

Judiciary's response to media enquiries on applications for search warrants

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

In response to media enquiries, the Judiciary would like to provide the following information today (October 8) on the existing system in handling urgent applications outside office hours in the Magistrates' Courts.

The normal arrangements are that four magistrates are put on a two-week duty roster for the handling of urgent applications, including applications for search warrants, outside office hours both in the weekdays and during weekends and holidays. Four respective contact numbers of the four duty magistrates are provided to the relevant law enforcement agencies. In case there is a need for the law enforcement agencies to make any urgent applications outside the office hours, they can contact one of the duty magistrates, and in case that duty magistrate is not readily contactable at a particular time, they can contact another duty magistrate immediately. This is the reason for providing four duty magistrates in a roster for practicable considerations.

All magistrates deal with such urgent applications strictly according to the law, having regard to the facts and particulars presented before them. The magistrate's decision in respect of application for a search warrant is subject to judicial review. If the applicant is not satisfied with the decision of a magistrate, the proper procedure is to take the matter forward through the established judicial system.

It is inappropriate for the Judiciary to comment on individual cases.