



ASIAN INSTITUTE OF
ALTERNATIVE
DISPUTE
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Delivering Excellence in ADR

ADR CENTURION

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The AIADR shall be a repertoire of global jurisprudence, formed by professional membership, recognized by international institutions, striving for the advancement of alternative dispute resolution methodologies, for amicable conflicts management and effective dispute resolution.

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***“Discourage
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The background features a complex, abstract geometric pattern of overlapping, angular shapes in shades of orange and blue. The shapes are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement, resembling a modern architectural facade or a stylized, crystalline structure. The colors are vibrant and contrast sharply against each other.

***e litigation.
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— Abraham Lincoln

Join the spotlight - submit your profile to the AIADR Newsletter

2026



Submission requirement:

- 1. Profile Picture**
- 2. Biodata (150 - 200) words**

- **Available to AIADR members with active membership only**
- **Limited to 5 slots for each issue.**

To submit, kindly email aiadr.editor@aiadr.world

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Membership

Collaborate with us!

Members are welcome to reach out to the Secretariat for assistance or collaboration in organizing webinars on ADR topics of their choice. No charges are levied. Do not miss out on this great opportunity to enhance your resume by delivering a webinar for the benefit of other members and the ADR fraternity. Email us to register your interest!

Upgrade Your Membership!

Members can now upgrade their membership level or get accredited as a Certified Practitioner through our fast-track path by virtue of having comparable membership or accreditation from equivalent international ADR organisations (e.g. Chartered Arbitrator with CIArb).

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DATUK PROFESSOR SUNDRA RAJOO

Dear Members,

Warm greetings from the Asian Institute of Alternative Dispute Resolution. It gives me great pleasure to present to you the 41st Issue of the ADR Centurion. Each edition of this newsletter represents not only a record of our activities but also a reflection of the collective efforts, shared aspirations, and continued growth of our ADR community. Over the past months, AIADR has continued to progress steadily through a wide range of meaningful programmes, collaborations, and professional engagements aimed at strengthening the practice and awareness of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) both regionally and internationally.

At the outset, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who has contributed to our shared mission of building a truly global platform for ADR. The development of effective dispute resolution systems requires cooperation, dedication, and sustained engagement from practitioners, institutions, academics, and stakeholders across jurisdictions. It is through your continued support and participation that AIADR is able to advance constructive dispute resolution practices and promote dialogue across diverse sectors.

I am especially grateful to the Governance Council, Office Bearers, committee members, the AIADR Secretariat, our partner organizations, esteemed members, and new subscribers for your continued commitment and unwavering support in furthering AIADR's objectives. Your collective efforts and

engagement remain the driving force behind the Institute's progress and achievements. I would also like to encourage all members to remain connected with AIADR through our various communication platforms, including our social media channels.

As we move further into this year, it is also an appropriate time to reflect on the progress we have achieved together as an institute. Over the past few months, AIADR has undertaken several initiatives designed to respond to the evolving needs of ADR practitioners and stakeholders. I am pleased to share with you some highlights of our recent activities and engagements.

1. Firstly, I am delighted to report the successful conclusion of the Tribunal Secretary Training Course held in India on 27 – 28 February 2026, conducted in collaboration with International Arbitration and Mediation Centre (IAMC), Hyderabad. The programme brought together a strong and diverse cohort of participants and delivered a structured, practice-oriented curriculum focused on strengthening professional competence in tribunal secretary functions within international arbitration.

The enthusiastic participation and engagement throughout the programme clearly reflected the growing demand for specialised training in this increasingly important area of practice. As arbitration proceedings become more sophisticated and procedural expectations continue to evolve, the role of tribunal secretaries has become essential in supporting tribunals and ensuring efficient case

Highlights

management.

The course was delivered by an experienced faculty comprising Anirudh Krishnan and myself, with valuable support by tutors Vishal Aggarwal and Isha Sinha. Through interactive discussions and practical exercises, participants gained deeper insights into the responsibilities of tribunal secretaries, procedural best practices, and the practical challenges encountered in arbitration proceedings. These sessions allowed participants to engage directly with real-world scenarios, enhancing both their technical understanding and professional confidence.

I would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to our partner, IAMC Hyderabad, whose collaboration and support were instrumental in the successful delivery of this programme. Initiatives such as this reflect AIADR's ongoing commitment to professional development, practical learning, and capacity building within the arbitration community. By providing accessible and relevant training opportunities, we aim to equip practitioners with the skills necessary to contribute effectively to modern dispute resolution practice.

2. Secondly, I am pleased to share the successful conclusion of our online webinar held on 5 March titled "Beyond the Game's Rules: Mediation & Arbitration in International Sport." The session brought together participants from across jurisdictions to explore the evolving role of dispute resolution mechanisms within the international sporting landscape.

The webinar featured a distinguished panel consisting of myself, together with Samrith Kaur, Alexandre Maciel, and Victor Wong. The discussions examined how mediation and arbitration continue to address complex disputes arising in sport, including governance issues, contractual disputes, disciplinary matters, and athlete-related conflicts. The speakers shared practical perspectives, emerging trends, and insights into the unique challenges faced by stakeholders operating within international sport.

Participants benefited from the diversity of viewpoints presented during the session, which

highlighted the increasing relevance of ADR mechanisms in specialized sectors beyond traditional commercial disputes. This initiative demonstrates AIADR's commitment to organizing timely and relevant discussions that broaden understanding of ADR applications across different industries. Through webinars and educational programmes, we continue to promote knowledge exchange, professional dialogue, and the development of expertise across the region and beyond.

3. Thirdly, I am pleased to share that AIADR successfully hosted Members' Night 2026 on 6 March 2026. The evening provided a valuable opportunity for members to reconnect, exchange ideas, and strengthen professional relationships within the ADR community. Beyond formal programmes and training sessions, gatherings such as this play an important role in fostering a sense of community and encouraging meaningful professional interaction.

The event allowed members to reflect on recent achievements, share experiences, and discuss further directions for ADR development in our region. We extend our sincere appreciation to all members who attended, whose presence and active participation contributed to making the evening both engaging and memorable. The conversations and exchanges throughout the evening reaffirmed the importance of collaboration and mutual support in advancing the practice of alternative dispute resolution.

I would also like to express special appreciation to our distinguished guests, The Hon. Justice Datin Paduka Evrol Mariette Peters and Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr. James Foong Cheng Yuen, for graciously accepting our invitation and joining us. Their presence provided encouragement and inspiration, reminding us of the importance of leadership, mentorship, and continued engagement with the ADR profession.

Events such as Members' Night reflect AIADR's ongoing commitment to building a strong, inclusive, and connected professional community. By creating opportunities for members to interact beyond formal settings, we aim to cultivate

lasting professional relationships and encourage collaboration

4. Lastly, I am pleased to announce that AIADR, in collaboration with the Nepal International ADR Centre (NIAC), will be hosting the 3rd Asia ADR Summit 2026 in Kathmandu, Nepal from 4 – 6 December 2026, in conjunction with the 2nd Nepal ADR Week.

This milestone edition of the Summit will bring together leading practitioners, academics, policymakers, and industry stakeholders from across the region and beyond under the theme: “Reaching the Pinnacle of ADR in a Changing World.” As dispute resolution frameworks continue to evolve in response to technological advancement, globalisation, and changing societal expectations, the Summit aims to provide a platform for high-level dialogue, knowledge exchange, and strategic collaboration.

Set against the historic and cultural backdrop of Kathmandu, this Summit represents a shared commitment to strengthening institutional cooperation and shaping the future direction of ADR both regionally and internationally. Further details regarding the programme, speakers, and participation opportunities will be announced in due course, and we look forward to welcoming members and stakeholders to this important event.

In closing, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all our members for their unwavering participation and support in our various activities and events. Your engagement remains essential to the success and impact of our work. The progress we have achieved thus far reflects the strength of our community and our shared commitment to advancing effective and accessible dispute resolution. We look forward to continuing this journey together and to building new opportunities for collaboration, learning, and growth in the months ahead.



A Study on Arbitrating Decentralized Finance (DeFi) and Smart-Contract Disputes: Emerging Challenges and Institutional



Sivashankaran S

Is a final year law student and an emerging arbitration practitioner with a strong academic and professional interest in alternative dispute resolution, particularly arbitration. He has undergone practical training in arbitration practice through professional engagements and academic research, focusing on contemporary developments in dispute resolution, including commercial arbitration and evolving legal frameworks. Deeply committed to building a career in arbitration, he aspires to become a renowned arbitrator and actively contribute to the global ADR community. As an initial step toward this goal, he is undertaking scholarly publications to engage with contemporary arbitration discourse and develop practical insights. He also aims to become a panel member of the Asian Institute of Alternative Dispute Resolution (AIADR) in the future. Currently, he is keen to further enhance his practical exposure by pursuing internship opportunities under esteemed institutions dedicated to ADR excellence.

ABSTRACT

Decentralized Finance (DeFi) is radically changing the global financial landscape, offering a revolutionary way to handle money without traditional banks, using blockchain technology. The backbone of DeFi is the smart contract—a piece of self-executing code that automatically runs transactions like loans, trading, insurance, and staking. While this approach offers incredible speed, transparency, and freedom from intermediaries, its reliance on rigid technology also creates significant weak points.

When things go wrong—due to a coding bug, an oracle failure (bad data feeds), a malicious exploit, or a dispute over governance—it generates complex disputes involving users, developers, and decentralized autonomous organizations (DAOs). The global, anonymous, and automated nature of DeFi makes taking these disputes to a traditional courtroom almost impossible. Simply figuring out

who to sue, where the case should be heard, how to interpret computer code as a legal agreement, and enforcing a ruling across global, decentralized networks creates massive roadblocks. This is why arbitration—especially in its digitally-enabled and on-chain forms—is rapidly becoming the most practical solution for settling DeFi conflicts.

This paper examines arbitration's growing role in these decentralized ecosystems. We analyze the institutional shifts major arbitral bodies are making to handle cases involving digital assets and smart contracts.

We pinpoint critical challenges: how to ensure awards can be enforced in a decentralized environment; maintaining due process for anonymous parties who are anonymous; finding arbitrators with deep technical expertise; and aligning the law with the pace of technological reality. We then assess the adaptation efforts of leading institutions

like the SIAC, ICC, LCIA, and blockchain-native platforms. The study concludes that arbitration has enormous potential to become the primary mechanism for DeFi dispute resolution, provided that legal, institutional, and technological innovations keep pace with this rapidly moving digital economy.

INTRODUCTION

Decentralized Finance (DeFi) has quickly emerged as a major force, reshaping how the world moves and manages money by offering transparent, automated, and open financial services without any central authority. Primarily built on blockchains like Ethereum, DeFi runs on smart contracts—computer protocols that automatically execute predefined transactions when certain conditions are met. This technology allows people anywhere to lend, borrow, trade, and even participate in governance through Decentralized Autonomous Organizations (DAOs).

While the promise of speed and efficiency has fueled DeFi's growth, it has also introduced unique risks. Smart contracts are rigid and immutable; once deployed, they are vulnerable to programming errors, bad data, hacker exploits, or unforeseen technological flaws. Consequently, disputes over smart-contract failures, lost funds, protocol fraud, or governance deadlocks are becoming increasingly common and often involve multiple, anonymous parties scattered across the globe.

Traditional legal systems are simply not built to handle these conflicts. The pseudonymity of users makes identifying parties for a lawsuit difficult, while DeFi's borderless nature creates confusion over which court has jurisdiction and which laws apply. Furthermore, judges and courts often lack the specialized technical knowledge required to interpret complex smart-contract code or understand blockchain architecture. The slow, bureaucratic nature of litigation is also fundamentally at odds with the instantaneous, irreversible execution of blockchain transactions, rendering court remedies useless once digital assets are moved. Most critically, enforcing a traditional court order on a decentralized network is challenging, as these systems operate autonomously and ignore centralized commands. These limitations urgently call for an alternative dispute-resolution system that is technologi-

cally compatible and effective across jurisdictions.

Arbitration has proven to be a practical and increasingly favored path for resolving disputes in DeFi and smart-contract environments. Its foundation is contractual, allowing parties to customize their rules, ensure confidentiality, select technical experts as arbitrators, and benefit from the global enforceability guaranteed by the New York Convention. Arbitration is well-suited for DeFi because it is flexible, can be conducted entirely online, and supports hybrid models where decisions can either be enforced through traditional means or automatically executed by smart contracts (on-chain arbitration). We are already seeing major arbitral institutions like the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC), the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), and the London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA) update their rules to handle digital assets, adopting provisions for digital evidence, virtual hearings, and appointing blockchain experts.

Despite these advantages, applying arbitration to DeFi remains a complex challenge. Key issues include: embedding arbitration clauses directly into smart contract code; guaranteeing fundamental due process rights for anonymous parties; creating reliable standards for blockchain-based evidence; and designing enforcement mechanisms that seamlessly interact with decentralized systems. Furthermore, the emergence of purely on-chain arbitration platforms (like Kleros and Aragon Court) highlights the need for fast, automated, and community-driven resolution, but these systems raise their own concerns regarding procedural fairness and legal enforceability outside the crypto ecosystem.

As DeFi continues to grow and regulatory scrutiny increases, the intersection of arbitration and decentralized finance is a vital area for research, policy development, and institutional innovation. This study seeks to contribute to that discussion by examining the emerging challenges and opportunities. We will analyze the shortcomings of traditional law, evaluate how arbitral institutions are adapting, and identify the key legal, procedural, and technological requirements for resolving conflicts in the DeFi ecosystem effectively. Through this research, we aim to offer broader insights into

Views

how dispute-resolution frameworks must evolve to remain relevant in a global economy that is rapidly becoming digital and decentralized.

KEYWORDS

Decentralized Finance (DeFi); Smart Contracts; Arbitration; Blockchain Disputes; Digital Assets; On-Chain Enforcement; Code-as-Law; Decentralized Autonomous Organizations (DAOs); Jurisdiction; Automated Transactions.

OBJECTIVES

- To examine the legal, technical, and procedural obstacles involved in arbitrating disputes within DeFi and smart-contract environments.
- To evaluate the concrete steps taken by leading global arbitration institutions to update their rules, procedures, and technological capabilities for handling blockchain-based conflicts.
- To assess the practical effectiveness and relevance of arbitration, including native on-chain dispute resolution systems, in settling conflicts that arise within decentralized ecosystems.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Werbach, K., & Cornell, N. (2017). "Contracts Ex Machina." Werbach and Cornell laid the groundwork by exploring the legal implications of smart contracts as self-enforcing agreements. They warned that treating code as the only source of contractual obligation is insufficient, especially when unexpected problems arise. Their work is crucial to our study, as it frames the debate over why a flexible mechanism like arbitration is necessary to resolve disputes that code alone cannot settle fairly.
- Reyes, C. (2020). "Blockchain Arbitration and the New World of Decentralized Dispute Resolution" Reyes focused on the potential of blockchain-native arbitration systems. The research details how decentralized platforms, such as Kleros, use token-based systems to quickly and cheaply resolve disputes. Reyes highlights the difficulty of transferring traditional legal safeguards (like due

process and impartiality) to these new systems, especially when trying to enforce decisions off-chain. This work clearly illustrates the core tension between radical decentralization and legal enforceability.

- Schrepel, T. (2021). "Smart Contracts and the Problem of Governance" Schrepel argues that the rigid nature of smart contracts makes them prone to governance failures, which inevitably lead to disputes. He points out that code cannot handle ambiguity or mediate unforeseen situations. Since governance breakdowns in DeFi often create power struggles among users and token holders, Schrepel suggests that arbitration acts as a crucial "governance layer" that can resolve conflicts where automated code cannot.
- Born, G., & Rutledge, P. (2022). "International Arbitration and Digital-Asset Disputes" Born and Rutledge examine how established arbitration bodies are actively reforming their rules to manage cases involving cryptocurrencies and blockchain systems. They note key institutional changes, such as expedited procedures, specific protocols for digital evidence, and a focus on appointing arbitrators with technical specialization. Their work confirms the active process of adaptation taking place within the traditional arbitration world.
- Chamberlain, C. (2023). "DeFi Disputes and the Future of On-Chain Arbitration" Chamberlain provides a detailed analysis of purely on-chain arbitration platforms (like Kleros, Aragon Court, and UMA). He acknowledges that decentralized arbitration offers speed, autonomy, and global reach. However, he concludes that it currently lacks the legal robustness, procedural fairness, and broad enforceability of traditional arbitration. His findings strongly support the idea that hybrid models—which combine the legal certainty of traditional arbitration with on-chain execution—may be the future standard for DeFi dispute resolution.

CONCLUSION

The emergence of Decentralized Finance has created a technologically advanced yet legally complicated environment where conventional methods for resolving conflict frequently fail. Smart contracts

are efficient and autonomous, but their lack of flexibility creates substantial risks when vulnerabilities are exploited or misinterpretations occur. As DeFi's global reach expands, disputes involving anonymous participants, cross-border transactions, and automated protocols are becoming the norm.

Arbitration offers a powerful and essential counterpoint to litigation. This study confirms that arbitration is uniquely suited to handle DeFi disputes because of its procedural adaptability, its capacity to integrate specialized technical knowledge, and its adherence to established international enforcement treaties. The development of on-chain arbitration further strengthens this potential, allowing for a seamless link between a binding resolution and the automated execution of a smart contract.

However, arbitration's ultimate success in the DeFi space requires continuous evolution. Institutions must finalize rules that fairly accommodate anonymous parties, manage digital evidence, and integrate blockchain-native procedural tools. Legal frameworks worldwide need to formally recognize hybrid enforcement models, and arbitrators must receive specialized training in blockchain technology. Furthermore, DeFi communities themselves must build governance structures that formally endorse fair and binding dispute resolution.

Ultimately, arbitration—driven by institutional adaptation and technological integration—provides the most promising path toward resolving conflicts in decentralized financial systems. As the digital economy grows, a collaborative effort among technologists, legal experts, regulators, and arbitration bodies is crucial to ensure that the evolving DeFi ecosystem is characterized by trust, fairness, and stability.



A Successful AIADR-IAMC Collaboration: Tribunal Secretary Course in Hyderabad

2026



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We are pleased to announce the successful completion of the Tribunal Secretary Training Course held in Hyderabad, India, on 27 - 28 February 2026, organized by the Asian Institute of Alternative Dispute Resolution (AIADR) in collaboration with the International Arbitration and Mediation Centre (IAMC), Hyderabad.

This two-day programme represented another important milestone in AIADR's ongoing efforts to strengthen professional capacity in international arbitration by developing specialized training for tribunal secretaries - a role that continues to gain increasing recognition within modern arbitral practice. Bringing together a strong cohort of participants from diverse professional backgrounds, the course reflected the growing demand for structured and practice-oriented education in this evolving field. Designed to bridge theory and practice, the programme delivered a comprehensive curriculum focused on the functions, responsibilities, and ethical standards expected of tribunal secretaries in international arbitration proceedings. Participants were guided through the practical realities of supporting arbitral tribunals, including procedural management, drafting assistance, case organi-

zation, and maintaining efficiency throughout the arbitration process. The training emphasized not only technical competence but also professionalism, independence, confidentiality, and procedural integrity - qualities essential to maintaining trust in arbitral proceedings.

Leading the programme were distinguished lecturers Datuk Sundra Rajoo and Anirudh Krishnan, both highly respected practitioners in the field of arbitration. Through their extensive experience and practical insights, participants gained a deeper understanding of how tribunal secretaries contribute to the effective administration of complex arbitration cases. The sessions combined conceptual discussions with real-world perspectives, enabling participants to appreciate the expectations placed upon tribunal secretaries in contemporary practice. A key strength of the training was its strong emphasis on applied learning. Dedicated tutors Vishal Aggarwal and Isha Sinha worked closely with participants, providing practical guidance and facilitating interactive discussions that encouraged critical thinking and active engagement. These sessions allowed participants to explore practical challenges faced in arbitral proceedings and to develop

confidence in applying best practices within realistic scenarios.

Beyond technical instruction, the course also served as a platform for professional exchange and collaboration. Participants engaged actively throughout the programme, sharing experiences and perspectives from different jurisdictions and professional roles. This dynamic learning environment fostered meaningful dialogue and strengthened professional networks among arbitration practitioners committed to advancing standards within the field.

The success of the Hyderabad programme would not have been possible without the strong collaboration between AIADR and IAMC Hyderabad. AIADR extends its sincere appreciation to IAMC Hyderabad for its invaluable support and partnership, which played a vital role in ensuring the smooth and successful delivery of the course.

Building on the strong momentum generated in India, AIADR looks forward to the 2nd Edition of the Tribunal Secretary Training Course, which will take place in Malaysia on 7 – 8 May 2026. The upcoming programme aims to continue equipping arbitration professionals with the specialized knowledge and practical skills required to excel in tribunal secretary roles.

The Hyderabad training was more than a professional course – it marked a significant step forward in advancing structured education for tribunal secretaries and reinforcing the importance of professional excellence in international arbitration. As AIADR continues to expand its training initiatives across jurisdictions, the Institute remains committed to nurturing skilled practitioners, promoting best practices, and supporting the continued evolution of arbitration worldwide.

TRAINER'S PROFILE



Datuk Professor Sundra Rajoo

Datuk Professor Sundra Rajoo is a distinguished Malaysian legal professional, architect, town planner and chartered arbitrator, internationally recognised for his contributions to arbitration, construction law, and alternative dispute resolution. He is the Founding President of the Asian Institute of Alternative Dispute Resolution (AIADR) and has served twice as Director of the Asian International Arbitration Centre (AIAC). With over three decades of experience, Datuk Sundra has acted as presiding arbitrator, co-arbitrator, and sole arbitrator in more than 300 domestic and international arbitrations under various institutional and ad hoc rules. His academic background spans law, architecture, urban planning, and construction, making him a rare polymath in the legal and built environment sectors. He has authored numerous leading texts on arbitration and construction law, and held academic positions at institutions in Malaysia, India, and China. For his services, he was conferred the federal title of "Datuk" by the King of Malaysia in 2012 and was named the 2023 Leading International Arbitrator by APCAM.

Highlights

2026



Anirudh Krishnan

Anirudh Krishnan is the Founder Partner of AK Law Chambers and a leading practitioner in litigation, arbitration, and dispute resolution. A graduate of NALSAR University of Law and the BCL programme at the University of Oxford, he is also a qualified Solicitor of England and Wales. Widely recognised by Chambers and Partners and India Business Law Journal, he is praised for his technical excellence, strategic thinking, and strong courtroom advocacy.

Anirudh advises clients on domestic and international arbitration, commercial litigation, and corporate advisory matters, and has participated in proceedings under ICC, LCIA, SIAC, AMTAC, and ICSID rules. He previously worked with Clifford Chance in London on international arbitration and commercial disputes. He is Chief Editor of the two-volume Justice R.S. Bachawat's Law of Arbitration and Conciliation and author of several publications on arbitration and public law. Anirudh has also served as a consultant to the Law Commission of India and regularly lectures and speaks at international legal forums.



Isha Sinha

Isha Sinha is a seasoned legal professional with over 14 years of experience in arbitration, dispute resolution, and complex commercial advisory, supported by strong expertise in corporate law, governance, and regulatory compliance. A graduate of Government Law College, Mumbai, she holds an Executive MBA in Financial Management from IIM Kozhikode and a postgraduate diploma in cyber laws, enabling a multidisciplinary and commercially focused approach.

She previously served as Chief Legal and Compliance Officer at Medicovert Hospitals, India, where she led high-value disputes, arbitrations, and regulatory matters across multiple jurisdictions, overseeing strategy from risk mitigation and proceedings to settlement and enforcement. Isha has advised clients in domestic and international arbitrations, shareholder disputes, and regulatory enforcement matters, with extensive experience in pleadings, evidence management, and hearings.

She has worked with leading firms including Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas and Tatva Legal, and is actively engaged with international arbitration institutions such as LCIA and SIAC.



Vishal Aggarwal

Vishal is a Solicitor-Advocate and triple qualified lawyer, with qualifications in England, India and Ireland. He holds Higher Rights of Audience to appear before Senior Courts in England and Wales and Courts of AIFC in Kazakhstan. Vishal is also an Accredited Tribunal Secretary empanelled with the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HKIAC) and the Australian Centre for International Commercial Arbitration (ACICA) in addition to being the Senior Editor of *Low, Practice and Procedure of Arbitration in India* published by Lexis Nexis.

Vishal advises both private and state parties in domestic and international arbitration proceedings as well as in complex cross-border disputes before various courts: Alongside representing parties in international litigation and arbitrations, he works on a variety of domestic disputes including debt-recovery and professional negligence. During his international career, he has also worked as Tribunal Secretary to International Arbitral Tribunals in multi-million-dollar disputes in Singapore, Malaysia, Africa and the UAE





On 5 March 2026, the Asian Institute of Alternative Dispute Resolution (AIADR) and the Sports Law Association of Malaysia (SLAM) jointly hosted a high-level online seminar titled “Beyond the Game’s Rules – Mediation & Arbitration in International Sport.” The seminar brought together internationally renowned arbitration experts and sports law authorities to provide an in-depth analysis of key practical issues in global sports arbitration and mediation, with particular emphasis on industry trends, emerging developments, and effective dispute resolution models.

The event attracted more than 30 participants, including legal professionals, practitioners, academics, and university students from across Asia and beyond. Datuk Professor Sundra Rajoo, a distinguished arbitration expert, moderated the session, which featured leading international arbitrators and sports law specialists. The seminar marked an important milestone in addressing complex issues in sports dispute resolution—an area that extends far beyond the rules of the game and encompasses critical domains such as contractual relationships, athlete eligibility, governance structures, commercial sponsorship, and athlete rights.

The seminar featured three senior experts in sports arbitration—Alexandre Maciel, Samrith Kaur, and Victor Wong—each of whom offered valuable and distinct perspectives. Collectively, their contributions provided a comprehensive examination of the advantages of mediation and arbitration, including confidentiality, specialized expertise, efficiency, and global enforceability, while also drawing comparisons with traditional court litigation.

Victor Wong, a member of the Subcommittee of the Sports Law Association of Malaysia, focused on the serious and immediate consequences of unresolved sports disputes. He highlighted the

time-sensitive nature of such conflicts, noting the potential for missed career opportunities for athletes, financial instability for clubs, and reputational risks for governing bodies. He also addressed the legal boundaries of arbitration agreements, including issues of arbitrability, jurisdictional challenges, and the importance of judicial oversight to ensure compliance with public policy.

Samrith Kaur, a certified mediator with AIADR and a Fellow of the Asian Domain Name Dispute Resolution Centre, advocated for a balanced approach when disputes arise during competitions. She emphasized the interdependence of game integrity, athlete rights, and commercial interests, cautioning against prioritizing one at the expense of others. She also explored the unique features of sports arbitration under the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), including its specialized jurisdiction, procedural flexibility, and significant role in global sports governance. In addition, she highlighted the effectiveness of mediation in resolving relationship-driven and reputational disputes.

The seminar concluded with remarks by Alexandre Maciel, who offered a critical perspective on sports arbitration. He examined the structural challenges faced by athletes, noting that despite arbitration’s advantages—such as professionalism, efficiency, and international enforceability—it often imposes high costs, limits judicial review, and involves elements of “involuntary consent” due to mandatory arbitration clauses. These factors, he argued, place athletes at a structural disadvantage. He further observed that fundamental rights, including the right to work and due process, are sometimes overlooked, thereby undermining the credibility of arbitration systems.

Maciel advocated for the incorporation of sports-specific provisions into national arbitration

laws, citing Portugal’s hybrid arbitration model as an example of how legislative frameworks can provide greater institutional protection for weaker parties. He also stressed the need to integrate human rights principles systematically into sports arbitration, arguing that the current system often operates within a “private bubble” detached from broader human rights frameworks. Referring to issues such as transgender athlete eligibility, he underscored the importance of upholding principles of equality and non-discrimination in sports governance. His remarks reinforced the view that sports arbitration is not merely a technical mechanism but must also balance efficiency with fairness and human rights to ensure legitimacy.

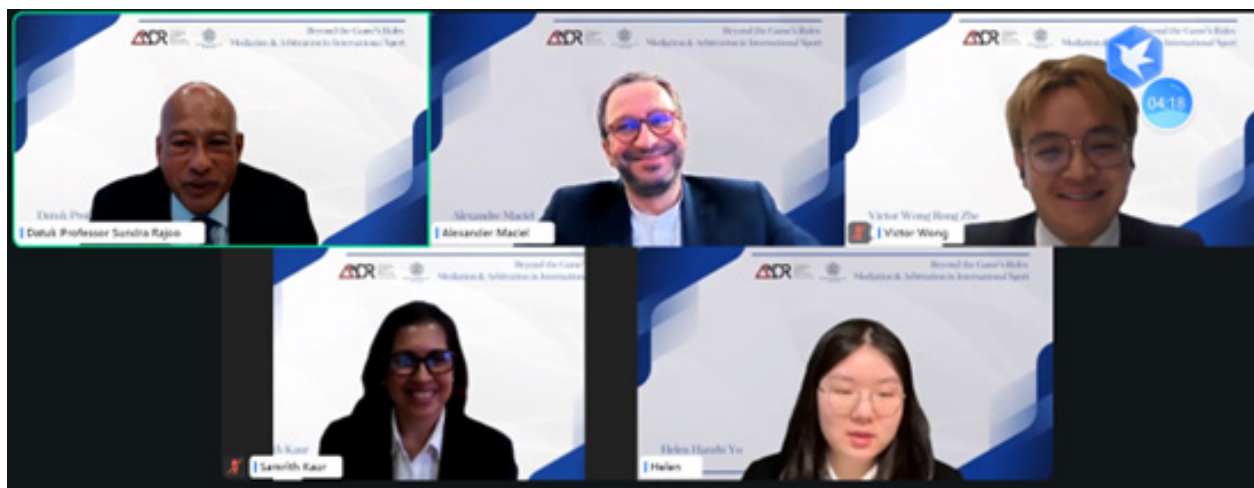
Overall, the seminar provided a comprehensive examination of mediation and arbitration in international sports dispute resolution. Drawing on perspectives from athletes, professional teams, and governing bodies, the speakers highlighted both the strengths of sports arbitration—particularly its professionalism, efficiency, and global enforceability—and its challenges, including cost barriers and structural imbalances affecting athletes. The discussion also underscored the vital role of mediation in addressing disputes involving team dynamics, reputational concerns, and selection issues, while emphasizing the importance of integrating human rights considerations into dispute resolution processes.

In today’s highly commercialized and globalized

sports industry, where cross-border interactions are increasingly common, achieving a balance between procedural efficiency and substantive justice—as well as between institutional governance and individual rights—has become a central challenge. Through comparative insights and multidimensional dialogue, the seminar identified key pathways for future reform, including the development of specialized procedures tailored to the unique characteristics of sports disputes, the increased institutional use of mediation, and the recognition of human rights as a cornerstone of legitimacy in sports arbitration.

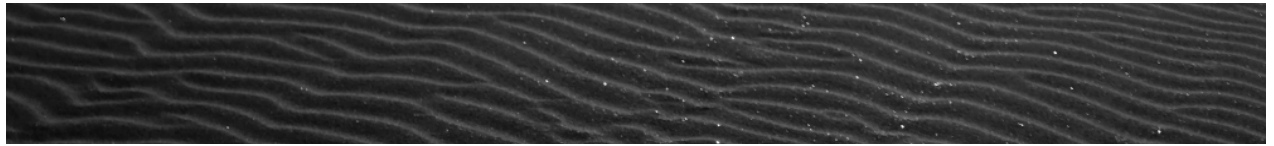
The seminar concluded with a shared commitment by the organizers and participating institutions to continue advancing the field through future seminars, professional training programmes, and practical exchange initiatives. These efforts aim to enhance the professional competence of practitioners, promote international collaboration in sports dispute resolution, and strengthen the foundations for global engagement in arbitration and mediation.

Ultimately, the seminar demonstrated the enduring value of high-quality, practice-oriented exchange programmes that align with the evolving needs of the sports industry. By combining professional depth with practical relevance, such initiatives play a vital role in improving dispute resolution systems and advancing the standardization and integrity of global sports governance.



Highlights From AIADR's Past Events

2026



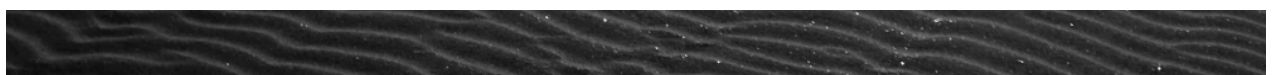
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Pictures from a roundtable at IAMC on the recent developments in Malaysia on Mediation

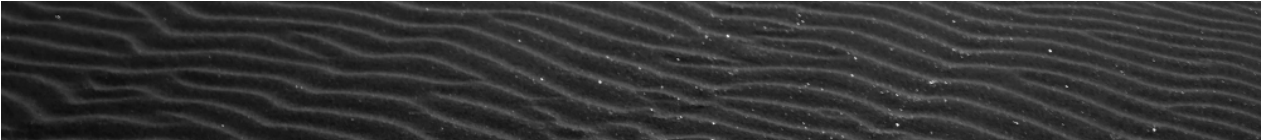


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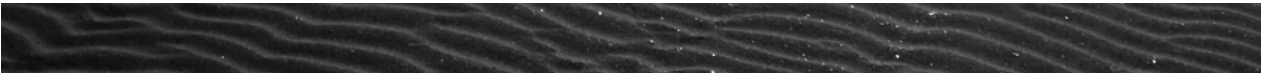
A Picture from the AIADR X IAMC Tribunal Secretary Training Course



Highlights From AIADR's Past Events



Some pictures from the AIADR Member's Evening



Upcoming Events.

7th - 8th May 2026

AIADR Tribunal Secretary Training Course (Kuala Lumpur)

9th - 14th June 2026

AIADR Mediation Training Course

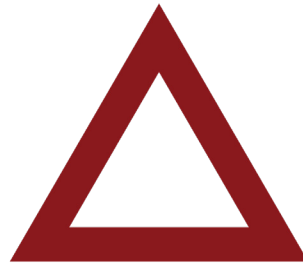
4th - 6th December 2026

AIADR 3rd Asia ADR Summit



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