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**10 MAY 2022**

**HIGH COURT FINDS IN OS 856/2020 THAT SDP DELIBERATELY  
PUBLISHED FALSE STATEMENT OF FACT**

The High Court today ordered the Singapore Democratic Party (“**SDP**”) to pay legal costs of \$7,000 and reasonable disbursements to the Attorney-General in OS 856/2020. It found that the SDP had deliberately published a false statement of fact.

2 OS 856/2020 is an application by the SDP to set aside a Correction Direction (“**CD**”) issued to it during the 2020 General Elections period. The CD was issued in respect of an article on SDP’s Facebook page (“**SDP Article**”), where it alleged that the then-Chief Executive of the Housing and Development Board (“**HDB**”), Dr Cheong Koon Hean, had said in a 2018 IPS-Nathan Lecture that Singapore’s “population density” (based on total land area) would increase to 13,700 per sq km and Singapore’s population would go up to nearly 10 million by 2030.

3 On 10 May 2022, the High Court dismissed SDP’s application and upheld the CD (*Singapore Democratic Party v AG* [2022] SGHC 100). The Court found that SDP had communicated a false statement of fact. In particular, Dr Cheong did not suggest or imply that Singapore’s population would go up to nearly 10 million by 2030. Dr Cheong had in fact expressly referred to Singapore reaching a “living density” of 13,700 per sq km by 2030, which is a figure calculated based only on the land available for urban areas (and not total land area). As SDP falsely represented what Dr Cheong had said in her 2018 IPS-Nathan Lecture, the Court found that SDP had communicated a false statement of fact and the CD was correctly issued.

4 The High Court additionally found that SDP was aware at all material times, including before SDP published the SDP Article, that Dr Cheong had referred to “living density” (based on land available for urban areas) and not

“population density” (based on total land area). This was because HDB had clarified this explicitly in a Straits Times forum article two weeks after Dr Cheong’s 2018 IPS-Nathan Lecture, and the Court found that SDP was aware of this clarification.

5 In the circumstances, the High Court found that “*SDP deliberately included the Subject Statement in the SDP Article, knowing that it was false*”, and ordered SDP to pay costs.

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