

Top honours for man who built up SIA, led GIC, MAS

J.Y. Pillay among 4,985 receiving National Day honours for their service to the nation

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Mr J.Y. Pillay, 85, the longest-serving chairman of the Council of Presidential Advisers (CPA), has been awarded Singapore's highest civilian honour. He is the 11th Singaporean to receive the Order of Temasek (With Distinction).

A veteran civil servant whom founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew said was "equal to the best brains in America", Mr Pillay was permanent secretary in the finance, defence and national development ministries.

Other positions he held previously included chairman of the Singapore Exchange and DBS Bank, as well as managing director of GIC and the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS). He chaired the CPA from 2005 until January this year.

He continues to be a member of the Presidential Council for Minority Rights. He is also rector of the College of Alice & Peter Tan at the National University of Singapore, and a board member of the Vatican's Financial Information Authority. In addition to overseeing the formation of the Singapore Exchange in 1999, Mr Pillay was founding chairman of Singapore Airlines. From a small fleet of 12 aircraft when he took over in 1972, SIA had grown to become one of the world's top airlines by the time he stepped down in 1996.

"I have very satisfying memories of my career in the civil service. If asked to cite the most traumatic event, I would say it was the so-called Pan-Electric crisis in the November of 1985, not long after I was posted to the MAS," said Mr Pillay, referring to the collapse of Singapore-based company Pan-Electric Industries that led to a three-day shutdown of the Singapore and Kuala Lumpur stock exchanges in 1985. "It was a kind of baptism of fire for me. Although the shock waves it created carried the memory of 'Pan-Electric' (a rather insignificant manufacturing com-

pany in Jurong), it was a crisis of the stockbroking industry, which at that time was a mutualised entity."

"The industry recovered, but it took another 15 years for it to be demutualised and modernised."

His best memories, he said, were working with his colleagues and superiors to try to achieve mutually agreed goals. "The two outstanding mentors I have had the privilege of serving were Hon Sui Sen and Goh Keng Swee. Not at all identical in personality and behaviour, but both driven by the common desire to make our world a better place."

"And both great human beings. I am greatly indebted to them."

The late Mr Hon and Mr Goh were both finance ministers, among their many other roles in public service.

The next highest award this year, the Order of Nila Utama (With High Distinction) goes to former minister and newly minted Singapore Management University chancellor Lim Chee Onn.

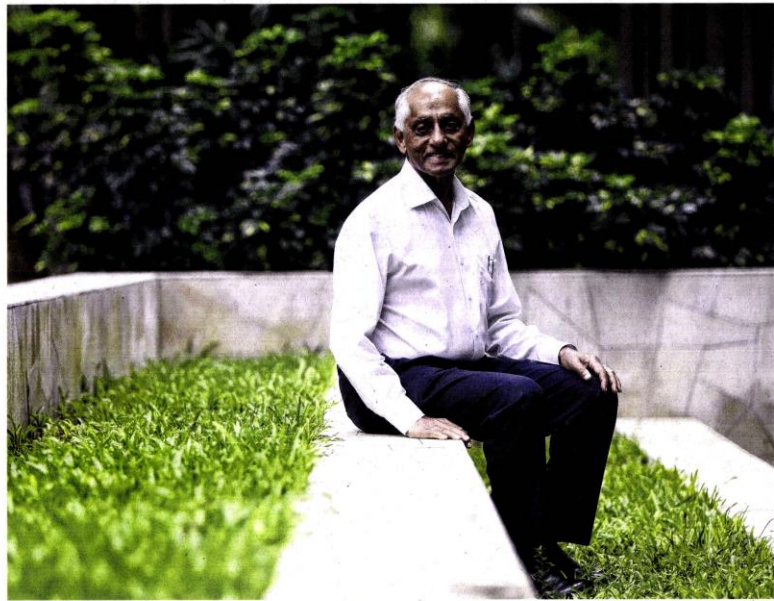
Mr Lim, 75, chairs the Singapore-Suzhou Township Development and is an honorary chairman of the National Heritage Board as well as a CPA member. He was executive chairman of Keppel Corporation from 2000 to 2008.

He served as a board member of MAS and as MP from 1977 to 1992. He was also secretary-general of the National Trades Union Congress from 1979 to 1983 and minister without portfolio in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) from 1980 to 1983.

Both the Order of Temasek and Order of Nila Utama are conferred by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister.

Mr Pillay and Mr Lim are among 4,985 individuals receiving National Day honours this year for their service to the nation.

Three individuals received the Distinguished Service Order, the third-highest award to be given this year. Among them is charity sector veteran Gerard Ee, 69, chairman of the Charity Council and Agency for Integrated Care (AIC).



Mr J.Y. Pillay, who has been awarded the Order of Temasek (With Distinction), said his best memories are of working with colleagues and superiors. ST FILE PHOTO

TRIBUTE TO MENTORS

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MR J.Y. PILLAY, on the late Mr Hon and Mr Goh, who were both finance ministers, among their many other roles in public service.

He told The Straits Times that in his more than 30 years of social service work, his favourite "child" is the Council for Third Age (C3A), an agency promoting active ageing in Singapore through public education, outreach and partnerships.

"It took me two years to promote the idea (of C3A)," he said.

When the then Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports gave Mr Ee's brainchild the nod in 2007, "I could not wait any longer and took it upon myself to submit the registration papers", he said.

"C3A took over the annual Senior Citizens' Week, reformatted and relaunched it as an active ageing event. Today, active ageing is very much a part of the local vocabulary, and C3A is thriving under new leadership."

For his contributions, Mr Ee, a retired chartered accountant, is receiving the Distinguished Service Order from the Government.

His citation notes his "significant contributions in setting the direction for the Charity Council, strengthening governance and building public trust in the sector".

"With the AIC, he provided strong leadership in moving care beyond hospitals to the community and integrating health and social care to better meet the needs of Singapore's ageing population."

Mr Ee said the award holds special meaning for him as his late father had received the same award. Businessman and philanthropist Ee Peng Liang was conferred the Distinguished Service Order in 1985.

Besides Mr Ee, the two other recipients of the Distinguished Service Order this year are the chair-



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Ms Ho Peng and Mr Yatiman Yusof have been awarded the Meritorious Service Medal.



man of Sembcorp Industries as well as GIC, Mr Ang Kong Hua; and Central Provident Fund Board and PUB chairman Chiang Chie Foo.

Receiving the Meritorious Service Medal are adviser and former director-general of education Ho Peng and chairman of the Malay Language Council board of advisers and former senior parliamentary secretary Yatiman Yusof.

Mr Yatiman's citation says: "He has been an active champion of the Malay language and culture



over many years, and has worked tirelessly with multiple public agencies and partners to not only preserve, but also elevate the awareness and practice of the language and culture in Singapore. He is also a diplomat and ambassador for Singapore."

A full list of this year's National Day Award recipients is available at the PMO website: <http://www.pmo.gov.sg/national-day-awards>

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