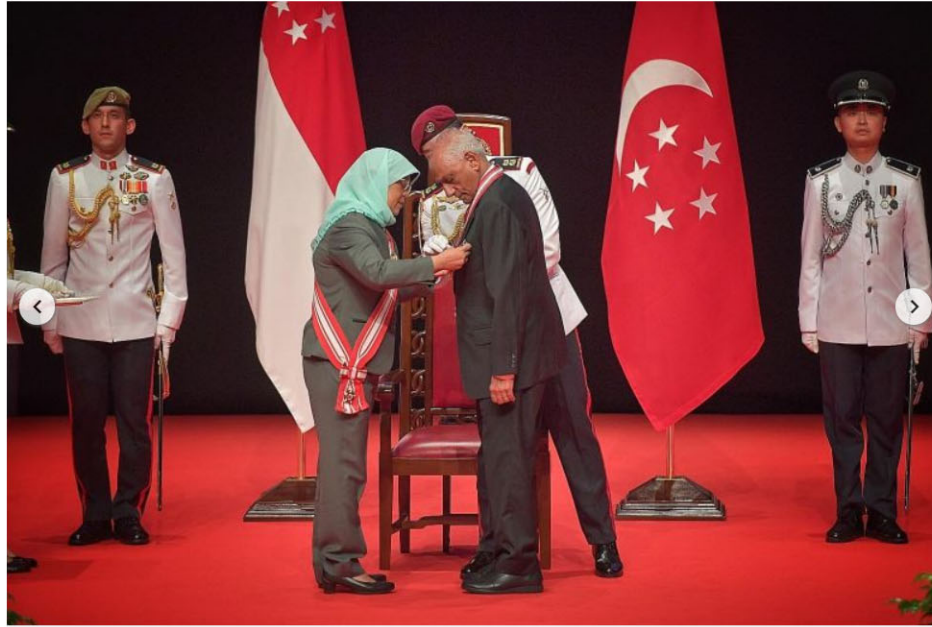


J.Y. Pillay and 510 others receive National Day Awards at ceremony



1 of 6 President Halimah Yacob presenting the Order of Temasek (With Distinction) to Mr J.Y. Pillay, who was the longest-serving chairman of the Council of Presidential Advisers, having led it from 2005 until January this year. ST PHOTO: ARIFFIN JAMAR

PUBLISHED 5 HOURS AGO



Calvin Yang

The desire to see his students excel led Republic Polytechnic principal Yeo Li Pheow and his team to think up and implement initiatives, including new programmes on innovation, to prepare the students for the future economy.

Mr Yeo also strengthened the course curricula to focus on technical knowledge and soft skills.

For his contributions, he received the Public Administration Medal (Gold). He was one of the 511 individuals given National Day Awards by President Halimah Yacob yesterday.

Heading the list was veteran civil servant J.Y. Pillay, who was presented with the Order of Temasek (With Distinction) at the ceremony held at the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) College Central.

Mr Yeo, who has been principal of the polytechnic in Woodlands since 2008, said he had not expected to get the award and was only doing his best for his students.

"My satisfaction is seeing students with challenging backgrounds, such as financial issues and learning difficulties, graduate. Those are things that money can't buy," he said.

The citation for his award said that under his leadership, the polytechnic implemented programmes to enhance student outcomes, including offering education and career guidance, and more structured internships for students.

Mr Pillay - whom founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew had said was "equal to the best brains in America" - was yesterday awarded Singapore's highest civilian honour for his contributions to the country.

He was the longest-serving chairman of the Council of Presidential Advisers (CPA), having led it from 2005 until January this year.

A citation for the 85-year-old, who was also permanent secretary in the finance, defence and national development ministries, said that Mr Pillay had "served Singapore with great devotion and distinction over more than half a century".

"A pioneer in the civil service and a close associate of Singapore's founding leaders, he led many key projects during the early years of our nationhood."

Other positions he has held included chairman of Singapore Airlines, as well as managing director of GIC and the Monetary Authority of Singapore.

The next highest award presented yesterday was the Order of Nila Utama (With High Distinction) to former minister Lim Chee Onn.



Mr Lim Chee Onn, a member of the Council of Presidential Advisers. ST PHOTO: ARIFFIN JAMAR

Mr Lim, 75, a member of the CPA, served as a Member of Parliament 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 from 1980 to 1983.

Three individuals received the Distinguished Service Order, the third-highest award this year. They were Mr Gerard Ee, chairman of the Charity Council; Mr Ang Kong Hua, chairman of Sembcorp Industries and GIC Investment Board; and Mr Chiang Chie Foo, chairman of the Central Provident Fund Board and national water agency PUB.



Dr Gerard Ee Hock Kim, chairman of the Charity Council. ST PHOTO: ARIFFIN JAMAR

Former director-general of education Ho Peng and former senior parliamentary secretary Yatiman Yusof were awarded the Meritorious Service Medal.

This year, the National Day Awards, which recognise individuals for their contributions to Singapore, were given out to nearly 5,000 people, including civil servants and community leaders.