

From the Profession

New Malaysian Chief Judge

Malaysia

The journal of the Malaysian Bar Association, *Infoline*, reports in its January February issue that Federal Court Judge Dato' Wan Adnan Bin Ismail was sworn in as the new Chief Judge of Malaysia in February.

Dato' Wan Adnan joined the English Bar in 1960 and the Malaysian Bar in 1966. As well as having been a magistrate, president of the Sessions Court in Taiping, a deputy public prosecutor and federal counsel, Dato Wan Adnan practised as legal advisor to a bank, with his own firm and was appointed a High Court judge in 1988. He was appointed to the Federal Court bench in 1994.

Mandatory Prison for Reckless Driving Opposed

Dr Cyrus V Das, President of the Malaysian Bar, noted that the Malaysian Bar Council did not favour a proposed mandatory imprisonment for reckless and dangerous driving.

The amendment to the *Road Traffic Act* was proposed to deal with an increasing number of errant drivers on Malaysian roads.

The Bar Council felt that "justice is always better served if the sentencing discretion is left to the courts to choose the punishment to fit the gravity of the offence on a case by case basis".

The Bar Council was of the opinion that existing legislation would allow matters involving "exaggerated cases like thuggery and hooliganism on the roads resulting in death" to be dealt with by imposition of a prison term under the provisions of the Penal Code, Section 304A where a motorist could be charged with "causing death by a rash and negligent act", but that "imprisonment for mere recklessness borne out of a lack of skill would be unjust".

Mandatory Council Voting

Singapore

Voting in Law Society Council elections is mandatory and failure to do so may attract a \$500 fine, according to an article in the *Singapore Law Gazette* (February 1998).

The article, which provides guidelines for Singapore lawyers on the annual renewal of practising certificates, outlines some of the procedures which must be observed in order to comply with legislation and Law Society rules for the issuing of a practising certificate.

Included among these is a necessity to advise whether a practitioner is qualified to practise in a foreign jurisdiction and whether there are adverse orders made against the practitioner in the foreign jurisdiction.

Singapore lawyers who are sole proprietors or partners are required to annex an accountant's report and practitioners must also supply evidence that they have paid relevant subscriptions and contributions to the Singapore Academy of Law.

Power Crisis and the Legal Community

New Zealand

The recent power supply problems in Auckland's CBD required the legal community to come up with ingenious solutions to the problem and highlighted risk and disaster management issues for firms, reports *Law Talk* 495.

High Court sittings were moved to unaffected parts of the city, including the crypt of a church and the Chief Justice Sir Thomas Eichelbaum paid tribute to judges and staff for their efforts in ensuring the court continued to function.

Firms hired generators or moved operations to other areas. One firm switched its telephone operations to its Wellington office and others set up work stations in rented offices or homes.

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