



## Partner, Shipping & International Trade

Rajah & Tann Singapore LLP  
T +65 6232 0383  
E [bala@rajahtann.com](mailto:bala@rajahtann.com)

## Practice Areas

Shipping & International Trade  
South Asia Desk

## Qualifications

- LLB (Hons), Bristol
- Diploma in Marine Engineering, Singapore Maritime Academy
- Advocate & Solicitor, Singapore
- Registered Practitioner, DIFC Court

## Active Sectors

Shipping  
Transportation & Logistics

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“Well versed in wet and dry shipping litigation in Singapore, including restructuring and charter party disputes, as well as fraud cases.”  
– *Chambers Asia-Pacific*

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**V Bala** is a Partner of the firm’s Shipping & International Trade practice group.

As a trained marine engineer with sailing experience, V Bala is regularly instructed by leading shipping companies and terminals as Counsel in a wide range of matters.

His contentious practice has seen him appear before all levels of the Singapore courts and arbitral tribunals on a wide range of commercial disputes, with particular focus on shipping, energy and offshore and international trade / commodities sectors. Being adept in dealing with engineering disputes and matters of a technical nature, he has acted for ship builders, repairers and equipment suppliers. He also has a strong non-contentious practice advising and drafting of documents pertaining to ship finance, ship sale and purchase, charterparties, contracts of affreightment, pooling arrangements, tankage, pilotage bunkering, trade finance and port documentation. Given the breadth of his practice and experience, he is **consistently invited to speak in conferences and seminars** around the world on cross-border litigation, arbitration and transactions.

Bala has been recognised as a leading shipping practitioner by *Chambers Asia-Pacific* (2025) and is described as one who “*has a particularly deep knowledge of shipping and always gives sound advice.*”

*The Legal 500 Asia Pacific* cited that “**advocacy is one of the strengths**” of V Bala and “*his background as a marine engineer is particularly helpful.*”

He is also identified as a **Distinguished Practitioner** by *Asialaw Leading Lawyers* (2024) and acknowledged by *Best Lawyers* (2026) for his Shipping & Maritime Law expertise.



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## Notable Cases & Transactions

### Litigation

- Leading bunker supplier before the Singapore Court of Appeal (full bench of 5 judges) on a landmark decision on the application of the doctrine of repudiatory breach to executed contracts
- One of the largest container terminal operators in a claim for hatch cover damage in the High Court of Singapore and the Court of Appeal
- FORTUNE 500 company in mis-delivery claims against a string of vessels
- Leading timber supplier in connection claims arising from a commodity financing arrangement
- Ship-builder in a claim against an engine supplier in relation to defective engines
- Ship-owners in a leading forum non conveniens case
- Banks and commodity houses in connection with injunctions against payment under documentary credit facilities
- Numerous arrest, security-taking and enforcement proceedings

### International Arbitration

- Leading fisheries company in an arbitration administered by the SIAC in connection with a dispute arising from promissory notes
- Leading iron ore importer in an arbitration administered by HKIAC
- Leading Bangladeshi importer in a GAFTA arbitration
- Numerous shipping / bills of lading / charterparty disputes in arbitrations administered by the LMAA/ SCMA
- An SIAC arbitration in respect of a Chinese joint venture dispute
- Leading European bank in ad hoc Singapore arbitration in a trade finance dispute
- An ad hoc Singapore arbitration for a Norwegian marine bearing manufacturer in a dispute involving the supply of a FPSO turret bearing systems
- The ICC arbitration in connection with the dispute in *APC AUSSIE 1* [2009] FCA 872 following a tow parting incident in Australia
- A LCIA arbitration in hotel related disputes in Africa



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## Wet-Work

Advised and represented ship-owners, charterers, P&I clubs and submarine cable owners in maritime casualties including groundings, collisions, allisions, cable severance, shipboard fatalities and oil pollution incidents:

- Accidents in the High Seas, Straits of Malacca, Singapore, India, Bangladesh, Australia, Middle East etc.
- Various berth contact cases
- Various submarine cable operators in cable damage and severance cases
- Injuries and fatalities on ships and in terminals
- Prosecution actions taken by regulatory agencies such as the Maritime Port Authority of Singapore and the Ministry of Manpower

## Non-Contentious work

- Advised bunker suppliers on standard terms and conditions
- Advised a leading terminal on pilotage terms and conditions
- Drafting charterparties – both standard and bespoke forms
- Advised on various ship finance documentation, including sale-and lease-back and where non-traditional financiers such as fund houses and individuals are involved

- Advised on ship building contracts including highly specialized vessels
- Advised on registration of vessels in Singapore and other registries
- Advised on vessel pooling arrangements in the European offshore wind farm sector
- Advised a leading bank on its warehousing documentation relating to the Qingdao Port scandal
- Advised on contracts of affreightment

## Publications

- Contributor, Singapore Civil Procedure (2015, 2016 Editions)
- Contributor, Shipping Law: <http://www.singaporelaw.sg/sglaw/laws-of-singapore/commercial-law/chapter-25>

## Other Professional Activities

- Adjunct advocacy tutor, Law Society of Singapore
- Adjunct lecturer, Shipping Law, Singapore Shipping Association