJ can develop what may be thought of as a "modern-day *lex mercatoria*" – the matrix of laws, principles, norms and networks that govern various aspects of transnational commercial activity – that can support the TSCJ and sustain our rules-based international order in the face of the challenges it faces today. Chief Justice Menon described his vision for the modern-day *lex mercatoria*, and then explained how this vision could be realised through meaningful convergence in the *procedural* and *substantive* norms of the TSCJ, as well as between the *institutions* of the TSCJ.



Chief Justice Menon with Chief Justice Zhang

ISSUED BY:

SG Courts

30 November 2023

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