

Strengthen and balance judicial system

During his tenure as a Judge of Appeal, Justice V. K. Rajah was renowned for tempering justice with compassion, and his judgment was always refreshing and well respected among the legal fraternity.

Some of Justice Rajah's past judgments are considered ground-breaking, and have, over time, enhanced Singapore's criminal justice system.

Now, as Attorney-General, he has entered the history books as the first attorney-general to have appealed on behalf of an accused person for a reduced sentence ("Prosecution succeeds in getting cyclist's jail term cut"; last Saturday).

Mr Rajah's statement, after the

successful appeal, in which he said it is vital to ensure that offenders are punished appropriately – "neither in a manifestly inadequate nor in a manifestly excessive manner" – is a hallmark of a good prosecutor.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Prem Raj Prabakaran's assertion that "justice works both ways, to the victim as well as to the accused person" is further testimony of how the state is moving forward, insofar as prosecution is concerned, under Mr Rajah's stewardship.

I have no doubt that Mr Rajah will take the Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC) to greater heights during his tenure.

One area that can be further

enhanced would be to look into a form of compensation for innocent victims of wrongful prosecution.

Granted, this may cause the AGC to take slightly more conservative positions, as it runs the risk of incurring costs for wrongful prosecution. However, this actually forces prosecutors to carry out thorough analysis of the merits of a case before taking it to court.

I doubt there will be many cases of wrongful prosecution in Singapore. However, it would be good to have such a system in place so that our judicial system can be well balanced towards both the accused and the state.

Rajasegaran Ramasamy