



## CHAIRMAN'S APRIL MESSAGE

Sadly, since my last message, the COVID-19 situation has escalated even further. Many countries across the world are in lockdown to slow down the spread of the virus to prevent healthcare services from being overwhelmed.

The dispute resolution world is having to adjust to the current situation, which has seen the closure of domestic courts across the globe as well as the cancellation of arbitration hearings due to worldwide travel bans and border closures.

In response to the authorities' directives against gatherings, many conferences have been cancelled or postponed. IPBA 2020 which was due to be held in Shanghai this month has been postponed to October. ICCA 2020 which was to be held in Edinburgh in May 2020 has been postponed to a date to be fixed either later this year or in 2021.

The Branch has also scaled back on its activities with many of our events and seminars being cancelled. For those who are attending our Courses, we have been in touch with the CIArb Education Team in London to discuss how tutorials can be conducted without the need for physical meetings in light of the travel restrictions imposed all across the world. We have recently received confirmation that the second tutorial for Module 4 on 8 May 2020 will now be held by way of videoconference. CIArb is also now recognising and permitting all assessments that would have been taken physically in exam centres to be undertaken at home. Further details will be notified to candidates in due course.

8 March was a sad day for the arbitration community, as it saw the passing of two arbitration giants, both of whom were active arbitrators in Singapore and the region. Vinayak Pradhan who has been described as a doyen of international arbitration passed on in Kuala Lumpur. Vinayak served as the President of CIArb in 2013. Many of us in Singapore had the privilege of knowing Vinayak not only in a professional capacity but were fortunate to be able to call him a friend. On the same day, VV Veeder QC passed away. Johnny Veeder, as he was more commonly known as, was one of the most well-known arbitration practitioners in the world. Among his many distinguished appointments, Johnny served as Vice-President of the LCIA Court as well as a council member of ICCA. I had the privilege of appearing before Johnny who was Presiding Arbitrator in a Singapore seated arbitration in early 2000. I commend to your reading two tributes to these extraordinary gentlemen which can be found at the following links:

- <https://www.ciarb.org/news/in-memory-of-ciarb-past-president-mr-vinayak-pradhan-carb-fciarb/>
- <https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/sqe-essexcourt/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/09145321/VVV-Tribute.pdf>

On a happier note, on 16 March 2020, our Vice-chair Sapna Jhangiani became the first woman lawyer in Singapore to be appointed a Queen's Counsel. See Sapna all decked out in her wig and gown at <https://www.singaporelawwatch.sg/Headlines/first-woman-lawyer-in-singapore-to-be-made-qc>. We are immensely proud of Sapna's achievements and delighted that she has chosen to make Singapore her home and serve on the board of the Branch.

In terms of recent legal developments, the Singapore Court of Appeal delivered its much-awaited judgment in *China Machine New Energy Corp v Jaguar Energy Guatemala LLC and another* [2020] SGCA 12. The Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal against the High Court's decision declining to

set aside an arbitral award on grounds of breach of natural justice. A copy of the judgment can be found at

[https://www.singaporelawwatch.sg/Portals/0/Docs/Judgments/2020/\[2020\]%20SGCA%2012.pdf](https://www.singaporelawwatch.sg/Portals/0/Docs/Judgments/2020/[2020]%20SGCA%2012.pdf)

Finally, you would by now have received notice of our AGM on 28 April 2020. In response to the Singapore Ministry of Health's directions on limits to the size of gatherings, the AGM will be conducted by way of telephone conference. Details can be found in the notice. I end off by expressing my deepest appreciation to Jonathan Choo (our Hon. Secretary) and Sunita Tavabalan (our secretariat) for their hard work in getting everything ready for the AGM including getting all the minutes, resolutions etc. signed in time. I appreciate how hard it is already to get things ready, without the additional challenges brought about by the restrictions in place due to COVID-19.

**Paul Sandosham, Chairman**