

By Legally India Friday, 17 November 2017 15:31 Bar, Bench & Litigation

Ex-LCIA India registrar Ajay Thomas joins ICC India arbitration group as vice-chair, alongside Ciccu



Ajay Thomas moves from defunct LCIA India to rival ICC

Following the London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA) India shutting its India operations in April 2016, its former registrar Ajay Thomas has moved to LCIA rival, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) International Court of Arbitration (ICA) in a part-time role.

He will be working as vice-chair of the ICA's India Arbitration Group (IAG), along IAG chairman Ciccu Mukhopadhaya. Mukhopadhaya, who had gone independent as a senior counsel from erstwhile [Amarchand Mangaldas in 2012](#) was previously vice-president of the ICC Court.

Thomas explained that the ICC had established its India Arbitration Group to "reinvigorate the presence of the ICC International Court of Arbitration and its

dispute resolution services in India”, and that he would be supporting this mission in his part-time role, while also continuing his practice as an advocate and independent arbitrator.

Thomas said: “As vice chair my role would be, inter alia to work in association with the chair (Ciccu) and other members of the India Advisory Group, in conceptualising and implementing the various activities and initiatives of the ICC Court of Arbitration in India.”

Activities would include “capacity building initiatives such as training, workshops - to build capacity amongst Indian lawyers and arbitrators by introducing them to international best practices” and to identify potential arbitrators from amongst members of the Indian legal and arbitration community.

Furthermore, he would also assist in organising ICC conferences, seminars and lectures. “This we believe would contribute to, and aid in, the existing efforts to make India a more attractive seat and venue for arbitration,” said Thomas.

The IAG has also appointed the following Indian lawyers as members:

Raj Panchmatia, Partner, Khaitan & Co; Nish Shetty, Partner, Clifford Chance, Singapore; **Vyapak Desai, Partner, Nishith Desai Associates;** Naresh Thacker, Partner, ELP; Shashank Garg, Partner, Advani & Co; and senior advocate Geeta Luthra.

The ICC, in a bid to compete with institutions such as the [Singapore International Arbitration Centre \(SIAC\)](#) that has focused heavily on India, has been also ramping up its India focus in recent years, having [promoted](#) Indian lawyer and deputy counsel Abhinav Bhushan to South Asia regional director in 2016.