

JUDICIARY NEWSLETTER

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THIRD EDITION OF "HOT SEAT" FORUM A SUCCESS

Curiosity was in the spotlight at the third edition of the "Hot Seat" forum, where students from state and private schools on Mahé and Praslin engaged in a lively Q&A with the President of the Court of Appeal, Justice Anthony Fernando.

From children's rights, to what inspired him to join the legal profession, to how judges balance the letter of the law with fairness, students asked tough and thought-provoking questions that sparked meaningful discussion.

The forum, held this Wednesday 1 October at the Palais de Justice, was attended by students, teachers, and members of the [National Council for Children](#) (NCC), led by CEO Mrs. Yasmin Umarji. Special thanks go to San Finesse from the NCC team and Sasha Marivel, Public Relations Officer of the Judiciary, who also moderated the session.

Students also had the opportunity to visit a courtroom, adding a practical learning experience to the day.

This initiative, a partnership between the Judiciary and NCC, is already showing results: children are becoming more curious about justice, their rights, and future career paths in law - with many eager to return for more.



CHIEF JUSTICE OF SEYCHELLES HONOURED BY SEACJF FOR CONTRIBUTION TO RULE OF LAW

The Chief Justice of Seychelles, Rony Govinden, has been recognised by the South East Africa Chief Justices' Forum (SEACJF) for his outstanding contribution to promoting the rule of law and strengthening judicial cooperation within the region. The award, presented last week during the SEACJF Annual General Meeting & Conference held in Botswana, celebrates those Chief Justices who have made singular and exemplary contributions towards raising the profile of the Forum and advancing its objectives, embodied by this year's conference theme, "Judicial Independence and Accountability in Safeguarding the Rule of Law", as well as exemplifying the ideals of the Conference of Constitutional Jurisdictions of Africa (CJCA), to which body Chief Justice Govinden was elected as member of its Executive Committee last year.

In the light of the continuous progress made by the Judiciary of Seychelles, the Chief Justices of the Southern and East African region have agreed to hold their next Executive Committee Meeting in Seychelles in April next year. This year's Conference theme highlighted the necessity for judicial independence, of which financial autonomy is a crucial component. The principle of judicial independence is facilitated by financial autonomy and judicial accountability; and is in line with the best practices as set out in the Paris Principles on the Status of National Institutions, and the UN Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary. Judge Brassel Adeline attended the conference on behalf of Chief Justice Govinden and accepted the award in his stead. He was accompanied by the Deputy Registrar, Ms. Marie-Angel Barbe, and Director for Legal Affairs, Mr. Lionel Garrick. This recognition highlights Seychelles' continued engagement and leadership within the SEACJF, reaffirming the Judiciary's commitment to upholding judicial independence, integrity, and regional collaboration in the pursuit of justice.



JUDICIARY WELCOMES NEW CHIEF MAGISTRATE AND MAGISTRATE AT SWEARING-IN CEREMONY

The Judiciary of Seychelles has marked a significant occasion with the swearing in of two judicial officers: the promotion of **Ms. Brigitte Confait** as Chief Magistrate, and the appointment of **Ms. Nisha Alleear** as Magistrate. The ceremony was attended by the Chief Justice, judicial officers, members of senior management, as well as the families and friends of the appointees on Thursday 2 October 2025 at the Palais de Justice auditorium.

Ms. Confait, who previously served as Senior Magistrate, was elevated to the position of Chief Magistrate in recognition of her extensive service and leadership within the Judiciary. A graduate of the University of Mauritius, she was called to the Seychelles Bar in 2014 and has served in the Office of the Attorney General for over eight years. During this time, she successfully conducted complex criminal, civil, and constitutional matters before the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal, and also contributed her expertise on national boards, including as Chairperson of the Seychelles Fisheries Authority Appeals Board. Since her appointment as Magistrate in May 2019, Ms. Confait has continued to demonstrate judicial competence and integrity, earning her new position as Chief Magistrate.

Also taking her oath of office was Ms. Nisha Alleear, newly appointed as Magistrate. Ms. Alleear holds a Bachelor of Law with Honours from Middlesex University in the UK and was called to the Bar of England and Wales at the University of the West of England in 2019. She completed her pupillage at Georges & Co. law firm, contributing to landmark cases such as the Vijay and MultiChoice matters. Endorsed by her mentor, Mr. Bernard Georges, for her dedication and talent, she has already gained valuable courtroom experience before both Justice Mohan Burhan and Chief Justice Rony Govinden. Ms. Alleear continues a proud family legacy in the legal sphere, following in the footsteps of her father, retired Chief Justice Vivekanand Alleear.

The Chief Justice congratulated both officers on their achievements, highlighting the importance of their roles in strengthening the Judiciary's service to the people of Seychelles and in upholding the rule of law.





CALL TO THE BAR

Karin Laboudallon was called to the Bar this Thursday 18 September at the Supreme Court. She took her oaths before the Chief Justice, in the presence of colleagues, family and friends. Attorney Kieran Shah, who was her pupil master for her two year pupillage, described her as "exemplary". In turn, she thanked everyone who helped in her journey and thanked Mr. Shah for the invaluable experience and patience he had with her. "I hope to be worthy of this title," she noted. Karine Laboudallon completed her law studies in the UK from 2019-2023.



Ms. Ria Alcindor was called to the Bar before Chief Justice Rony Govinden and Judge Madeleine this Friday 3 October at the Palais de Justice. Attorney General Vincent Perrera commended Ms. Alcindor as "a brilliant legal mind in the making" with "a tireless work ethic." He highlighted her active service on Boards, the Trainings Committee, and the Social Committee. Her colleagues also praised her commitment to the work, describing her as often "burning the midnight oil." In her remarks, Ms. Alcindor described her pupillage as "transformative," noting her parents as her greatest source of strength. She expressed gratitude for the Bar Vocational Course led by Chief Justice Govinden and Judge Madeleine, calling it an honor to learn directly from the country's judges. Chief Justice Govinden praised her as a studious young lawyer and reminded her to also care for her physical and mental wellbeing. Ms. Alcindor holds a Bachelor of Law from the University of London and successfully passed the Seychelles Bar Examination in December 2022. She completed her two-year pupillage with the Attorney General's Office from May 2023 to April 2025, where she appeared before tribunals, the Magistrates' Court, the Supreme Court, and the Court of Appeal.



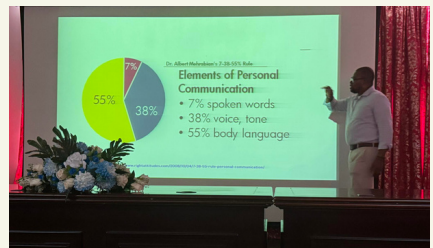
COURTESY CALL FROM OUTGOING FRENCH AMBASSADOR

The Ambassador of France to Seychelles H.E. Mrs. Olivia Berkeley-Christmann paid a Courtesy Call on the Chief Justice on Tuesday 2 September 2025 at the Palais de Justice. This is as she reaches the end of her mandate in country. The Chief Justice expressed his thanks for all collaborations done during her tenure, especially in terms of bilateral relations and cooperation in fighting maritime crime and improving maritime security with local stakeholders. Mrs. Berkeley-Christmann was first appointed as Ambassador to Seychelles in September 2022.



EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP TRAINING

On Thursday 18 September 2025, the Senior Management team of the Judiciary attended a wellbeing session with Psychotherapist Jimmy Petrouse, from the Quality of Life Division. Topics covered were focused on knowing oneself better in order to lead better, and how to apply empathy when managing people. This is especially vital in high stress environments, and in large teams within key institutions.



SPORTS DAY

From volleyball to relay races, tug of war and more, staff came together on Thursday 14 August at the Roche Caiman beach soccer arena to celebrate fitness and camaraderie.

Congratulations to the Aldabra team (pink) for taking first place, Frégate team (yellow) in second place, and Farquhar team (red) in third place.

A big well done to all other teams for their spirit and effort – this was truly about building stronger bonds while staying active!



BAKE SALE

Our annual bake sale took place in the Palais de Justice lobby. A variety of sweet and salty baked goods have been made by our staff to sell. Funds raised go towards our Social Committee, who organizes various activities for our teams including the much anticipated end of year party.



NEW INDIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER

On Thursday 25 September, the newly accredited Indian High Commissioner to Seychelles, Mr. Rohit Rathish, paid a courtesy visit to the Chief Justice at the Palais de Justice.

They spoke about the differences in judicial processes between India and Seychelles, the possibility for training exchanges, and the longstanding partnership that already exists between the two nations.

Mr. Rohit Rathish is a diplomat with nearly 20 years of experience of working in the Government of India. He has a B.Tech. in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from REC, Kozhikode, Kerala. He has served in different capacities in the Indian Missions in Geneva, Port Louis, Kabul, San Francisco and Male.



ELECTION OBSERVERS VISIT

The African Union and COMESA Election Observers who were in Seychelles for this Presidential election, paid a courtesy call to the Chief Justice on Friday 26 September morning.

They engaged on topics of judicial processes in electoral matters, the rules on recusal applicable to the Supreme Court, and the recent constitutional amendment establishing a transition period between the outgoing and incoming President.

The Observers further raised the topics of security and privileges for presidential candidates and also shared comparative insights on best practices from other jurisdictions, such as Zambia.

Concluding the remarks, Chief Justice Govinden stated that: "Democracy is the will of the people in action."



FESTIVAL KREOL

Judiciary staff organized and enjoyed a number of activities for Kreol Festival throughout the last week of October. Our Kreol Quiz took place over the course of three days and ended on Friday 31 October after a lively session where staff were questioned on Kreol language, Seychelles history, laws, and more. The "Curieuse" team won first place and we had great participation from the other teams, who demonstrated good knowledge of their country, culture, and with great competitive spirits.

Members of our team also represented the Judiciary at the "Salon Lengwistik ek Savwar Kiltirel" at the [ICCS Seychelles](#) on Tuesday 28 and Wednesday 29 October. We took this opportunity of being close to members of the public to speak about the Family Tribunal and the types of cases it can hear, given that topics of child custody, family property, family disputes, and related issues are common in the community. We also quizzed the public on their knowledge of the courts and structures of government, with many winners walking away with Judiciary branded pens.

Finally, our staff put on their best florals and cultural attire to enjoy typical Kreol dishes and dancing at their own Festival Kreol event on Friday 31 October held at the Palais de Justice. There was music, Kreol ambiance, and lots of smiles as staff bonded and made memories at this yearly event that celebrates what makes Seychelles so unique.



EDITORIAL

BY CHIEF JUSTICE R. GOVINDEN

“UPCOMING CHANGES IN ASSIGNING CASES TO NEW SUPREME COURT JUDGES”

The legal landscape is continually evolving, and recent developments indicate a significant shift in how commercial cases are managed within the Supreme Court. The introduction of a new judge dedicated to handling commercial disputes aims to enhance efficiency and expedite the resolution of cases. This paper explores the implications of these changes, the rationale behind them, and their potential impact on the judicial system.



Historically, commercial cases have often been assigned to judges with varying degrees of expertise in business law. This has led to inconsistencies in case management and prolonged litigation periods. The Supreme Court's decision to appoint a new judge specifically for commercial cases reflects an understanding of the complexities involved in such matters and a commitment to improving judicial efficiency.

The appointment of a judge with specialized knowledge in commercial law allows for more informed decision-making. Judges who are well-versed in business practices can better understand the nuances of commercial disputes, leading to more accurate rulings and reduced chances of appeals.

By assigning all commercial cases to a single judge or a designated panel, the court can streamline processes. This approach minimizes delays caused by judges needing time to familiarize themselves with different types of cases. A focused docket allows for quicker hearings and resolutions.

Having a dedicated judge for commercial cases fosters predictability in rulings. Legal practitioners will have clearer expectations regarding outcomes based on established precedents set by this judge, which can lead to more efficient settlement negotiations outside of court.

To ensure that the new judge is equipped to handle complex commercial cases effectively, comprehensive training programs should be implemented. These programs could include workshops on current trends in business law, mediation techniques, and alternative dispute resolution methods.

Informing stakeholders—including businesses, legal professionals, and the public—about these changes is crucial. A campaign outlining the benefits of having a specialized judge will help build trust in the system and encourage parties to utilize this streamlined process. Establishing metrics for success will be essential in assessing the effectiveness of this initiative over time. Regular evaluations should focus on case turnaround times, satisfaction rates among litigants, and overall impacts on court congestion.

It has also been found that the evolving landscape of commercial law necessitates continuous improvements in dispute resolution mechanisms.

In light of this, there is a growing recognition that integrating alternative dispute resolution (ADR) methods into the procedures outlined in the Commercial Code can significantly enhance efficiency in resolving commercial disputes. This paper examines the rationale for these changes, the proposed alterations to the Commercial Code, and their anticipated impact on the judicial system. Traditional litigation processes can be lengthy and costly, often resulting in significant delays before a resolution is reached. By incorporating ADR mechanisms such as mediation and arbitration into the Commercial Code, parties can resolve disputes more swiftly and with less expense.

ADR methods typically allow for more flexible timelines compared to court schedules, enabling quicker resolutions that are crucial for businesses needing to maintain operational continuity. Many commercial disputes arise between parties who have ongoing business relationships. ADR methods, particularly mediation, emphasize collaboration and communication rather than adversarial confrontation.

By fostering a more amicable environment for dispute resolution, businesses can preserve valuable relationships that might otherwise be damaged through contentious litigation. ADR allows parties to select arbitrators or mediators with specific expertise relevant to their industry or dispute type. This ensures that decisions are made by individuals who understand the complexities of commercial transactions.

The incorporation of specialized knowledge into dispute resolution can lead to more informed outcomes and reduce the likelihood of appeals based on misunderstandings of industry practices.

One potential change could involve mandating that all commercial contracts include clauses requiring parties to engage in ADR before pursuing litigation. This would encourage early resolution efforts and reduce court congestion. Such clauses could specify which form of ADR will be utilized (e.g., mediation or arbitration) and outline procedures for initiating these processes. The revised Commercial Code may establish clear guidelines for conducting ADR processes, including timelines, procedural rules, and standards for mediator/arbitrator qualifications. These frameworks would provide consistency across cases while allowing flexibility tailored to specific disputes. To facilitate smoother transitions between ADR and litigation if necessary, amendments could outline how courts will handle cases that do not resolve through ADR. This integration might include provisions for staying litigation proceedings while parties engage in ADR or establishing protocols for submitting settlement agreements reached through mediation.

By encouraging or mandating the use of ADR mechanisms, courts are likely to experience a decrease in caseloads related to commercial disputes. This reduction allows judges to focus on other pressing matters within the judicial system. Businesses benefit from quicker resolutions as they can return to normal operations sooner without prolonged uncertainty regarding legal outcomes. The economic implications extend beyond individual businesses; efficient dispute resolution contributes positively to overall market stability and investor confidence. Integrating ADR into the Commercial Code may also improve access to justice by providing more affordable options for resolving disputes compared to traditional litigation. Smaller businesses or individuals may find it easier to navigate these alternative mechanisms without incurring prohibitive legal costs associated with court proceedings.

The upcoming changes regarding assigning all commercial cases to a new Supreme Court judge represent a proactive step towards enhancing judicial efficiency within this critical area of law. By focusing on specialization, case management efficiency, predictability, and consistency, these reforms hold promise for reducing litigation times while maintaining fairness in adjudication processes.



We thank you for reading the Judiciary newsletter

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