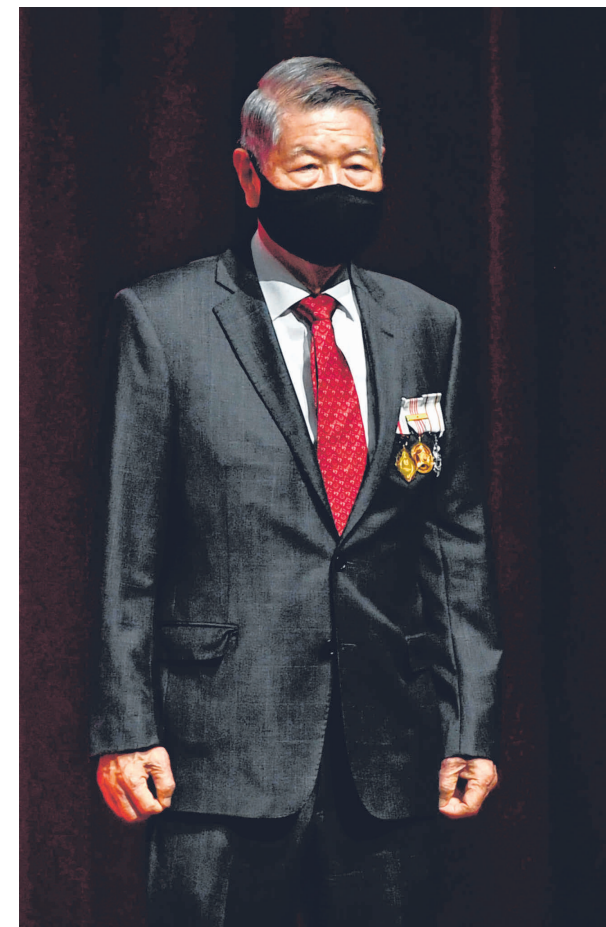
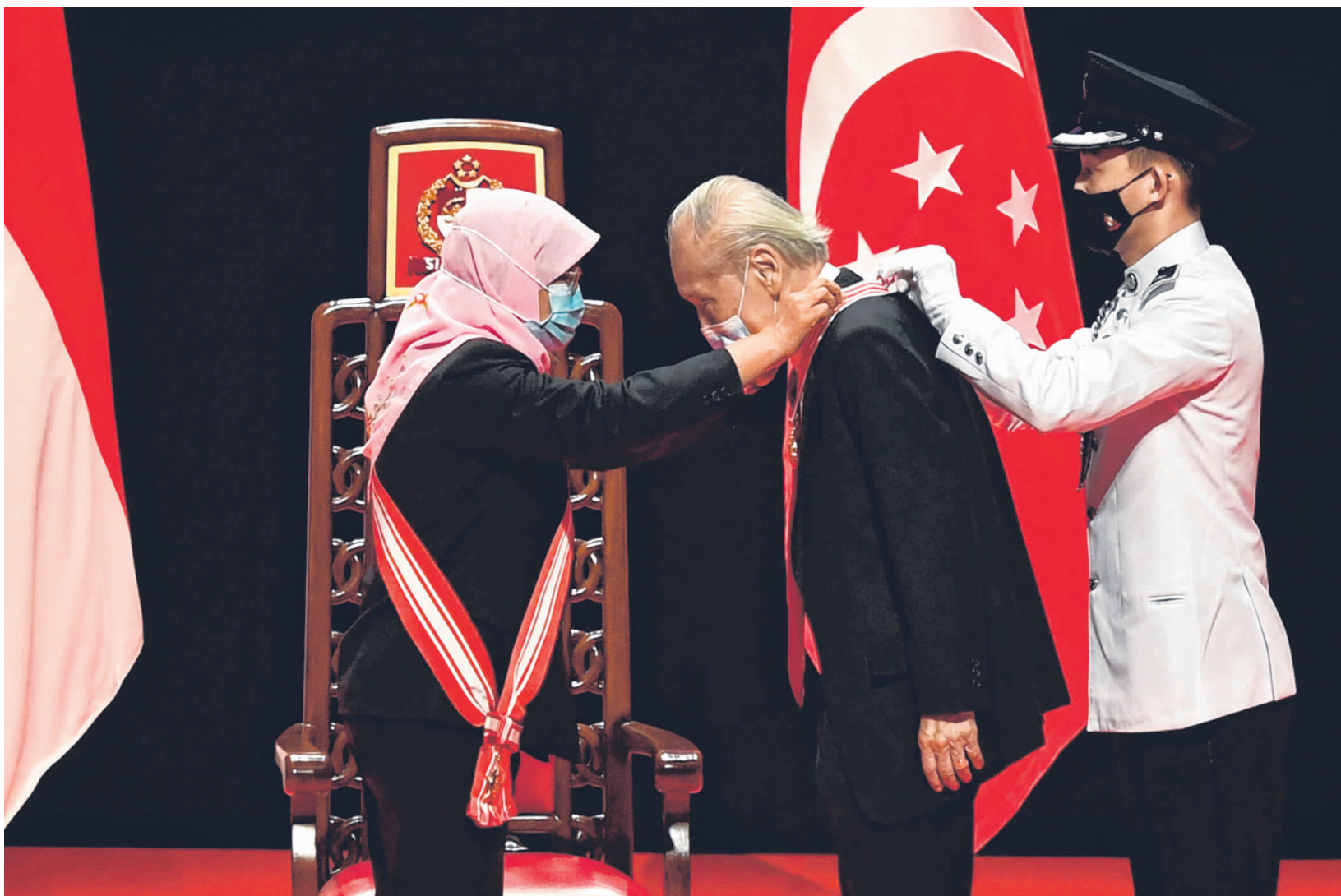


President Halimah Yacob presenting the Distinguished Service Order to Professor Wang Gungwu at the 2020 National Day Awards ceremony held at the Institute of Technical Education College Central yesterday. Prof Wang was recognised for his instrumental role in “developing world-class research institutions in Singapore”.  
ST PHOTOS: CHONG JUN LIANG



Mr Koh Choon Hui, who was also given the Distinguished Service Order, has nurtured several social service agencies in his four decades in the sector. The investiture ceremony was held for more than 500 recipients of the higher honours. In all, a total of 5,472 individuals in 24 award categories received National Day honours.

# Over 500 get top National Day honours

## Ex-senior minister S. Jayakumar among those lauded in ceremony postponed from 2020

**Tham Yuen-C**  
Senior Political Correspondent

Former senior minister S. Jayakumar, who served in the Cabinets of all three of Singapore's prime ministers, headed the list of National Day Award recipients yesterday.

He was conferred the Order of Temasek (With High Distinction), the highest civilian honour, for his “wide-ranging, invaluable and unique contributions to the well-being and security of Singapore”.

The investiture ceremony, postponed from last year, was held at

the Institute of Technical Education College Central for more than 500 recipients of the higher honours. In all, a total of 5,472 individuals in 24 award categories received National Day honours.

President Halimah Yacob gave out the awards to the recipients, who were reminded not to shake hands, a standard precaution amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Guests in the audience, including Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat as well as former prime minister Goh Chok Tong and former president Tony Tan, also had to abide by safe manage-

ment measures. They had to undergo Covid-19 antigen rapid tests and were seated a distance apart.

PM Lee said in a Facebook post after the event: “We postponed the ceremony last year due to the pandemic, so I was glad we could now present the awards in-person, split over two sessions for everyone's safety.”

Professor Jayakumar, 81, was commended for having “given his entire life to the service of Singapore”.

He has served as a diplomat and minister in a public service career spanning more than 30 years, and was a key negotiator and legal adviser on important issues such as the Defence Cooperation Agreement and Extradition Treaty with Indonesia and the Pedra Branca dispute with Malaysia.

He had helmed a wide array of

ministries, from home affairs to law to foreign affairs. He also served as deputy prime minister, coordinating minister for national security and senior minister.

Said the citation for his award: “Uniquely among public servants, Prof Jayakumar brought an exceptionally keen legal mind to bear on a considerable range of issues, from national security and foreign policy to political and constitutional developments.”

Long after his retirement from politics in 2011, he continues to provide advice as senior legal adviser to the Foreign Minister.

On the ceremony, Prof Jayakumar said: “It was an unusual personal experience because in my 30 years as a minister, I attended this ceremony to witness others getting awards.

“I was immensely satisfied to be in the company of so many others from all walks of life who have contributed in their own ways, touched the lives of others and helped our country.”

Others who received top honours were social service stalwart, Mr Koh Choon Hui, 79, as well as one of the world's foremost historians, Professor Wang Gungwu, 90.

Both were conferred the Distinguished Service Order.

Mr Koh, chairman of the Singapore Children's Society since 1978, has nurtured several social service agencies in his four decades in the social service sector.

“His work has benefited many Singaporeans,” said the citation.

Prof Wang, founding chairman of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of

Singapore, and the former chairman of the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute and East Asian Institute, was recognised for his instrumental role in “developing world-class research institutions in Singapore”.

In a Facebook post, President Halimah said: “Our public service officers deserve this recognition and honour for their selfless contributions to Singapore's development and growth in various sectors. I hope they will continue with their service to Singapore as we work towards the next phase of nation building.”

Thanking recipients for their dedication and service to the nation, PM Lee said on Facebook: “May you continue to do our country proud, and be an inspiration to others!”

yuenc@sph.com.sg