

S'pore to develop arbitration sector

Shanmugam outlines plans to establish Singapore as a 'centre of excellence' for international arbitration

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SINGAPORE – An academy that will help develop Singapore into “a world-class centre of excellence” in international arbitration will be set up later this year, said Minister for Foreign Affairs and Law K Shanmugam yesterday.

The move comes amid Singapore’s aspirations to expand its legal services sector, fuelled by a growing number of foreign law practices and foreign lawyers in the country.

The numbers have increased from about 63 to 116, and from about 630 to 1,030 respectively, in the past five years.

Last year, the Singapore International Arbitration Council (SIAC) handled 188 cases, compared to the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre which administered 41 cases.

In the first quarter of this year, SIAC registered 118 cases compared to



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59 in the same period last year, bringing in a total value of over S\$2 billion.

Noting the achievements of the arbitration sectors, Mr Shanmugam said Singapore “intends to go further, particularly in the context of excellence” and the establishment of the Singapore International Arbitration Academy will help facilitate that.

“If you come to Singapore, you get a one-stop experience of the entire region. We intend to be a centre of excellence,” said Mr Shanmugam at the 21st International Council for Com-



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mercial Arbitration (ICCA) Congress,

The inaugural academy will be hosted by the National University of Singapore’s (NUS) Centre for International Law and NUS faculty of law from Nov 26 to Dec 14, and will be held at the NUS Bukit Timah campus.

The annual 16-day programme “is the first in the world that provides training for counsel, instructing solicitors and government officials via a two track but integrated programme where counsel are instructed in preparation for oral submissions before leading arbitrators on the final day of the academy,” said NUS Associate Professor Michael Ewing-Chow.

Only 60 participants will be enrolled “to ensure maximum quality of skills training and interaction”, he added.

More than 40 leading practitioners, arbitrators and public officials will be sharing their insights and expertise.

They include the United Kingdom Supreme Court President Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers, Attorney-General Sundaresh Menon — who will be appointed an Appeal Court Judge from Aug 1 — and former Senior Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Professor S Jayakumar.