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PubliC Certificate issued on October 3, 2024 to English Account NG C3 for personal and temporary display.

news-20240502-TTA-20240502-71363009

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|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Source name | Thursday, May 2, 2024 |
| Toronto Star (ON) | |
| Source type | Toronto Star (ON) |
| Press • Newspapers | • p. A4 |
| Periodicity | • 266 words |
| Daily | |
| Geographical coverage | |
| Provincial | |
| Origin | |
| Toronto, Ontario, Canada | |



Ottawa names six new judges for Ontario

Jacques Gallant

The struggling Toronto Superior Court, where a lack of jurists has caused serious criminal cases to collapse, is receiving a net gain of one additional judge following appointments announced Wednesday by the federal government.

Justice Minister Arif Virani appointed six new judges in Ontario, including two for the Superior Court in Toronto, at a time when the Trudeau government is under fire for its slow pace at filling judicial vacancies across the country. Prior to Wednesday, there were at least 20 vacancies in the Superior Court throughout Ontario, about five of which were in Toronto.

Toronto's two new judges are Carissima Mathen, a well-known constitutional law expert and professor at the University of Ottawa, and provincial court judge Apple Newton-Smith, a former criminal defence lawyer.

Virani also appointed judges to the Superior Court's family branch in Belleville and Newmarket, while elevating two Superior Court judges to the Ontario Court of Appeal: Justices Darla Wilson of Toronto and Lene Madsen of

Hamilton.

Wilson's elevation means that Toronto Superior Court received a net gain of one additional judge.

The minister also appointed judges Wednesday in Saskatchewan and Quebec, as well as to the Federal Court and Tax Court.

As the Star has previously reported, at least seven criminal cases have been tossed in Toronto since December due to delays caused by the lack of judges. They include two cases of child sexual abuse, two cases of human trafficking involving the same accused man, charges of gun possession linked to a fatal shooting, and two assault and sexual assault cases.

Jacques Gallant