Technology, Media & Telecommunications

Online Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2022 Comes into Force on 1 February 2023

The Online Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2022 ("**Act**") has come into operation on 1 February 2023. The Act introduces new regulations and obligations on the part of online communication services and internet access service providers, and will empower the Infocomm Media Development Authority ("**IMDA**") to issue orders blocking harmful content.

(a) **Code of Practice**. The Act introduces a new Part 10A in the Broadcasting Act 1994, which empowers IMDA to issue online Codes of Practice applicable to providers of any regulated online communication service. The Broadcasting (Online Codes of Practice Procedure) Rules 2023 have also been introduced to provide the procedure through which IMDA may issue a proposed online Code of Practice, which includes giving notice and considering objections and representations. While IMDA has issued a draft Code of Practice for Online Safety ("**Code**") setting out the obligations of designated Social Media Services, this is subject to further development. The finalised Code is expected to come into force in the second half of 2023. In the meantime, the draft Code contains the following key provisions:

- **User Safety** – The Service must put in place measures to minimise users' exposure to harmful content, empower users to manage their safety on the Service and mitigate the impact on users that may arise from the propagation of harmful content, particularly for children.

- **User Reporting and Resolution** – Any individual must be able to report concerning content or unwanted interactions to the Service. The reporting and resolution mechanism provided to users must be effective, transparent, easy to access, and easy to use.

- **Accountability** – The Service must submit to IMDA annual reports on the measures the Service has put in place to combat harmful and inappropriate content, for publishing on IMDA's website.

(b) **Blocking directions**. Under the new Part 10A, IMDA may also issue the following directions to deal with egregious content:

- Online communication services – A direction to the provider of an online communication service to: (i) disable access to egregious content on its service by Singapore end-users; or (ii) stop delivery of content to the accounts of all Singapore end-users so as to stop or reduce the communication of the egregious content.

- Internet access service providers – A blocking direction to an internet access service provider to stop access by Singapore end-users to the online communication service.

For more information, click here and here to read our earlier Legal Updates.

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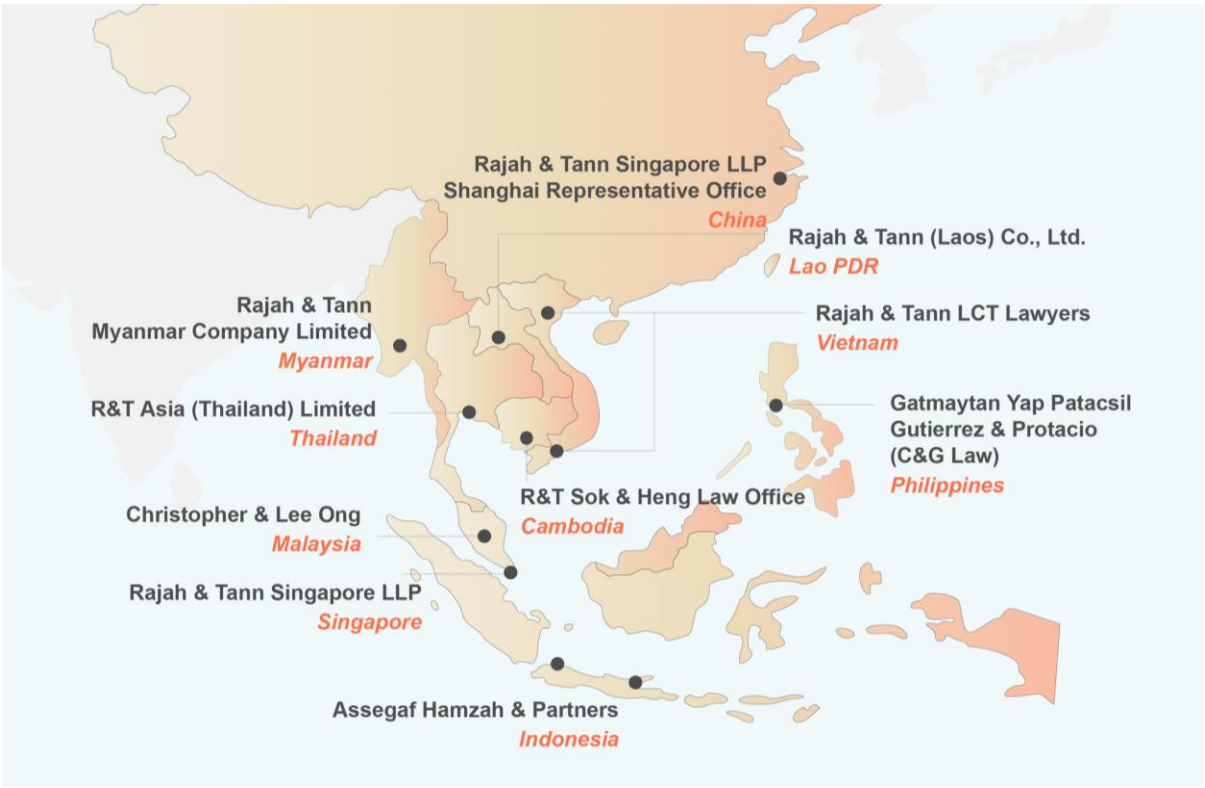

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