

PROFILE



Managing Director, Dispute Resolution
Deputy Head, Construction & Engineering
Drew & Napier, Singapore
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Qualifications

LL.B. (Hons), National University of Singapore (2008), Shaw Foundation Scholar
LL.M. International Arbitration & Litigation, University College London (2009)
B.Sc. (1st Class Hons) Politics & International Relations, London School of Economics, External (2006)
Advocate & Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Singapore (2011)
Attorney-at-law of the state of New York (2011)
Advocate, Dubai International Financial Centre
Barrister of England & Wales (2025)

Language

English, Hindi, Malay (Basic)

MAHESH RAI

ABOUT MAHESH

Mahesh is counsel of choice for complex and high-stakes litigation and arbitration. He has appeared as counsel in some 250 cases. His practice spans a range of industries including technology, construction, infrastructure, telecommunications, shipping, energy, and commodities.

He is widely praised as “a first-rate litigator,” “a master strategist,” and a lawyer who is “quick on his feet, precise in detail, and clear and concise in explanation.”

Mahesh is consistently ranked in several publications, including both Chambers Asia-Pacific and Chambers Global 2025 for Dispute Resolution: Litigation and Arbitration. The Legal 500 Asia Pacific 2025 recommends him for Dispute Resolution, International Arbitration, Projects & Energy, White-Collar Crime and Construction.

He has been named one of Asia's Super 50 Disputes Lawyers by Asian Legal Business (ALB) from 2021 to 2024, and was awarded Young Lawyer of the Year at the ALB SE Asia Law Awards in 2019. Mahesh is also recognised as a Litigation Star for Construction by Benchmark Litigation Asia Pacific (2025).

Recognised for his exceptional skill in advocacy and sophisticated legal acumen, in 2021, Mahesh received the prestigious Joseph Grimberg Outstanding Young Advocate Award – a prize awarded to the most talented lawyers in Singapore who have demonstrated outstanding qualities in their professional work and ethical standards.

Mahesh graduated from the National University of Singapore (NUS) as a Shaw Foundation Scholar. He earned an LL.M. in International Arbitration & Litigation from University College London (UCL) where he represented the United Kingdom as an oralist in the UCL team that was the runner-up in the prestigious Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition.

For his *pro bono* work and expanding access to justice, Mahesh was highlighted as one of Asia-Pacific's Innovative Lawyers at The Financial Times' annual Innovative Lawyers Asia-Pacific 2018 awards. He was also shortlisted for the 2018 IBA Outstanding Young Lawyer Award for his *pro bono* representation of accused persons facing the death penalty in Singapore and civil-party victims before the UN Khmer Rouge Tribunal.

EXPERIENCE

Mahesh has handled various high profile matters. Here are just a few:

- **Arbitration against the Government of Maldives** – Represented an international contractor in two UNCITRAL arbitrations against the Maldivian Government for claims over US\$155 million relating to expropriation of land and delays to a project to construct public housing over 10 islands.
- **Construction dispute over Asia's largest petrochemical plant** – Represented a Korean multinational conglomerate in an UNCITRAL arbitration against an Indian state-owned company over claims exceeding US\$400 million arising out of the construction of a petrochemical plant.
- **Arbitration over distributorship arrangements in Middle East** – Represented a Korean manufacturer in two SIAC arbitrations (totaling more than US\$387 million) against its Iranian exclusive distributor for alleged breaches of distributorship agreements resulting in loss of market share in Iran, as well as its counterclaims for outstanding receivables and unauthorised use of trademarks.
- **Cryptocurrency / Algorithmic Trading** – Represented the founders of a significant cryptocurrency algorithmic trading firm in contractual, company and proprietary disputes over claims in excess of US\$120 million.
- **Disputes over the design, installation and operation of a nationwide telecommunications network** – Represented a leading multinational information technology and telecommunication company in two SIAC arbitrations against the telecommunication of a Malaysian conglomerate over contractual disputes relating to the design, commissioning and operation of a telecommunication network, and the supply of hardware and software.

ACCOLADES

Chambers Asia-Pacific & Chambers Global

Dispute Resolution: Litigation – Singapore 2026 – Band 5 (4 consecutive years)

Dispute Resolution: Arbitration – Singapore 2026 – Band 4 (5 years ranked)

Dispute Resolution (International Firms) - India 2026 – Singapore expertise based abroad (3 consecutive years)

Construction – Singapore 2026 – Band 3 (4 years ranked)

- *"He is extremely commercial and pragmatic."*
- *"Mahesh has excellent skills and a professional approach."*
- *"He shows a keen awareness of the client's needs and guides us well on matters."*
- *"He's very prominent and very aggressive."*

- *"Mahesh is an excellent examiner, very good on his feet and very sharp. He is very solution-oriented."*
- *"He is extremely knowledgeable and up to date on various issues. He is able to mitigate situations while keeping the commercialities in mind."*
- *"Mahesh is one of the best lawyers I have ever worked with. He is smart and practical."*
- *"extremely talented and hard-working".*
- *"He is very knowledgeable and clear in conversations, systematic in his approach and reassuring to the client."*
- *"His ability to present cases to tribunals is really excellent."*
- *"Mahesh Rai is very clever and well versed with the law. An excellent advocate who would have thoroughly mastered the case by the time one is at the hearing, he is very user-friendly as well."*

The Legal 500 Asia-Pacific

Dispute Resolution 2026 – Recommended Lawyer for 3 consecutive years

International Arbitration 2026 – Next Generation lawyer for 6 years

Projects & Energy 2026 – Recommended Lawyer for 7 consecutive years

White-Collar Crime 2026 – Recommended lawyer for 6 consecutive years

Construction 2026 – Recommended lawyer for 6 consecutive years

- *"Mahesh Rai is the core partner who is in charge of construction matters. His strong grip for related facts and legal issues make him shine when advocating."*
- *"Mahesh Rai is brilliant and on top of everything. Someone you would want on your side."*
- *"Mahesh Rai's in-depth knowledge of construction law was very evident in the initial meeting of the arbitration dispute – which was key in convincing the client to move forward with the arbitration case. He was able to give a clear picture and an accurate timeline of how the case would proceed all the while giving constant updates on the progress of the case."*
- *"Highly recommend Mahesh Rai. He fits the firm's profile of being efficient and excellent at advocacy. Would not be surprised if he becomes the next and youngest senior counsel."*
- *"Mahesh Rai provides good input based on his vast experience and commercial knowledge of the industry."*
- *"Mahesh Rai is highly regarded for construction and engineering disputes"*
- *Sources say "Mahesh Rai was always on top of every aspect of the dispute, nothing could slip away from him. His strategic advice and sound reasoning were key in developing and framing claim."*
- *"wonderfully engaging to deal with and has an incredibly relaxed manner"*

The Legal 500 Arbitration Powerlist: Southeast Asia 2023

Recognised as a leading arbitration counsel in the Southeast Asia region for 2 consecutive years

Best Lawyers International: Singapore

Arbitration and Mediation 2027 - Endorsed Individual

Litigation 2027 – Endorsed individual for 3 consecutive years

The Joseph Grimberg Outstanding Young Advocate Award (2021)

Winner of the annual award instituted by the Singapore Academy of Law and Drew & Napier which recognises young lawyers in good standing who exhibit professional excellence, service to the

profession and the bar; service to the community; and/or a reputation for or the advancement of legal ethics and professional responsibility. The award also recognises lawyers who demonstrate the same professional excellence and high ethical standards that Mr Grimberg embodied.

Asian Legal Business Asia Super 50 Disputes Lawyers 2024

Recognised as being amongst the top 50 disputes lawyers in the region for 4 consecutive years

- *"Mahesh is highly strategic and consistently achieves wins in challenging cases."*
- *"He's unmatched in his field."*
- *"Mahesh adeptly navigates complex issues and delivers commercially savvy solutions."*
- A client rates Mahesh as *"top of the class"*, while another adds: *"Working with Mahesh and his team has been seamless from start to finish. As soon as Mahesh stepped in, our long-standing dispute got resolved in no time."*
- Rated *"10/10"* by a client, Mahesh is lauded for working *"that extra 10 percent to ensure all bases are covered, and was always three steps ahead of the defendant in my High Court litigation"*.

Benchmark Litigation Asia-Pacific

Construction 2026 – Litigation Star for 2 consecutive years (Previously Future Star for 3 consecutive years)

India Business Law Journal (IBLJ)

Recognised as a top international India expert in IBLJ's International A-List 2026 for 4 consecutive years

Asian Legal Business SE Asia Law Awards

Young Lawyer of the Year 2019

Asian Legal Business

Identified as one of 40 bright legal minds in the region under the age of 40 – *"40 Under 40 list"* (October 2018 issue)

Financial Times Innovative Lawyers APAC 2018 awards

Mahesh was commended for his commitment to *pro bono* advocacy, highlighting his work with HOME (Humanitarian Organisation for Migration Economics) and AWARE (Association of Women for Action and Research) that led him to challenge laws that disadvantage migrant and refugee workers.

Lexology Index (formerly Who's Who Legal)

Arbitration 2026 – Thought Leader; Recommended Lawyer for 2 consecutive years; Future Leader for 4 consecutive years

Commercial Litigation 2025 – Recommended Lawyer for 3 consecutive years

Construction 2025 – Highly Recommended Lawyer (Previously Recommended Lawyer for 2 consecutive years)

Global Elite Thought Leader – Under 45: Arbitration 2023

Global Elite Thought Leader – Under 45: Investigations 2023 for 2 consecutive years

Global Guide: Investigations 2022 – Future Leader for 5 consecutive years

Southeast Asia – Arbitration 2025 – Recommended Lawyer for 5 consecutive years

Southeast Asia – Commercial Litigation 2025 – Recommended Lawyer for 3 consecutive years

Southeast Asia – Investigations 2025 – Recommended Lawyer for 3 consecutive years

- *"We were impressed by not only Mahesh's knowledge but also his experience on such cross-border matters."*
- *"Mahesh provides impressive subject knowledge and experience in investigations."*
- Mahesh Rai impresses as "one of Singapore's best dispute resolution specialists", with peers commending his "expertise in construction disputes" and "strong pipeline of arbitration work across the Asia-Pacific region".
- Mahesh Rai is a "sensational lawyer" who "has built a strong practice" in corporate investigations.
- *"Mahesh is a bright up-and-comer in the investigations space".*
- Mahesh "is always keen to think out of the box" applaud sources who commend his "great industry knowledge and level of responsiveness".
- Mahesh Rai is "truly a leader in this area"...He provides specialist insight into disputes in the telecommunications and energy sectors.
- *"Mahesh is quick on his feet, pays attention to detail and is clear and concise in his explanations."*

Asialaw Leading Lawyers

Dispute Resolution 2025 – Distinguished Practitioner for 2 consecutive years (Previously Rising Star for 2 consecutive years)

Dispute Resolution & Litigation 2018 – Leading Lawyer for 2 years

- *"I have worked with Mahesh Rai's team (so Mahesh, Jonathan Yong and Samuel Soo, in particular). They are excellent lawyers who bring significant strategic insight and close attention to detail to their work, which is efficient and cost effective."*
- *"Very hard-working, responsive, easy to work with and results-oriented. He is also very bright and solution-oriented."*
- *"Mahesh is a strategic thinker who directs his team to do effective and efficient work."*
- *"Both from a personal and a professional point of view, I found Mahesh as someone impressive and genuine. He has great analytical skills, able to listen well, and very good in communication, as I often saw him carry himself so well in the court or in any kind of joint discussions. He provides me as a client with great sensitivity, tending the needs of my case in his best way. Mahesh also always comes up with great strategy, showing his creativity as a veteran lawyer."*
- *"Good problem-solving skills and decision-making."*
- *"Mahesh Rai is exceptional, bright, and very responsive."*
- *"A superb advocate and on par with other senior counsels."*
- *"Professional, knowledgeable and approachable. His quick and laser mind would do well in any subject-matter."*
- *"Mahesh Rai leads a disputes team that is well versed in both blockchain technology nuances and traditional commercial and financial litigation and arbitration. His domain knowledge in blockchain, fintech and technology makes him brutally effective in disputes regarding these matters, more than the*

other top-ranked disputes teams in Singapore. This is a very key differentiator. The team is very meticulous and has great attention to detail, and catches both technology-related and more typical factual nuances of cases. Mr Rai himself is a very forceful and cunning cross-examiner in court, and has a commanding presence that allows him to take control of court proceedings, even against senior counsels and litigators much more senior than him. He is also extremely responsive, and he and his team readily respond to queries even at 11pm or on a Sunday. Finally, he gives straightforward, practical, concise, commercial and very concrete recommendations when asked for options, including cost considerations. He will not give theoretical or abstract answers, and will not give tentative or timid recommendations that do not allow a client to visualize a concrete course of action. He even advised on a personal matter for one of my friends, a senior executive in a large blockchain company, and my friend gave glowing positive feedback, that he felt very reassured and confident on a personal level, in addition to getting clear advice on the legal issues.”

- *“Strong knowledge of laws in India and good knowledge of the country’s legal infrastructure.”*
- *“His personal approach to a transaction goes a long way.”*
- *“Always approachable, a patient listener, has sound industry knowledge, excellent knowledge of law and always provides practical solutions.”*
- *“Mahesh listens well and is a great tactician.”*
- *“Excellent, thorough, and balanced risk management and advice.”*
- *“Creative solutions and very focused.”*
- *“Quick, efficient and super-understanding of the matter and case file.”*
- *“Mahesh has sound knowledge and expertise in disputes relating to telecom towers industry. He is spot on his turnaround time and has an eye for details.”*
- *“Deep understanding of Singapore law and appreciation of practical problems in multijurisdiction litigations.”*
- *“Strong knowledge of Indian laws.”*
- *Sources say Mahesh “demonstrates commitment and responsiveness to queries at all hours. A very driven individual who has sensible commercial solutions. A capable lawyer who delivers results we ask for.”*
- *“Mahesh is a first-rate litigator with a good eye for detail. He grasps issues quickly, was accessible and was excellent in providing commercial solutions to our problems.”*
- *“Mahesh is an excellent disputes lawyer and a master strategist with a deserved reputation for solving complex issues. He was very user friendly, commercially-minded and was one of the best lawyers my company has worked with.”*
- *“To the point discussion. In-depth knowledge of the matter and the industry. Hands-on related to the approach and strategy.”*
- *“The level of legal advice and general client service that I received while working with Mahesh Rai’s team was outstanding. My queries were answered promptly and with great attention to detail. Not only did the team closely monitor the progress of the settlement discussions, but it had also taken it upon itself to supervise and check the drafts that came back from the Indonesian law firm instructed by us to advise on Indonesian law queries pertaining to the transaction. Our management and I have been very pleased with the standard of service received from D&N.”*

Global Arbitration Review 18th edition (2025)

- A client calls Mahesh Rai a “*distinguished lawyer who is intellectually superior to many of his peers*” and says that he has “*a proven ability to cut short otherwise drawn-out legal processes by his finesse and skill in bringing parties to a settlement.*”
- Mahesh Rai was praised for his “*diligent and precise*” work.
- A client said Mahesh “*expressed a commendable level of personal engagement and was always available to provide support, guidance and direction from start to end.*”

Global Investigations Review 100 (GIR 100)

Investigations 2019 – Leading Individual

APPOINTMENTS/MEMBERSHIPS

- Director, Chartered Institute of Arbitrators Singapore Branch
- Fellow, Chartered Institute of Arbitrators
- Fellow, Singapore Institute of Arbitrators
- Panel Arbitrator, Singapore International Arbitration Centre, Reserve Panel
- Arbitrator, Asian International Arbitration Centre Panel
- Panel of Arbitrators, Thailand Arbitration Centre (THAC)
- Panel of International Arbitrators, Korean Commercial Arbitration Board (KCAB)
- Panel of Arbitrators, Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HKIAC)
- Legal Practitioner, Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) Courts
- Assessor, Panel of Assessors for COVID-19 Temporary Relief, Ministry of Law
- Accredited Specialist (Building and Construction), Singapore Academy of Law
- Chairman, CI Arb Young Members Group
- Member, Law Society of Singapore
- Member, Singapore Academy of Law

PUBLICATIONS

- Co-author, Chambers and Partners Global Practice Guides – Construction 2026 (Singapore chapter)
- Co-author, The Legal 500 Investment Treaty Arbitration Comparative Guide 2025 (Singapore Chapter)
- Co-author, Lexology Panoramic: Sanctions 2024 and 2025 (Singapore Chapter)
- Co-author, The Legal 500 Country Comparative Guide – Litigation 2021; 2022 to 2025 (Singapore chapter)
- Contributing author, Singapore Civil Procedure 2023 to 2025
- Co-author, International Comparative Legal Guide – Construction & Engineering Law 2021 to 2024 (Singapore chapter)
- Expert author, Commonwealth Study on International Commercial Arbitration 2019
- Co-author, Chambers and Partners Global Practice Guides – Litigation 2019 (Singapore chapter)

- Contributing author, Global Investigations Review, The Practitioner's Guide to Global Investigations 2017 and 2018 (1st and 2nd edition)
- Contributing author, Global Investigations Review's Practitioner's Guide to Global Investigations (Edition 2) newsletter (2018)
- Contributing author, 'FIDIC around the world – Singapore', appeared in the 2017 Construction Law International Vol.12 Issue 3; published by the International Bar Association.
- Contributing author, Singapore Civil Procedure (2014 (Supplement) & 2015)