

prisonnews

CAPTAINS OF LIVES
REHAB • RENEW • RESTART

JUNE 2026 ISSUE



Dear Readers,

Welcome to the June 2026 issue of Prison News.

In this edition, we highlight a series of significant milestones and initiatives that reflect our continued commitment to operational excellence, staff development, leadership growth, and international collaboration.

We begin by revisiting two major events organised by the Singapore Prison Service (SPS)—the International Correctional Leadership Programme and the Asian Prisons Lockdown Challenge. These platforms brought together correctional professionals from across the region to exchange knowledge, strengthen professional networks, and enhance operational capabilities and readiness within the corrections landscape.

We also celebrate the people behind our mission at the Yellow Ribbon Community Project Appreciation and Awards Luncheon, as well as the SPS Staff Appreciation Night, events dedicated to recognising the dedication, professionalism, and contributions of our staff and community partners, whose collective efforts continue to support rehabilitation and reintegration as we progress towards a society without re-offending.

This issue also features the First-Time Supervisor Course, which reflects SPS's continued investment in leadership development by equipping newly appointed supervisors with the skills, confidence, and mindset to lead with empathy, accountability, and professionalism.

Beyond our local efforts, SPS was honoured on the international stage at the International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA) Annual Conference in Türkiye, where we received the prestigious 'Reducing Reoffending Award' in recognition of our holistic and gender-responsive approach towards the rehabilitation and reintegration of female inmates.

Finally, we commemorate a significant leadership milestone with the Commissioner's Change of Command Ceremony, marking both a transition in leadership and the beginning of a new chapter for the organisation. Wishing you a pleasant reading experience!

Gan Zi Xing

Editor, Prison News Committee



**SINGAPORE
PRISON SERVICE**

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International Correctional Leadership Programme and Asian Prisons Lockdown Challenge



International Correctional Leadership Programme and Asian Prisons Lockdown Challenge

From 22 to 26 September 2025, SPS hosted two landmark events — the second International Correctional Leadership Programme (ICLP) and the seventh Asian Prisons Lockdown Challenge (APLC).

The events brought together more than 80 correctional officers from 16 jurisdictions, united by a shared commitment to learn from one another, strengthen professional capabilities, and forge lasting partnerships and friendships within the international corrections community. Let us bring you through the highlights of these events!



Reported by Sng Sok Hing

International Correctional Leadership Programme

The ICLP aims to foster meaningful networking opportunities and the exchange of best practices among correctional leaders internationally. Now in its second run, the programme brought together 27 participants from 14 countries and jurisdictions. First-time participants from Bangladesh, Kiribati, Malaysia, the Philippines, and the Solomon Islands joined correctional leaders from Brunei, Fiji, Hong Kong, Indonesia, the Maldives, Nauru, Thailand, Vanuatu, and Singapore.



Thailand Department of Corrections' Director of Human Resource Management Division, Dr Pimporn Netrabukkana, shared about Thailand's Gender Responsive Interventions within prisons.

Over the five-day programme, participants connected through shared experiences and candid discussions on current and emerging challenges faced by correctional agencies. Presentations, discussions, and site visits to the Singapore Prison Training Institute (SPTI) and Selarang Park Complex (SPC) provided participants with an immersive insight into SPS's approaches towards training, operational readiness, and the use of technology to enhance operations.

What further enriched these discussions was the diversity of perspectives brought by each delegation. Participants came from a wide range of correctional contexts, shaped by different legal systems, community structures, resource environments, and cultural nuances. Practices that may be routine in one jurisdiction often offered fresh perspectives and possible solutions to challenges faced in another. The ICLP provided a valuable platform for participants to reflect on these experiences and explore how ideas and practices could be meaningfully adapted to their respective local contexts.

In this edition, guest speakers from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Hong Kong Correctional Services Department, and Thailand Department of Corrections shared their expertise and insights on contemporary correctional challenges and innovative approaches within the corrections landscape.



Hong Kong Correctional Services Department's Deputy Commissioner of Correctional Services (Rehabilitation and Management), Mr Ng Chiu-Kok, shared insights on community engagement initiatives in Hong Kong.



UNODC representatives sharing international standards and best practices in corrections. Dr Nick Tobia introducing the Laya Calculator, a tool that supports accurate computation of inmates' release dates.



ICLP participants enjoying an energiser game amid presentations.



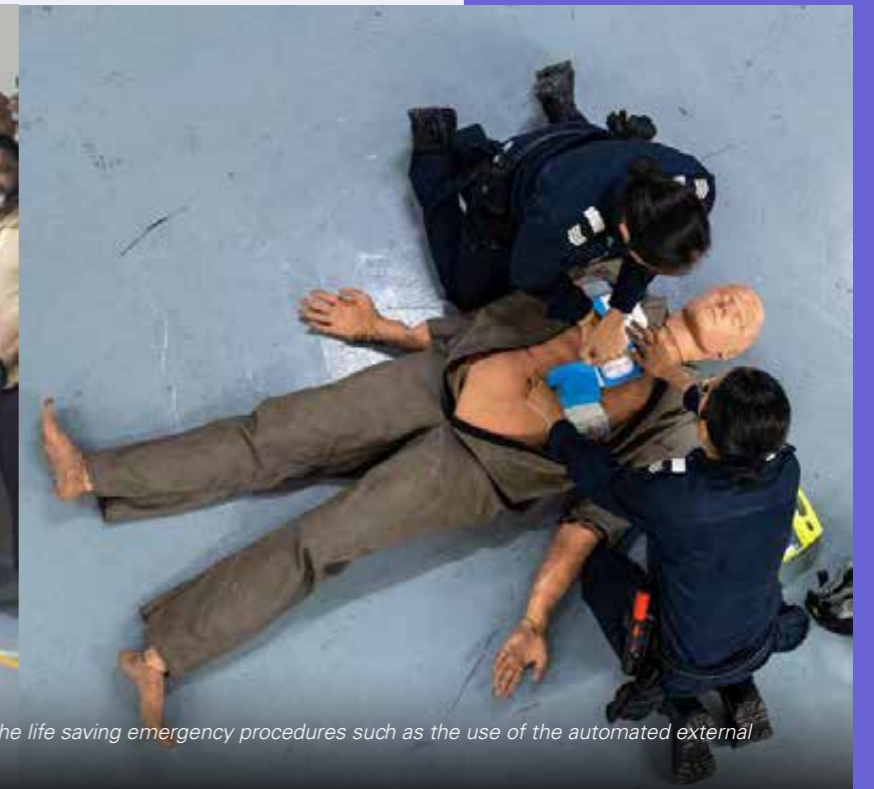
At SPC, participants had the opportunity to observe the various technologies used to enhance operations.



ICLP participants touring the accommodation and communal areas at Institution S2.



Prison Officer Cohort trainees demonstrating contingency response techniques, including the life saving emergency procedures such as the use of the automated external defibrillator (AED).



Staff Officer (Curriculum Design & Development) Tan Yee Boon Jayrius (right) demonstrating how SPTI utilises virtual reality to conduct scenario based training.



ICLP participants having lunch alongside trainees from the Prison Officer Course.



ICLP participants at the training village which provides a mock-up prison environment designed to allow trainees to undergo realistic, scenario-based tactical and contingency training.



Dialogue session with SPS senior leadership including then Commissioner of Prisons Shie Yong Lee (middle).

The programme culminated in a dialogue session with SPS’s senior leadership, whereby participants engaged in open discussions on various topics such as leadership, organisational transformation, and the future of corrections.

To celebrate a fruitful five-day journey together, participants came together on the final day of ICLP in a colourful display of cultural costumes, marking the end of a meaningful and enriching programme. Friendships were forged throughout the week, and it was heartwarming to witness the camaraderie that had grown among participants — united by their shared commitment to learning and advancing best correctional practices.

Reflections from ICLP Participants



Mr Assanee Sangkhanate

from Thailand Department of Corrections

“ In the past five days, we have learned a lot of techniques and best practices from SPS, including the need to collaborate with the younger generation.”



ICLP participants taking a group photo with SPS mascot COLin on the final day of the programme.



Ms Analiza P Bides

The Philippines’ Bureau of Jail Management and Penology

“ ICLP has shown us how leveraging technology can be the best way forward in corrections.”



APLC participants at the Opening Ceremony.

Asian Prisons Lockdown Challenge

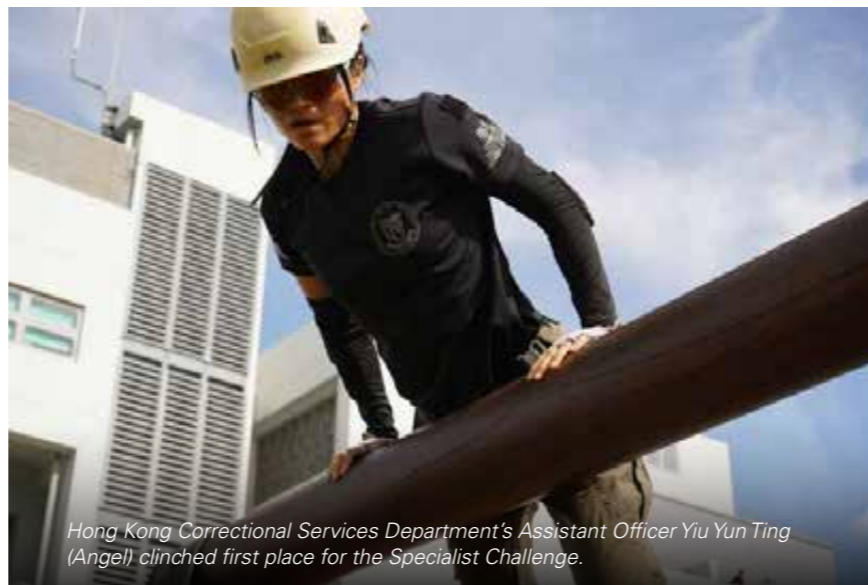
Back for its seventh run since 2010, APLC is a biennial tactical, skills-based competition organised by SPS's elite Singapore Prisons Emergency Action Response (SPEAR) Force. Specialist teams from international correctional agencies came together to benchmark their tactical skills proficiency across a series of physically and mentally demanding challenges, gaining not only valuable competitive experience, but also practical insights to strengthen contingency response capabilities within prisons.

This year, six countries — Brunei, Hong Kong, Macao, Malaysia, South Korea, and Singapore competed across five events that tested physical endurance, teamwork, and precision. Challenges included the Team Obstacles Course, the Sharpshooter Challenge, the Operation Tech-Secure Challenge, and the Rescue & Restore Challenge. Participants also gained hands-on experience operating drone technology as part of the competition.

The competition kicked off with the Specialist Challenge — a new event that provided women officers with a dedicated platform to demonstrate tactical excellence. Ms Yiu Yun Ting (Angel) from the Hong Kong Correctional Services Department claimed first place, in a result that surprised even herself. Representing her department for the first time, it was a memorable debut on the international stage.



SPEAR Officers performing a live demonstration of their operational capabilities during the opening ceremony.



Hong Kong Correctional Services Department's Assistant Officer Yiu Yun Ting (Angel) clinched first place for the Specialist Challenge.



Ms Tate Quek Ying Jie navigating through the Wave obstacle.

For SPS's Ms Tate Quek Ying Jie, APLC was a personal challenge as much as a competitive one. "I wanted to find something that challenges myself and is different from my day-to-day operational duties."



The Commando Rope Crawl tested the officers' physical and mental endurance.



The Korea Correctional Service Team climbing the Low Rope.

Continuing with the Team Obstacle Course, the Korea Correctional Service rose to the occasion, navigating the physically demanding course with speed, coordination, and precision to claim first place. The challenge pushed teams to their limits, requiring not only individual fitness but seamless teamwork under pressure.

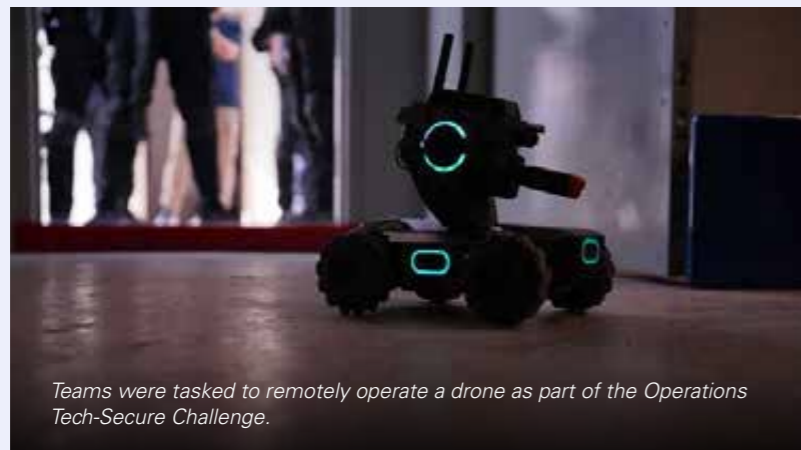


Marksmanship skills were put to the test in the Sharpshooter Challenge.

In the Sharpshooter Challenge, SPS's Cluster A officers demonstrated exceptional marksmanship and composure under pressure, claiming top honours with outstanding accuracy and focus.

The Operations Tech-Secure Challenge put teams' technical capabilities to the test, with participants navigating tactical scenarios involving the hands-on operation of drone technology. The Hong Kong Correctional Services Department delivered a commanding performance, showcasing strong technical proficiency and tactical adaptability to secure first place.

Closing out the events, the Rescue & Restore Challenge demanded speed, coordination, and composure in high-stakes conditions. Macao Correctional Services Bureau executed with precision and composure to claim the top spot — a fitting finale to an intense and action-packed competition.



Teams were tasked to remotely operate a drone as part of the Operations Tech-Secure Challenge.

Beyond the competitive elements, officers from different nations formed lasting professional bonds through the sharing of experiences and best practices that transcend borders. These connections embody the true essence of the APLC — fostering a network of excellence that strengthens correctional services across the region.

At the ICLP and APLC closing ceremony, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Home Affairs, Ms Sim Ann congratulated all participants and reaffirmed the importance of multilateral cooperation in encouraging diverse perspectives and strengthening capabilities together.



ICLP Closing Ceremony graced by Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Home Affairs Ms Sim Ann (middle in blue).

Reflections from the Teams

Team SPS

“The most memorable part was definitely training together, pushing each other, and seeing the fruits of our labour!”



Participants put their skills to the test in the usage of the Oleoresin Capsicum Delivery System (OCDS), commonly referred to as pepper spray.



SPS participants in action during the Rescue & Restore Challenge.



The SPS Cluster A Team.



The SPS Cluster B Team.



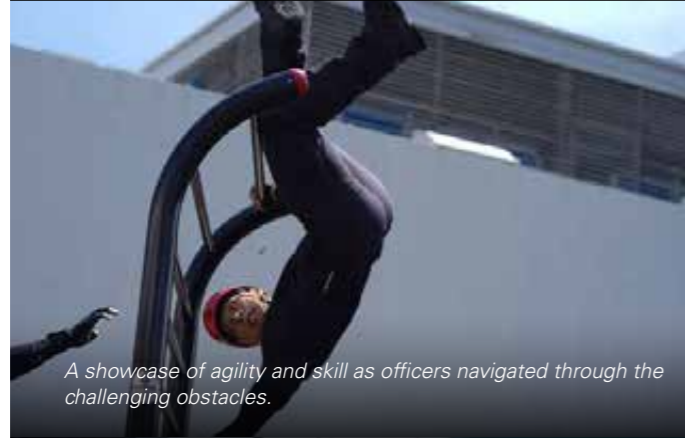
The SPS Cluster C Team.

Macao Correctional Services Bureau

“ Throughout this competition, we learnt different practices from other countries. We also encouraged and motivated each other to do our best.”



The Macao Correctional Services Bureau Team.



A showcase of agility and skill as officers navigated through the challenging obstacles.



The Macao Correctional Services Bureau team working in unison to complete the last obstacle, the Tyre Flip.



The Hong Kong Correctional Services Department Team.



The Hong Kong Correctional Services Department team sprinting off from the starting point of the obstacle course.

Hong Kong Correctional Services Department

“ Friendship always comes before competition. We can learn good practices from each other!”

Malaysian Prison Department

“ The competition has trained our teamwork and made us strive to perform to our very best!”

Korea Correctional Service

“ I enjoyed seeing everyone participating enthusiastically and having fun!”



Officers put their breaching skills to the test, forcing entry through a chained door.



The Korea Correctional Service Team.



The Malaysian Prison Department Team.



Officers at the firing range putting their marksmanship skills to the test.



The Brunei Prisons Department Team.



Brunei Prisons Department officer clearing the Low Wall.

Brunei Prisons Department

“ APLC opened our minds to the importance of planning prior to any operations. The competition tested our physical and mental capabilities, as well as our teamwork.”

Yellow Ribbon Community Project Appreciation and Awards Luncheon 2025

SPS and Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA) held their yearly Yellow Ribbon Community Project (YRCP) Appreciation and Awards Luncheon on 8 November 2025, in conjunction with the YRCP's 15th anniversary. The event acknowledged the tireless contributions of grassroots volunteers who provide assistance to families affected by incarceration. Let us take you through the key highlights of the event and share some reflections from the organising committee and volunteers!



Reported by Mohammad Haziq Bin Abdul Razak



It was a joyous event as everyone gathered for a "selfie" with Guest-of-Honour Acting Minister for Transport and Senior Minister of State for Finance, Mr Jeffrey Siow.



Opening Address by Guest-of-Honour Acting Minister for Transport and Senior Minister of State for Finance, Mr Jeffrey Siow.



The Guest-of-Honour and key appointment holders listening intently as the event shared about the success and growth of the YRCP.



The event recognised the contributions by community partners and volunteers towards supporting families affected by incarceration.

During the ceremony, the guest-of-honour Acting Minister for Transport and Senior Minister of State for Finance, Mr Jeffrey Siow, outlined critical developments and research findings that demonstrate the power of collective action in rehabilitation efforts.

Key Takeaways from the Event

15 Years of Community Support

The YRCP celebrates its 15th anniversary, having grown from 70 volunteers to over 1,100 today. These volunteers come together to support more than 25,000 families affected by incarceration.

Reintegration Challenges Remain

Despite Singapore’s relatively low recidivism rate, one in five inmates return to prison within two years. Ex-offenders face broken homes, strained relationships, financial difficulties, and emotional burdens that make successful reintegration challenging.

Family Support Reduces Reoffending

Research demonstrates that family support can reduce the likelihood of reoffending by up to six times. Both international studies and local research conducted by SPS confirm that family support enables ex-offenders to remain crime-free and fosters their belief in their capacity for positive transformation.

“We-First” Society Vision

The YRCP embodies Prime Minister Mr Lawrence Wong’s “We-First” society vision from this year’s National Day Rally, demonstrating how community collaboration creates second chances and builds a more compassionate Singapore for future generations.



Organiser of the YRCP Appreciation and Awards Luncheon, Staff Officer (Family Policy) Mr Choo Kok Loong, Jay.



Jay engaging volunteers during the YRCP Appreciation and Awards Luncheon.

Let us hear from the event organiser, Mr Choo Kok Loong, Jay

“When we support families impacted by incarceration, we strengthen the foundation for rehabilitation. Every family we help reminds us that change is a collective effort — and YRCP’s strength lies in how volunteers, agencies, and communities stand together to give hope and rebuild lives.”

Jay served as one of the organisers for the YRCP Appreciation and Awards Luncheon 2025. Currently with the Community Partnership and Family Policy Branch in SPS’s Rehabilitation and Reintegration Division, Jay leads the YRCP, which has become a cornerstone initiative of Corrections 2030 under his leadership.

Strategic Partnership Drives Digital Innovation

Jay’s collaborative approach is exemplified through his work with SANA, where he has fostered a partnership that continuously drives innovation and improvement across all aspects of the YRCP. This collaboration led to the comprehensive refresh of the programme framework and the groundbreaking introduction of the YRCP Portal — a digital transformation that has revolutionised volunteer management and programme delivery, creating a platform that empowers volunteers with the tools and insights necessary to deliver more effective support to families in need.

From Crisis to Hope: A Volunteer's Journey with a Family in Need

When Mr Sathish Kumar's father was incarcerated, his mother found herself alone in Singapore, struggling to raise her young son with most of her family and relatives back in India. That was when Ms Abdul Khader Noor UI Aysha, a YRCP volunteer, stepped into their lives beginning a journey of transformation.

Ms Aysha became their anchor, checking in weekly and ensuring the family received holistic support. Beyond material assistance, she invited them to community events, fostering their sense of belonging in Singapore.

The impact was profound. Despite his difficult childhood, Mr Sathish topped his N-level cohort, earned a polytechnic scholarship and became a student leader. Today, inspired by the kindness shown to his family, he volunteers to give back to the community.

"Seeing how Ms Aysha helped our family and checked in on us every week makes me wonder how I can contribute back," Mr Sathish reflects. "Without Ms Aysha and the YRCP, I would not have been able to accomplish many of my academic achievements."

Ms Aysha has served as a dedicated YRCP volunteer in the Tampines-Changkat division for 14 years. She hopes to continue making a difference in the lives of others and encourages more members of the community to join her in the work that she is doing.



Ms Aysha (centre) during one of her regular visits with Mr Sathish's (right) family.



Ms Ayesha and Mr Sathish Kumar attending the YRCP Appreciation and Awards Luncheon.



Mr Elendrus Bin Osman (right) receiving the Long Service Award (15 years).

Building Communities, One Family at a Time

Mr Elendrus Bin Osman has dedicated 15 years to the YRCP as the Yellow Ribbon Champion of Tampines West division, one of the first divisions to implement YRCP in Singapore. His leadership has been instrumental in both the programme's early success and its sustained growth.

Beyond directly supporting families, Mr Elendrus has played a significant role in expanding YRCP's reach by actively recruiting and mentoring volunteers. His ability to inspire others has built a strong, committed volunteer base in Tampines West, ensuring continuous support for families in need over the years.

Drawing from his experience as both a former senior prison officer and volunteer leader, Mr Elendrus provides

valuable guidance to fellow volunteers in handling complex cases. His dual perspective allows him to effectively troubleshoot challenges and strengthen the programme's impact.

"The assistance extended to families plays a major role in enabling their incarcerated loved ones to focus on rehabilitation programmes, knowing their families are being cared for by the community," Mr Elendrus explains. "The families feel they are not being stigmatised or left on their own as the community cares."

His 15-year commitment reflects the heart of YRCP's mission—mobilising communities to strengthen families and ensuring that no one is left behind. As Mr Elendrus confidently states, "I am confident that YRCP is here to stay and no one will be left behind — after all, we are all Singaporeans!"



Smiles, thumbs-ups, and finger hearts all around as one big SPS family came together for a night of laughter and to show appreciation for one another!

SPS Staff Appreciation Night 2025

The Staff Appreciation Night (SAN) 2025 carried a simple but meaningful theme, "Icons of All Time", honouring staff members as icons in their own way, making a positive difference to those around them. The atmosphere was warm, energetic, and filled with camaraderie, setting the tone for a memorable night of appreciation and recognition.



Reported by Syazmeer Khan S/O Naseer Khan



"T-Birds and the Pink Ladies" from Grease.



SPS's very own "Addams Family".



Marvel heroes and 'villains' showing up at the event!

Dance Performances by Directorate Members

The event kicked off with a dance performance by the SPS Directorate Members, adding a light-hearted touch to an evening dedicated to recognising the people behind SPS's mission.



The Directorate Members' dance performance started the evening on a light hearted and fun note.



Deputy Commissioner of Prisons (Operations & Rehabilitation) Mr Rockey Francisco Junior delivering the opening address.



SPS staff looking forward to a night of laughter, as well as great prizes to be won!

In his opening address, Deputy Commissioner of Prisons (Operations & Rehabilitation) Mr Rockey Francisco Junior shared that the performance was a gesture of appreciation in the spirit of "Service before Self". He expressed heartfelt thanks to three groups: the SPS leadership for their commitment, the retirees whose years of service laid the foundation for SPS's successes, and all SPS staff for their dedication in keeping prisons safe and upholding the culture of "Dare and Care", reinforcing the theme that every Captain of Lives is truly an icon of all time.



SPS APPRECIATION NIGHT 2025

MR ROSLEE BIN JOHARI

35 YEARS 2 MONTHS



SPS APPRECIATION NIGHT 2025

MR ARIVANANTHAN S/O RETNAM

35 YEARS 5 MONTHS

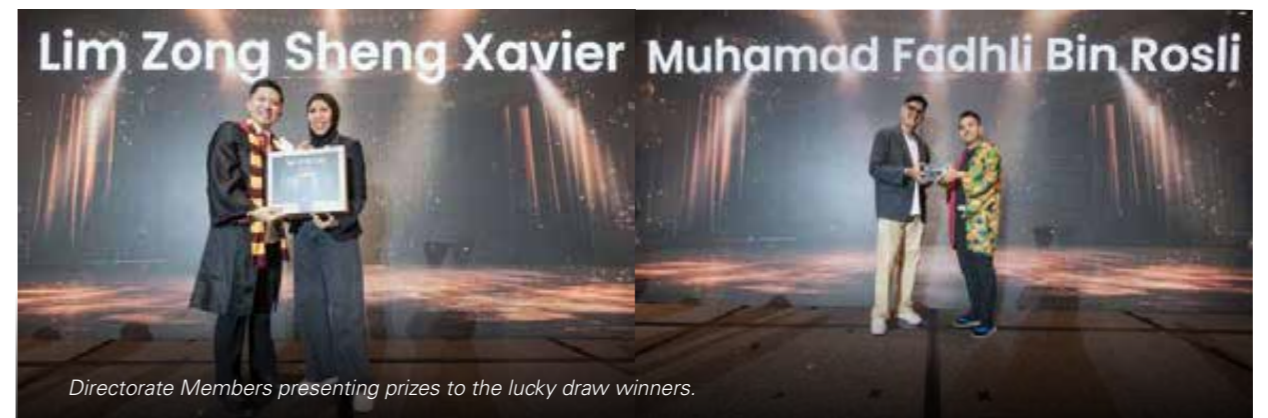


SPS APPRECIATION NIGHT 2025

MS TOH SIEW KEE

33 YEARS 11 MONTHS

Deputy Commissioner of Prisons (Operations & Rehabilitation) Mr Rockey Francisco Junior presenting the retirees with a token of appreciation to thank them for their years of service.



Lim Zong Sheng Xavier Muhamad Fadhli Bin Rosli

Directorate Members presenting prizes to the lucky draw winners.

The event also honoured those stepping into retirement with an appreciation video, a touching tribute to congratulate all retiring staff with well-wishes from close colleagues and friends. The montage celebrated their years of dedication and service, while also capturing the warmth and gratitude of the SPS family.

The celebrations continued with a lucky draw segment that kept the crowd engaged as prizes were revealed for the top winners starting from the 30th place. Anticipation was building in the air with each announcement as there were home appliances, dining vouchers, tech gadgets, and gaming consoles to be won.

Mentalist Performance

The excitement did not stop at the lucky draw as the audience was bedazzled by a captivating performance by mentalist Nique Tan, who showcased seemingly incredible feats of mind-reading and precognition. Adding onto the fun, a series of interactive crowd games got everyone up on their feet and laughing as participants were whittled down to a final few competing for a top prize.

The “Best Dressed” competition added a lively touch to the evening, with teams and individuals taking to the stage in creative outfits inspired by the “Icons of All Time” theme. From stylish interpretations to humorous performances, participants showcased their looks with confidence and flair, entertaining the audience with energetic poses, playful struts, and plenty of personality.

The night ended on a high note, with staff forming playful “human trains” behind their favourite “Best Dressed” pairs before breaking into a lively singalong that turned the event into a live concert. The evening concluded with a mass group photo and the much-anticipated lucky draw finale, where participants eagerly awaited the announcement of the top three prizes, including the grand prize which was an iPhone 17 Pro Max.

SAN 2025 was more than just a night of entertainment — it was a heartfelt tribute to the people who keep SPS moving forward. From performances and prizes to recognition and encouragement, the event served as a reminder that every Captain of Lives is an “Icon of All Time”, making a positive difference in the lives of others.



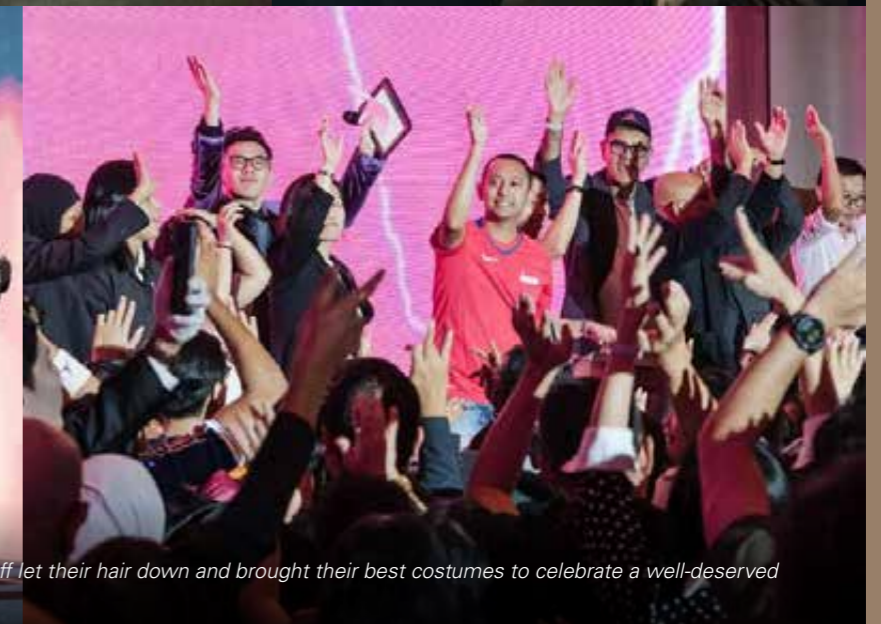
Mentalist Nique Tan captivating the audience with his incredible mind-reading performance.



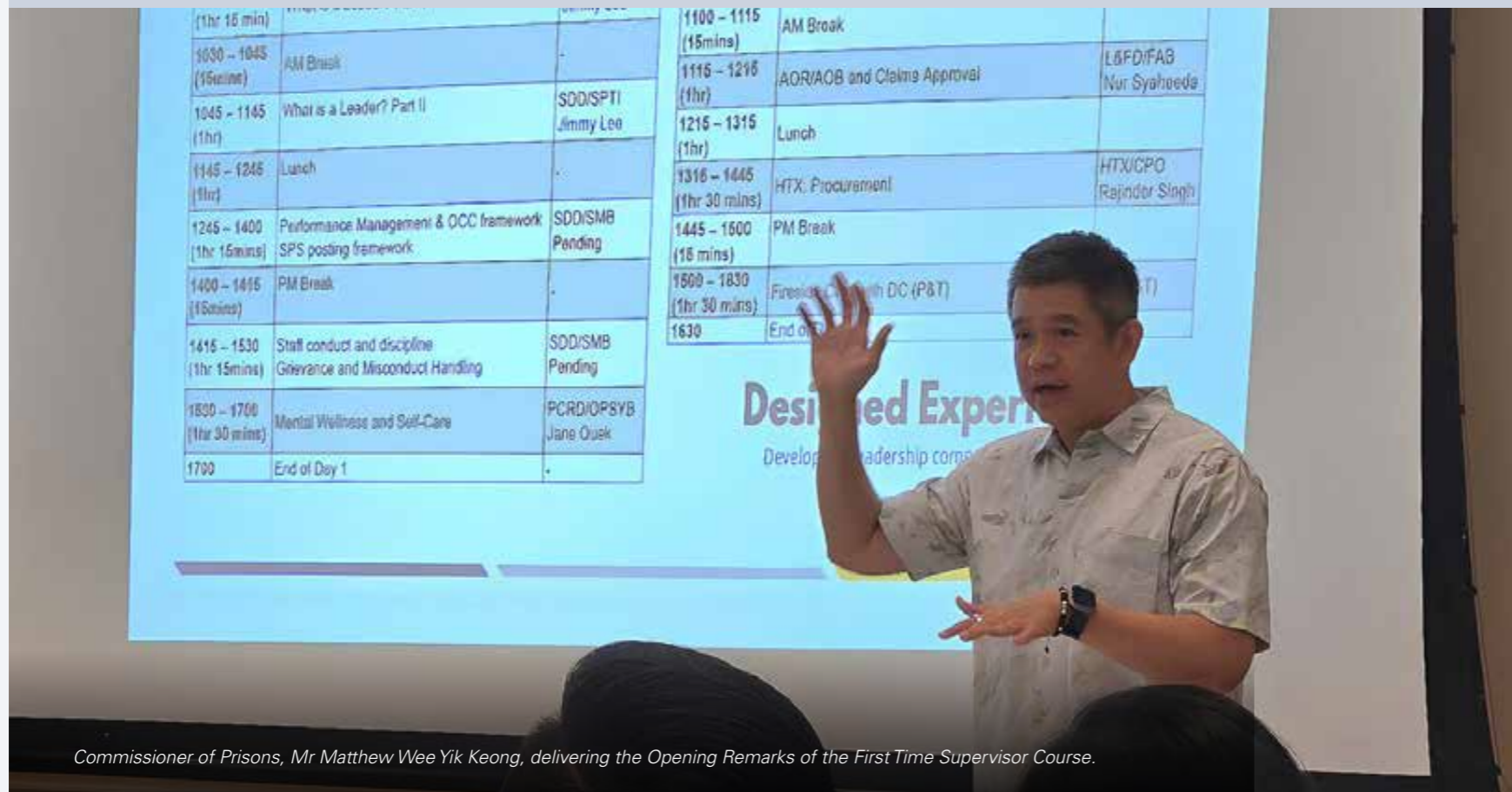
A series of interactive crowd games got the audience up on their feet and competing for the top prize.



Special prizes were given out to the best dressed group and individual of the night.



It was a night to remember as our staff let their hair down and brought their best costumes to celebrate a well-deserved evening of fun and camaraderie.



Commissioner of Prisons, Mr Matthew Wee Yik Keong, delivering the Opening Remarks of the First Time Supervisor Course.

Nurturing and Developing Our COLs – First Time Supervisor Course

Confident, capable, and driven leaders are the cornerstone of SPS’s organisational excellence. Over the years, SPS has remained committed to nurturing the next generation of leaders and equipping them for success. In September 2025, SPS conducted the inaugural First-Time Supervisor Course (FTSC), an initiative designed to support Captains of Lives

(COLs) who have recently taken on supervisory responsibilities. Let us take a closer look at how the course is shaping future SPS leaders.



Reported by Chua Chong Shan

Easing the Transition into Leadership

The FTSC is an initiative by SPS designed for COLs who have assumed supervisory positions in the recent years. Previously, many COLs taking on their first leadership role had to navigate this transitional period independently and gradually develop the competencies required to become effective leaders. With this in mind, the FTSC was specifically designed to facilitate the smooth transition of newly appointed supervisors from individual contributors to effective leaders.

Overview of Activities

This course spanned two days and provided a comprehensive introduction to essential supervisory skills, covering a broad range of topics including leadership fundamentals, staff management, mental wellness and risk management. These lessons equipped all participants with the functional knowledge and skills needed to lead their teams effectively and manage daily operations. The various lessons were mainly centered around discussions and presentations, which also allowed participants to chip in and share their thoughts and perspectives towards leadership.

The FTSC ended off with a fireside chat with Deputy Commissioner of Prisons (Operations & Rehabilitation) Mr Rocky Francisco Junior. The fireside chat provided participants with a unique opportunity to engage SPS senior management in dialogue, gaining insights into strategic thinking and practical leadership experiences.



Snippets of the various activities and breakout discussions that took place during FTSC.



First Time Supervisors from various divisions across SPS gathered to share their knowledge and perspectives.

Practical Learning for an Operational Role

We spoke to Mr Douglas Lim, one of the participants who had attended the inaugural run of FTSC. He shared that he had enjoyed the hybrid format of FTSC — having both structured workshops and interactive discussions created an engaging learning environment that encouraged peer learning and sharing of experiences amongst fellow first-time supervisors.

As a Team Leader in the SPEAR Force, Douglas found that the risk management training was valuable in equipping him with knowledge to assess risks and mitigate them accordingly to ensure the safety of his team members. He shared that this skillset was particularly important, given the nature of SPEAR operations and the numerous risks involved.

Beyond influencing his daily work, the FTSC also enabled Douglas to better guide and support his staff regarding their career development. As a first-time supervisor, he had expressed some uncertainty in answering challenging questions regarding performance ranking and

promotion. The FTSC provided the necessary resources for him and allowed him to pick up valuable tips to better guide and manage the expectations of his team members.



Team Leader (SPEAR) Mr Douglas Lim (front row, squatting in black T-shirt) with his team members from the SPEAR Force.

Immediate Application and Impact

The tangible impact of the FTSC extended beyond Douglas, as reflected in feedback shared by Mr Lee Kwang Hui Jeremy and Mr Muhammad Khairul Nizzam Bin Mazlan, SPEAR Force Operators under his charge. Both officers spoke positively about Douglas and observed that he had already begun applying some of the practical leadership tips and insights gained from the course.

What do you think is Douglas's leadership style?

For me, Mr Douglas is a very down-to-earth leader — he leads by example and is willing to do the work he asks of the team. This boosts the team's morale and demonstrates accountability. He gives his team members the authority and resources to succeed, while also mentoring each and every one of us and ensuring that we grow and progress ahead in our career.

What are some changes you noticed about Douglas after FTSC?

He is better able to understand the team's needs according to various situations. He provides clear vision to the team and leads us with confidence. I noticed that he is clearer and more structured in his communication, and he ensures that all of us are on the same page before moving forward with the tasks or operations.

When we are going through difficult tasks or operations, he will always remember to demonstrate care and appreciation for the team members. Lastly, we have also seen that he is more intentional in asking for feedback, and following up with the necessary changes accordingly.

From your perspective, how has Douglas benefitted from this course?

The course has helped him become a more well-rounded leader who is able to balance maintaining high operational standards with leading his team with compassion. This has made us feel more supported and motivated to perform better, and team morale has also improved significantly.

Gaining New Perspectives

We also spoke to another participant, Ms Fatima Jaini, a Senior Correctional Rehabilitation Specialist from the Psychological and Correctional Rehabilitation Division (PCRD), who found the FTSC especially valuable in providing her with fresh perspectives on the work carried out by other divisions across SPS.

In particular, she shared that the modules on finance matters were the most applicable and useful for her as a new supervisor. With her enhanced understanding in these areas, she is now better equipped to guide her staff and instill greater confidence when handling more complex financial matters.

For Ms Fatima, one memorable moment during FTSC was a segment on leadership conducted by Commandant SPTI Mr Jimmy Lee. She was intrigued to learn about how leadership looked like in other

divisions beyond PCRD, and how other supervisors handled challenges in different contexts. More importantly, she also shared that the segment was thought provoking and valuable in challenging her traditional perspectives towards leadership.

Looking Ahead

As SPS's work continues to evolve and grow in complexity, the need for capable yet compassionate leaders becomes increasingly important. Through programmes such as the FTSC, SPS continues to invest in the development and growth of leaders at all levels of the organisation.

Our COLs will always remain the bedrock of the organisation, and investing in their development is not merely beneficial, it is essential to ensuring SPS's continued success for generations to come.



FTSC participants posing for a picture with Deputy Commissioner of Prisons (Operations & Rehabilitation) Mr Rockey Francisco Junior.

International Corrections & Prisons Association Annual Conference 2025



The SPS delegation comprised (from left) Director (Psychological and Correctional Rehabilitation Division) Mr Karam Singh, Senior Assistant Director (Operational Psychology Branch) Ms Rashida Mohamed Zain, Deputy Commissioner of Prisons (Operations & Rehabilitation) Mr Rockey Francisco Junior, Staff Officer (Frontline Operations Branch) Ms Gina Farm, and Superintendent (Institution Tanah Merah 1 & 2) Mr Luke Leong.

In October 2025, SPS attended the International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA) Annual Conference in Türkiye and received the prestigious ICPA Reducing Reoffending Award. The event provided an opportunity for SPS to share its work, take part in facility visits, and forge valuable partnerships with correctional partners internationally.



Reported by Li Yixuan Renee

The ICPA Annual Conference is one of the most prominent gatherings in the correctional field, bringing together policymakers, practitioners, and experts to exchange ideas to address the evolving challenges faced by prisons today. In 2025, the conference was organised by Türkiye's General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses with conversations centered on staff wellbeing, the role of technology, and the impact of community corrections.

Representing SPS was a delegation that brought both depth and diversity to the discussions. Director (Psychological and Correctional Rehabilitation Division) Mr Karam Singh took to the stage to share insights on how prison environments can influence rehabilitation outcomes.



Director (Psychological and Correctional Rehabilitation Division) Mr Karam Singh shared about how the prison climate and environmental factors during incarceration can impact rehabilitation outcomes.

Superintendent (Institution Tanah Merah 1 & 2) Mr Luke Leong and Senior Assistant Director (Operational Psychology Branch) Ms Rashida Mohamed Zain shared insights on SPS's staff wellness support framework, as well as community initiatives such as the Desistor Network and the YRCP.



Site visits to the Kocaeli F Type High Security Closed Prison and Kocaeli Open Prison.



Sharing by Senior Assistant Director (Operational Psychology Branch) Ms Rashida Mohamed Zain and Superintendent (Institution Tanah Merah 1 & 2) Mr Luke Leong.

Beyond the presentations, the conference offered valuable learning opportunities, including facility visits to prisons in the Kocaeli province and sharing sessions by correctional agencies from around the world. Key takeaways highlighted the importance of workplace culture in strengthening staff resilience, as well as the value of trauma-informed approaches in rehabilitation.

These discussions reaffirmed the importance of evidence-informed practices underpinning SPS's work, including the application of the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) framework, which aligns interventions with the specific criminogenic risks and needs of each individual.

At the closing ceremony, SPS was presented with the Reducing Reoffending Award in recognition of its gender-responsive approach towards the rehabilitation and reintegration

of female offenders. Under this approach, staff are trained to recognise and respond to gender-specific trauma experienced by female offenders, including family violence and sexual abuse, while tailoring programmes and interventions to address their unique risks and rehabilitation needs.



Deputy Commissioner of Prisons (Operations & Rehabilitation) Mr Rocky Francisco Junior receiving the Reducing Reoffending Award from ICPA Executive Director Ms Natalie Boal and ICPA Board Member Mr Rob Jeffreys.

A Legacy of Purpose: Commissioner of Prisons Ms Shie Yong Lee

On 1 April 2026, Ms Shie Yong Lee relinquished her appointment as Commissioner of Prisons to take on a new leadership role within the Ministry of Home Affairs. She was succeeded by Mr Matthew Wee Yik Keong, previously the Deputy Commissioner of Prisons (Operations & Rehabilitation).



Reported by Lum Hong Wei Lloyd and Adlyna Adly Azamin

From Trainee to Commissioner

Ms Shie Yong Lee began her journey with the Singapore Prison Service the same way most do, as a young officer in training, learning the fundamentals of discipline, teamwork and purpose alongside her peers. Few could have imagined then where that journey would lead.

Over the course of more than three decades, Ms Shie would go on to shape many aspects of what SPS stands for today. She was part of the early Research & Planning team (now known as the Strategic Planning Division) that helped define the organisation's vision and core values in the late 1990s. Reflecting on that experience, she described it as a

foundational process that gave officers a clearer sense of purpose as Captains of Lives.

In the years that followed, her contributions extended beyond SPS, influencing whole-of-government policies and inter-agency efforts aimed at reducing re-offending and strengthening community reintegration.

Her leadership was characterised by quiet determination and sustained commitment — guiding operational teams and strengthening structured rehabilitation regimes that contributed meaningfully to reductions in recidivism. As Commissioner of Prisons, she led SPS through significant developments in technology and digitalisation, while steering the organisation through the unprecedented challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through it all, she remains clear about one thing: **“Whatever milestones SPS achieved, we did it together.”**



Ms Shie Yong Lee (standing, second from left) during her trainee days in SPS.



Ms Shie during her initial years of service with SPS.



Group photo of the SPS Directorate Members at the Change of Command Ceremony.

People & Purpose

Beyond systems and policies, Ms Shie's leadership has always centred on people.

She believes that most decisions are not inherently difficult when they are guided by what is right for the mission. The more challenging moments, however, are those involving trade-offs that directly affect people, where organisational needs must be carefully balanced with empathy and care.

As a leader, she placed great importance on listening widely and drawing on perspectives beyond her own experience. She is candid about the demands that come with leadership

too, particularly in roles that require constant engagement and visibility, and the need to step out of one's comfort zone.

Ms Shie also played a meaningful role in shaping the staff culture within SPS. She championed psychological safety, encouraged officers to seek help when needed, and kept mental resilience firmly on the agenda. Looking back, she sees an organisation that has grown more open, more supportive, and intentional in caring for its people.

Change of Command Ceremony

At the Change of Command Ceremony, Ms Shie formally handed over leadership, bringing the curtain down on a distinguished 30-year career in SPS.

The occasion carried significance beyond ceremonial formalities. It symbolised the passing on of values, responsibility, and purpose to the next generation of leaders.

In his address, Commissioner of Prisons Mr Matthew Wee Yik Keong paid tribute to Ms Shie, describing her as someone who joined the service with a simple desire to do good, and ultimately went on to make a profound impact on the organisation and its people. He added that her dedication, energy, and unwavering care for her officers had left a deep and lasting mark on SPS.

Under her leadership, SPS strengthened its position as a globally recognised correctional service, achieving low recidivism rates, strong operational outcomes, and a cohesive correctional ecosystem built on the support of community partners.

What she leaves behind is a prison service that is not only future-ready, but grounded in strong values and a culture of care.



Then Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs Mr Pang Kin Keong (middle) presiding over the handover of the SPS Command Mace.



Ms Shie Yong Lee (centre, in yellow) joining in on a PrisHealth activity to help staff maintain an active and healthy lifestyle.

Reflections & Legacy

When asked how she hopes to be remembered, Ms Shie shared that her goal was never about individual recognition.

What she hopes, instead, is that she has been found faithful. Faithful in growing the organisation, in developing its people, and in enabling everyone to overcome challenges together as one team.

Her advice to current and future officers is simple but carries conviction. Stay focused on the mission and values, because they guide not

just what needs to be done, but also how it should be done. Leadership, in her view, is about setting the example and never asking of others what you are not willing to do yourself.

She also encourages officers to shift their focus from the “me” to the “we”. Fulfilment, she has found, tends to come from collective purpose rather than individual pursuit. Investing in people, building resilience, and finding genuine meaning in one’s work are not just ideals to her. They are what sustain both performance and purpose over the long run.

Q&A with Ms Shie Yong Lee

Looking back at your tenure, what milestones or initiatives are you most proud of, and why?

SPS’s resilience in overcoming COVID-19. I was appointed as Commissioner of Prisons in September 2020, in the midst of COVID-19. During the pandemic, the whole of Singapore and SPS battled the persistent virus, on all fronts, under what seemed at that time, to be dark days where no end seemed to be in sight. I am especially grateful that our staff, prison volunteers, community partners, even our inmates and their families, were of one mind, made sacrifices for the greater good, we did not allow fear, while present, to paralyse us. I am grateful that faith and courage energised us and we overcame the pandemic of a lifetime, together — SPS and Singapore, emerging stronger and more resilient.

As SPS moves towards its next strategic milestone of Corrections 2030, what are some of the most significant changes you have observed since joining the organisation?

One of the most significant changes is the increased transparency and openness in communications to help strengthen public trust in SPS.

Trust in institutions and traditional sources of authority are increasingly questioned. Information also moves faster than verification, amplified by AI and social media. Hence, credibility is even more valuable but also vulnerable as public trust has to be earned repeatedly and sustained.

SPS's public communications strategies have evolved and we communicate widely and more frequently, not just in response to media queries. In the last five years, we have partnered with mainstream, new media outlets and social media to push out new stories and documentary series such as the Inside Maximum Security, Beyond Maximum Security, Inside The Women's Prison with Channel News Asia (CNA). The purpose is to share more about the importance of our work, humanise our officers and the inmates to increase public support for corrections, spread support for second chances and help in the recruitment of prison officers and volunteers. All these public communications do add up to increase the public trust in SPS.

What strategies and habits help you stay effective while juggling many roles and expectations?

I wake up early and start the day early. My head is clearer in the morning and before the meetings crowd the day, there is a window period of about 1 hr or so for me to clear work. Having pockets of such free time in the office helps me to be available to staff to pop by in the morning to discuss and sort out issues faster, instead of drafting long emails and sending them back and forth to clarify matters.



Ms Shie Yong Lee during a staff dialogue at Institution A5.

Having a supportive family always helps. In my case, my dad and late mum helped me tremendously with childcare when my kids were young. My husband is also extremely supportive and understanding, so are my kids. I also had a great helper who helped me raise three kids. I had supportive bosses and colleagues. I count myself extremely blessed and would not have been able to be present at work if not for my family's support and help.

As the first female Commissioner, what unique experience have shaped how you approach your role and what has been the most unexpected experience you've encountered in your role?

I do not think my gender has in any way put me at an advantage or disadvantage for the role as Commissioner and neither did I have to approach my leadership responsibilities differently because of my gender. My bosses and colleagues did not make me feel like I had to be different just because I was a woman leader in a predominantly male uniformed service.

What I am conscious about, is that my worldview may be shaped by my (limited) experience as a woman prison officer. Hence, I made sure to consult widely and take in views and suggestions from your colleagues whose judgement you trust. I usually turn to the Deputy Commissioners and Directorate for their views, this is particularly in policies involving staff (as it may affect both male and female officers differently) or public communications and COL advertisements which may impact how different segments of the public may view our messages.

The other thing that surprised me for my role was the number of speeches, opening or closing remarks to be done in a year. Being the perfectionist I am, I think I always give my speech writers a panic attack coming back so late with the finalised speech. Thankfully, we have good speech writers who are truly courageous and agile.

As you move on to the next chapter, what advice would you give to current and future generations of prison officers?

Focus on the mission and values; doing the right things and then doing things rightly. It helps us to prioritise what to do and how to do it.

For leaders, do not ask your officers to do what you are not willing to do yourself. If you ask your officers to give 100%, then you must be able to do that and more.

Invest in your people's growth and resilience. You will be amazed at the human capacity to adapt, learn and grow. Overcoming COVID-19 together showed us that too. Staff's capabilities once stretched, becomes their latent strength, and they can even grow more and faster.

Bloom wherever you are planted. Find meaning in your work to be fruitful, everyone is a leader and has a sphere of influence. Put on a positive lens, it helps frame how you perceive things, not half cup empty but half cup full.

Prison News: It's Not Goodbye, It's See You Again!



Since January 2020, SPS's quarterly newsletter, known as Prison News, has offered readers a rare glimpse into life behind prison walls. Through its stories and features, fellow COLs, volunteers, partners, and members of the public have gained a deeper understanding and appreciation of the collective efforts that support safe and secure custody, rehabilitation, and reintegration within the larger corrections landscape.

Over the years, Prison News has also served as a platform to share the journeys, experiences, and contributions of the many individuals who work tirelessly behind the scenes to support SPS's mission. We hope these stories have inspired more to journey alongside inmates and ex-offenders as we work towards a safer Singapore and a society without re-offending.

While the June 2026 edition marks the final issue of Prison News in its current format, it also marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter in how we engage and connect with our audiences.

Moving forward, SPS will be launching a dynamic new way of bringing our stories to life — and we cannot wait for you to experience it. Get ready for more authentic, up-close, and behind-the-scenes glimpses into the heart of our mission, shining a spotlight on the incredible work of our COLs, volunteers, and community partners like never before. Stay connected with us through SPS's YouTube channel and social media platforms so that you never miss a moment!

The Prison News Editorial Team