

PROFILE



**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)
Solicitor of England & Wales (2013)
International Lawyer, Bar Association of the Kingdom of Cambodia (2013)

Language

English, Hindi, Malay (Basic)

MAHESH RAI

ABOUT MAHESH

Mahesh is counsel of choice for litigation and arbitration for matters which are complex and high-stakes. His practice spans a range of industries including construction, infrastructure, telecommunications, IT, shipping, energy and commodities.

Mahesh commands praise for being “a first-rate litigator”, “an excellent disputes lawyer and a master strategist with a deserved reputation for solving complex issues” and a lawyer who “is quick on his feet, pays attention to detail and is clear and concise in his explanations”.

He is consistently ranked in several publications. Mahesh is ranked in both Chambers Asia-Pacific and Chambers Global for Dispute Resolution: Arbitration (2022/2023 edition). The Legal 500 Asia-Pacific recommends Mahesh for Dispute Resolution, International Arbitration, Projects & Energy, White-Collar Crime and Construction (2023 edition). He is recognised as Asia's Super 50 Disputes Lawyers by ALB in 2021, 2022 and 2023. Mahesh is recommended by Benchmark Litigation Asia-Pacific for Construction (2023 edition). He won the Young Lawyer of the Year Award at the Asian Legal Business (ALB) SE Asia Law Awards 2019. He is ranked as a Future Leader in Arbitration by Who's Who Legal from 2020 to 2023 and a Future Leader in Investigations from 2018 to 2022, and by the Global Arbitration Review in 2016. In its 2023 edition, asialaw ranked him as a Rising Star in Dispute Resolution. ALB identified Mahesh as an outstanding young lawyer in the “40 under 40” survey in 2018.

Recognized 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 young lawyers in Singapore who have demonstrated outstanding qualities in their professional work and ethical standards.

In 2014, Mahesh was selected by the Supreme Court to be placed in the Young *Amicus Curiae* list and he appeared as *amicus curiae* in a High Court matter involving money laundering.

Mahesh's experience also includes stints at two 'magic circle' barristers' chambers, Fountain Court Chambers (as a Singapore Academy of Law Scholar) and Essex Court Chambers (as the first winner of the Essex Court Singapore moots), where he worked on complex commercial litigation and arbitration matters.

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

EXPERIENCE

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

- **Construction dispute over Asia's largest petrochemical plant** – Representing a Korean multinational conglomerate in an UNCITRAL arbitration against an Indian state-owned company over claims amounting to over US\$400 million arising out of the construction of a petrochemical plant.
- **Arbitration against the Government of Maldives** – Represented an international contractor in two UNCITRAL arbitrations against the Government of Maldives for claims amounting to over US\$155 million relating to expropriation of land and delays to a project to construct public housing over 10 islands.
- **Maritime accident in the South China Sea** – Represented a €6 billion Norwegian company in a US\$20 million maritime arbitration, where Swiss law and Chinese law applied, against a Chinese public-listed company for project delays arising from a tug and tow accident in the South China Sea. The dispute involved issues of seaworthiness of vessels, obligations under the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea 1974 and gross negligence.
- **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.
- **Litigation involving SEA's largest pipe trading company** – Representing the Managing Director and a shareholder of Southeast Asia's largest oil pipe trading company in a complex S\$100 million dispute resulting in 5 suits involving 7 sets of solicitors.

ACCOLADES

Chambers Asia-Pacific

Dispute Resolution: Litigation – Singapore 2024 – Band 5 (2 consecutive years)

Dispute Resolution: Arbitration – Singapore 2024 – Band 4 (3 years ranked)

Dispute Resolution (International Firms) - India 2024 – Singapore expertise based abroad

Construction – Singapore 2024 – Band 3 (2 years ranked)

- *"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."*

Chambers Global

Dispute Resolution: Litigation - Singapore 2024 – Band 4

Dispute Resolution: Arbitration - Singapore 2024 – Band 4 (2 years ranked)

India 2024: Dispute Resolution – Singapore expertise based abroad – Band 4

The Legal 500 Asia-Pacific

Dispute Resolution 2024 – Recommended Lawyer; Next Generation Partner for 4 consecutive years

International Arbitration 2024 – Next Generation Partner for 5 consecutive years; Recommended Lawyer in 2019

Projects & Energy 2024 – Recommended Lawyer for 6 consecutive years

White-Collar Crime 2024 – Recommended lawyer for 4 consecutive years

Construction 2024 – Recommended lawyer for 4 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 arbitrator in the Southeast Asia region for 2 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 2023

Recognised as being amongst the top 50 disputes lawyers in the region for 3 consecutive years

- 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 2023 – Future Star for 2 consecutive years

Asian Legal Business SE Asia Law Awards

Young Lawyer of the Year 2019

Asian Legal Business

“40 Under 40” 2018 – Identified as one of 40 bright legal minds in the region under the age of 40

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.

Who’s Who Legal

Future Leaders

Ranked as an eminent lawyer under 45 in the respective fields:

Global Elite Thought Leader – Under 45: Arbitration 2023

Global Elite Thought Leader – Under 45: Investigations 2023

Global Guide: Arbitration (2020 to 2023 editions)

Global Guide: Investigations (2018 to 2022 editions)

Arbitration 2024 – Recommended Lawyer

National Guide: Southeast Asia - Arbitration (2021, 2022 and 2023) – Recommended Lawyer

National Guide: Southeast Asia – Litigation 2023 – Recommended Lawyer

National Guide: Southeast Asia – Investigations 2023 – Recommended Lawyer

- *"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."*

Global Arbitration Review 16th edition (2023)

- 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."*

The International A-list 2022-2023

- Top international India expert in India Business Law Journal's (ILBJ)

Asialaw Leading Lawyers

Dispute Resolution 2023/2024 – Rising Star for 2 consecutive years

Dispute Resolution & Litigation 2018 – Leading Lawyer for 2 consecutive years

- *"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 Investigations Review 100 (GIR 100)

Investigations 2019 – Leading Individual

Asia Business Law Journal

Identified as one of Singapore’s Top 100 lawyers in 2019

Singapore Business Review

Singapore’s 70 most influential lawyers aged 40 and under in 2016 – Listed lawyer

Excellence in Advocacy Award

Awarded by the Singapore International Arbitration Academy in 2012

Singapore Academy of Law Moot Competition for Singapore lawyers

Winner of Essex Court Chambers in 2012

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)
- Assessor, Panel of Assessors for COVID-19 Temporary Relief, Ministry of Law
- Accredited Specialist (Building and Construction), Singapore Academy of Law
- Chairman, CIArb Young Members Group
- Former Regional Representative, ICC Young Arbitrators Forum 2017-2019
- Member, Young International Arbitration Group
- Member, Young International Council for Commercial Arbitration
- Member, Inter-Pacific Bar Association
- Member, International Bar Association
- Member, Law Society of Singapore
- Committee Member, International Relations Committee of Law Society of Singapore
- Member, Singapore Academy of Law
- Lead Counsel, Legal Assistance Scheme for Capital Offences

PUBLICATIONS

- Contributing author, Singapore Civil Procedure 2023
- Co-author, International Comparative Legal Guide – Construction & Engineering Law 2021, 2022 and 2023 (Singapore chapter)
- Co-author, The Legal 500 Country Comparative Guide – Litigation 2021 and 2022 (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)