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9TH ANNUAL GLOBAL IP & TECH CONCLAVE & AWARDS 2025

Global IP & Tech Professionals Meet to discuss the Trends & New Developments



THEME: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CHANGING THE WORLD OF IP & TECH



DELVE INTO STIMULATING TALKS FROM THE VIBRANT WORLD OF IP AND IT

20th - 21st JANUARY 2025 Hotel Taj Dubai, UAE







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-Aakriti Raizada

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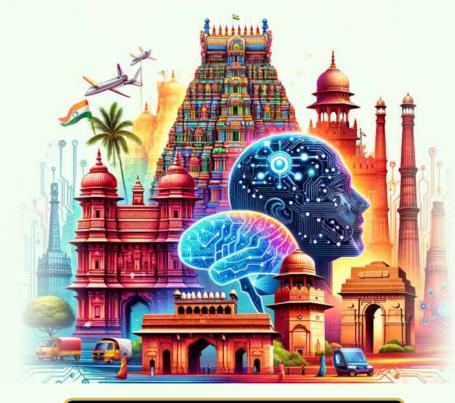
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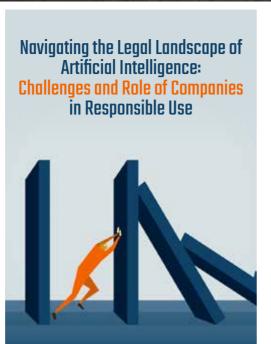






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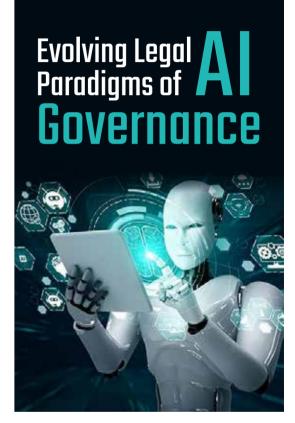














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S&R ASSOCIATES REPRESENTED BOOK RUNNING LEAD MANAGERS IN ₹ 11 BILLION IPO BY P N GADGIL JEWELLERS



S&R Associates represented Motilal Oswal Investment Advisors, Nuvama Wealth Management and BOB Capital Markets, book running lead managers, in the INR 11 billion initial public offering by P N Gadgil Jewellers Limited, a jewellery company.

P N Gadgil Jewellers, a leading market player with BIS-registered shops in India, was the second-largest organised jeweller in Maharashtra. The IPO opened for subscription on Tuesday, September 10, and closed on Thursday, September 12.

The issue's price band was set between ₹456 and ₹480 per equity share of face value ₹10. The IPO comprised a fresh issue of equity shares worth up to ₹8.5 billion and an offer for sale of shares worth ₹2.5 billion by the promoters

The S&R team was led by Partners Jitesh Shahani and Juhi Singh, and included Associates Mittu Choudhary, Aditya Jain, Aarushi Kapoor, Ayushi Shrivastava and Gunjeet Singh.

DSK LEGAL ADVISED PITTI ENGINEERING ON ACQUISITION OF DAKSHIN FOUNDRY

DSK Legal assisted and advised Pitti Engineering Limited (the Company) in relation to the acquisition of 100% shareholding of Dakshin Foundry Private Limited (Target Entity) from its existing shareholders (Transaction).

The Company is a listed company having its specialisation in manufacturing iron and steel products. The Company produces electrical steel laminations and motor cores for electrical equipment, sub-assemblies for various industrial applications, die-cast rotors for motors and generators, and press tools for shaping and forming metal components. The Target Entity is engaged in the business of manufacturing of high-quality costing in ductile iron, grey iron, low carbon, alloy steel grades and simo iron costings along with value-added services like pattern making, painting, heat and surface treatments and machining.

The scope of work of DSK Legal included:

- i. conducting legal due diligence of the Target Entity;
- ii. drafting, reviewing, revising, negotiating, and finalising the share purchase agreement;
- iii. assisting in undertaking closing of the Transaction; and
- iv. undertaking title due diligence on the underlying parcel of land owned/leased by the Target Entity.



The transaction team at DSK Legal comprised Partner Siddharth Suresh, Senior Associates Ananya Madhusudan and Prateek Kumar Singh, and Associate Lakshay Garg.

The real estate due diligence was conducted by a team that included Partner Srinivas B.R., Senior Associate Shravan K.S., and Associate Simran Naik.

Transaction Square acted as the financial advisor for the Company in the Transaction.

LUTHRA AND LUTHRA LAW OFFICES INDIA ADVISED AZURE POWER ON ₹ 2,400 CR LOAN REFINANCING AND PREPAYMENT OF GREEN BONDS

Luthra and Luthra Law Offices India advised 7 subsidiaries of Azure Power India Private Limited in securing Ioan facilities aggregating to INR 2400 Crores (approximately USD 29 million) from Rural Electrification Corporation (REC).

These funds will be used to refinance renewable power projects within Azure Power's portfolio, which has a combined capacity of 615 MW. Additionally, the transaction enables the prepayment of green bonds worth USD 310 million issued by Azure group entities to international bondholders.

Azure Power is a leading solar power producer in India, focussing on large-scale renewable energy projects. REC is an Indian infrastructure finance company dedicated to providing financial assistance for power initiatives.



The transaction team was led by Partner Karan Mitroo, with support from Managing Associates Ankita Parasar and Samarth Sharma, and Associate Harshil Kakkar.

SHARDUL AMARCHAND MANGALDAS & CO. ADVISED JUPITER WAGONS ON STRATEGIC AGREEMENT WITH SCHULER PRESSEN GMBH AND SCHULER INDIA

Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co. advised Jupiter Wagons Limited (JWL) and its subsidiary, Jupiter Tatravagonka Railwheel Factory Private Limited (JTRF), on a strategic agreement for supply of manufacturing equipment, supervision and commissioning of production lines to produce and manufacture railway wheels and axles. The deal was closed on September 17, 2024 and represents a key milestone in the journey of JWL in the railway sector and will enable JTRF to expand and bolster its capabilities of manufacturing railway wheels and axles.

This was structured in such a manner so as to ensure that the supply of equipment (both onshore and offshore) along with the rendering of relevant services is undertaken in a smooth, hassle-free and efficient manner.

The deal also aligns with JWL's strategy to support the 'Make in India' initiative, boosting India's manufacturing and supply capabilities in the railway sector as once the production lines are completed and fully commissioned,



it is expected that JTRF will be supplying the manufactured wheels and axles to marquee players of the railway sector in Europe as well as the Indian market.

The SAM & Co. team was led by Abhishek Guha, Partner; Deepto Roy, Partner; Pranav Nanda, Principal Associate; & Vaibhav Gwalani, Associate.

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STEPHENSON HARWOOD ADVISED PDS ON SUCCESSFUL ₹ 430 CR QIP



Stephenson Harwood LLP has advised PDS Limited (PDS) on the UAE aspects of its successful Qualified Institutional Placement (QIP) worth INR 430 crores (US\$ 51 million) in the Indian markets.

PDS, a global fashion infrastructure platform, offers product development, sourcing, and manufacturing services across 90+ locations in more than 20

countries. Stephenson Harwood conducted a comprehensive diligence exercise and provided legal opinions concerning PDS Limited's material subsidiaries based in the UAE. The firm collaborated closely with PDS's executives and various counsels to deliver this opinion, which played a crucial role in the offering process.

Diwakar Agarwal, who led the Stephenson Harwood team on this transaction, commented, "Advising on this pivotal public offering has been an honour. This transaction is significant for PDS's strategic expansion. It also highlights our capabilities and growing track record in assisting Indian companies going for IPOs or QIPs in respect of their overseas material subsidiaries while undergoing the capital markets process. We are proud to contribute to PDS's journey as they continue to expand into new markets and diversify their operations."

The Stephenson Harwood team was Led by Partner Diwakar Agarwal, with support from Associates Suditi Surana and Hajer El Moumni.

SNG & PARTNERS ADVISED HDFC CREDILA FINANCIAL SERVICES IN RAISING ₹ 2500 CR

SNG & Partners advised and assisted HDFC Credila Financial Services Limited (HDFC Credila) in raising an estimated amount of INR 2500 crores. HDFC Credila raised the funds in two separate issuances wherein it raised INR 1500 crores approx. from South Korea's Shinhan Bank (the lender of South Korea's secondlargest financial institution Shinhan Financial Group) and balance from a rights issue. HDFC Credila Financial Services Limited is a non-banking financial company dedicated to education loans. HDFC Credila was earlier a subsidiary of HDFC Limited and came under the HDFC Bank umbrella post-merger.

Earlier this year, HDFC Bank had sold a 90 per cent stake in HDFC Credila to comply with regulatory guidelines related to the merger, wherein RBI asked HDFC Bank to pare its stake in the education loan subsidiary to 10 per cent within two years of the merger.

SNG & Partners advised in structuring and negotiating the terms of the transactions, ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements while optimising financial



outcomes for the client.

Amit Aggarwal, [Managing Partner - Corporate & Non-Contentious Practice], provided strategic inputs and the transaction team was led by Aditya Vikram Dua (Partner), along with Devyani Dhawan (Of Counsel), Aniket Sawant (Principal Associate), Ayushi Parnami (Senior Associate) and Rachit Munjal (Senior Associate).

CHANDHIOK & MAHAJAN ADVISED SARDA ENERGY & MINERALS ON ACQUISITION OF THERMAL POWER PLANT

Chandhiok & Mahajan Advocates and Solicitors advised Sarda Energy & Minerals Limited (Sarda) in its successful acquisition of SKS Power Generation Chhattisgarh Limited, which operates a 600 MW thermal power plant in Chhattisgarh.

The acquisition was part of the corporate insolvency resolution process under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016, with a deal value exceeding INR 1900 crores. The resolution plan submitted by Sarda was approved by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) on 13 August 2024.

Chandhiok & Mahajan also successfully defended Sarda in various applications and appeals filed by unsuccessful resolution applicants before the NCLT and the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), challenging the approval of Sarda's resolution plan. The NCLAT, in its judgement dated 1 October 2024, upheld the NCLT's order approving the plan and dismissed the objections raised by the unsuccessful applicants.



The Restructuring & Insolvency Team at Chandhiok & Mahajan was led by Pooja Mahajan, Managing Partner and Head of the Restructuring & Insolvency Practice, and supported by Nishant Sogani (Counsel), Savar Mahajan (Managing Associate), Saurabh Bachhawat (Managing Associate), Shrishti Agnihotri (Associate), Shreya Mahalwar (Associate), and Priyanka Pandey (Associate).

KHAITAN & CO ADVISED BERTELSMANN INDIA INVESTMENTS ON ITS INVESTMENT IN BASIC ENTERPRISES



Khaitan & Co advised Bertelsmann India Investments (BII) on its investment in Basic Enterprises Private Limited, along with CE Ventures Limited and other existing shareholders, including Mr. Ashish Ramesh Kacholia, S Four Capital, and LV Angel Fund, for a

total investment amount of approximately USD 10 million.

The investment was led by Bertelsmann India Investments (BII), the strategic investment arm of the German conglomerate Bertelsmann SE & Co. KGaA, in collaboration with CE Ventures, the venture capital platform of Crescent Enterprises, a leading global, diversified business headquartered in the UAE.

Basic Enterprises Private Limited (Basic Home Loans) is a private limited company that provides services related to home loans and loans against property to users and borrowers through its mobile platform and website, leveraging arrangements with banks, non-banking financial companies, and housing finance companies.

Basic Home Loan plans to utilise the newly raised funds to expand its market presence, build its own lending book, and enhance its technological

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capabilities. The Gurugram-headquartered fintech startup has previously raised \$8.7 million across three funding rounds.

Khaitan & Co's role included conducting legal due diligence on the company, advising on its business model, drafting, negotiating, and finalising transaction documents, as well as assisting with the execution and closing of the transaction.

The core transaction team at Khaitan & Co comprised Partner Bharat Anand. Partner Nidhi Killawala.

Principal Associate Ayushi Mishra, and Associate Gracy Bindra, with support from Senior Associate Shatakshi Gupta on closing-related aspects.

Partner Sanjay Khan Nagra and Principal Associate Pritish Mishra advised on the regulatory aspects of the transaction, while Partner Nirupam Lodha, Principal Associate Shivangi Narang, and Associate Toshani Mukherjee provided guidance on the intellectual property aspects.

LUTHRA AND LUTHRA LAW OFFICES INDIA ADVISED GORBEA SOLAR ON ₹ 1,234.7 CR FINANCING FOR SOLAR PLANT IN JODHPUR



Luthra and Luthra Law Offices India recently advised Gorbea Solar Private Limited, a subsidiary of Zelestra Corporation S.A.U. (formerly Solarpack Corporacion Tecnologica S.A., a Spanish company), in relation to the financial assistance availed from Bank of America, MUFG Bank Ltd., The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC) and Crédit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank, India by way of INR denominated facility of up to INR 1234.7 Crores in connection with financing of a 300MWac greenfield solar PV plant in the district of Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

This project reaffirms Zelestra's commitment to the development of renewable solutions for its Customers in India. The facility, is designated as green financing under Zelestra's Green Financing Framework, aligning with the Green Loan Principles issued by the Loan Market Association.

Luthra and Luthra transaction team was led by Partner Karan Mitroo, and ably assisted by Senior Associate Surbhi Jain and Associate Jhalak Gupta.

CYRIL AMARCHAND MANGALDAS ADVISED IDFC AND IDFC FINANCIAL HOLDING COMPANY

Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas (CAM) advised IDFC Limited (IDFC) and IDFC Financial Holding Company Limited (IDFC FHC) on their amalgamation with IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (IDFC First Bank), including transaction structuring, legal diligence, regulatory interface, negotiations and finalising documentation, including the Scheme of Amalgamation, Implementation Agreement, assistance with the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) process, corporate advisory and closing assistance.

The transaction was led by Anu Tiwari, Partner (Head – Fintech and Financial Services); Ketaki Mehta, Partner - GIFT City; with support from Kush Wadehra, Principal Associate; and Shobhit Dave, Associate.



Jeeta Nayak, Partner, Vishrut Jain, Principal Associate; and Shobhit Dave, Associate, supported on certain Corporate Law and Governance related aspects.

Cyril Shroff, Managing Partner; L. Viswanathan, Senior Partner; and Anand Sinha, Senior Advisor, provided strategic input and guidance throughout the process.

Other parties and advisors to the transaction included SSPA & Co., Chartered Accountants (valuer to IDFC and

IDFC FHC); Axis Capital Limited (fairness opinion for IDFC and IDFC FHC); Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP and Harsh Chandrakant Ruparelia (valuer to IDFC First Bank); ICICI Securities (fairness opinion for IDFC First Bank); JM Financial Limited (financial advisor to IDFC First Bank).

The transaction document was signed on July 3, 2024, and closed on October 1, 2024.

ROPES & GRAY, ANDERSON MORI AND NISHIMURA ADVISED ON BAIN CAPITAL'S ACQUISITION OF RED BARON GROUP



Ropes & Gray and Anderson Mori & Tomotsune advised Bain Capital, a global private equity firm, on its \$694 million majority acquisition of Red Baron Group, Japan's largest used-bike dealership. Nishimura & Asahi represented Red Baron in the transaction, which

operates over 300 stores across Japan. As part of the deal, Red Baron's management will remain in place.

This acquisition marks Bain Capital's continued investment in the resilient Japanese M&A market, which remains strong despite global economic challenges. Bain has ramped up its activity in Japan, with plans to expand its portfolio by \$31 billion over the next five years.

The Ropes & Gray team advising Bain was led by Private Equity Counsel Kaori Fukazawa, alongside M&A Partner Tsuyoshi Imai, Finance Partner Ben Morris, and Associates Takashi Nakamura and Alex Nakayama.

In addition to this deal, Ropes & Gray has recently advised Bain Capital on two other significant transactions in Japan, including take-private offers for Trancom, a logistics and IT services company, for \$491 million, and T-Gaia, a mobile phone distributor, for \$987 million.

KHAITAN & CO ADVISED DELTA CORP ON DEMERGER OF HOSPITALITY AND REAL ESTATE BUSINESS

Khaitan & Co advised Delta Corp Limited (formerly Arrow Webtex Ltd) on the demerger of its hospitality and real estate business into Delta Penland Private Limited (DPPL). This demerger was executed through a Composite Scheme of Arrangement under Sections 230–232, read with Section 66 of the Companies Act, 2013, with a mirror shareholding structure.

DPPL, a newly incorporated wholly-owned subsidiary of Delta Corp, will manage the hospitality and real estate business. It is currently in the process

of converting from a private limited company to a public company. Delta Corp will continue to focus on its core business of gaming (live, electronic, and online), while DPPL will manage the hospitality and real estate operations.

The core team at Khaitan & Co was led by Hiten Kotak (Executive Director), Mehul Shah (Partner), Bhavin Vora (Executive Director), Aman Yagnik (Counsel), Jamsheed Dadachanji (Principal Associate), Mohak Shingala (Senior Associate), and Hiren Kukreja (Associate).

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PATHIK ARORA, FORMER GENERAL COUNSEL SENVION INDIA, JOINS ENGIE INDIA



Pathik Arora, Former General Counsel Senvion India, Joins ENGIE India

Pathik Arora has joined ENGIE India, a subsidiary of French energy giant ENGIE SA, as General Counsel. In his new role, Pathik will lead the legal, ethics, and compliance functions of the company.

Pathik brings over 22 years of experience, having served market leaders across various sectors, including renewable energy, EPC in chemical and petrochemicals, IT, real estate, healthcare, infrastructure, and more. Before joining ENGIE, Pathik was General Counsel at

Senvion India, where he spent six years and played a pivotal role in the company's growth story in India. He has extensive expertise in handling complex legal, compliance, and governance matters, including crossborder M&A, due diligence, project financing, and strategic advisory.

With in-house leadership and law firm experience spanning multiple jurisdictions, Pathik has also advised boards on critical business and legal matters and led corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. His extensive knowledge will be a valuable asset as ENGIE India continues to strengthen its position as one of the country's leading clean-power generation companies, with a focus on decarbonisation and achieving its "Net Zero Carbon" target by 2045.

ENGIE SA (stylised as ENGIE, listed on the Euronext exchanges in Paris and Brussels) is a French multinational power company, which operates in the fields of electricity generation and distribution, natural gas, nuclear power, renewable energy, and in the petroleum industry. It is involved in both upstream (engineering, sale, operation, maintenance) and downstream (waste management, dismantling) activities.

DENTONS LINK LEGAL EXPANDS DISPUTE RESOLUTION PRACTICE WITH MUSTAFA MOTIWALA

Mustafa Motiwala, former Partner and Disputes Head at Clasis Law, has joined Dentons Link Legal as a Senior Partner in the Dispute Resolution team, along with Associate Partners Aniketh Nair and Nihal Shaikh.

With over 30 years of experience, Motiwala is an expert in litigation, domestic and international arbitration, enforcement of foreign awards and judgements, real estate, intellectual property, media, entertainment, and corporate matters. He has advised clients across a wide range of dispute resolution areas, including real estate, insurance, admiralty, international trade, aviation, banking, shareholder disputes, insolvency, and white-collar crimes.

Nair brings a diverse practice to the firm, with expertise in commercial litigation, arbitration, intellectual property, advertising, insolvency, credit insurance, and mergers and acquisitions. Shaikh, with over a decade of experience, specialises in handling disputes related



Dentons Link Legal Expands Dispute Resolution Practice
With Mustafa Motivala

to commercial claims, shipping, infrastructure projects, insolvency, and white-collar crimes.

Atul Sharma, Executive Chairman of Dentons Link Legal, expressed his enthusiasm for the new appointments:

"We're delighted to welcome our exceptional partners. I am sure they will play a key role in delivering best quality client focussed services and will contribute to further bolster the firm's existing capabilities in the disputes practice. Mustafa is a seasoned and respected disputes practitioner and will add value to the strategic capabilities of the firm."

Nusrat Hassan, Managing Partner, emphasised the strategic significance of the move, noting, "With the addition of our new partners, we are happy to deepen our expertise in litigation and arbitration across sectors.

As we continue to expand and adapt to the everevolving demands of the legal landscape, this strategic addition enables us to further solidify our position as a trusted advisor, fostering long-term, meaningful relationships with our clients."

Managing Partner Anand Srivastava added, "As a Firm, we always strive to be ahead of the curve in delivering exceptional legal services across the globe. I am excited about the future and confident that these additions to our firm will further strengthen the support for our clients."

AMITABH LAL DAS TAKES ON CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER ROLE AT HYUNDAI MOTOR INDIA

Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL) has announced the appointment of Amitabh Lal Das as its new Chief Legal Officer. In this role, Das will be responsible for overseeing the legal, compliance, and secretarial functions at HMIL.

Amitabh is a seasoned General Counsel and a C-suite corporate leader with thirty years of extensive domestic and international experience across various facets of legal practice. His background includes litigation in Courts, Senior Legal Positions in Law Firms, and serving as General Counsel for both U.S. and Indian Companies in Diverse Sectors.

Throughout his career, he has demonstrated expertise in Managing Core Legal Areas and Related Functions, including Compliance, Ethics, Government Relations, Public Policy, Regulatory Affairs, Board Management, and Corporate Governance. He also has experience in overseeing Company Secretarial Duties, Risk



Amitabh Lal Das Takes on Chief Legal Officer Role at Hyundai Motor India

Management, Internal Controls, and Assurance.

Prior to his appointment at Hyundai Motor India, he served as General Counsel for Bajaj Auto Ltd.

BANK OF AMERICA APPOINTS SONALI SHARMA AS GENERAL COUNSEL



Bank of America Appoints Sonali Sharma as General Counsel

Bank of America has appointed Sonali Sharma as its new General Counsel for the Indian entity. Based out of Mumbai, Sharma will oversee the legal operations and regulatory compliance for the bank's India business.

A seasoned professional in the banking and finance industry, Sharma brings extensive experience in structured finance advisory, financial services litigation, capital markets, and SEBI regulations. Before her new role, Sharma had a distinguished career with Juris Corp, where she worked in various capacities for over a decade, eventually reaching partnership. Following her tenure at Juris Corp, Sharma transitioned into an in-house career,

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working with prominent financial institutions such as Standard Chartered Bank and Avendus Group.

In her most recent role, Sharma was a volunteer at the Cuddles Foundation, contributing her time and expertise to the cause. With her deep expertise and leadership in legal and regulatory matters, Sharma is expected to play a crucial role in navigating the complexities of India's financial landscape for Bank of America.

Sharma succeeds Abhimanyu Singh Poonia, who

has moved on to Citibank as its General Counsel for the India Subcontinent business. Bank of America expressed confidence that Sharma's leadership will help strengthen its legal and compliance operations in India as the bank continues to expand its presence in the region.

"After an amazing fulfilling stint at Cuddles Foundation I'm happy to share that I'm starting a new position as Head of Legal India (General Counsel) Bank of America, Sharma posted on LinkedIn".

ROHAN GHOSH ROY JOINS CYRIL AMARCHAND MANGALDAS AS EQUITY PARTNER IN CORPORATE PRACTICE



Rohan Ghosh Roy Joins Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas As Equity Partner In Corporate Practice

Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas has announced the appointment of Rohan Ghosh Roy as an Equity Partner in its Corporate Practice, where he will be based at the Mumbai office.

Rohan is a highly accomplished corporate lawyer with over 15 years of experience. Known for his expertise in handling complex cross-border private equity and M&A transactions, he has led deals collectively valued at over US\$ 10 billion

for prominent clients. Prior to this, he spent 15 years at Trilegal, where he was promoted to equity partner in 2015.

Welcoming him, Cyril Shroff, Managing Partner of Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas, said, "I am delighted to welcome Rohan to the corporate practice in Mumbai. He brings rich experience and knowledge that will enhance our capabilities. I am excited about the contribution he will make as we continue to expand our corporate practice."

Rohan holds a law degree from NUJS, Kolkata, graduating in 2008, and recently completed his LL.M. at The University of Chicago Law School.

Commenting on his new role, Rohan Ghosh Roy said, "What drew me to CAM was the chance to work with the pre-eminent corporate practitioners of our times, and on market-defining transactions for marquee clients. To do so at what is undoubtedly a pivotal moment in the India story is the icing on the cake. Together with my colleagues, I look forward to being the trusted advisor of choice for our clients as they play their role in shaping the future. I, for one, am very excited! I look forward to working with Mr. Shroff."

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20th - 21st January 2025 | Dubai, UAE

THEME: ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE CHANGING





SHIVANI KHANDEKAR JOINS S&R ASSOCIATES AS RETAINED PARTNER IN NEW DEI HI

Shivani Khandekar has joined S&R Associates as a retained Partner in the firm's New Delhi office, accompanied by Associates Gokul Holani and S. M. Shriram Kashyap. This move enhances the firm's litigation and arbitration capabilities.

Shivani specialises in commercial litigation, Indian and international arbitration, and regulatory and insolvency matters. She has represented clients across various sectors, including manufacturing, infrastructure, finance, and telecommunications, before multiple courts and tribunals in India. Her extensive experience includes work in the Supreme Court of India, the High Court of Delhi, the High Court of Andhra Pradesh, and the National Company Law Tribunal and Appellate Tribunal, as well as in institutional arbitration proceedings.

A graduate of the University of Delhi, Shivani earned a B.A. (Hons.) in Economics in 2010 and an LL.B. in 2013. She is an Advocate-on-Record at the Supreme Court of India. Prior to joining S&R Associates, she



Shivani Khandekar Joins S&R Associates as Retained Partner in New Delhi

worked with Trilegal in New Delhi as counsel and was a partner at Singhania & Co. in New Delhi.

With Shivani's addition, S&R Associates continues to bolster its team of approximately 150 lawyers, including 40 Partners and Counsel.

SIDDHESH REDKAR JOINS HINDUSTAN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY AS GENERAL COUNSEL



Siddhesh Redkar Joins Hindustan Construction Company As General Counsel

Siddhesh Redkar has joined Hindustan Construction Company Limited (HCC) as General Counsel.

Siddhesh is a seasoned legal professional with over 19 years of extensive experience across the Construction, Oil & Gas, Water Management, and Infrastructure sectors, with a particular focus on the EPC (Engineering, Procurement, and Construction) model.

In his new role at HCC, Siddhesh will be responsible for overseeing the company's legal functions, including managing litigations, arbitrations, compliance, and company secretarial duties. His expertise extends to leading high-stakes arbitrations, negotiating complex EPC contracts, and handling significant mergers and acquisitions projects.

Siddhesh's impressive career includes tenure with renowned organisations such as Larsen & Toubro, British Gas Exploration and Production India Ltd, Weatherford, Va Tech Wabag, Leighton India, Sandvik Asia, and THINK Gas.

Before joining HCC, he worked with THINK Gas Distribution Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, as General Counsel. He managed legal aspects of M&A, IPOs, and business transactions, drafted and negotiated gas contracts, ensured regulatory compliance, and addressed commercial/legal issues with the ministry and regulator. Additionally, he led the company's land portfolio management and developed effective litigation strategies.

LATERAL MOVES LATERAL MOVES

CYRIL AMARCHAND MANGALDAS EXPANDS CORPORATE TEAM WITH PARTNER RATNADEEP ROYCHOWDHURY



Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas has announced the return of Ratnadeep Roychowdhury as a Partner in its Corporate Practice, based in the Mumbai office.

Partner Ratnadeep Roychowdhury

Ratnadeep brings over 17 years of experience as a commercial lawyer, having worked with leading law firms and serving as India General Counsel at a private equity firm. He is known for his expertise in handling complex, cross-border transactions for private equity

and sovereign wealth funds investing in India, alongside his experience in high-profile corporate litigation.

Cyril Shroff, Managing Partner of Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas, welcomed Ratnadeep, stating, "I am delighted to welcome Ratnadeep back to the firm as Partner. His extensive experience and deep understanding of firm's culture and client service focus makes him an invaluable addition to our corporate practice. With his arrival, we continue to strengthen our capabilities to serve our clients."

Ratnadeep previously joined the firm, erstwhile Amarchand & Mangaldas & Suresh A. Shroff & Co., in 2007 after graduating from NUJS, Kolkata, and remained with the firm until 2011.

On rejoining the firm, Ratnadeep expressed his excitement, saying, "I am excited to be joining the market leading private equity and M&A practice at Cyril Amarchand. I will be returning to my original professional home and that is a source of great pride and joy for me. I am looking forward to contributing to the growth and success of the corporate practice of the firm."

SANJEEV GEMAWAT JOINS ESSAR GROUP AS MANAGING DIRECTOR AND GROUP GENERAL COUNSEL

Sanjeev Gemawat has been appointed as Managing Director and Group General Counsel at Essar Group, following his previous role as General Counsel at Vedanta Resources Limited.

He is a distinguished professional, holding qualifications as a Chartered Secretary in both India and the UK, a Chartered Accountant, and a Cost & Management Accountant. He also holds a postgraduate degree in Law and a Doctorate in Insider Trading.

With over three decades of experience across diverse industries including Metals and Mining, Cement, Sugar, Automobiles, Real Estate, Hospitality, and Manufacturing, Gemawat has previously been associated with both Indian and multinational corporations such as Vedanta, Dalmia Bharat, DLF, JCB, and others.

He is a recognised speaker and author on various contemporary legal and industry-specific topics, sharing his insights at numerous national and



Sanjeev Gemawat Joins Essar Group as Managing Director and Group General Counsel

international conferences. As one of the Founders of the General Counsels Association of India (GCAI), Sanjeev Gemawat has been a strong advocate for the statutory recognition of the role of General Counsels and is dedicated to furthering this cause.

RACHEL MANSER JOINS CYRIL AMARCHAND MANGALDAS AS CHIEF KNOWLEDGE OFFICER

Rachel Manser has joined Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas (CAM) as the Chief Knowledge Officer and will be based at the firm's Mumbai office.

With nearly 20 years of experience at Linklaters, Rachel most recently served as a Director, leading the firm's global Knowledge & Learning (K&L) efforts. In this role, she was responsible for overseeing K&L strategy, knowledge management, client-facing K&L initiatives, knowledge technologies, information and research, data governance, and learning and development. Rachel also played a key role in shaping the firm's approach to innovation and was a founding member of the Innovation Steering Group. Before her leadership in K&L, she worked as a Professional Support Lawyer specialising in competition law at both Linklaters and Allen & Overy.

On her joining, Cyril Shroff, Managing Partner, Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas, said, "I am thrilled to welcome Rachel to the firm. Knowledge Management, including thought leadership and innovation, is essential to our firm's ethos. We are putting knowledge at the centre of the firm. Rachel joining us will bring decades of global and best practices. This will further boost our offerings within the firm and to our clients."



Rachel Manser Joins Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas as Chief Knowledge Officer

Rachel is an England & Wales qualified solicitor, with a degree in English and German Law. Rachel Manser, Chief Knowledge Officer, Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas, said, "It is a tremendous honour to be asked to work alongside the eminent lawyers at CAM to harness their extensive knowledge and expertise as a core part of the firm's future growth strategy. The firm rightly enjoys a superb reputation both in India and internationally, and I am delighted to be part of the team and to work towards taking the knowledge systems to global levels."

LAKSHMIDEVI SOMANATH JOINS ANAND AND ANAND AS PARTNER IN LITIGATION AND STRATEGY TEAM



Lakshmidevi Somanath Joins Anand and Anand as Partner in Litigation and Strategy Tearn

Anand and Anand has announced the appointment of Lakshmidevi Somanath as a Partner in its Litigation and Strategy team. She brings over 23 years of experience in Intellectual Property (IP) law to the firm.

An alumna of the National Law School of India

University (NLSIU), Bangalore, Somanath previously served on the now-defunct Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB). She was instrumental in several landmark decisions, including the recognition of Good Day as a well-known trademark and orders safeguarding trademarks of RPG, HP, and Red Bull, among others.

She has litigated various IP legal issues in high-profile cases involving significant IP and constitutional law issues before High Courts and tribunals. Her expertise extends to IP legal advisory, audits, valuations, and the filing and prosecution of IP applications both in India and internationally, including PCT and MADRID filings. She also provides strategic advice on IP monetisation, contracts, well-known marks, and commercial IP issues.

Currently, she is a PhD Scholar at IIT Kharagpur.

With the onboarding of Somanath, the number of Partners at Anand and Anand is now 33.



"Recognising India's Finest General Counsel for their Legal Finesse as a Business Strategist & Business Enabler"







egal Era recognized the outstanding contributions of General Counsels (GCs) in India at the prestigious India's Finest General Counsel Awards 2024. The event celebrated excellence in two prominent categories: India's Leading Finest General Counsels and India's Leading Finest Legend General Counsels. A special segment highlighting a Powerlist of fast-growing GCs further emphasized their pivotal role in shaping the future of India Inc., showcasing the increasing

influence and significance of GCs in the corporate world.

The esteemed ceremony was graced by the Hon'ble Mr. Birendra Saraf, Advocate General of Maharashtra, who added a distinguished touch by presenting the awards to the deserving honorees, marking a memorable milestone in the celebration of legal leadership. Here is the list of our decorated Awardees at the India's Finest General Counsel Awards 2024.





























INDIA'S FINEST GENERAL COUNSEL



Abhishekh Kanoi General Counsel & Company Secretary PDS Limited

Abhishekh Kanoi is the General Counsel & Company Secretary at PDS Limited. He has rich and diverse in-house corporate experience of over 16 years in Corporate Legal and Commercial Space across various industries like law firm, hospitality, manufacturing, automotive, media & entertainment, fashions and apparel industry and non-banking financial institutions with special reference to emerging technology and convergence. His wide array of specialisation includes Legal Affairs, Corporate Secretarial, IPO & Listing, Regulatory Compliances, RBI & FEMA Matters, Mergers & Acquisitions, Listing Compliances (India & Overseas Entities), Venture Capital Investments, Cross-Border and Domestic Transactions, Intellectual Property Rights, Copyrights, Media and Entertainment Laws. He has earned the Young Achiever of the Year award by Legal Era in 2021. He has helped to develop a new global legal and governance framework for the company while ensuring its overseas expansion is brought into line with this centralised approach.



Amar Kumar Sundram

General Counsel - Senior Vice President (Legal) and Chief Compliance Officer, NEC Corporation India Pvt Ltd.

Amar Kumar Sundram is the General Counsel - Senior Vice President (Legal) and Chief Compliance Officer at NEC Corporation India Pvt. Ltd. With over 25 years of experience in corporate legal affairs, he is a seasoned professional renowned for his strategic thinking and ability to navigate complex legal issues.

He has held prominent roles in both Indian and multinational business houses, including DCM Shriram, Birla, Tata, AT&T, Reliance, Citi, EY, and RBS (NatWest Group). His previous position as Head of Legal, Regulatory Affairs & Governance at RBS India involved overseeing NatWest Markets and serving on the India Ex-co and Risk Committee. At EY India, Amar advised 18,000 employees and over 470 partners across various service lines, including Advisory, Transaction, Assurance, Tax, and FIDS.

Amit Atre

Head Legal Affairs & Corporate Secretary, Mercedes-Benz India Pvt. Ltd.

Amit Atre is the Head Legal Affairs & Corporate Secretary at Mercedes-Benz India Pvt. Ltd., he oversees the comprehensive management of legal and secretarial functions. With over 23 years of experience, his career includes notable roles such as Group Company Secretary at Thermax Limited, where he managed the secretarial portfolio, and Head of Labour and Employment legal portfolio at General Electric (GE) in India. He has also held positions as Corporate Legal Function Manager for Cummins South Pacific, Australia, and Corporate Secretarial Manager at Cummins India Limited, one of India's leading listed MNCs.

Amit has a sound understanding of all laws and regulations including corporate, labour and environmental laws and regulations for the manufacturing environment. Hands-on experience in complete contracts management, managing litigations, legal compliances for setting up Green Field Projects, legal compliance management, labour laws compliance management, managing complete corporate secretarial affairs for large listed company, mergers & amalgamations, sale of business, advise on Anti Trust, Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, Export Control Laws – ITAR, EAR of USA, investigation of Whistle Blower complaints.



Amit Bhasin

Chief Legal Officer, Marico Ltd.

Amit Bhasin is the Chief Legal Officer and Group General Counsel at Marico Limited, where he is a key member of the Executive Committee. He oversees legal and corporate affairs for Marico's operations both in India and internationally, and leads the company's corporate social responsibility functions.

With over 19 years of experience in corporate legal, compliance, governance, and legal business partnering, Amit has a strong background in the consumer sector. Before joining Marico, he was with Hindustan Unilever Limited, where he managed numerous mergers and acquisitions, including the acquisition of GSK's business. He also contributed to global networks focussed on competition law, governance, and compliance.

He is actively involved in advocacy for the fast-moving consumer goods industry, holding memberships in several industry organisations. He is a member of the FICCI FMCG Committee, Chair of the FICCI FMCG Committee for Legal Metrology and CCPA, and is also engaged with the Indian Beauty & Hygiene Association (IBHA) and the MCIA FMCG User Council.









Anil PM
Head - Legal & Compliance and CS,
Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance

Anil PM is currently heading the Legal & Compliance function for Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance Co. Ltd. He has been associated with the Company since February 2017. Anil is a seasoned legal & compliance leader with around twenty years of rich experience having substantive exposure & expertise in most areas of laws, regulations, statutes, corporate governance, trademarks, service marks, intellectual property rights & more.



Senior Director, Thermo Fisher Scientific

Anumeha Soni is the Senior Director at Thermo Fisher Scientific, leading direct and indirect teams of around 25 people across more than 20 operational sites. She is a member of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) and a certified Lean Six Sigma Green and Black Belt, as well as a Certified Compliance Specialist from Trace International, US. Before joining Thermo Fisher Scientific India, she gained experience at corporations such as General Motors, Becton Dickinson, DuPont, Alere, and Boston Scientific Corporation, where she handled various legal and compliance roles in India and the Asia Pacific region.



Anubhav Kapoor

Senior Vice President & General Counsel, Chairman's Office South Asia, Samvardhana Motherson International Limited

Anubhav Kapoor is the Senior Vice President & General Counsel, Chairman's Office South Asia, at Samvardhana Motherson International Limited. He is responsible for intellectual property rights, regulatory compliance and corporate governance practices and policies for the entities of the Company in India. As an in-house counsel, he has 29 years of experience, which spans various industries including information technology, automotive, aerospace, pharmaceuticals, food, banking and insurance software and engineering. He has handled multifarious areas such as mergers and acquisitions, arbitration and litigation management, structuring large business contracts, intellectual property rights and global compliances. Passionate about innovation, he has assisted large corporates including Tata Technologies, Cummins, Domino's Pizza India and Polaris in devising their intellectual property creation and monetisation strategies. Anubhav has also handled contracts and litigations involving complex IP issues, including during mergers and acquisitions, spin-out and joint venture deals. Having done his Master's in Law from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, he did his MBA in Finance & Information Technology from the Institute of Management Technology.

Arpita Sen

Associate General Counsel, Head of Business Legal, Intel India

Arpita Sen is the Head of Business Legal and Associate General Counsel at Intel India. With over 25 years of experience as an attorney and over 20 years as a designated General Counsel and Compliance Officer, she brings extensive expertise to her role. She has held leadership positions as a trusted management advisor with required leadership skills for heading and managing a corporate legal, compliance and ethics function and also managing inter-company legal relationships. She also has expertise in providing strategic and practical legal advise, providing suitable legal options best suited for business/commercial strategy, being a trusted advisor, problem solver. Recently in 2021-2022, she led a USD 1.2 Billion divestiture of healthcare services of an Indian public listed company including appointing Big 5 counsel across 4 geos, heading the entire reliance based legal DD for the org, negotiating and finalising transaction documents and disclosures in a complex asset cum stock transfer deal. The List Co had upwards of 20 subsidiaries across the world.









Ashish Pandey
General Counsel - Company Secretary,
Luminous Power Technologies

Ashish Pandey is the General Counsel and Company Secretary at Luminous Power Technologies, a key player in the multinational energy conglomerate. With over two decades of experience in corporate governance, compliance, and legal affairs, he has successfully led complex legal transactions and played a pivotal role in ensuring the organisation's regulatory adherence and governance standards. His expertise spans across corporate legal matters, compliance programmes, and ethics, where his leadership has significantly reduced legal risks and enhanced regulatory compliance. He has been instrumental in implementing comprehensive ethics and compliance programmes that have increased employee awareness and commitment to regulatory standards. His strategic approach has not only safeguarded Luminous Power Technologies' reputation but also fostered a culture of transparency and accountability.

Over the years, he has collaborated with top-tier law firms, conducted meticulous due diligence, and navigated major corporate challenges, including managing high-stakes arbitration cases involving intricate contractual disputes. His crisis management skills, along with his ability to collaborate with boards and legal experts, have been key to delivering favourable outcomes in complex legal matters.



Ashish Chandra
General Counsel, CoinSwitch

Ashish Chandra is the General Counsel at CoinSwitch, India's leading crypto platform transitioning into a multi-asset wealth-tech superapp. With over 23 years of experience in the internet, tech, and Web3.0 industries, he has been instrumental in shaping the legal and regulatory landscape for some of the most influential companies in India. Before joining CoinSwitch, Ashish led the legal and regulatory affairs for WhatsApp in India, where he played a key role in building the e-commerce and fintech/payments business for Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp.

Throughout his career, Ashish has worked with major Indian and US companies, including Netflix, eBay, Reliance Jio, and Snapdeal. He has been recognised for his contributions to the legal field, receiving accolades such as "Young Achiever in the Indian Legal Industry" (2015) and "Best eCommerce Legal Team in India" (2016) from LegalEra. His team at CoinSwitch was also honoured as the "Unicorn Startup Legal Team of the Year" in 2022 by Legal Era.

He has been involved in significant deals and litigations, including raising \$8 billion in VC/PE funding and handling complex internet-related legal challenges in India. His expertise extends to policy advocacy, where he has represented major corporations before regulators and policymakers to shape laws on e-commerce, digital payments, and data privacy.

Ashok Kumar P.

General Counsel, ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India Limited

Ashok Kumar P. is the General Counsel at ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel. An India qualified in-house lawyer having 18+ years experience with good commercial knowledge and flair for technology. Areas of expertise include complex telecom & power infrastructure projects; Contract structuring, negotiation & finalisation; Contract-Risk & Claim Management; JVs, Consortiums and M&As; project financing, marketing & supply support, real estate, investment and exchange control; employment & immigration laws; other Corporate and Commercial Laws. Special focus on various models of Thermal, Solar PV, Solar Thermal, Bio-energy, transmission and distribution EPC contracts including FIDIC and Bespoke models.



Avantika Bajaj

Vice President & General Counsel, Swiggy

Avantika Bajaj is the Vice President and Group General Counsel at Swiggy, where she oversees the company's legal affairs, providing strategic guidance on business operations, commercial contracts, mergers and acquisitions, and regulatory compliance. Her role involves managing a wide range of legal matters to support Swiggy's growth and business objectives.

Before joining Swiggy, Avantika was the Head of Legal at James Murdoch's Lupa Systems in India. In this position, she handled legal strategies for strategic acquisitions, business development, and joint ventures. She also played a key role in managing technology incubation deals and content acquisitions.

Her previous experience includes serving as Vice President Legal at Star TV Network, where she managed legal affairs for the English cluster of channels, overseeing content acquisition for OTT and TV channels and handling high-value transactions across digital media, IT, and broadcasting.

Avantika's career also includes significant roles at Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas and DSK Legal, where she specialised in cross-border M&A, private equity, corporate transactions, and strategic litigation.









Babu Rao General Counsel, Bajaj Finance Limited

Babu Rao, is the General Counsel of Bajaj Finance Limited. He is responsible for Legal and Secretarial functions of the Company.

He is a Senior Legal Professional having 25 years of wide range of experience in Banking Law & Practice, Corporate Laws, Capital Markets, SEBI, Tax Laws, Industrial & Personnel Management Laws, Intellectual Property Laws, Contract Laws, Securitization Act, Strategic Business Planning, Derivatives and Regulatory Compliance, Litigation, Mergers and Acquisitions.

He worked with companies like Citibank N.A. as Director Legal and Dy. General Counsel, Amarchand Mangaldas, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, Unit Trust of India. etc.



Bijoya RoyGeneral Counsel (South Asia), Pernod Ricard India

Bijoya Roy is the General Counsel (South Asia) at Pernod Ricard India, she brings over two decades of extensive legal experience across various industries and jurisdictions. She began her career in Mumbai, where she worked with leading organisations such as Tata Housing, Asian Paints, and Kodak. In 2008, she qualified as a Solicitor of England and Wales and later joined Thomson Reuters, where she spent a decade in senior legal roles. Initially part of the EMEA team based in London, she was subsequently posted in Dubai, where she supported Thomson Reuters' global emerging markets, including India, China, ASEAN, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, Russia, and parts of Europe.

In 2019, she returned to India to take on the role of Group General Counsel at Flipkart, overseeing the legal department during a pivotal phase in the company's growth.

Her experience has seen her manage teams spread across geographies, some large and in excess of 50 lawyers and some much smaller. During the course of her professional journey, she has specialised in European Competition Law, technology laws and litigation strategy. Thriving in complex environments, her professional journey has taken her from real estate to data and technology, e-commerce and the consumer industry.

Chetan Chopra

Group General Counsel, TruKKer

Chetan Chopra is the Group General Counsel at TruKKer, overseeing legal operations across 12 countries. With over 18 years of comprehensive experience in both in-house roles and premier law firms, Chetan's expertise spans industries such as E-Commerce, Technology, FinTech, PharmaTech, and FMCG. His career includes pivotal roles at Flipkart, United Breweries, OLA, and PepsiCo, as well as with law firms JSA and SAM Co.

At TruKKer, Chetan drives legal strategies aligned with business objectives, focussing on dispute resolution, compliance, and M&A. Previously, at Flipkart, he led the Legal division for the Online Marketplace, managing HealthTec, FinTec, TravelTec, Disputes, IP, and Nodal functions. Chetan is recognised for his pragmatic approach, handling complex investigations related to FDI, Anti-Trust, and Tax matters, and providing innovative legal solutions.

His experience extends to Anti-Trust laws, IP management, and contract negotiations. Chetan has also led cross-functional teams, providing legal support to various business verticals and enhancing legal awareness through training and policy formulation. Known for his strategic leadership, Chetan excels in delivering impactful solutions in challenging legal environments.



Debolina Partap

General Counsel. Wockhardt

Debolina Partap is the General Counsel at Wockhardt, with extensive experience spanning banking, finance, pharmaceuticals, and healthcare. Her responsibility includes all corporate legal work, M&As, IP management, licensing deals and litigation management, legal compliance, transactions management amongst others. She has widespread proficiency in advising top management on legal risks to the organisation as well. Her contribution to Covid-19 vaccine contracts is huge. Inclusion of her main accomplishments are, inter alia, successfully handling and concluding complex M&A structures and deals, settling complex financial cases and arbitrations filed against Wockhardt Limited, multi-jurisdictional arbitrations on commercial disputes and settling intricate derivatives suits filed against Wockhardt Group worldwide.

Wockhardt is a leading pharmaceutical, biotech and healthcare provider, all combined. She takes care of legal issues concerning complex and composite global regulatory matters related to Wockhardt Group. She is one of the very few general counsels globally who tackle forensics and data analytics. International and national recognised legal organisations have bestowed several accolades to her and her team.









Deepak Acharya

Group General Counsel, Aditya Birla Group

Deepak Acharya is the Group General Counsel at Aditya Birla Group. Deepak is a certified Corporate Trainer for various Corporate Training Programmes like Corporate Athlete, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People and Coaching for Success. A law graduate from the Government Law College-Mumbai, Deepak is a Fellow member of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India and also an Associate Member of the All India Management Association. Practicing for more than 25 years in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods Industry, an experienced lawyer, Deepak has previously worked in various positions for The Procter & Gamble Company in India, Asia Pacific, Greater China, Central & Eastern Europe, Middle East and African Regions. Earlier he was working as the Chief Risk Officer & General Counsel of Wipro Limited where Deepak was responsible for Legal & Compliance, Enterprise Risk Management, Enterprise Cyber Security, Global Data Privacy and Global Government Relations functions for Wipro Limited.



Sr. VP - Legal, CS & Compliance Officer Radico Khaitan Limited

Diinesh Gupta is the Senior Vice President - Legal, CS & Compliance Officer at Radico Khaitan Limited, where he excels in managing corporate governance, legal, and compliance functions. With a distinguished career spanning diverse industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, telecom, real estate, and chemicals, Diinesh brings a wealth of experience in navigating complex legal landscapes.

His expertise includes corporate governance, where he ensures adherence to legal and regulatory standards, and legal & litigation management, where he handles intricate matters and provides strategic counsel. Proficient in fundraising, Diinesh has led strategic initiatives like IPOs and debt financing, engaging with investors to support business growth.



Deepak Jacob

Group General Counsel, Dream Sports

Deepak Jacob is the President Corporate Affairs & Group General Counsel at Dream Sports, with extensive experience in legal, public policy, and government relations. He has a proven track record as a strategic advisor to CEOs, corporate boards, and founders.

With deep expertise across multiple sectors, including Information Technology, eCommerce, Telecoms, Media, Entertainment, Sports & Gaming, as well as Real Estate, Commercial Laws, and Goods & Services Tax, Deepak has demonstrated excellence in leadership, collaboration, and communication. He brings a comprehensive understanding of business, laws, and regulations within these industries.

A highly skilled legal professional, Deepak excels in litigation management, mergers & acquisitions, corporate governance, and regulatory, public policy, and government relations advocacy. His broad experience enables him to effectively navigate complex legal challenges while providing strategic guidance for business growth and success.

Divya Kumat

Executive Vice President, Chief Legal Officer & Company Secretary, Datamatics Global Services Limited

Divya Kumat is the Executive Vice President, Chief Legal Officer, and Company Secretary at Datamatics Global Services Limited. In her role, she leads all the legal and secretarial initiatives for more than 41 Group companies worldwide with the support of an able and efficient team. She has more than 23 years of enriching experience as Group General Counsel and Company Secretary. As Company Secretary of a listed entity, Divya has formulated and successfully implemented various policies like Contract Management policy, Insider Trading policy, Whistle Blower policy, Investor Grievance policy, Prevention of Sexual Harassment policy to name a few. Keeping pace with the digitally enhanced organisation, she championed a bespoke contract management system and automated contract management for the Group.









Dr. Mukul ShastryGeneral Counsel, Cube Highways

Dr. Mukul Shastry is the General Counsel at Cube Highways. He has 20 years of experience and is adept in Business Strategy (Commercio-Legal), Corporate M&A, IBC Processes, PPP Infrastructure projects, Claim management, Litigation management, Legal processes (both civil and criminal), Arbitration including International Commercial Arbitration, Compliance with RBI, SEBI & MCA rules & regulations, Trade & Competition Law, General Corporate Laws. He has previously worked with in In-House roles with organisations such as Welspun Group, Adani Group, KEC International Ltd. He has also worked with the RBI as Legal Counsel. During his stint at RBI, he has advised RBI on policy issues on topics spanning across Banking operations, Payments & Settlement Systems, and foreign exchange; drafted and vetted international contracts between RBI and foreign entities; represented and defended RBI in multiple forums - Tax authorities, Finance secretary, Gol, and Central Information Commission. He was also an adjunct member of RBI Faculty, conducting sessions for Bank officials on dealing with Legal and Regulatory issues in Banking & Finance domain. He is also Company Secretary for various companies.



Dr. Sanjeev Gemawat

Managing Director & Group General Counsel, Essar Group

Dr. Sanjeev Gemawat is the Managing Director & Group General Counsel at Essar Group, bringing over three decades of diverse industry experience across sectors such as metals and mining, cement, sugar, automotive, real estate, hospitality, and manufacturing. Known for his strategic business-oriented approach, he is a distinguished thought leader and corporate secretary with multiple professional qualifications, including Chartered Secretary (India and the UK), Chartered Accountant, Cost & Management Accountant, as well as a postgraduate degree in Law and a Doctorate in Insider Trading.

In addition to his corporate leadership, Dr. Gemawat is recognized as a speaker and author on various contemporary legal and industry topics, having presented at both national and international forums. He is also one of the founding members of the General Counsels' Association of India (GCAI), where he actively advocates for the statutory recognition of the General Counsel role in India. His dedication to advancing the legal profession and his extensive expertise make him a prominent figure in both the legal and business communities.

Dr. Vivek Mittal

Global General Counsel, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Limited

Dr. Vivek Mittal is the Global General Counsel at Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Limited (DRL), an NYSE, NSE, and BSE listed multi-locational global generic pharmaceutical giant. At DRL, he leads a team of about 75 lawyers and professionals covering a gamut of activities like domestic and cross-border mergers and acquisitions, in-licensing, out-licensing, commercial agreements, domestic and complex cross-border civil and criminal litigation, arbitration, ethical and statutory compliances, data privacy, and data protection.

In addition to his existing role Global General Counsel, Dr. Mittal is also designated as DPO of DRL, he also oversees IPR, employment laws, regulatory issues, and corporate commercial advisory among others.

Dr. Mittal has a very diversified and successful multi-industry career spanning over 23 years with the latest stint being at Danaher Corporation, where he was Regional Counsel - METAI for Diagnostics Platform, Head of Legal at Lupin Limited and has been instrumental in critical roles at Reliance, Radico Khaitan, IndiaBulls, Caparo India and Mount Shivalik.

Dr. Mittal has been recognized and honored with multiple accolades from prestigious institutes. He is a regular speaker at such events and places. On the academic background - he is a Ph.D. in commerce, a member of ICSI, a post graduate in commerce, and a graduate in law.



Garima Nahar

General Counsel, Jio Finance Limited

Garima Nahar, General Counsel at Jio, distinguishes herself as a highly regarded corporate lawyer, accumulating over two decades of invaluable experience in the legal domain. Presently, she holds the position of General Counsel at Jio Finance Limited. With extensive expertise in diverse banking and financial transactions, Garima, a gold medallist from the National Law Institute University, Bhopal, seamlessly blends a robust academic foundation with her practical acumen. Garima's professional journey boasts key roles, including General Counsel, Chief Compliance Officer, and Chief ESG Officer at J.C. Flowers ARC and Eight Capital, General Counsel & Chief ESG Coordinator at IIFL Finance, Senior Group Head at ICICI Bank, and Foreign Counsel at Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP in New York. Her multifaceted expertise and remarkable achievements firmly position her as an outstanding professional in the dynamic landscape of corporate law. In her current role as the General Counsel at Jio Finance Ltd., Garima continues to enhance her well-established track record of excellence.









Hemant Kumar

Group General Counsel, Larsen & Toubro Limited

Hemant Kumar is the Group General Counsel at Larsen & Toubro Limited, bringing extensive expertise in strategic advisory, board management, enterprise risk and compliance, complex transactions, litigation, cross-functional leadership, change management, public policy, and government relations. He adeptly combines a global mindset with strong execution skills to drive business growth in challenging regulatory environments.

His prolific career encompasses high-profile roles that have deepened his domain knowledge of corporate laws in India and provided him with a comprehensive understanding of legal frameworks across jurisdictions, including the USA, England, Australia, Africa, France, and the Middle East. His international exposure and extensive travel for assignments have enriched his understanding of global legal practices. He has handled prominent cases, including those involving Members of Parliament and Legislative Assemblies, and notably served as the defence counsel in the Bhagalpur Blinding Case. His previous senior roles include positions at State Bank of India, Steel Authority of India, JSW Steel, Reliance ADAG, and Essar Group. Additionally, he has contributed to academia as a faculty member and paper-setter for diploma courses in Safety Engineering.



Hemant Kumar Rajora

General Manager (Legal), Oil India Limited

Hemant Kumar Rajora is the General Manager (Legal) at Oil India Limited, where he provides strategic legal leadership and oversees the company's legal and compliance functions. With over two decades of experience in the energy sector, Hemant has built a strong reputation for his expertise in legal advisory, regulatory compliance, and risk management.

Before joining Oil India Limited, he has worked with several prominent organizations in the energy sector, including Indraprastha Gas Limited, Adani Total Gas, GAIL (India) Limited, NTPC Limited, and the Law Offices of AS Chandhiok & Law Firm. He has gained extensive experience in managing complex legal issues, ensuring regulatory compliance, and providing legal advisory services throughout his career.

Throughout his career, he has developed extensive expertise in business strategy, management, project management, litigation, and program management. He is well-known for his ability to navigate complex legal landscapes and provide innovative solutions that align with corporate goals and industry standards. With more than 22 years of experience in the energy sector, he brings a wealth of legal expertise and strategic insight to his leadership role. He has developed a deep understanding of dispute resolution, regulatory frameworks, complex contract negotiations, compliance management, and risk mitigation. His work involves close collaboration with senior leadership and cross-functional teams to ensure that legal aspects are aligned with corporate goals and industry standards.

Hrishikesh Chitnis

General Counsel, Mahindra Logistics Limited

Hrishikesh Chitnis General Counsel at Mahindra Logistics Limited brings over two decades of extensive experience in corporate legal affairs. In this role, he leverages his deep expertise in managing complex legal matters, including commercial contracts, labour law, competition law, and international trade sanctions, to drive the company's strategic and operational success. He has built a distinguished career by guiding major corporate organisations through intricate legal landscapes. His previous positions at leading companies such as TATA Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra Limited, Fiat India Automobiles, and Mahindra Two Wheelers have honed his skills and provided him with a comprehensive understanding of various legal challenges and opportunities. At Mahindra Logistics, he focusses on delivering practical legal solutions that are aligned with business strategies and ensure seamless corporate operations. He is pivotal in integrating ethical practices into business processes, maintaining compliance, and fostering a culture of integrity and collaboration. His proficiency in multiple languages enhances his ability to navigate diverse cultural landscapes and conduct effective negotiations. Dedicated to upholding the highest standards of legal excellence, he continues to contribute to the robust legal framework that supports Mahindra Logistics' growth and global success. His leadership drives the company's commitment to ethical practices and strategic legal management.



Isha Rathnam

Vice President - Legal Affairs (CLO) South Asia & Networks, Lionsgate South Asia

Isha Rathnam is Vice President - Legal Affairs (CLO) for South Asia and Networks - Emerging Markets Asia at Lionsgate South Asia. In this role, she oversees legal operations across the region, offering strategic counsel on Intellectual Property, Media, and Commercial Law.

Throughout her career, she has held significant positions including Director of Legal Affairs at Lionsgate and Lionsgate Play Emerging Markets, Partner at K Law, and Senior Manager of Legal & Business Affairs at Reliance Broadcast Network Limited.

She is highly skilled in Intellectual Property, Corporate Law, Licensing, and Copyright Law, which enables her to effectively manage complex legal challenges within the media sector. Her deep understanding of the industry and strategic legal insights make her a key leader in navigating the complexities of media and entertainment law.









Jagriti Bhattacharya General Counsel, Pine Labs

Jagriti Bhattacharyya is the General Counsel at Pine Labs, where she plays a pivotal role in overseeing the company's legal and compliance functions. Her responsibilities include guiding Pine Labs through complex legal landscapes and supporting its strategic initiatives.

Jagriti's extensive experience includes her previous role as Chief Counsel for South Asia at Thomson Reuters, where she managed a broad range of legal issues, including key transactions and international arbitrations. This role continued with Refinitiv following its acquisition by Blackstone and later by the London Stock Exchange Group.

Before her tenure at Thomson Reuters, Jagriti worked at Citibank as Senior Vice President and Vice President & Associate Country Counsel, focussing on the launch of innovative financial products and providing legal support to the Treasury function. She also held the position of Senior Legal Counsel at ICICI Bank, handling corporate legal matters.

Throughout her career, she has demonstrated a commitment to corporate governance and diversity, actively leading women's networks and contributing to diversity initiatives in her previous roles.

Kanaiya Thakker

SVP (Head Legal), Adani Enterprise Ltd

Kanaiya Thakker is the SVP - Head Legal for the Natural Resources Business at Adani Enterprises Ltd. With a successful 9-year tenure at Holcim India (Ambuja Cements Ltd.), Thakker achieved significant milestones in high-stake litigations, including CCI, sales tax, environmental issues, and potential M&A. At Adani Enterprises, he oversees the Legal function for the Natural Resources business, which includes integrated resource management, coal mining and trading, cement and aggregates, iron ore, copper, bunkering, and ATF.





Kaizad Adi Hazari Group General Counsel, TCG Global

Kaizad Adi Hazari is the Group General Counsel at The Chatterjee Group (TCG). He specialises in Business Advisory, Corporate M&A, Structuring and Business Strategy. He has handled high stake Litigations and Commercial Transactions including managing Regulatory Matters for different industries, Managed Intellectual Property Rights, Corporate Governance, Secretarial, Compliance & Corporate Affairs. He handles complex matters globally on Anti-Trust Law, Patents, GDPR & Data Privacy, Sanction Controls, Statutory Compliance, PCA & ML, FCPA/UK Bribery Compliances and Investigations by regulatory agencies. Kaizad has held key positions like President & Global Head Legal, Compliance, IP & Corporate Affairs for Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Ltd. Joint President - Head Legal with Hindalco Industries Ltd, General Counsel - South Asia for GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Raymond Group as Group Head Legal, Asian Paints, ICICI Ltd and was with Mulla and Mulla and Craigie Blunt and Caroe. He was also with HDFC Ltd for their Stressed Asset Fund.

Kanika Shah Wadhwa

Head of Legal, Haleon

Kanika Shah Wadhwa is the Head of Legal at Haleon, where she leads the legal department and provides strategic legal guidance. Based in Gurgaon, Haryana, she oversees Haleon's legal operations and ensures regulatory compliance.

Prior to her role at Haleon, Kanika was the General Manager - Legal at GSK Consumer Healthcare India, where she managed legal affairs and supported strategic decisions. She has also served as Senior Legal Counsel at InterGlobe Aviation Limited, handling legal matters in the aviation sector, and as Corporate Manager - Legal at Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages Private Limited, overseeing legal functions across various business operations.

Kanika's career includes experience as a Sr. Executive - Legal at Bharti Airtel Limited, where she managed legal issues for the telecommunications company.

Kanika's extensive experience in legal leadership and regulatory compliance underscores her expertise and contributions to corporate law.









Kaushik Mukherjee President Legal (Head Legal Corporate Affairs), Sammaan Capital

Kaushik Mukherjee is the President Legal (Head of Legal Corporate Affairs) at Sammaan Capital (formerly Indiabulls Housing Finance). He is a corporate lawyer and senior in-house counsel with diverse experience across practice areas including capital markets, mergers and acquisitions, structured finance, real estate project financing, restructuring, and corporate and securities advisory and disputes. Kaushik has been a capital markets and public M&A partner with leading Indian law firms including Shardul Amarchand and JSA Law, amongst others. As an inhouse counsel, Kaushik's repertoire includes structuring and execution of commercial transactions. Additionally, he oversees all regulatory matters ranging from simple advisory in relation to compliance to strategising (with external counsel or otherwise) in connection with investigations and disputes. He has regularly advised on gueries raised by the Reserve Bank of India and the National Housing Board in relation to periodic inspections conducted by such regulators. Kaushik has multiple publications under his name including a National Stock Exchange (of India) publication on corporate governance (as a special advisor), apart from authoring articles in leading financial dailies.



Kumar Sambasivan General Counsel, Ayana Renewable Power

Kumar Sambasivan is a General Council Member at Ayana Renewable Power and a corporate generalist attorney with substantial in-house legal experience, providing pro-active support on high value infrastructure projects, contracts and negotiations, corporate governance, mergers and acquisition, regulatory compliance, intellectual property, dispute resolution and litigation. He specialises in high value contracting, contract management, risk management, mergers and acquisitions, compliance, dispute management, intellectual property.

Lakshman Singh General Counsel, Siemens Gamesa

Lakshman Singh is the General Counsel at Siemens Gamesa, where he leads the legal department, overseeing all legal and compliance functions for the company's operations in Chennai. His role includes managing legal strategies for a range of business activities, from acquisitions and transactions to compliance and risk management.

Prior to joining Siemens Gamesa, Lakshman served as the Head of Litigations at Larsen & Toubro. In this position, he managed corporate legal functions, including litigation, acquisitions, and new business ventures such as e-commerce and data centres. His leadership extended across multiple legal disciplines, supporting the company's diverse and complex business environment.

Lakshman also held the position of Chief Manager Legal at Siemens, where he was responsible for legal and compliance matters within the Power & Gas and Power Generation Services divisions. Earlier in his career, he worked as Manager Legal & Contracts at Alstom Projects India Ltd., where he handled various legal and contractual matters.

With a strong background in energy, legal compliance, and corporate governance, he has built a robust career.



Lakshmi Menon Nair

Director and Associate General Counsel, Head of Legal - India Geo, Hewlett Packard Enterprise

Lakshmi Menon Nair is the Director and Head of Legal - India Geo at Hewlett Packard Enterprise. She is a General Counsel with both global and local experience, known for providing practical, outcome-oriented advice to technology companies ranging from medium-sized enterprises to large Fortune 500 companies. She has advised on complex cross-border commercial transactions, technology laws, mergers, acquisitions, divestitures, employment laws, data protection laws, intellectual property laws, trade laws, insurance laws, antitrust issues, dispute management, facilitated corporate secretarial matters, corporate governance, real estate laws, environmental laws, business code of conduct issues and risk/compliance management. She has experience managing large and small agile teams with a focus on driving excellence and elevating performance by creating an inclusive environment for team members. She is a member of several Diversity, Equity and Inclusion ERGs in her present organisation and drives strategic initiatives for these groups.









Manjaree Chowdhary

Sr. Executive Director and General Counsel, Maruti Suzuki India Limited

Maniaree Chowdharv is the Sr. Executive Director and General Counsel at Maruti Suzuki India. With over 25 years of experience, she leads a team of 50 experts, working closely with the Board, the CEO and the Leadership team. She provides legal and compliance support in a dynamic regulatory and risk environment at Maruti Suzuki India, a subsidiary of Suzuki Motor Corporation, Japan. Manjaree has worked across South Asia, US, ANZ, and Japan in diverse industries like Industrial, Manufacturing, Auto, Healthcare, Power and Services. Skilled in strategic advisory, listed entity management, complex transactions, dispute resolution, enterprise risk, compliance and public policy, she has led industry initiatives including the formulation of a Voluntary Code of Ethics adopted by the National Healthcare Federation of India. At Maruti Suzuki, she has successfully led change management through incremental steps. With a Masters in Law from the University of London, Manjaree made a mid-career shift from academics to law, beginning her legal career at a leading Indian law firm and moving in-house to General Electric before joining Maruti Suzuki as its first woman General Counsel.



Head - Legal, Southern Asia, Director & CS India, Kenvue

Mayur Vasani is the Head - Legal, Southern Asia, Director & CS India at Kenvue. In this role, he oversees the legal and compliance functions across Southern Asia, ensuring regulatory adherence and guiding the company's strategic legal initiatives.

With over two decades of experience, Mayur brings extensive expertise to his current position. He previously served as the Legal Director for Johnson & Johnson's Consumer Health division from 2010, also holding the role of Member of the Board of Directors, which underscores his proficiency in corporate governance and legal management.

Before joining Johnson & Johnson, Mayur was the Taxation Manager and Company Secretary at SABIC, focussing on indirect taxation, tax law, VAT, and transfer pricing. At DuPont, he served as Corporate Manager - Indirect Tax, further enhancing his skills in tax management and regulatory compliance. His comprehensive skill set includes expertise in indirect taxation, tax management, VAT, transfer pricing, and corporate governance.



Manoj Gujaran

Seasoned Corporate Compliance, Legal and CSR Professional

Manoj Gujaran is a seasoned Corporate Compliance, Legal, and CSR professional with over two decades of experience. He brings a wealth of expertise in NBFC compliance, company law, listing regulations, corporate governance, legal drafting, due diligence, restructuring, CSR, intellectual property rights, and human resources. An award-winning Chief Compliance Officer and legal strategist, Manoj has recently embarked on an entrepreneurial path as an independent consultant, helping organizations navigate regulatory complexities while fostering sustainable growth and innovation.

With extensive experience across financial services, media, and multinational corporations, he has a proven track record in ensuring regulatoryadherence, managing corporate restructuring, and championing ESG and CSR initiatives. In his previous role as Chief Compliance Officer at Poonawalla Fincorp Limited, he led key compliance initiatives and developed impactful CSR strategies. His deep understanding of RBI guidelines, digital lending, and strategic investments further underscores his comprehensive approach to corporate governance.

Mohit Kapoor

Executive Vice President & Head Legal, SBI Card & Payments

Mohit Kapoor is the Executive Vice President and Head of Legal at SBI Card & Payments Services. He is a dual-qualified lawyer with varied experience in litigation and corporate matters, spanning multiple industries and geographies. Having begun his career practising at premier law firms, he has handled a variety of matters ranging from indirect tax, consumer, antitrust, intellectual property and product liability laws, while engaging and working extensively with India's senior-most counsels. He then successfully transitioned to more transactional and advisory roles by gaining rich experience working at different organisations including foreign law firms, global insurers, international HR consultants, leading banks, and NBFCs. He has more than three decades of experience and has held various responsibilities in various organisations and has been exposed to a variety of experiences including providing timely and costeffective legal support to businesses against aggressive schedules and budgets, liaising with the Board of Directors, shareholders and regulators. Currently, He heads the legal department of India's largest pure-play credit card issuer - SBI Card, providing strategic, legal, regulatory and commercial support as a member of the Senior Management Team.











Nagendra Pal Goel

Executive Director – Legal & Company Secretary, Ingram Micro India Pvt Ltd

Nagendra Pal Goel is the Executive Director-Legal & Company Secretary at Ingram Micro Private Limited, the largest global IT distribution and ITES company, where he is responsible for managing the legal and secretarial portfolio for South Asia. With over two decades of experience, Nagendra is a well-recognized professional in corporate law, known for his expertise and strategic approach in handling complex legal matters across diverse sectors. In addition to holding a degree in Commerce and Law graduate from the University of Delhi, he is also a Fellow Member of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India. Nagendra specialises in Corporate Law & Governance, Company Law, Contracts, Compliance & Business Ethics, Litigation & Employment Law. His experience also extends in the fields of Banking and Insurance & Economic laws.

Joint Venture, Mergers & Acquisitions & Greenfield Projects are his passion and an integral part of his successful career.

His career spans over 24 years during which he has worked with several diverse industries like FMCG, B2B, Beverages and even been a part of the Chemical, Pharmaceutical & Manufacturing industry. He has been employed in various capacities in both multinational and Indian companies, like Jindal Photo Limited, Valvoline Cummins Limited, Ashland India Private Limited & ISP India Private Limited.



Naveen Raju

General Counsel & Executive Vice President Mahindra & Mahindra Limited

Naveen Raju is General Counsel and Executive Vice President at Mahindra & Mahindra and a member of the Group Executive Board. In his role as General Counsel, he leads the in-house legal team and provides assurance on legal and regulatory compliance across the Group's global businesses and operations.

He has over two decades of experience working with leading Indian private sector companies including ACC, Crompton Greaves and Reliance Industries Limited. He moved to Mahindra in 2014 and has been instrumental in creating core internal competencies, integrating the legal function with group businesses and promoting greater adoption of technology.

He is a Director on the Board of Mahindra Logistics Limited and its affiliate companies, Mahindra Automotive North America Inc. and other group entities.

In his professional capacity, he is a member of the Board of Directors at the Association of Corporate Counsel, which is the world's largest in-house counsel community with over 40,000 members across 85 countries. He is also co-chair of the legal affairs and IPR committee at the Bombay Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Navita Chaubal

General Counsel & Sr. Director, Target

Navita Chaubal is the General Counsel & Sr. Director at Target. She is a solution-focussed legal & compliance professional with 26+ years' rich experience in overseeing daily legal & compliance functions pertaining to regulation and standards. She is adept at understanding business operations & needs, mentoring teams to align with business requirements, conducting audits, verifying operational efficiency, evaluating internal control systems and recommending ways of improving internal controls. Navita is proficient in managing legal groups/teams, Knowledge Management, legal project, investigating various cases and maintaining records. Focussed and hard working with proven capability in discovering critical legal points in complex litigation and ability to easily grasp complex situations. Rich exposure of working with international clients/teams in SE Asia, Germany, Netherlands, Denmark, Italy, USA, UK, China, Austria, Belgium, Spain, etc. Skilled in managing multiple projects simultaneously ensuring compliance. She has strong analytical, problem-solving skills coupled with relation building skills with internal/ external bodies & excellent negotiations skills.



Neera Sharma

Group General Counsel & CEO, Sistema Smart Technologies Limited

Neera Sharma is the Group General Counsel & CEO at Sistema Smart Technologies Limited. She is a University of California, Los Angeles, alumni and an experienced chief of legal with a demonstrated history of working in the telecommunications, real estate and IT industry. She is skilled in negotiations, mergers and acquisitions, corporate law, legal compliance, complaint management, litigations, arbitration, and dispute resolution. With over 24 years of experience, she has worked with several start-ups and developed teams from scratch while handling multiple responsibilities. As a member of the Board of Directors, she has always played a role that goes far beyond her position as a legal adviser. Neera has been working closely with senior business leaders to develop corporate strategies across the region and acts as company representative in discussions with the government, the regulators and other stakeholders to help influence the policy decisions. She has been recognised as one of the leading senior counsels of India. Neera is praised and has been awarded for her strong leadership skills and the ability to build business models that take into account complex legal outcomes. She is credited for being an excellent communicator with strong negotiation skills and having leadership qualities and analytical power.









Nishant Nayan

Head-Legal and Compliance, Panasonic Electric Works

Nishant Nayan is the Head of Legal and Compliance at Panasonic Electric Works, bringing over 18 years of expertise in M&A, contracts, compliance, litigation, and risk management. His qualifications include an LLB from Delhi University, a Company Secretary (FCS) designation, and a Global EMBA-PGPMAX from the Indian School of Business (ISB), Hyderabad.

Nishant is highly skilled in strategising corporate transactions, managing complex legal and compliance issues, and serving as a business partner and enabler. His experience covers M&A leadership, joint ventures, foreign technology transfers, corporate litigation, dispute resolution, arbitration, and regulatory compliance. He has effectively managed board governance, listing compliance, and manufacturing compliance for both Indian and international group companies.



Panduranga Acharya General Counsel, Zepto

Panduranga Acharva is the General Counsel at Zepto. He is a seasoned legal professional and a veteran in the e-commerce industry, known for his solution-oriented and a great decision maker. He has led complex transactions and highly performing teams in his career. His vast experience on sectoral regulatory issues is outstanding. Panduranga has built high performance teams and has demonstrated great legal leadership in various organisations. Panduranga is a Law graduate from Bangalore University. After a brief period of court practice, he worked for various corporations. He carries 18 years of post-qualification experience as inhouse counsel and has been associated with Mobile Store, Videocon, Vodafone, Flipkart, Swiggy and CarDekho Group. His core competence includes, M&A Transactions Advisory, Business Structuring, Regulatory Compliances, Policy Advocacy and Real Estate Transactions. He is a regular speaker on diverse legal topics and has been co-chair for FICCI Online Food Aggregator Working Group and currently Executive Committee Member, e-Commerce Law Section at INBA and member of CII National Committee on Regulatory Affairs.

Parag Mathur

Group General Counsel, PhonePe Private Ltd.

Parag Mathur is the Group General Counsel at PhonePe, bringing over 24 years of extensive expertise in Legal, M&A, Regulatory, and Compliance domains. His role at PhonePe involves providing substantial legal support for new business launches. He is also responsible for spearheading major projects like redomiciling PhonePe to India from Singapore, orchestrating the USD 1 Billion Funding Round, Insurance Broking, Stock Broking, Payments and NBFC -Account Aggregator licenses, including other connected registrations and sublicenses to enable digital distribution of financial products and services on PhonePe.

Through his engagement with the NITI Aayog, the Government of India, and financial regulators, he has helped drive regulations that support the use of Aadhaar-based OTP for onboarding in 2016, as well as video KYC, digital verification, and penny drop for non-face-to-face onboarding. These regulations have evolved over the past five years to allow for paperless and presence-less customer onboarding.

As a Fellow Member of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India and a law graduate, Parag has accumulated a wealth of experience through key roles in well-established organisations such as Modi Corp, Polar Software, Bharti Airtel, and ING Life Insurance.



Parvatheesam Kanchinadham

Corporate Secretary and Chief Legal Officer (Corporate & Compliance), Tata Steel

Parvatheesam Kanchinadham is currently the Corporate Secretary and Chief Legal Officer (Corporate & Compliance) at Tata Steel. His most significant responsibilities include advising the Board on Governance and ensuring that the Members of the Board are ably equipped with resources to discharge their fiduciary duties and corporate governance practices. Kanchinadham is also responsible for the Compliance Function of Tata Steel and the legal requirements of the company in the areas of Governance, Anti-trust, Corporate Actions and New Ventures. He also has oversight responsibility of the legal and governance matters of Tata Steel's Investment in Subsidiaries, Joint Ventures and Associate Companies in India and Overseas. Prior to joining the Tata Group, he served as the Corporate Secretary and Chief Risk & Compliance Officer of Infosys. At Infosys, PK was responsible for the Governance, Risk and Compliance function (including compliance with SEC Rules and Regulations). Kanchinadham also serves as Member of the CII National Committee on Financial Reporting and on the CII National Committee on Regulatory Affairs'.









Pooja Bedi Chief Counsel - BU India. Mondelez International

Pooja Bedi is the Chief Counsel for BU India at Mondelēz International, bringing over 20 years of extensive legal experience to the role. She specialises in mergers and acquisitions, complex multi-jurisdictional transactions, contract negotiations, and government relations. Her expertise also includes sensitive litigation, intellectual property protection, and legal tech and operations management.

Before joining Mondelēz International, Pooja was Head of Legal & Compliance for the Indian Subcontinent at Philips, where she built a best-in-class legal, compliance, governance, risk, and CSR function. Her previous roles include Associate Counsel at Argentum Law, Legal Director at JUUL Labs, managing legal and compliance affairs for India, Southeast Asia, and parts of EMEA, and Legal Compliance & Corporate Affairs Director at AB InBev India & Southeast Asia. She has also served as Senior Manager at Pernod Ricard India and Company Secretary at Tips Industries Limited.

Pooja has received several accolades, including the Women in Law Excellence Award by Legal Era in 2021 and the Rising Star - "Under 40" In-House GC by Legal Era in 2017.



Poornima Sampath
SVP & Chief Legal Officer, Tata Digital

Poornima Sampath is SVP & Chief Legal Officer at Tata Digital. Previously, she was working with Tata Sons as Vice President - Group Legal. She has also worked with Intel Capital as Senior Attorney, where she spent a few years handling legal matters across a diverse portfolio of venture capital investments in India, Asia-Pacific and the United States. Prior to Intel Capital, she worked at Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP in New York, focussing on M&A, private equity and restructuring matters. Poornima is admitted to practice law in New York, India and the United Kingdom (non- practicing solicitor).

Prateek Sharma

Director-Legal & Compliance, Fractal Analytics Private Limited

Prateek Sharma is the Director - Legal & Compliance at Fractal, where he leads legal and compliance functions. In this role, he oversees critical aspects of legal operations and regulatory adherence. Previously, he was the Lead Legal & Compliance at Fractal, focussing on due diligence and project management.

Prateek's career includes significant roles at major organisations. At CRISIL Limited, he served as Associate Director, managing various aspects of legal and compliance work. He also held the position of Senior Legal Counsel at InterGlobe Enterprises, where he was involved in leadership and stakeholder management. His early career included roles as a Legal Manager at ICICI Lombard and as a Contract Management Specialist at Accenture.

He holds an LLM in International Business Laws from the National University of Singapore and a B.A. LL.B (Hons) from National Law Institute University, Bhopal. His expertise encompasses contract management, stakeholder management, and legal compliance, positioning him as a key figure in navigating complex legal and regulatory environments.



Pujarini Guha Maulik Senior Vice President, InMobi

Pujarini Guha Maulik, SVP Legal and Privacy Head, InMobi has over 20+ years of experience as an in-house counsel, currently she heads a team of 22+ in-house lawyers and privacy practitioners. InMobi is present in about 13+ countries with business in 100+ countries and she oversees the legal and privacy portfolios across the board. Her exposure in InMobi has been diverse starting from setting up a team from scratch to establishing robust processes towards Corporate Governance. Currently, she is the presiding member of its Privacy Committee (CIPM certified). Prior to InMobi, she worked with Infosys and DRL









Rabindra Purohit

Head Legal, Compliance & Company Secretary, Nivea India

Rabindra Purohit is the Head of Legal, Compliance & Company Secretary at NIVEA India. As a seasoned Corporate Lawyer and Company Secretary, he brings over two decades of experience working with in-house legal teams at multinational corporations. His career began as a Senior Associate at Lexport Law Firm, followed by roles as Senior Manager Legal & Company Secretary at Bharti Delmonte Foods and Deputy General Manager Legal & Company Secretary at Vodafone, where he managed legal matters including litigation, tax disputes, intellectual property protection, and corporate affairs.

In his current role, he oversees the company's legal, secretarial, and compliance functions. His expertise lies in de-risking business operations, driving compliance, navigating complex transactions, handling disputes, protecting intellectual property and brands, managing cross-border transactions, and ensuring robust corporate governance. He is also skilled in crafting legal frameworks and partnering with businesses to unlock strategic growth through legal tech, creativity, and collaboration.



Rajbeer Sachdeva

President, Group Legal, J. K. Organisation

Raibeer Sachdeva is the President, Group Legal at JK Organisation. He was previously the Senior Executive Director and Group General Counsel at DLF Ltd. and, prior to that, worked as the Global Head of Legal at Ranbaxy Laboratories Ltd. He has extensively worked in the domain of Mergers and Acquisitions, Competition & Antitrust laws, Real Estate Transactions, Intellectual Property and Trademark matters and Arbitrations in India and abroad. He has also been dealing with various matters relating to Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2016, after successful acquiring a Company under CIRP from NCLT. He is an alumnus of Delhi University with an LLB and LLM and has about 32 years of experience as a Corporate Lawyer. He views the role of a Corporate Lawyer as an advisor to business teams on various intricate matters and legal tasks should be completed meticulously and with precision. The emphasis should be to effectively handle the transactions and litigations after taking into account the business perspective which is utmost important for taking a final view and to provide solutions to the business team. The role of the Corporate Counsel is a strategic and the advice given to the business team must be practical and business-oriented.



Chief General Counsel & Company Secretary, Tata Chemicals Limited

Rajiv Chandan is the Chief General Counsel & Company Secretary at Tata Chemicals Limited. He is a corporate lawyer and a Governance Professional. He has a masters' degree in Commerce and a Law degree from the University of Mumbai. He is also qualified Company Secretary from The Institute of Company Secretaries of India. Rajiv is with Tata Group since 2007 and he is a Key Managerial Person in Tata Chemicals Ltd and designated as Global General Counsel & Company Secretary. Being a member of Management Committee, he heads the Legal, Corporate Governance, Compliance and Company Secretarial functions of the Company headquartered in Mumbai and its subsidiaries based in India, America, UK and Africa. Rajiv has over three decades of experience in the areas of Legal, Regulatory, Compliance, Corporate Governance and Mergers & Acquisitions including cross-border His experience is spread across diverse industries and sectors, including paper, automobiles, logistics, cement, chemicals, FMCG and fertilisers. Rajiv is also representing his company in various Legal affairs committee of industry bodies such as CII, FICCI and BCCI.



Rajiv Malik

Dy. General Manager, LG Electronics

Rajiv Malik is the Dy. General Manager at LG Electronics India, where he manages the legal team for the company's Noida manufacturing subsidiary. With over 20 years of legal experience, he specialises in litigation, contract management, data privacy, anti-trust issues, and compliance. He holds an LLB from Delhi University and is a qualified Company Secretary. Additionally, Rajiv has pursued further education in Cyber Laws from Amity University and Al & Law from Lund University.

In his role at LG Electronics, Rajiv oversees key legal functions, including intellectual property rights (IPR), alternative dispute resolution (ADR), and competition law. His extensive expertise extends beyond his corporate responsibilities; he is a respected speaker at industry conferences and seminars, where he provides valuable insights into legal and compliance matters.

Rajiv's qualification as a Company Secretary enhances his understanding of corporate governance and compliance, enabling him to help organisations adhere to legal obligations and manage potential risks effectively. He is dedicated to promoting ethical practices and ensuring that businesses operate within legal frameworks, contributing significantly to the company's legal and compliance strategies.









Rajiv Mohapatra
Vice President, Global Legal Compliance, Mastercard

Rajiv Mohapatra, Vice President, Global Legal Compliance at Mastercard, is a dual-qualified banking and finance lawyer with over 23 years of experience in leadership roles across the banking and finance industry. He has advised boards and management of major corporates and global MNCs, including Vodafone, HSBC Bank, and CitiFinancial, on various legal and regulatory issues. Specialising in managing legal risks, regulatory and corporate affairs, corporate-commercial litigations, legal recovery, compliance, and public policy, Rajiv currently serves as the Global Head of Legal Compliance for money transmission products at Mastercard, overseeing with 'at his current role he oversees'. Rajiv also has experience in private practice before the High Courts and Supreme Court of India. He is a life member of the Bar Association, London.



Vice President and Deputy General Counsel, HT Media Ltd.

Sachin Kalra is the Vice President & Deputy General Counsel at HT Media Limited (Group). Having pursued his Master's degree from Bharati Vidyapeeth, Pune, he completed post-graduation and joined as a faculty of law with the same university. Soon, he decided to take up law as a career and became a practicing lawyer in litigation. Subsequently, he specialised in corporate law and intellectual property rights law. In his prior assignments, Sachin headed and represented the legal functions of Bharti AXA, Bharti Retail, Samsung (South-West Asia), Vodafone India. He possesses a wide experience of handling a diverse range of legal matters in different industries including insurance, telecom, FMCG, retail, real estate, electronics, consumer durables, education and media. With a penchant for research and a love for academics, he continues to hold a keen interest in interacting with and tutoring law students on a wide array of subjects beyond the rote learning of textbooks. As a General Counsel, Sachin has been bestowed with several prestigious awards.





Roopesh Jain

Deputy Vice President, Johnson Controls-Hitachi Air Conditioning India Limited

Roopesh Jain is the Deputy Vice President at Johnson Controls-Hitachi Air Conditioning India Limited. With over 25 years of experience in legal, compliance, and taxation matters, he has served as General Counsel for leading companies across diverse sectors, including consumer durables, pharma, oil and gas, construction, and finance. Roopesh has a strong background in contract management, commercial litigation, statutory compliance, corporate governance, ESG, and risk management. He is a commerce and law graduate and is also qualified as a Company Secretary and Cost & Management Accountant.

Based in Ahmedabad, Roopesh has a proven track record of successful partnerships with businesses, demonstrating expertise in Contract Management, Drafting, Review & Negotiation, Commercial Litigation, Statutory Compliance, Corporate Secretarial, Corporate Governance, ESG, Risk Management, and Joint Venture relationship management.

Saikat Sarkar

Global General Counsel, Eicher Motors Ltd.

Saikat Sarkar is the Global General Counsel at Eicher Motors Limited, overseeing the legal function for a company with over USD 1.25 billion in net revenue. With over 25 years of experience, he has held significant roles across diverse geographies and sectors.

He has worked with Hindustan Unilever Limited and Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages Private Limited (HCCB), where he managed legal functions across major Indian cities. He was also General Counsel for Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, and Myanmar, based in Kuala Lumpur, before relocating to Bangalore.

His expertise includes Corporate and Business Operations, Contract and Commercial Laws, Anti-Trust/Competition Law, Litigation, Intellectual Property Rights, Corporate Governance, FCPA, Ethics and Compliance, and more. He is known for his strong leadership, team collaboration, and effective stakeholder management.









Sameer Chugh General Counsel & Chief Legal Officer, Play Games 24X7 Pvt Ltd.

Sameer Chugh is the Chief Legal Officer at Games24x7. With over 26 years of experience, he leads the company's legal, compliance, and secretarial functions. He holds a degree in Law from Symbiosis Law College, Pune. He has also completed the Masters in Marketing Management from SIMS, Pune followed by MSc in Telecom Business from UCL, London, UK. Sameer has worked with leading Indian Law Firms including Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas & Kochhar & Co. He has worked as the India General Counsel with companies such as NCR Corporation, BT Group, Essar Group and Cummins. He was the Director – Legal & Regulatory for Bharti Airtel before taking over as the Group General Counsel of Bharti Group.

Sameet Gambhir

Sr. Vice President & Group Head- Legal, UFLEX Limited

Sameet Gambhir is the Sr. Vice President & Group Head - Legal at UFLEX Limited. A Senior Corporate Legal & Risk Management professional and Company Secretary, he has around 30 years of industry experience. He was previously the Vice President (Corporate Law) & Company Secretary at DCM Shriram Ltd. His expertise includes Regulatory & Corporate legal matters, Corporate Governance & Compliances, Corporate restructuring, M&A, RBI & FEMA matters, SEBI Regulations, Risk management, IPR matters, brand protection, data privacy issues, due-diligence, and investigations ESG, Industrial & labour Laws, Contracts & Agreements, litigations. He also carries vast experience in Corporate Secretarial matters including handling Board meetings, Committee meetings and shareholders meetings. He is the Co-Chairman of the Corporate Affairs committee of PHDCCI and also a member of National Committee on Regulatory Affairs of CII. He is also a member of Board of Study of GD Goenka Law School.



Sameer Karekatte

Chief Legal and Compliance Officer, Zuno General Insurance Ltd.

Sameer Karekatte is the Chief Legal and Compliance Officer at Zuno General Insurance Ltd., with extensive experience with varied business environment in multiple Industries, Leading Corporate Legal Function for over a decade, Core functional experience include Public Affairs, Extensive Litigation, Legislative Advocacy, Regulatory Structures, Corporate Re-structuring, Project Negotiations, Competition Law & Anti-trust framework, Arbitration, Industrial & Employment Laws, Reality & Estate Transactions, IPR Policy and Litigation.

Sameer's expertise extends to conflict management, commercial corporate contracts, and devising effective legal strategies. He is proficient in intellectual property protection, civil, criminal, and constitutional laws, as well as banking, insurance, and other regulatory compliances. He has a strong track record in structuring and managing legal organisations and business interfaces, making him a valuable asset in navigating complex legal landscapes.

Sandiip Chaudaury

Group General Counsel, Suzlon

Sandiip Chaudaury is the Group General Counsel at Suzlon Energy Ltd, one of India's largest renewable energy companies with a significant international presence. In this role, he oversees legal, regulatory, and compliance matters, managing a diverse team of lawyers across various verticals. Sandeep provides crucial advice and guidance to senior management and board members, focussing on mergers and acquisitions, contract negotiation, and safeguarding the company's interests in strategic disputes.

His expertise extends to handling large-scale litigations and arbitrations, complex transactions, and legal budgets. He is dedicated to enhancing the capabilities of the in-house legal team and has extensive experience with US FCPA regulations, having conducted numerous training sessions and investigations. Additionally, he has managed significant international litigations and environmental, health, and safety (EHS) matters.

With a career beginning at a prominent law firm, Sandiip has held various legal roles in major corporations such as Walmart, Coca Cola, Baxter, UPL, and Lafarge Cement. His strategic legal leadership at Suzlon involves strengthening internal governance policies, stakeholder engagement, and ensuring comprehensive legal compliance across the Suzlon Group.









Sanjeev Sachdeva General Counsel, Elan Group

Sanjeev Sachdeva is the General Counsel at Elan Group, a prominent real estate group with presence in commercial, retail and high end residential developments. Elan Group is a majestic group and has a philosophy of delivering what is promised. The allure of Elan's elitism and refinement has earned the Group many patrons. The partners and patrons are an integral part of its success story.

Prior to his engagement with Elan Group, he was working as a Senior Partner with the law firm MINE & YOUNG - Advocates & Legal Consultants, New Delhi focussing on real estate, corporate laws and infrastructure. Earlier, Sanjeev Sachdeva has held the position of GC and Head Legal of Emaar India.

He has more than three decades of experience in spearheading legal services to companies and firms in the real estate and infrastructure development sector.



Sanjit Kaur Batra
Group Vice President Legal & Legal Head - India,
Cummins India

Sanjit Kaur Batra is the Group Vice President Legal and Legal Head at Cummins India, where she oversees the company's legal, secretarial, and compliance functions. With a diverse career spanning the corporate and social sectors, Sanjit brings extensive experience from roles at DuPont, where she served as APAC Counsel and Legal Head for South Asia, and the U.S. Government's USPTO's international IP policy office in South Asia. Her background includes work in private practice and as a litigator, focussing on cross-border M&A, divestitures, restructuring transactions, corporate governance, anti-trust, and intellectual property. Sanjit also contributes to policy advocacy through various industry association committees in India.

Sanjukta Kulkarni

EVP & Global General Counsel, LTIMindtree

Sanjukta Kulkarni is the Executive Vice President and Global General Counsel at LTIMindtree Ltd. She is also a member of the Management Council and Risk Operating Committee at LTI. She has diverse experience in leading deal negotiations of several fifty plus million US dollar commercial contracts across US, Europe, Australia and Middle East while heading as deputy of Legal function at Hewlett Packard Enterprise, TCS eServe, Capgemini India and Tech Mahindra. She has well over 25 years' experience of managing legal activities at large MNCs while holding leadership positions. She is a double Master's degree holder from Stockholm University in Sweden and Aberdeen University in UK. Over the course of her career, she has advised management on several matters related to compliance, employment law, government investigations including interactions with US Department of Justice and Indian law enforcement officials such as CBI, litigation including managing US class action suits, advised on whistle-blower investigations, formation of JVs. mergers and integration activities. Data Privacy breach management and general policy matters including on rebadging employees in Europe, India and Middle East. She has keen interest in mentoring teams and has also been a speaker at several legal industry forums.



Santosh Parab

General Counsel, L&T Finance Limited

Santosh Parab is the General Counsel at L&T Finance Limited, with over 28 years of experience with expertise in varied domains – retail, wholesale, and banking finance, borrowings & treasury, mergers & acquisitions of entities in the financial sector, equity raising, private equity, litigation, recovery, and resolution.

Prior to joining L&T Finance, he worked with IDBI, IDFC, IDFC Bank, and Altico Capital in different roles across the legal function. He has played a pivotal role in all major milestones achieved during his tenure with previous organisations, including obtaining banking licenses, managing acquisitions and divestments of various financial entities, overseeing mergers of banks with NBFCs, and working on resolution plans, among others.









Saugata Chakravarty

Chief Legal Officer, Grasim Industries Ltd.

Saugata Chakravarty is the Chief Legal Officer at Grasim Industries Limited (Aditya Birla Group). With nearly 22 years of experience in corporate transactional law, he brings deep expertise in legal, corporate affairs, governance, and risk and compliance.

In his role at Grasim, Saugata oversees the legal management of diverse business units, including Pulp, Fibre, Textile, Chemicals, Epoxy, Insulator, B2B E-commerce Building Solutions, and Renewable Energy, both in India and internationally. His responsibilities include advising on strategic market approaches, navigating legal and regulatory issues, and analysing the impact of legislative changes. As a permanent invitee to the Board and Management Committee meetings, he plays a crucial role in providing strategic insights and advocacy on evolving legal frameworks.

Saugata leads a team of approximately 38 legal professionals, dedicated to managing legal and contractual risks and building a high-performance team. His expertise encompasses business partnership, executive management, policy advocacy, strategic legal advisory, and the negotiation and management of complex agreements, including project concessions, mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, and shareholder agreements.



General Counsel & Head (Legal, Compliance & Ethics), JLL India & South Asia

Sheel Sinha currently serves as General Counsel for India & South Asia at Jones Lang LaSalle(JLL), a multinational real estate services company and manages legal, compliance, and ethics verticals. He holds a Bachelor of Economics (Hons) and Bachelor of Laws from Campus Law Centre, Delhi University (2002). Sheel is an enterprising leader & planner with a strong track record of 21 years in streamlining legal operations, invigorating businesses, heightening productivity, and improving systems & procedures in senior-level legal assignments in contentious, transactional, and regulatory compliance domains. Prior to joining JLL, he held positions as Director and Associate General Counsel at PwC India, where he managed legal issues for the firm across all service lines and Associate Vice President at SBI Card (then GE-SBIJV) where he had a diversified role in managing legal affairs of two distinct entities apart from being a participant in larger Generic Electric India legal leadership.



Shagoofa Rashid Khan

Independent Consultant, National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF)

Shagoofa Rashid Khan is an Independent Consultant at the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF). She brings over 26 years of experience across private equity, acquisitions, strategic initiatives, corporate and commercial laws, compliance and ethics advisory, audit, and finance. She began her legal career at Nishith Desai Associates, where she eventually headed the real estate funds practice. She has held significant roles, leading legal-compliance functions at Kotak Investment Advisors Limited, IDFC Alternatives, and Tata Sons' Group Legal Team. She also headed the Investment Funds practice at Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas. Most recently, she served as Group General Counsel and Head of Corporate Affairs at National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Limited (NIIFL). Currently, she is an Independent Consultant to NIIFL.

She has been a member of various working groups and committees constituted by SEBI and IFSCA. She was also a member of IVCA's Executive Committee (2022-24) and is a member of the Regional Advocacy Committee, APREA. Shagoofa was named General Counsel of the Year at the 5th Annual Legal Era Women in Law Excellence Awards (2023).

Shelly Kohli

Chief Legal & Compliance Officer, United Breweries

Shelly Kohli is Chief Legal & Compliance Officer at United Breweries Ltd. she is a corporate lawyer with over 20 years of experience, having worked both in private practice and in-house lawyer in senior management roles with large global corporations like General Electric, Unilever. She is a dual qualified lawyer enrolled to practice in India and the State of New York, USA. In her current role, she leads the legal and compliance function of United Breweries Limited and is a part of the Management Team. UBL is listed on the National Stock Exchange and Bombay Stock Exchange and is a part of Heineken Group. In this role, she is responsible for all legal and compliance matters, including corporate, litigation and intellectual property across geographies. She is a strategic legal adviser to the Board and Senior Management of the company.









Shujath Bin AliGlobal General Counsel & Chief Compliance
Officer, Re Sustainability Limited

Shuiath Bin Ali is the Global General Counsel & Chief Compliance Officer at Re Sustainability Limited. A graduate in Commerce and Law, he has done Masters in Law in Alternate Dispute Resolution & International Commercial Arbitration. A Fellow Member of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India, he has attended executive education programmes on strategy, general management and leadership from Harvard University, Massachusetts, Indian School of Business, Hyderabad, and National Law School, Bengaluru. He was also a member of Toastmasters International and led various initiatives in the development of leadership and communication skills for professionals and students. Shujath served as Senior Director-Legal, Risk Management & Company Secretary and Compliance Officer at Parexel International-India, providing strategic corporate legal advice and operational legal support for India operations. Prior to that, he was a Senior Legal Counsel & Corporate Secretary for International Paper-India. He worked as Associate Vice President-Legal & Corporate Secretary for Deloitte US-India offices and has overall 21 years of experience in the areas of governance, compliance, risk management and corporate, commercial and employment laws. He is credited for working in diverse industries like pharma, information technology, professional services and manufacturing.



Smitha Chandrashekaraiah Director-Legal, HARMAN International

Smitha Chandrashekaraiah is the Director-Legal at Harman International and has worked across various sectors including but not limited to logistics, IT, healthcare, asset finance and audio/visuals in the Asia Pacific Region. She is a trusted advisor to the top management covering a broad spectrum of legal and compliance practice - strategic advisory, Board Management, risk and compliance management, structuring and negotiating complex commercial transactions, M&A, litigation, external counsel management and talent development. Core strength/focus in the areas of Privacy, Employment, General Corporate/Commercial, Contract Negotiations, M&A, and Corporate Governance.

Somya Agarwal

VP-Legal, Secretarial & Compliance, Fractal Analytics Private Limited

Somya Agarwal is the Vice President - Legal, Secretarial, and Compliance at Fractal Analytics, where she utilises over 20 years of experience as a lawyer and company secretary to provide strategic legal counsel and compliance solutions. At Fractal Analytics, a leading global provider of artificial intelligence and analytics solutions, she aligns legal and business objectives to drive optimal outcomes for the organisation and its stakeholders.

Somya's expertise encompasses transaction documentation, contracts, litigation, joint ventures, acquisitions, and board/shareholder matters. She has successfully managed numerous funding rounds, contributing to the company's journey to becoming a unicorn and overseeing the acquisition of various international brands. Her role also involves pioneering legal restructuring initiatives to streamline corporate actions, optimising efficiency through legal process automation, and enhancing global compliance solutions for cross-border entities. She has previously served as Head Legal and Company Secretary at Ginger Hotels and Publicis Groupe, and as Assistant Vice President-Legal and Company Secretary at NourishCo Beverages Limited.



Sonal Basu

General Counsel, Lloyds Technology Centre India

Sonal Basu is the General Counsel at Lloyds Technology Centre India. Previously, she was the head of Mindtree's legal, regulatory, and integrity functions. She has nearly twenty years of experience in the field of information technology. In her current role, she provides strategic counsel to the Board and management, across global markets and is also a champion of diversity and inclusion initiatives. Sonal regularly speaks at various reputed forums and educational institutions including IIM Bangalore and has been a faculty member for a seminar course on 'Cloud Computing' at the National Law School, Bangalore. Sonal has also co-authored a write-up on 'Bitcoins' and 'Data Science to Drive Good Governance' which were published in international journals. Sonal, an active volunteer with an NGO that emphasises the importance of children's education, holds a BLS, LLB degree from Government Law College, Mumbai and a post-graduate diploma in Intellectual Property Rights Laws from the National Law School of India University. She has a Master of Laws degree in Corporate and Commercial Law from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). She has also completed her executive leadership program from Cornell University, USA. With several articles authored by her on IT and outsourcing to the credit.









Sormistha Ghosh

Group General Counsel & Chief Risk Officer (Senior VP -Legal & Secretarial), Strides Pharma Science Limited

Sormistha Ghosh is the Group General Counsel and Chief Risk Officer (Senior VP - Legal & Secretarial) at Strides Pharma. A competent lawyer from India, she served as a consulting lawyer for almost a decade before taking up in-house roles with global MNCs. Sormistha has been associated with Strides Pharma Science Limited for over five years now. In her current role at the group level globally, Sormistha looks after the functions of legal, secretarial, compliance and enterprise risk management. It enables her to exercise equal efforts for strategy, operations, collaboration, risk management and creating a legal centre of excellence. It brings in value to the Group operations as board member of the US entity (a material subsidiary outside India), where board members consist of independent director also. Acting as the Chief Risk Officer, Sormistha is responsible for the Risk Management Committee and the Board of Directors for reporting pro-actively all risks identified for the corporation globally.



Suchita Saigal is the General Counsel at Cleantech Solar, she joined the Company, a leading provider of renewable energy to corporations in Southeast Asia and India, in February 2021 as the Assistant General Counsel to head their India legal team. In December 2021, she was promoted to Acting General Counsel (India and SEA) and in March 2022 she was confirmed as the General Counsel (India and SEA). Suchita has 12+ years' experience in top tier law firms across jurisdictions and leading power companies. She advises on transaction structuring, acquisitions, project development, project financing, litigations and disputes, and other operational matters. Suchita started her career as a trainee lawyer at Clifford Chance, London, and thereafter, joined its Energy and Infrastructure practice as an associate, advising on key crossjurisdiction financings and acquisitions, including the acquisition of the biggest residential solar rooftop portfolio. Subsequently, on relocating to India, Suchita worked with the Projects practice in JSA and Trilegal. In 2016, she moved in-house to join the CLP India (now Apraava Energy) legal team.





Srivals KumarExternal GC and Corporate Legal, Consultant

Srivals Kumar is an Advocate & Corporate Legal Consultant with over 25 years of extensive experience in the legal field. He has held key inhouse counsel roles at notable companies such as Bharti Airtel, Tata Teleservices, Star TV, Mumbai International Airport, Flipkart.com, Rustomjee, and Sunteck Realty Limited. Currently, Kumar provides expert legal advisory services as an External Legal Consultant, offering strategic guidance across a wide range of legal matters. During his distinguished corporate experience, he has adeptly handled issues ranging from Contracts, Statutory Compliances, and Litigation to Business Advisory for operations and business teams. He has provided legal and regulatory insights on day-to-day issues, demonstrating his ability to navigate complex legal landscapes. His work spans highly regulated sectors such as Telecom, Media, Airports, and Real Estate, where he has tackled numerous challenging issues with expertise. His contributions to the legal field have been widely recognised. He was named one of the "Distinguished Legal Minds of India 2022-23" by Legal Era and received the "Policy & Regulatory Lawyer of the Year" award in 2020 for his outstanding achievements. In addition to his consultancy work, Kumar is a regular speaker at industry forums and legal seminars and serves as a guest faculty member at leading law schools and universities across India.

Sudipta Ghosh Head of Legal, Real Assets - EAAA Alternative

Sudipta Ghosh is the Head of Legal, Real Assets at EAAA Alternative (formerly Edelweiss Alternatives Asset Advisors). In this role, she is responsible for establishing and leading the legal department to support platforms investing in critical infrastructure, such as roads, real estate, InvITs, and a pioneering climate fund. She plays a key role in advising on complex legal matters related to large-scale investments and developments in the real assets sector.

Prior to this, she was General Counsel at Apraava Energy Private Limited, one of India's largest foreign-owned power companies. During her tenure, she was actively involved in advising the company on a wide range of legal matters related to conventional and renewable energy projects, with a particular focus on wind and solar energy projects in India. Her expertise spans project document drafting, negotiating offtake agreements, and executing both conventional and non-conventional power projects.

Her extensive career also includes significant roles at two prestigious law firms in India – Trilegal and Amarchand Mangaldas. She has handled a broad range of domestic and international financing for infrastructure projects, including power projects and airports. She has varied experience and keen interest in project financing.









Sumeet Singh

General Counsel & Head - Corporate Strategy, BharatPe

Sumeet Singh is the General Counsel & Head - Corporate Strategy, BharatPe. He is a seasoned legal professional with 10+ years of experience across leading law firms including AZB & Partners, DSK Legal, and Amarchand Mangaldas. Sumeet brings a deep understanding of legal, compliance, regulatory, and structuring aspects of multiple sectors including non-banking financial, retail, e-commerce, FMCG, digital media, and technology. Sumeet who is expected to join BharatPe soon is currently a Partner at Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas, New Delhi, having joined the erstwhile Amarchand Mangaldas Suresh A. Shroff in 2013 from AZB. Sumeet has actively represented some of India's biggest e-commerce, retail entities, financial companies, and start-ups. Recently, he was part of the core team advising Reliance Retail Ventures Limited, in its acquisition of the entire retail & wholesale and logistics & warehousing business of Kishore Biyani's Future Group.



President & General Counsel, AGP City Gas Pvt Ltd.

Susheel Jad is the President & General Counsel for AGP City Gas Pvt Ltd, bringing over 30 years of legal expertise across various fields. He has managed litigation in multiple courts, tribunals, forums, regulators, and statutory and administrative authorities. His extensive experience spans consumer law, labour law, arbitration, mergers and acquisitions, taxation, insolvency, land acquisition, regulatory work, and due diligence. Notably, Susheel has handled high-stakes international arbitration matters under the ICC.

Before joining AG&P, Susheel held significant senior roles. He served as the Legal Head at Indraprastha Gas Limited for 15 years and at National Fertilizers Limited's Vijaypur Unit for another 15 years. In these roles, he successfully navigated various regulatory challenges, including playing a crucial role in setting aside the network tariff regulations of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB).



Sunei Kapur General Counsel, O2 Power

sectors.

Sunei Kapur is the General Counsel at O2 Power, a role he has held since 2020. With over 12 years of experience in the legal field, he has developed a notable focus on the infrastructure and renewable energy sectors. Prior to joining O2 Power, he was with ReNew Power as DGM - Legal, and began his career at HSA Advocates as a Senior Associate. Sunei holds a B.SL LLB degree from I.L.S. Law College. His career is distinguished by significant contributions to legal strategy and support within the renewable energy space, demonstrating strong expertise in managing complex legal matters in both infrastructure and energy

Tulika Jesrani

General Counsel, Kimberly-Clark (India)

Tulika Jesrani is the General Counsel at Kimberly-Clark (India). She brings over 17 years of experience in the FMCG, Pharma, and CPG sectors. Prior to joining Kimberly-Clark in 2020, Jesrani served as Associate General Counsel for L'Oréal, India and Bangladesh. At Piramal Healthcare Limited, she played a key role in structuring and negotiating transactions. She began her legal career at DSK Legal Associates and Crawford Bayley & Co, handling litigation in real estate, banking, and commercial disputes. Jesrani holds certifications in Competition Law and IPR and was awarded the "Women in Law Excellence" at the Annual Legal Era Awards in 2021.











Vandana Seth Vice President - Legal, Tata 1mg

Vandana Seth is the Vice President, Legal at Tata 1mg. With more than 11 years of experience, Vandana's profile is a combination of a law firm role, an in-house role and a consulting firm. A lawyer as well as a CS, Vandana is an excellent team worker who joined Themis Associates (a boutique law firm based out of Bangalore) in 2011. Her role at Themis was to lead a team for handling the pre- and post-actions related to funding transactions. Working for more than 50+ successful VC and PE transactions over a span of 3 years, in the same profile, Vandana worked on a lot of automation projects like compliance management, Term sheet automation, Nominee director training and related compliance automation and so on. A go-getter personality who believes in converting impossibilities to possibilities, Vandana presently heads the legal, secretarial and compliance verticals of TATA 1MG Group. Her job focusses on managing the entire legal, regulatory, compliance, secretarial, fundraising, IPR and certain operational aspects. Vandana, who was awarded as 'Women in Law Excellence Awards,' 2021, instituted by Legal Era for Recognising Leadership, Innovation, and Achievements of Women Lawyers, completed her course in Company Secretary in 2010. Vandana has been awarded with 40 under 40 Rising Star Awards 2021 by Legal Era.



Vinayak Mishra General Counsel, Lightspeed India Partners Advisors

Vinayak Mishra, General Counsel at Lightspeed India Partners Advisors, graduated from Hidayatullah National Law University. He began his career as a corporate lawyer specialising in M&A, PIPE, and PE transactions. His interest in early-stage investing led him to represent prominent venture capital investors. Driven by a passion to contribute to India's startup ecosystem, he transitioned from a major law firm to establish his own practice and later set up a law firm with like-minded entrepreneurs to support VCs and VC-backed companies.

Vineet Vij

Group General Counsel, Tech Mahindra Ltd.

Vineet Vij is serving as the Group General Counsel of Tech Mahindra. Leading a team of 100 passionate and business-focussed lawyers spread across the globe with presence in India, US, Mexico, UK, Netherlands, Israel, and so on, Vineet and team is responsible for taking care of the legal and regulatory aspects to support the organisation's growth in due compliance with applicable laws that involves supporting multibillion cross-border commercial transactions, mergers and acquisitions, disputes and litigations, global compliances, legal policy and regulatory. IPR, strategic legal support with the overall responsibility to safeguard the legal & business interests of the company and its principal officers. As part of the overall department structure, the legal teams of group companies worldwide, namely, Comviva Technologies, Born Group, Target Group, Tech Mahindra Business Services, LCC also work under Vineet's supervision and guidance. Vineet has worked for over 27 years at established IT, ITeS, Engineering, Banking & NBFC corporations. As an independent practitioner, he has also worked across variety of practice areas including Commercial and Contract law, Litigation and Dispute resolution, Cross-border M&As, Global regulatory compliances, Financial and Banking laws, Real estate SEZ and STPI regulations, Company law, IT, Data protection, Privacy, Cyber and IPR laws, Criminal law, Telecom, Arbitration, Employment, Bankruptcy, Competition and Indirect tax laws.



Vivek Tyagi

General Counsel, Adidas India Marketing Pvt. Ltd.

Vivek Tyagi is the General Counsel at Adidas India Marketing Private Limited. With over 22 years of experience in litigation, compliance, and strategic legal management, he has a proven track record of successfully overseeing legal operations for major organisations such as Samsung India Electronics Limited, DIAL – GMR Group, and Indiabulls Group. In his role at Adidas India, he is responsible for ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory standards while driving strategic legal initiatives to support business goals. Vivek is skilled in developing and implementing legal strategies, managing litigation, and mitigating risks. His expertise spans across litigation management, compliance and regulatory affairs, risk management, and team leadership, all of which contribute to the company's robust legal framework.

His leadership, strategic thinking, and exceptional communication and negotiation skills have made him a key figure in managing complex legal matters. His approach focuses on fostering collaboration, navigating regulatory challenges, and providing innovative legal solutions that align with Adidas India's business objectives.







Yogesh Wadhwa

General Counsel, Hyundai Motor India Ltd.

Yogesh Wadhwa is the General Counsel at Hyundai Motor India Ltd. With an experience of 20 years in legal profession and a mix of in-house and law firm roles. He has established various businesses, negotiated and closed M&A transactions, collaborated with diverse stakeholders, and managed complex litigations. His expertise also covers Government Relations and Public Policy, having supported these functions at General Motors.

His career spans work in India, South Asia, and the Middle East, with significant experience in the Manufacturing and Oil & Gas sectors. He has worked with prominent MNCs such as General Motors, Renault, and Nissan, as well as Halliburton and Cairn Energy.



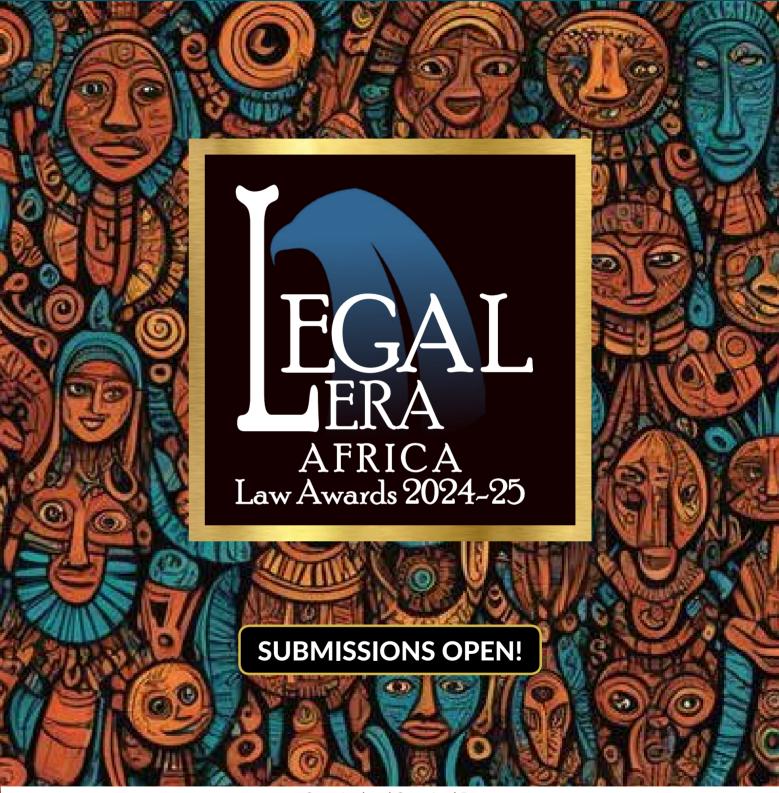
Zameer Nathani

Group General Counsel, CarDekho Group

Zameer Nathani is the Group General Counsel at CarDekho Group. He is an LLB, LLM (Civil, Corporate, Criminal, Customs, International Laws), PLD (Harvard Business School), Executive MBA (NMIMS), and has certifications in IPR. Electronic Commerce and ADR from WIPO. United Nations, M&A (Harvard Business School), Private Equity (London Business School) and US IP Laws (Stanford University). Zameer started his practice in 2002 and was a law firm attorney for reputed corporate like Eureka Forbes, LG Electronics, TCL India, Motul Oils, Ginger Hotels, Kale Consultants Software UK, Johnson & Johnson, Johnson Diversey and other multinationals from the US, UK and Asia Pacific. He joined the corporate world, becoming the Associate Vice President of Reliance Entertainment - Digital Businesses to head the legal affairs globally for all the digital businesses (gaming, e-commerce and OTT platform). Thereafter, he became Head-Legal for Balaji Telefilms (Public Listed), a renowned production house for TV serials, movies & OTT, reporting to Founder and MD Mrs. Shobha Kapoor, followed by becoming Director - Legal for the iconic clothing brand Raymond (Public Listed) to head the legal team for retail, manufacturing, FMCG, real estate, engineering, aviation etc. under the brand Raymond, Park Avenue etc.

2ND ANNUAL LEGAL ERA AFRICA LAW AWARDS 2024-25

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Legal Era Celebrates Women Leadership, Innovation & Achievements of Women Lawyers at the "6th Annual Women in Law Excellence Awards 2024"

egal Era Celebrates Women's Leadership, Innovation & Achievements of Women Lawyers at the "6th Annual Women in Law Excellence Awards 2024".

Legal Era hosted its mega flagship 13th Annual India Conclave & Awards 2024, an unprecedented gathering of legal expertise at The Lalit, Mumbai. The Conclave saw more than 500 professionals participate from 5+ countries and from across cities in India. Stalwarts and seasoned professionals participated and deliberated in the 40+ thought-provoking sessions and discussions at the India Conclave 2024, uniting legal luminaries, advocates, and scholars on a global stage.

On day 2 of this Conclave, 23rd August 2024, Legal Era proudly hosted the 6th Annual Women in Law Excellence Awards recognising Women's Leadership, Innovation & Achievements of Women Lawyers.

Conceptualised and organised by the Legal Era Women Lawyers Network (LWLN) & the Legal Era - Legal Media Group, the awards celebrated the commitment, expertise, and strong leadership of leading women lawyers who have made great strides in an increasingly challenging global market.

Segment by segment, the awardees got onto the stage to receive their tokens of recognition amid thunderous applause from the audience.

The Awards were presented to winners by Ms. Neera Sharma, Chief Executive Officer & Chief Legal Officer, Sistema Smart Technologies Limited and Ms. Kala Anandarajah, Partner, Head, Competition & Antitrust and Trade, Rajah & Tann Asia.

Lawyers have always been leaders in changing times owing to their philosophy and intellect. And Legal Era's hat-tip to leading women lawyers was much appreciated.

The winners mingled with the guests over cocktails and dinner, exchanging ideas, experiences and pleasantries. Many leveraged the occasion to renew old ties and also build new ones.

As we raise a toast to this joie de vivre that it stays with all of us (and grows) till the next edition of these Awards, here's listing the bright sparks who walked away with the honours at this edition:

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Amrita Sinha Head, Corporate Legal-Group Companies Tata Steel Limited

Amrita Sinha is the Head, Corporate Legal-Group Companies at Tata Steel. She brings 17 years of in-house experience and has played a pivotal role in navigating complex M&A transactions across India and multiple geographies including Canada, Singapore, Japan, Africa, within the metals and mining sector. She was instrumental in handling the recent restructuring of the Tata Steel and its group companies, as well as, the acquisition of Bhushan Steel through the IBC route. In addition to M&A and restructuring, Amrita has extensive experience in corporate, securities, and commercial law. She also serves on a POSH committee of the company. Amrita holds a graduate degree in Economics from Fergusson College, Pune, and is a university rank holder in law from ILS Law College, Pune.



Head Legal - Group Function & Wholesale, L&T Finance Limited

Aparna Rawat is the Head Legal - Group Function & Wholesale at L&T Finance Limited. She is a multi-faceted legal professional with almost two decades of experience across the banking and financial services industry. She is a tech legal enthusiast and has transformed to a holistic in-house counsel from a corporate litigation and transactional lawyer. She manages the wholesale business, group functions and corporate functions, along with corporate stressed asset resolution, treasury management and reduction of the wholesale book. By leveraging her experience in real estate, private equity and stressed situations group, she has made the legal function more central to the company's business operations. She believes law is organic in nature and its evolution is based on the needs and interests of the society. Thus, it is extremely critical for an in-house and practicing lawyer to keep pace with the same.





Antara Roy
Assistant General Counsel, ITC Limited

Antara Roy is the Assistant General Counsel at ITC Limited and a seasoned in-house counsel with over eleven years of experience in regulatory and commercial advisory roles. Presently dealing primarily with the FMCG sector, including advising on business operations of the company, handling various litigations (including strategising approaches for the Company, briefing Senior Counsels and drafting/reviewing documentation connected thereto) and regulatory issues, drafting and reviewing commercial contracts, as well as compliance reviews; and certain aspects of corporate sustainability-related engagements. Professional Journey Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas, Mumbai (erstwhile Amarchand Mangaldas & Suresh A. Shroff & Co.) from August, 2012 to January, 2016. ITC Limited, from March 2016 onwards.

Miscellaneous Authored/co-authored several published articles on various issues such as consumer protection, commercial speech, res extra commercium, online gaming, and the Forest Rights Act, 2006.

Ashu Thakur

Founder & CEO, Ashu Thakur & Associates

Ashu Thakur is the Founder and CEO of Ashu Thakur & Associates.

With qualifications as a solicitor in both India and the UK, she brings a wealth of expertise and a global perspective to her practice. Her illustrious career is marked by several prestigious accolades, including the British Chevening Scholarship (2000) and the French Lions International Scholarship (1991), reflecting her commitment to excellence and international collaboration.

Ashu is highly regarded for her leadership and vision, particularly in establishing and heading the firm's specialised French Desk. This unique offering supports French companies and foreign nationals in navigating the intricacies of the Indian legal landscape.

Ashu's approach to law is defined by intellectual rigour, integrity, and a deep commitment to serving her clients with efficiency and precision. Her leadership has positioned Ashu Thakur & Associates as a trusted name in the legal industry.



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Attreyi Mukherjee

General Counsel/Member Board of Directors, Tata Industries Ltd./Impetis Biosciences Limited

Attreyi Mukherjee is the General Counsel at Tata Industries Ltd. and is qualified to practice law in both India and England & Wales. She is a senior legal professional in a leadership role with rich experience of business partnering as well as complex transactional matters including domestic and cross-border M&As, JVs and Technology Licensing deals.

With a focus on time-bound and successful outcomes, she has advised businesses in diverse sectors including Aviation, Aerospace Manufacturing, E-commerce, EdTech, Digital Health, Fintech, Lifesciences, Management Services and Consumer Products.

After several years of practice at reputed law firms, Attreyi joined Tata Group Legal Team (her first foray in-house) and reported to the Tata Group General Counsel. In her current role as General Counsel of Tata Industries (which is an NBFC-CIC), Attreyi briefs Boards, manages team, oversees legal functions of the portfolio businesses, hires and manages external legal resources and supports business incubation. She also supports the compliance and enterprise risk management functions. She is also a member of the POSH Committee.



Ekta Tyagi is a Partner in the Dispute Resolution Team of DSK Legal. She specialises in white collar criminal law and advises on all aspects of commercial litigation and arbitration (including pre-litigation and litigation strategy). She also has significant experience in corporate transactional practice (including M&A and PE).

Ekta represents clients on matters investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Enforcement Directorate (ED), Serious Fraud Investigation Organisation (SFIO), Economic Offences Wing (EOW) etc. She appears before High Courts, Sessions Courts, Arbitral Tribunals, NCLT, investigation/enforcement agencies as well as forums established under special statutes (such as the Appellate Tribunal and Adjudicating Authority under PMLA). Ekta also conducts investigations arising out of whistle blower complaints and fraud/FCPA-related allegations.





Debosmita Nandy Head - Legal, Cinépolis India

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Debosmita Nandy is the Head - Legal at Cinépolis India and has over 15 years of experience as a legal professional. Her journey commenced in the dispute resolution team at Khaitan & Co, handling diverse civil, commercial, and IP litigation cases and successfully representing clients before various tribunals and courts.

Transitioning to an in-house role at ITC Limited, she spent the subsequent decade honing skills in contract drafting and negotiation, devising intricate litigation strategies for complex disputes, and advising on legal issues across a spectrum of business functions – Sales, Marketing, Finance, IT, Construction, Operations, and Business Development. Her extensive experience spans multiple industries, including FMCG, Hospitality, and Retail, both in India and Sri Lanka. Currently, she leads the Legal function for Cinépolis India, part of the global multiplex chain Cinépolis, overseeing a team of skilled lawyers and collaborating with a group of driven and expert professionals in their respective fields.

Gunjan Shah

Partner, Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co

Gunjan Shah is a Partner at Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co. and a long-standing member of the firm's Management Board. She is a prominent practitioner in mergers and acquisitions, private equity, debt and equity restructuring, and Indian securities law.

Gunjan has extensive experience representing global and domestic private equity funds and corporates in large, complex, and innovative transactions.

In recognition of her contributions to the legal field, she was named 'Lawyer of the Year' for Corporate & M&A at the Legal Era Awards 2023 and 'Star Woman Lawyer of the Year' at the Legal Era Women in Law Excellence Awards 2022.



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Juhi Chaudhary
General Counsel. Rallis India Limited

Juhi Chaudhary is the General Counsel at Rallis India Limited, where she leads the legal and compliance functions. With extensive experience in the legal services industry, she specialises in negotiation, mergers & acquisitions, corporate governance, joint ventures, and legal writing. Prior to her role at TATA Rallis, she served as Head of Legal - Private Equity at Essel Finance/Navi and as Legal Counsel at Thomson Reuters, contributing to cross-border transactions and regulatory compliance. Juhi's expertise makes her a distinguished leader in the legal field.

Madhu Rewari

Partner, Anand and Anand

Madhu Rewari is a Partner at Anand and Anand, specialising in trademark prosecution. With over 16 years of experience in the intellectual property (IP) field. She has successfully represented leading Indian companies and multinational corporations, including Fortune 500 firms, across India and the Indian subcontinent.

Madhu offers strategic counsel on brand adoption, protection, enforcement, and commercialisation, along with drafting and negotiating various contracts. She is also proficient in assisting clients with the development of essential policies, such as Brand Usage, Internet, and Privacy Policies.

Her expertise extends to conducting due diligence for companies acquiring IP assets and providing advice on related commercial issues. Madhu is well-versed in contentious matters, including IP violations, misleading claims, and advertising disputes, and has successfully represented clients in high-profile cases. Additionally, she has handled several Domain Name Disputes before WIPO and the IN Registry.



Keshika Sengupta

Compliance Head, India, Ingram Micro India Pvt. Ltd.

Keshika Sengupta is the Compliance Head, India at Ingram Micro India Pvt. Ltd. She holds a law and business administration degree from Symbiosis Law School, Pune (June 2009), and a postgraduate degree in Business and Constitutional Law from Pune University (June 2012). Keshika's professional journey of 13+ years has enriched her with diverse and a multi-faceted experience. Beginning her maiden stint with teaching law at her Alma-Mater, provided her by default an opportunity to mentor young aspirants and guide them on their path to meet their aspirations. It stimulated her leadership skills right at the threshold of her career. She moved forward exploring her competencies in litigation to being an in-house legal counsel and further graduating to a compliance & ethics officer.

All through her journey, she has imbibed the role of a contributory team member of essence and relevance; she has successfully endeavoured to be part of the growth teams of organisations she has been part of playing her role as a strong and motivating team member.

Manali Singhal

Vice President, National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Limited

Manali Singhal is the Vice President at the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Limited. She joined the firm in 2019 and is based out of the Mumbai office. She has an experience of over 6 years in private equity and mergers & acquisitions. At NIIFL, she is responsible for overseeing the legal aspects pertaining to fund raising and investments and providing operational and compliance support Prior to NIIFL, Manali was associated with Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas for 5 years. During her stint with the firm, she worked on several critical engagements that involved advising on the merger of 3 nationalised bank (Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank with Bank of Baroda), capital raised by Janalakshmi Financial Services Limited (JFS), investment by a venture capital fund in a startup, various schemes of restructuring for Hindustan Unilever Limited, Indian Hotels Company Limited, demerger of Tata Teleservices' consumer mobility business to Bharti Airtel Limited, represented Hotel Leela Ventures Limited to sell the Leela Goa group of hotels.



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Mehak Gupta Senior Legal Counsel, Infosys Limited

Mehak Gupta is Senior Legal Counsel at Infosys Limited. She is a seasoned professional in the legal field and has participated in and led several 'first-of-their-kind' transactions in the IT services sector. These transactions involved advising on innovative structures to provide IT services, negotiating complex and high-value software development, and licensing agreements, and representing the organisation in private and public tendering processes. As the lead counsel for the Panasonic India Innovation Centre, Gupta provided end-to-end legal advisory and solutions for Panasonic's newly developed technology platforms such as MirAle (Smart Appliance Application), SignEdge Solution, and eCareWiz. She has consistently played a pivotal role in navigating the complexities of the global market, safeguarding interests, and achieving policy and financial goals. Currently, at Infosys, she helps navigate the regulatory landscape, addressing unique needs and challenges intertwined with the rapid evolution of technology.



Associate Partner, Krishna & Saurastri Associates LLP

Namrata Saha Saurastri is an Associate Partner at Krishna & Saurastri Associates LLP. Her expertise includes handling commercial disputes, company disputes, partnership disputes, money recovery disputes, family disputes, succession disputes, real estate, securities disputes, and insolvency and bankruptcy laws. She has appeared in several complex matters before the High Courts, City Civil Courts, District Courts, Small Causes Courts, National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT), Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT), Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), and Maharashtra Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA). Her services include developing a pre-litigation strategy, drafting and settling of notices, pleadings and evidence, and attending hearings in the courts/authorities/appellate authorities/tribunals. She has also handled several domestic and international arbitrations where the governing law is of India. She is familiar with the rules framed by the International Chamber of Commerce, Mumbai International Arbitration Centre, Singapore International Arbitration Centre, and the London International Arbitration Centre.





Mitali Basu

General Counsel (Vice President Legal - Compliance & Corporate Governance), Eureka Forbes

Mitali Basu is a General Counsel (Vice President Legal - Compliance & Corporate Governance), at Eureka Forbes, brings over 22 years of experience in handling a comprehensive spectrum of legal services. She has worked in specialised boutique law firms in Mumbai and Kolkata before serving for the past 6 years as Associate Vice President - Legal, heading the function at a listed electrical goods manufacturing company based out of their corporate head office in Mumbai. Prior to this, Basu was with India's oldest FMCG house for nearly four years as Head -Legal, managing a team of 10 reportees. She is adept in handling various functions related to mergers, demergers, acquisitions, litigation, IPR, contract management, company secretarial duties, manufacturing compliances, and other non-litigation functions, including legal metrology and food laws. Basu has extensive experience in managing IPR matters both nationally and internationally, and has carried out significant actions in brand protection. She is proficient in drafting listing documents, mergers, acquisitions, demergers, caution notices, plaints, complaints, due diligence reports, and more. Known for exceptional analytical and negotiation skills, Basu is an effective communicator with the ability to relate to people at all levels of business and management.

Paulome Mehta

Managing Associate, LexOrbis

Paulome Mehta is the Managing Associate in the Trade Mark and Copyright team at LexOrbis. She holds a degree in Bachelor of Pharmacy (B.Pharm) from University of Mumbai, a degree in Bachelor of Law (LL.B) from University of Mumbai, and Masters of Law (LL.M) in Corporate and Financial Laws from O.P. Jindal Global University. She is registered with the Bar Council of Maharashtra and Goa and is also a registered Indian Patent Agent.

She has 10 years of work experience and has handled both contentious and non-contentious matters in various aspects of IP. She has assisted and appeared in IP matters before various forums such as the Bombay High Court, Indian Patent Office, Trade Mark Registry, and National Green Tribunal. Having worked with a wide variety of national and international clients from various industries such as pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, FMCG, textile, auto, agriculture, she has gained an indepth understanding of the IP industry. She has worked on several aspects of trade marks such as searching, strategy, prosecution, oppositions, renewals as well as trade mark litigation. She also has experience on various aspects of patents such as searching, prosecution, drafting and patent litigation.



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Pavi Jain
Counsel. Khaitan and Co

Pavi Jain is a Counsel at Khaitan & Co in Mumbai, focussing on Mergers & Acquisitions and Private Equity. A pivotal member of the firm's Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practice group, Pavi provides expert advice on ESG matters and manages the firm's relationship with the Indian Venture Capital Association (IVCA), where she also participates in the Climate Council.

Pavi has a distinguished track record in Private Equity, advising The Blackstone Group on key investments, including acquisitions of warehousing businesses and exits like CMS Info Systems Limited and Gokaldas Exports Limited. She has also guided Apax Partners on their exit from a surgical manufacturing company and their acquisition of GlobalLogic, Inc.

In Mergers & Acquisitions, she has worked with Charoen Pokphand Group (Thailand) on their bid for Metro Cash & Carry's India business and Reliance Brands Limited on several strategic acquisitions. Her experience spans sectors such as cybersecurity, asset management, gaming, and ship management.



Radhika Gaggar is a Partner and Co-Head of the Private Client practice at Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas. She advises on general corporate matters with a focus on private acquisitions and both inbound and outbound foreign investments related to India.

In her private client practice, Radhika specialises in estate and succession planning, particularly its cross-border aspects and interactions with Indian exchange control regulations, takeover regulations, and personal laws. She is adept at handling family settlements, drafting family constitutions, and establishing trusts. Her extensive experience includes advising families, promoters of major corporate houses, and professional wealth management and fiduciary service providers on the setup and operation of trusts, both domestically and internationally. Radhika has played a key role in restructuring existing trust structures, establishing private trust companies, and defining the rights and obligations of fiduciaries and beneficiaries. She has also been instrumental in negotiating and implementing high-profile family settlements and advises on the establishment of charitable institutions to support philanthropic endeavours by individuals, families, and corporations.





Priyanka Walesha Head Legal, YUM! Brands

Priyanka Walesha is the Head of Legal at Yum Brands, with over 14 years of professional experience in the legal domain. She leads the Legal Division at Yum Digital and Technology. Before joining Yum, Walesha headed the legal division for GnPS-Technology Consulting (Advisory LoS) at PwC, Pan India. As a seasoned professional, she has extensive experience in establishing and managing legal and compliance functions, including Board management requirements for corporations. She has hands-on experience in end-to-end contract management, including drafting, negotiating, reviewing, and handling post-negotiation issues across various geographies in India.

Walesha spearheads large and complex technology and consultancy agreements and provides advisory services to senior management on business operations and legal compliance. Her role also encompasses handling litigations, policy-making, and providing pre- and post-litigation support, as well as communicating with external counsels on contentious matters. As part of the corporate and business leadership team, she offers strategic inputs to facilitate business growth in a complex regulatory environment, enhances legal processes, and leads policy advocacy efforts. Known for her resourcefulness and acumen, she is adept at assessing and protecting the interests of the organisation through a professional approach, producing results within strict deadlines, and ensuring effective legal documentation and representation.

Ranju Goyal General Counsel, Awfis Space Solutions Limited

Ranju Goyal is the General Counsel at Awfis Space Solutions Limited, bringing over 24 years of experience in leading legal and secretarial functions across various sectors, including power, cement, chemicals, real estate, logistics, supply chain, and co-living/co-working industries.

As a Fellow Member of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India, with a post-graduate diploma in Business Administration and a degree in Law from Campus Law Centre, Delhi University, Ranju has a robust background in corporate governance and legal management. Her expertise includes handling multiple rounds of private equity and debt funding for logistics and co-living startups. She has also spearheaded the IPO and listing of a power company and supported the IPOs of two other power companies throughout her career.



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Saloni Mody Dalal

Partner, DSK Legal

Saloni Mody Dalal is a Partner at DSK Legal, specialising in the firm's real estate practice group, as well as its banking and finance, corporate commercial, and M&A practice groups. Her expertise encompasses equity and financing transactions in real estate and related sectors, including investments in residential and commercial projects, affordable housing, retail, townships, SEZs, and IT parks.

Saloni has provided advisory services to both offshore and domestic funds, as well as Indian companies, on private equity, M&A, disposals, demergers, joint ventures, restructurings, corporate governance, and regulatory compliance, with a particular focus on FDI transactions in real estate, infrastructure, hospitality, and related sectors. Her practice also covers all forms of debt and mezzanine funding.

She plays an active role in formulating, negotiating, and implementing structures for private equity and financing transactions, as well as strategic investments in real estate and allied sectors. Saloni works closely with portfolio companies throughout the investment lifecycle, providing ongoing legal and regulatory guidance.



Managing Partner, Mumbai, Chandhiok & Mahajan

Shafaq Uraizee Sapre is the Managing Partner of the Mumbai office at Chandhiok & Mahajan, with over 23 years of expertise in mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, fund investments, commercial law, cross-border transactions, and corporate advisory. She has advised both Indian and international clients on joint ventures, technology collaborations, investment strategies, and regulatory compliance. She has led numerous M&A transactions and provides end-to-end solutions for structuring and restructuring investments across various sectors.





Satya Rishishwar

Head-Legal and Compliance, "Ring/Kissht" OnEMI Technology Solutions Private Limited

Satya Rishishwar is the Head of Legal and Compliance at Ring/Kissht, ONEMI Technology Solutions Private Limited. With a decade of legal experience, including seven years leading legal departments in the NBFC and fintech sectors, Satya combines practical expertise with a strong academic background.

She is adept at providing balanced legal support to business teams, focussing on contract management, litigation, and non-litigation matters at the group level. Satya's approach integrates strategic thinking with comprehensive legal oversight, ensuring robust management of legal and compliance functions.

Shraddha S. Chauhan

Partner, Anand and Anand

Shraddha S. Chauhan is a Partner at Anand and Anand with 13 years of distinguished experience in Intellectual Property law. Her expertise spans all areas of Patent Law, from prosecution to strategic litigation counseling. She has a strong track record in representing clients in Invalidity and Infringement Proceedings before the Indian Patent Office, the Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB), and various High Courts.

Shraddha manages patent portfolios for several multi-billion dollar companies and adeptly handles complex technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, Consumer Appliances and Electronics, Data Storage & Software Solutions, Hybrid Engines, Internet-of-Things (IoT), Medical Devices, Renewable Energy, Semiconductor Assemblies, and Telecommunications (covering 3G, 4G, LTE/LTE-A, 5G, and more).

In addition to her regular practice, Shraddha specialises in conducting Essentiality Evaluations of Patents in line with Technical Standards for telecommunications bodies such as ETSI and 3GPP. She is also skilled in strategic patent planning, advising on pre/post-grant proceedings, licensing, and pre-enforcement strategies.



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Smreeti Prakash

Assistant General Manager - Legal, Pernod Ricard India

Smreeti Prakash is the Assistant General Manager – Legal at Pernod Ricard India, where she focusses on strategy and new business ventures in the alco-bev sector. With 14 years of diverse legal experience, Smreeti has worked both as an in-house attorney and with a reputed law firm and Big 5 consultants. Her expertise spans sectors including energy & infrastructure, hospitality, and media & entertainment.

Previously, Smreeti was with Senvion, a German MNC in the wind energy sector, where she managed corporate and transactional matters. She played a pivotal role in negotiating and advising on infrastructure projects, including M&A, deal structuring, and various agreements such as EPC, O&M, technology transfer, and power purchase agreements.



Partner, Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas & Co

Subhalakshmi Naskar is a Partner and Co-Head of the Projects & Infrastructure practice at Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas. With extensive experience in the infrastructure sector, she has represented a range of clients including strategic developers, investors, and funding institutions, both domestic and international.

Subhalakshmi specialises in advising on infrastructure projects, project financing, refinancing, structured financing, and cross-border transactions. Her work spans the roads, ports, and renewable energy sectors, where she provides expertise on power projects, roads, and airports. She represents developers, sponsors, lenders, and contractors in infrastructure and project finance transactions.

Her clientele includes major infrastructure players, leading Indian banks, and international investors such as Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, CDPQ, International Finance Corporation, Goldman Sachs, and the Adani Group.





Sowmya Saikumar

Partner, Gaurishanker Saikumar & Co.

Sowmya Saikumar is a Partner at Gaurishanker Saikumar & Co., practising as an Advocate since 2009. She has represented various domestic and international clients before the Supreme Court of India, High Courts, and various Tribunals. Sowmya has handled domestic and international arbitrations under ICC, ICA, and DIFC-LCIA rules and has adjudicated disputes as an Arbitrator in domestic arbitrations.

She appears regularly in the Supreme Court, High Courts, Tribunals, and in arbitrations and mediations. Sowmya has argued several precedent-setting cases in Insolvency and Bankruptcy, arbitration, electricity laws, and consumer protection laws. Her experience in Insolvency & Bankruptcy includes representing a diverse range of clients, including operational and financial creditors, homebuyers, resolution professionals, and ex-directors.

Ushasi Das

Senior Assistant General Counsel, ITC Limited

Ushasi Das is the Senior Assistant General Counsel at ITC Limited, having joined the company in 2016. Leading a team of lawyers, she oversees strategic initiatives across ITC's diverse portfolio, which includes FMCG, Hotels & Hospitality, Paper & Paperboards, and ITC Services.

Her core expertise encompasses Mergers & Acquisitions, Investments, and Restructuring, playing a crucial role in ITC's inorganic growth efforts. Ushasi has extensive experience navigating regulatory issues related to securities and foreign exchange laws and manages both contentious and non-contentious matters in these domains. She also advises the Tobacco Division and has supported the Personal Care Products' Business through the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ushasi is actively involved in ITC's sustainability initiatives, serving on the Sustainability and Compliance Review Committee. Before joining ITC, she worked with prominent law firms such as AZB & Partners, J. Sagar Associates, and Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas, focussing on inbound and outbound investments, acquisitions, and divestments. She graduated from the National University of Juridical Sciences, where she also served as the editor of the NUJS Law Review.





V. Divya Lakshmi

Senior Associate Director of Ethics and Compliance, Eli Lilly and Company

V. Divya Lakshmi is the Senior Associate Director of Ethics and Compliance at Eli Lilly and Company, she is a seasoned legal and compliance professional with a proven track record in providing strategic counsel and fostering a culture of compliance. At Eli Lilly, she excels in overseeing the legal department, managing complex matters, and ensuring adherence to compliance standards.

Her expertise encompasses contract negotiation, regulatory compliance, risk management, corporate governance, and team leadership. Known for aligning legal and compliance objectives with business goals, she is recognised for her visionary leadership and ability to deliver innovative solutions.

Previously, she has led compliance efforts at LCCI, driving efficiency and adherence to a robust compliance culture without formal authority.





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13th Annual Legal Era India Conclave and Awards 2024



Legal Era recently successfully concluded the 13th edition of its flagship Annual Legal Era India Conclave and Awards 2024.

eld on August 22, 23 and 24 at The Lalit Hotel in aamchee Mumbai, the Conclave & Awards saw the finest talents from the twin spheres of business and law from over five countries.

Conceptualised by Legal Era and its communities namely Global Business Lawyers Network & Legal Era Corporate Counsel Community, each of the three days of the Conclave offered plenary sessions, breakout sessions, awards and recognitions, cocktails, and dinner. Attendees interacted at 40+ sessions unleashing

a firestorm of original ideas and strategies to address the numerous challenges and opportunities facing the industry, nation and world at large.

Welcoming each and every person, **Aakriti Raizada**, Founder and Director of Legal Era, addressed the August gathering with intelligence and poise. "It is the era of emergent sectors and emergent technologies. Disruption is coming in slowly – and we are in the thick of a new disruption era. With AI impacting every business touchpoint, disrupting routines and patterns is leading to fresh possibilities. All this means that we as lawyers and







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It is the era of emergent sectors and emergent technologies. Disruption is coming in slowly – and we are in the thick of a new disruption era. With Al impacting every business touchpoint, disrupting routines and patterns is lead-

ing to fresh possibilities. All this means that we as lawyers and business leaders need to upskill, catch the nerve of the market trends, and be ready with agile and sustainable strategies to convert challenges into opportunities and not just survive but thrive.

Aakriti Raizada

Founder and Director of Legal Era - Legal Media Group

business leaders need to upskill, catch the nerve of the market trends, and be ready with agile and sustainable strategies to convert challenges into opportunities and not just survive but thrive," she said.

"Success today requires the agility and drive to rethink and reinvent. Being agile means staying open to change and embracing it as an opportunity. Viksit Bharat aims to transform India into a developed, self-reliant, and sustainable nation by 2047. It's a vision that requires collective effort, innovation, and adaptability. Lawyers and India Inc. are key stakeholders in shaping this promising future!" she emphasised.

The first day (August 22) began with a plenary address *Leader's Speak - Evolving Legal & Regulatory Framework for the Digital Era in India.*

The discussions on day 1 explored crucial subjects such as banking regulations; the Unregulated Deposit Schemes Act, 2019; sustainable finance; ESG initiatives; and climate-related disclosure frameworks. Other sessions





delved into employment law, advertising regulations, and strategies to tackle counterfeiting and infringement in the evolving digital space.

Attendees made use of the opportunity to network during the cocktails and dinner that followed, sparking meaningful and sometimes cross-cultural conversations on challenges facing law and business.

The second day of the Conclave, August 23, began with keynote addresses by the likes of Pravin Anand, Managing Partner at Anand and Anand, who took a deep dive into the intersection of Innovation, AI, and Intellectual Property. This set the tone for subsequent discussions on ESG policy, responsible AI, privacy, and ethical business practices.

Further sessions covered restructuring, insolvency, and the future of insurance and fintech, while some panels addressed evolving corporate governance trends and regulatory frameworks for online gaming and global cybersecurity compliance.

The day closed with the **Women in Law Awards 2024**, recognising Women in Leadership positions and their Finesse & Achievements.

The Women in Law Awards 2024, conceptualised by the Legal Era Women Lawyers Network (LWLN) and Legal Era - Legal Media Group, honoured the commitment, expertise, and leadership of women lawyers who are breaking the glass ceiling in an industry that is still essentially male-dominated.

Up next were the **Global Achievers Awards 2024** that witnessed the emerging stars of industry take their place under the Sun.

Global Achievers Awards, 2024, "Recognising Cross-Border (India Desk) Lawyers for their Legal Finesse,



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Innovation & Accomplishments," - Legal Era's initiative to recognise the Cross-border India Desk Lawyers - was much appreciated.

The final day of the Conclave, August 24, began with Hon'ble Justice Manmohan, Chief Justice, Delhi High Court, discussing Tech Era - Empowering the Legal Industry. In his insightful speech, he reflected on the transformative impact of technology on the judicial system:

"The impact of the use of technology in our courts has been an uptick and towards the positive. The ease of filing a case, appeal, application, document, etc., through an electronic mode, without the confines of location, has strengthened the right of access to justice. The more obvious and low-hanging fruits of technology are an increase in efficiency, productivity, transparency,

accountability, better organisation and management of cases, cost saving, reduced paperwork, and enhanced public trust and confidence in the judicial system," the Chief Justice of the Delhi HC said.

He further emphasised the significant role that artificial intelligence (AI) can play in the legal industry, noting:

"I say with great responsibility that it will be an opportunity missed if we fail to develop and deploy AI-based tools in the dispensation of justice, the caveat being that we must monitor and mitigate negative impacts, and train the AI-based tools on large language models that are based on clean data and data that is free from biases."

"The forever challenge for developing and deploying AIbased tools will be to maintain data protection, integrity,





(L-R) Manoj Gujaran, Seasoned Corporate Compliance, Legal and CSR Professional; Lakshmi Menon Nair, Director and Associate General Counsel, Head of Legal -India Geo, Hewlett Packard Enterprise; Neera Sharma, Chief Executive & Legal Officer, Sistema Smart Technologies Limited; Sameet Gambhir, Senior VP & Global Head-Legal UFlex and Rajesh Narain Gupta, Founder & Chairman, SNG & Partners, Advocates & Solicitors

and keep the streams of justice clean and clear of any biases," he said.

Thereafter, discussions shifted to the Growing In-House Role in Asia & the MENA Region, and White Collar Crimes. After lunch, the attendees participated in various breakout sessions, tackling specialised topics.

Additionally, on Days 1 and 3 of the Conclave, namely August 22 and 24, 2024, Legal Era hosted the prestigious India's Leading Lawyers Awards 2024 and India's Finest General Counsel Awards 2024, respectively.

India's Leading Lawyers Awards 2024 recognised top legal professionals across four categories: Leading Lawyer Legends & Notable Practitioners, Leading Lawyer Champions, GENNEXT Leading Lawyers, and Leading Lawyers.

Whereas India's Finest General Counsel Awards 2024 honoured the exceptional contributions of General Counsels in India, with awards presented in two key categories: India's Leading Finest General Counsels and India's Leading Finest Legend General Counsels.

A special segment showcasing a Powerlist of fast-growing GCs underscored the crucial role General Counsels are now playing in shaping the future of India Inc., and spoke of their increasing influence and significance in the corporate world.

The event grew in stature with the esteemed presence of Hon'ble Mr Birendra Saraf, Advocate General, Maharashtra who handed over the trophies to the beaming awardees adding a distinguished touch to the celebrations.



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Through the last 14 years since Legal Era's inception in 2009, the Annual Legal Era Conclave has been a forerunner for law & policy and awarding recognition. The 13th Annual Conclave 2024 became a fulcrum for legal innovation, sharing best practices, and forging new connections among legal professionals worldwide. The 14th Annual Conclave 2025 will continue to lead the way.

Legal Era's continued efforts to drive legal innovation and foster community-building have cemented its position as a key player in the global legal landscape, helping shape the future of the profession.

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It would do well for in-house counsel to remember that implementing AI without sufficient human oversight exposes companies to legal challenges related to negligence, discrimination, and procedural fairness

n a world driven by algorithms, who watches the coders? It echoes the famous phrase by the Roman poet Juvenal 'Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?' ('Who watches the watchmen?'), which questions the accountability of the ones in the decision-making capacity.

Organisations and professionals are employing artificial intelligence ("AI") technologies to boost productivity, streamline operations, and predict consumer behaviour. While these innovations create opportunities, they also

pose significant legal and ethical challenges. This has resulted in the role of in-house counsels expanding from the traditional role of being legal advisors confined to compliance and dispute resolution to now being required to wear multiple hats.

While India has begun to introduce regulations and policy guidelines that directly or indirectly address AI-related concerns, it does not yet have a comprehensive legal framework specifically for AI. This regulatory

gap and ambiguities have heightened the importance and complexity of the in-house counsel's role. They must now engage in cross-disciplinary collaboration with technologists and borrow jurisprudence from the existing foundations of laws and existing legislations/ guidance along with global guidance on AI to act as the ethical compass guiding the responsible use of AI.

The provisions in the *Constitution of India* (*Articles 14, 15, and 16*) and existing anti-discrimination laws serve as a foundation for AI technology used in various sectors to ensure that they do not discriminate against individuals based on race, gender, religion, or caste. An in-house counsel will need to be particularly vigilant if their company uses AI in recruitment, as such systems could potentially lead to biased outcomes. Similarly, staying abreast with sector-specific AI regulatory guidelines is paramount. Some examples are the *Reserve Bank of India* ("*RBI"*) guidelines on digital lending, 2022¹ focussing on ensuring fairness, transparency, and

accountability when AI is used in digital lending apps; and mandating companies using AI for credit scoring to ensure that consumers are not unfairly denied loans based on flawed or biased algorithms.

On March 15, 2024², the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology ("MeitY") issued an advisory in continuation to the advisory dated December 23, 2023 ("Advisory"). This Advisory replaced the old advisory dated March 1, 2024 by introducing changes that did away with a mandatory prior government approval regime while replacing it with a notification-based regime along with easing the requirements for submission of 'action taken-cum status reports' for unreliable or untested AI models. This Advisory imposes on intermediaries, platforms and its users the risk of facing penal consequences under criminal laws for non-compliance with the IT Act and its rules. It also places a compliance burden requiring explicit labelling related to deepfakes. Recently, the PIL filed in the *Hon'ble*

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MEHAK GUPTA
Senior Legal Counsel and
Insurance Counsel

Infosys

Legal counsels
can also borrow
jurisprudence
from global
legislations like
the comprehensive
European Union
Artificial Intelligence
Act, 2024 ("EU AI
Act") which has
created a tiered risk
categorisation system

Delhi High Court on Deepfakes³ is a landmark development, concerning the growing threat of deepfake technology i.e. use of AI to manipulate video and audio, which poses a serious threat to privacy, reputation, and even in some cases national security. While the court has yet to deliver its final ruling, this case emphasises the judiciary's awareness of AI's darker capabilities and the growing necessity for regulation.

In-house counsels must closely monitor updates related to AI and ensure that their company's AI deployments align with emerging standards and regulations in line with the roots of the Indian Constitution.

India's Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 ("DPDP Act") focusses on protecting 'PII'⁴ by imposing restrictions on the collection, processing, and storage of data, which is central to AI systems that rely heavily on large datasets. The Aadhaar judgement⁵, although not directly related to AI, provides a significant framework for the handling of personal data. Similarly, in the Schrems II Case (2020)⁶, the Court of Justice of the European Union invalidated the EU-U.S. Privacy Shield, citing concerns about the transfer of personal data to countries with insufficient protections. This ruling has profound implications for companies using AI systems that process or transfer personal data across-borders. AI systems often rely on cloud computing, which may involve cross-border data flows.

For in-house counsel, these judgements necessitate revisiting data transfer agreements and ensuring compliance with the latest data protection standards by collaborating with AI engineers to implement privacy-by-design principles and embedding data protection measures into AI systems from their inception.

Another key challenge is determining who owns intellectual property (IP) in AI-generated works. The Copyright Act, 1957, currently does not explicitly recognise AI-generated works. However, debates are ongoing about whether AI can be considered an author or inventor, and how to manage IP rights when AI tools contribute to creative or technical outputs. Courts across jurisdictions have had varying stances on whether AI can hold copyright or whether its output belongs to the user or developer. In a widely discussed case in the *United States: Thaler v. United States Copyright Office (2022)*⁷, an AI system "Creativity Machine" created a piece of artwork, and its creator attempted to claim copyright on its behalf. The court ruled that AI- generated works cannot receive copyright protection in the U.S. unless there is significant human involvement. The case sets an important precedent for companies using AI to create content

- 1 Reserve Bank of India Notifications (rbi.org.in)
- 2 Advisory 15March 2024.pdf (meity.gov.in)
- 3 PIL filed in Delhi High Court against use of deepfake technologies in political campaign for Lok Sabha, Assembly elections - The Hindu
- 4 Personal Identifiable Information
- 5 Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India, 2018
- 6 The CJEU Judgement in the Schrems II Case (europa.eu)
- 7 Opinions Response (uscourts.gov)
- 8 Navigators Logistics Ltd. vs Kashif Qureshi & Ors (2018)
- 9 In the matter of Jaswinder Singh v. State of Punjab (Order dated 27-3-2023)
- 10 In the matter of Md Zakir Hussain v. State of Manipur (WP(C) No. 70 of 2023)
- 11 Rigveda-Thirty ninth mantra of one hundred and sixteenth Sukta of the first mandala of the Rigveda

or products - without human creativity, the output cannot be protected under copyright law. In another case, the *Delhi High Court*⁸ emphasised the necessity of human creativity in works created with AI assistance, while determining that a list compiled through computing without human intervention cannot get copyright protection.

Therefore, in-house legal teams need to consider the implications of using AI for content creation or innovation. For instance, if an AI tool helps a company develop a new product design, questions may arise about who holds the rights to that design. This is an area of ambiguity under current Indian law, and companies must stay informed as IP frameworks evolve to address AI-related issues. This also calls for regular consultations with external legal experts in regions where the company operates.

Despite the complexities associated with AI, Indian courts have shown receptiveness in integrating AI into daily operations. Be it a matter in the *P&H HC*⁹ wherein the Judge asked ChatGPT for feedback to gain a more comprehensive understanding of whether bail should be granted in cases involving "cruelty"; or, the *Manipur HC*¹⁰ utilising the AI tool-ChatGPT to assist in legal research while ruling on a complex case. However, these courts themselves acknowledged that while the use of AI tools like ChatGPT is fine for reference, the actual legal reasoning employed by them in judicial pronouncements must remain subject to human assessment. For in-house counsel, these judgements underscore the importance of building systems that retain human control over critical decisions. Implementing AI without sufficient human oversight exposes companies to legal challenges related to negligence, discrimination, and procedural fairness.

Legal counsels can also borrow jurisprudence from global legislations like the comprehensive European Union Artificial Intelligence Act, 2024 ("EU AI Act") which has created a tiered risk categorisation system. The EU AI Act applies to any AI system within the EU that is on the market, in service or in use. It categorises AI technology mainly under three subsets i.e. (i) Unacceptable AI systems that include social scoring and emotion manipulation which are prohibited; (ii) High-risk AI systems i.e. those used in employment, education and other essential services which

mandatorily require registration in a public database; and finally (iii) Limited/Minimal AI which enjoys unrestricted use within the regulatory framework.

Learning from such legal developments, the in-house counsel must be at the forefront of developing and proactive implementation of AI governance frameworks that balance innovation with risk mitigation by addressing key concerns such as data privacy, algorithmic transparency, human oversight, and compliance with applicable laws.

In an age where AI is increasingly becoming the cornerstone of innovation, a verse from the Rigveda¹¹ and Vedic philosophy which emphasises the fact that 'knowledge continues to grow without limits' resonates now more than ever. The scope of knowledge is indeed boundless, especially when machines are capable of learning and adapting beyond human limitations. This is where the role of the in-house counsel becomes pivotal- serving as both a legal safeguard as well as a strategic advisor who can help future-proof companies while this AI landscape continues to evolve.



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As regulatory frameworks evolve, organisations must prioritise responsible Al use by addressing ethical considerations, ensuring transparency, and establishing accountability mechanisms

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rtificial intelligence (AI) has caused a rapid revolution of industries by increasing productivity and creating new opportunities. However, as AI technology develops, so does the moral and legal conundrum that surrounds its use. Companies must navigate an intricate legal environment that includes issues with data privacy, intellectual property, liability, and ethics. This article discusses case studies and recent rulings that highlight these issues, as well as the legal frameworks that currently regulate AI and the obligations placed on businesses to ensure its responsible usage.

The legal landscape surrounding artificial intelligence is continually evolving, with various nations pursuing different regulatory strategies. The European Union (EU) is leading the charge with the proposed Artificial Intelligence Act, which categorises AI systems based on their risk levels—unacceptable, high, limited, and minimal risk. High-risk AI systems, such as those used in critical infrastructure or biometric identification, face strict compliance requirements, including risk assessments and transparency obligations.

On the other hand, the US has yet to create a thorough legislative framework for regulating AI. On the other hand, several organisations—including the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC)—are creating guidelines that focus on accountability, transparency, and fairness. For instance, the FTC emphasised that artificial intelligence (AI) systems must not engage in deceptive practices, and that companies could be held accountable for misrepresenting their AI capabilities to customers.

KEY LEGAL ISSUES SURROUNDING AT

1. Intellectual Property Rights

The issue of intellectual property (IP) rights has become more prominent as AI systems produce more and more creative content. The ruling on AI-generated works by the U.S. Copyright Office is one noteworthy example. The office decided in 2022 that works produced entirely by AI, devoid of human input, were ineligible for copyright protection¹. Given that traditional IP regulations are unable to keep up with the rapid improvements in technology, this ruling emphasises the necessity for clear guidelines for IP rights pertaining to AI-generated work.

2. Liability and Accountability

The issue of liability in AI-related incidents has been brought to the forefront by cases involving autonomous vehicles. For instance, in 2018, an Uber self-driving car struck and killed a pedestrian in Tempe, Arizona². Following the incident, questions arose regarding liability: Should Uber, the vehicle manufacturer, or the software developer be held accountable? This case highlighted the ambiguity in existing laws regarding accountability for AI systems, prompting discussions about the need for legislation that clarifies liability in such scenarios.

The European Union (EU) is leading the charge with the proposed Artificial Intelligence Act, which categorises AI systems based on their risk levels — unacceptable, high, limited, and minimal risk

3. Data Privacy and Security Laws

Data protection laws significantly impact AI, particularly those governing the collection and processing of personal data. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the EU imposes stringent rules on data processing, requiring companies to ensure transparency, obtain consent, and implement data minimisation practices. Non-compliance can result in hefty fines, as seen in the case of British Airways, which faced a £20 million fine for a data breach that compromised the personal information of over 400,000 customers³.

Another example is Facebook's 2020 settlement with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC)⁴ over data privacy concerns, in which the company agreed to pay \$5 billion for improperly handling user data, partly due to its use of AI algorithms. This example highlights the regulatory scrutiny that technology companies must endure when it comes to data protection, underscoring the need for strong data governance procedures in order to adhere to legislation such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

In the U.S., state-level regulations like the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA)⁵ provide consumers with rights regarding their personal data, including the right to know what data is collected and the right to opt-out of its sale. Companies with global operations face a complex compliance landscape due to the multitude of regulations they must adhere to.

THE ROLE OF COMPANIES IN RESPONSIBLE AT USE

1. Ethical Considerations

As AI systems become integral to decision-making processes,

companies must address ethical considerations to ensure responsible use. This includes mitigating biases in AI algorithms, enhancing transparency, and establishing accountability mechanisms. For example, AI systems used in hiring processes can inadvertently perpetuate existing biases if trained on historical data that reflects discriminatory practices.

Amazon's Recruiting Tool

In 2018, Amazon scrapped an AI recruiting tool6 that was found to be biased against women. The system was designed to automate the hiring process by analysing resumes, but it was trained on resumes submitted over a tenyear period, which predominantly came from male candidates. As a result, the AI learned to favour male applicants, effectively downgrading resumes that included the word "women" or references to women's colleges. This case underscores the importance of bias mitigation in AI systems and the responsibility companies have to ensure fairness in their algorithms.

2. Transparency and Explainability

Transparency in AI decision-making processes is crucial for building trust among users and stakeholders. Companies should strive to create explainable AI systems, allowing users to understand how decisions are made. This is particularly important in high-stakes areas such as healthcare, finance, and law enforcement.

Recent Judgement: The Algorithmic Accountability Act

In 2021, the U.S. Congress introduced the Algorithmic Accountability Act⁷, which

^{1.} Copyright Office Affirms its Fourth Refusal to Register Generative AI Work

Self-Driving Uber Car Kills Pedestrian in Arizona, Where Robots Roam - The New York Times (nytimes.com)

^{3.} ICO fines British Airways £20m for data breach affecting more than 400,000 customers 4. FTC settlement imposes historic penalty, and significant requirements to boost

accountability and transparency

California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) | State of California - Department of Justice -Office of the Attorney General

^{6.} Amazon Scraps Secret AI Recruiting Engine that Showed Biases Against Women

^{7.} Text - H.R.6580 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): Algorithmic Accountability Act of 2022 | Congress.gov | Library of Congress

requires companies to assess the impact of their automated decision-making systems on accuracy, fairness, and privacy. While this legislation is still in the proposal stage, it reflects a growing recognition of the need for transparency and accountability in AI systems. Companies that proactively adopt transparency measures will likely benefit from enhanced public trust and reduced regulatory scrutiny.

3. Accountability and Liability

Establishing accountability in AI systems poses significant challenges, particularly regarding liability for harm caused by AI-driven decisions. Companies must determine who is responsible when AI systems malfunction or lead to adverse outcomes.(refer Uber case mentioned above)

BEST PRACTICES FOR RESPONSIBLE AI USE

To navigate the legal landscape effectively, companies should adopt best practices for responsible AI use. These include:

- 1. Establishing Ethical Guidelines: Companies should develop comprehensive ethical guidelines for AI development and deployment. This includes principles such as fairness, accountability, and respect for human rights.
- **2. Implementing Governance Structures:** Establishing governance frameworks that oversee AI projects is crucial. Companies should create dedicated AI ethics boards or committees to ensure compliance with legal standards and ethical norms.
- **3. Engaging Stakeholders:** Engaging with stakeholders, including customers, employees, and regulators, is vital for understanding the societal impact of AI technologies. Companies should seek input and feedback to inform their AI strategies.
- **4. Continuous Monitoring and Auditing:** Regularly monitoring AI systems for bias and performance issues is essential. Companies should conduct audits to assess compliance with legal and ethical standards and make necessary adjustments.

CONCLUSION

Navigating the legal landscape of artificial intelligence presents significant challenges for companies. As regulatory frameworks evolve, organisations must prioritise responsible AI use by addressing ethical considerations, ensuring transparency, and establishing accountability mechanisms.

By adopting best practices and learning from case studies and recent judgements, companies can mitigate risks and build public trust in AI technologies.

The future of AI will depend on the ability of organisations to balance innovation with responsibility, ensuring that these powerful tools are used for the benefit of society as a whole.



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NAVIGATING AI REGULATION

INSIGHTS FROM THE EU AI ACT FOR INDIA'S REGULATORY FUTURE

By categorising AI systems based on risk and implementing stringent regulatory measures, the EU has effectively addressed the complexities and ethical challenges associated with AI deployment

INTRODUCTION

This article explores the regulatory efforts undertaken by the European Union ("EU") in formulating the European Union Artificial Intelligence Act, 2024 ("EU AI Act"), focussing on how these regulations can harness Artificial Intelligence ("AI") for the collective good while maximising its potential. This article also discusses how the EU AI Act could serve as a blueprint for Indian regulators in effectively managing and utilising AI technology.

ANALYSIS OF THE EU AT ACT

1. The European Parliament approved the EU AI Act on April 22, 2024. This landmark legislation introduces a risk-based approach to AI regulation, categorising AI systems into four tiers (as shown below) based on the level of risk they pose. This classification is pivotal as it sets the stage for understanding how AI technologies will be regulated and managed within the EU.



(i) Unacceptable Risk AI

This category of AI is completely prohibited under the EU AI Act. This categorisation pertains to AI systems that engage in manipulative or deceptive practices, exploit vulnerabilities in individuals, discriminate based on race or religion using biometric data, or compile facial recognition

databases through the indiscriminate scraping of images from sources like the internet or CCTV footage. For Example: An AI system designed to manipulate social media users by creating compelling deepfake videos that deceive viewers into believing false narratives about political candidates.

(ii) High Risk AI

In contrast to 'Unacceptable Risk AI', the 'High-Risk AI' category under the EU AI Act encompasses a broader spectrum of applications. This classification includes AI technologies that, while not outrightly prohibit, pose significant risks to individuals, public safety, or essential services. Annex III of the EU AI Act provides a detailed list of AI systems that could be categorised as 'High-Risk AI Systems'. Further, Article 49 (Registration) of the EU AI Act makes it mandatory for authorised representatives of AI systems to register themselves as well as their AI systems in the EU Databases of the European Commission. Therefore, while these AI systems are not prohibited, they are subject to rigorous regulatory oversight aimed at mitigating potential harm and ensuring their responsible deployment. Such regulatory measures may include rigorous testing procedures, continuous monitoring for accuracy and reliability, and strict data protection protocols to safeguard privacy. For Example: An AI-powered medical diagnostic system designed to analyse complex medical images and provide diagnostic recommendations. Such technology may fall under the 'High Risk AI' category due to its critical impact on patient health and safety.



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(iii) Limited Risk AI and Minimal Risk AI

- a. The final two categories under the EU AI Act are "Limited Risk AI" and "Minimal Risk AI".
- b. For "Limited Risk AI", the EU AI Act mandates enhanced transparency measures. Consumers interacting with AI systems, such as chatbots, must be informed comprehensively in order to make informed decisions. Additionally, providers must ensure that AI-generated content, whether text, audio, or video, is clearly identified, especially in cases involving educational or informational content where deepfakes could mislead the public. For example: A chatbot designed to provide customer support for an online retail platform falls under the "Limited Risk AI" category. The platform must disclose to users that they are interacting with an AI system and ensure that any responses generated by the chatbot are clearly distinguishable from human-generated replies.
- c. Conversely, "Minimal Risk AI" enjoys unrestricted usage under the EU AI Act. This category encompasses AI applications such as spam filters and AI-enhanced video games, where the risks to individuals or public safety are minimal. For example: an AI-powered virtual assistant in a video game, used to enhance gameplay experience by providing hints and challenges, qualifies as "Minimal Risk AI". Such applications are considered low-risk because they do not harm individuals or public safety significantly, allowing for unrestricted use within regulatory guidelines.

2. Penalties for Non-compliance under the EU AI Act

The EU AI Act currently identifies severe violations, including infringement of Article 5 (Prohibited AI Practices), which can result in fines of up to €35 million or 7% of the offending entity's annual worldwide turnover, whichever amount is higher. For less serious transgressions, such as failure to meet the transparency requirements outlined in Articles 16, 22, 23, 24, 26, and 50, fines of up to €15 million or 3% of global revenue may be imposed. Fines of up to €7.5 million or 1% of revenue may also be levied for providing inaccurate, incomplete, or misleading information to national authorities or notified entities.

INDIA: KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- While India has not attempted to regulate AI through legislation in a comprehensive manner, as yet, it has, through the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India ("MeitY") on December 26, 2023, issued an advisory ("2023 Advisory") to all intermediaries, mandating compliance with the existing Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 ("IT Rules"). The directive specifically targeted the growing concerns around misinformation powered by AI Deepfakes. The 2023 Advisory mandated all intermediaries to clearly communicate prohibited content, as specified under Rule 3(1)(b) of the IT Rules, through terms of service, user agreements, and regular notifications during user interactions.
- Following the 2023 Advisory, MeitY issued another advisory on March 15, 2024 ("2024 Advisory"), reinforcing due diligence obligations

outlined in the IT Rules. The key elements of the 2024 Advisory are as follows:

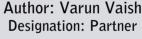
- (i) Due diligence requirements for AI models, large language models (LLMs), generative AI software, algorithms, and computer resources to prevent discrimination or compromise of electoral integrity.
- (ii) Imposition of responsibilities on intermediaries and platforms to prevent users from violating the IT Act 2000 and IT Rules by hosting, displaying, modifying, transmitting, storing, or sharing unlawful content.
- (iii) Intermediaries and platforms using under-tested or unreliable AI models on the Indian internet must obtain explicit government approval.
- (iv) Introduction of a consent mechanism for AI models to inform users about inherent risks and consequences.
- (v) Making it mandatory for AI platforms to label potentially misleading or deepfake-generated information with unique metadata or identifiers, enabling traceability to the intermediary and creator.

CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

The EU has made commendable strides in regulating AI through the enactment of the EU AI Act. By categorising AI systems based on risk and implementing stringent regulatory measures, the EU has effectively addressed the complexities and ethical challenges associated with AI deployment. Looking ahead, it is expected that India shall also be required to enact comprehensive legislation to regulate AI in the near future and may, in this regard, draw valuable insights from the EU AI Act.

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ATEEV MATHUR
Partner



n a country like India where dockets of the courts are always flooded and Justice is often delayed, if not denied, Alternate Dispute Resolution is the necessity of time. We all know that in order to achieve this objective, India had adopted the UNCITRAL model law and enacted the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996. However, comparative data available in the public domain suggests that India is not being considered as a favoruable destination by the parties for conducting Arbitrations. No doubt this aspect has been getting attention from the Legislature as well Judiciary and steps are being taken to promote Arbitration in India. As a first step, all stakeholders have come together and have promoted the institutional Arbitration which is more organised and result-oriented.

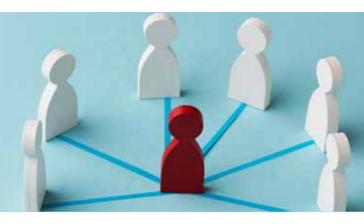
There have been amendments brought in the legislative scheme as well and the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 has seen many amendments. It is trite to say that law is ever evolving and it is commendable that the Indian legislature and Judiciary has been alive to the ground situation and day-to-day practical problems faced.

Recently, the Supreme Court was tasked to resolve a legal conundrum relating to interplay between the Arbitration agreement and Indian Stamp Act. The task was not simple inasmuch as the Apex court was faced with a Judgement of a constitutional Bench of five Hon'ble judges in the matter of N N Global¹. However, in a landmark Judgement by the seven Judges bench, this issue was set at rest by holding that Agreements which are not stamped or are inadequately stamped are inadmissible in evidence under Section 35 of the Stamp Act. Such agreements are not rendered *void or void ab initio* or unenforceable and that non-stamping or inadequate stamping is a curable defect. This indeed would resolve many pending objections in the Courts of law.

Similarly, the concept of public policy of India has travelled a long distance from *Renusagar*ⁱⁱ to *Saw Pipes*ⁱⁱⁱ to now Government of India v. Vedanta Ltd.^{iv} There are many more fundamental questions of law and procedure like power of courts exercising jurisdiction under Section 34 or Section 37 of the Act to modify the Award or to review their own orders are also being considered by the larger benches of the Supreme Court of India.

The question of power of courts appointing arbitrator under Section 11 has seen a paradigm shift in approach from SBP Patel Engineering to Vidya Drolia and now SPML judgement. This was required to expedite the process of initiation of Arbitration without going into the technical objections and holding the process for years even at the stage of appointment of arbitrator. It is interesting to see that the Supreme Court at one stage has interpreted the law so as to expedite the process of appointment of arbitrator, on the other hand in the judgement Perkins the unilateral appointment by one party was deprecated. This has allowed more transparency and a judicious approach.

At the same time, when judicial intervention has kept the soul of arbitration alive in the country, the legislature has also kept pace I would like to emphasise that all the changes brought in the recent past to bring the arbitration act in conformity with the international status should be compiled together and introduced in the arbitration act on a consolidated basis



with the time. Prior to the amendments brought in the Act in the year 2015, an arbitral award would be automatically stayed upon the courts entertaining objections under Section 34 of the Act. However, in order to discourage the delays in prosecuting cases, the amendment provided that for getting a stay of the arbitral award, award debtor is required to file a specific application to this effect. This indeed was a welcome step. This, again triggered some controversy on the applicability of the amended provision on the pre-2015 proceedings. Ultimately, the legislature brought in the 2021 Amendments introducing the grounds for unconditional stay and also providing that these provisions would also apply to the Court proceedings emanating from the pre-2015 arbitrations.

The legislature has promoted institutional Arbitrations and has even established India International Arbitration Centre by Act of Parliament and given it the status of an Institute of National Importance. This demonstrates that the country is now adapting to the changing environment of alternate dispute resolution. In the

end, I would like to emphasise that all the changes brought in the recent past bring the Arbitration Act in conformity with the International status should be compiled together and introduced in the Arbitration Act on a consolidated basis.

These changes if brought in by way of legislative initiative instead of judicial verdicts would provide poise and pave the way to a more certain and clearer path for the International Community to consider India as a more Arbitration-friendly country.



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Ateev is a partner with SNG & Partners and heads litigation practice. He has a rich experience of over two decades, both in Litigation and Alternate Disputes. Arbitrations as a subject is very close to his heart and he has conducted a number of Arbitrations before a number of Arbitral Tribunals and related litigations even up to Supreme Court.



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Evolving Legal Al Paradigms of Al Governance

Governance of Artificial Intelligence has become a globally recognised policy imperative. The European Union has framed the first comprehensive and special statute on Artificial Intelligence, the EU AI Act, 2023.

governance framework for AI technology will involve a latticework of policy, legislations, standards, processes, risk frameworks and best practice s, which would apply to design, development, deployment and use of AI.

The aim of AI governance, as we understand it today, is to put human agency at the centre of the AI system to ensure that an AI system does not threaten human rights and values. The principles of AI governance are not far removed from how we seek to regulate human behaviour. The greater the risk of harm, the greater the regulation.

The governance framework for AI is at different levels of maturity around the world. In India, Niti Aayog has published detailed papers on AI, giving us a glimpse of India's policy perspective. The 'National



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ATTREYI MUKHERJEE

As primary drivers and developers of the technology, corporates have a vital responsibility to inform stakeholders of the risks of Al systems and their uses

Strategy for Artificial Intelligence', issued in June 2018 and 'Responsible AI', issued in February 2021, focus on the benefic uses of AI and the importance of ethics, privacy, transparency, fairness, accountability and suggest broad ethical principles for developing and deploying AI in India. The term 'Responsible AI' in essence means that AI systems in their design, development and use, be trustworthy, transparent, ethical and explainable. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India released its recommendations on "Leveraging Artificial Intelligence and Big Data in Telecommunication Sector" in 2023. However, India is yet to adopt a comprehensive law dealing with AI.

The EU AI Act

The European Union has taken the lead by framing the first comprehensive and special statute on Artificial Intelligence, the EU AI Act, 2023, which came into effect from July 2024 and will see a staggered implementation. The EU law adopts the risk-based approach -

- Systems considered to carry unacceptable risk and are either prohibited or allowed only for certain narrow purposes. Examples: biometric categorisation systems, social scoring systems, facial recognition, etc.
- AI systems are always considered high-risk if it profiles individuals, i.e. automated processing of personal data to assess various aspects of a person's life.
- General Purpose AI (GPAI) will have to publish summary of training data, amongst other compliance requirements.
- As regards liability, while some obligations are cast on professional users who deploy/use AI systems, however, majority of the obligations are placed on providers/developers.

Certain Key Principles

- Ethics We all want to prevent the harmful use of AI technology. But in reality, we have wildly varied understanding of what constitutes harm. For example, the rules around free speech and informational control vary a great deal across the world. Obviously, there is no one-sizefits-all approach when it comes to setting ethical guardrails around AI technology. This is where multilateral efforts can bring value by shaping universally accepted principles for ethical and responsible use of AI technology.
- 2. Multilateral approach
 - a. The OECD Principles on Artificial Intelligence (May 2019) promote AI that is innovative, trustworthy and that respects human rights and democratic values.
 - UNESCO's `Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence' (November 2021) was adopted by 193-member States and rests on four core values –
 - i. Human rights and human dignity.
 - ii. Living in peaceful, just, and interconnected societies.
 - iii. Ensuring diversity and inclusiveness.
 - iv. Environment and ecosystem flourishing.
 - c. The Bletchley Declaration Hosted in Bletchley Park, UK, in 2023 and attended by 29 countries, including India, the declaration is

a positive step towards a cohesive international response to the responsible use of AI. The declaration states —

"Many risks arising from AI are inherently international in nature, and so are best addressed through international cooperation. We resolve to work together in an inclusive manner to ensure human-centric, trustworthy and responsible AI that is safe, and supports the good of all..."

- 3. Data Governance Enormous amount of data is required to train AI systems, especially GPAI. Thus, most AI governance frameworks would see rules around collection, use and protection of personal data, use of non-personal or anonymised data, governance of dark data, spoliation of data, use of IP data/materials, etc.
- 4. Liability framework In September 2022, the European Commission published a proposal for a directive on adapting non-contractual civil liability rules to artificial intelligence, with the intention that, persons harmed by AI systems must enjoy the same level of protection as persons harmed by other technologies. On its part, India has not been slow to recognise the impact of dark patterns on e-commerce and online customer experience and has thus stated that the Unfair Trade Practices which are regulated under section 2(47) of Consumer Protection Act, 2019 apply equally to dark patterns. It is fair to say that liability frameworks will have to stretch and strengthen to address potential harm caused by AI.
- 5. Checks and balances Ethics by design, certification requirements, compliance with standards, audits are some checks which can be deployed. A matrix of ex-ante audit and certification and regular expost audits (especially to address emergent capabilities and risks) of AI systems would provide needed confidence in the use of AI.

Role of Corporates

Any discussion on AI governance is incomplete without reference to the role of corporates. As primary drivers and developers of the technology, corporates have a vital responsibility to inform stakeholders of the risks of AI systems and their uses. Developing appropriate risk frameworks and industry best practices takes on greater significance in the absence of comprehensive policy and regulatory frameworks. The accelerated pace of technology development has put the corporates in a key position to develop partnerships with government and multilateral organisations for policy formulation. It is hoped that this position will be leveraged for good - to let technology aid and empower mankind, enhance productivity and unlock abundance, while limiting the inherent and external risks of AI, including economic inequality, use by bad actors, and potentially all destructive arms race.

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GARIMA NAHAR General Counsel



In India's rapidly evolving ESG landscape, compliance with regulatory frameworks is essential. but the true value lies in embedding ESG principles into the core of business strategy. Companies that align their purpose with the right reasons for sustainability investing in education, skill development, and cultural integration - will see a direct correlation with profitability. It's not just about meeting requirements; it's about building a resilient, futureready organisation that thrives by doing what's right.

SEBI's Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) framework was launched; it requires India's top 1,000 listed companies to disclose ESG performance, aligning with global transparency standards.

By 2022, the RBI published a discussion paper for banks and NBFCs to incorporate ESG into credit risk assessments. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) followed suit in 2023 by embedding ESG into insurers' investment strategies. The RBI's 2024 draft framework on climate-related financial disclosures and green deposits further bolstered India's regulatory architecture for sustainable finance.

Moving Beyond Compliance: Education and Skill Development

While regulatory compliance is essential—since you can only save what you can measure—Indian businesses must go beyond mere reporting of ESG principles. To truly embed these values, it's crucial to prioritise education and skill development within organisations.

- i. Education and Awareness: Embedding ESG in organisational culture starts with education. Companies must promote ESG awareness across all levels to inform strategic decision-making. Business schools also play a crucial role by incorporating ESG into their curricula, ensuring future leaders balance sustainability with profitability. As sustainable investing grows, organisations prioritising ESG are poised to thrive, attracting talent aligned with these values.
- ii. Skill Development: Developing internal expertise is essential for successful ESG integration. Building capabilities in environmental assessments and governance frameworks equips companies to navigate evolving regulations and market demands. Companies investing in these skills will be better positioned to lead in sustainability.

ESG as a Business Driver: Turning Compliance into Competitive Advantage

Forward-thinking companies are proving that strong ESG practices can deliver substantial business benefits. These businesses view ESG not as a compliance burden but as a catalyst for growth, enhanced brand loyalty, and profitability.

1. Attracting Premium Investments: Companies with robust ESG frameworks often secure higher valuations and attract premium investors. Tesla, a leader in electric vehicles and renewable energy, exemplifies this trend. Its sustainability initiatives have boosted market valuation and drawn significant ESG-focussed investment.

Similarly, Rothy's, a brand renowned for crafting sandals from recycled plastic, has demonstrated how ESG practices can enhance profitability. Since its 2016 launch, Rothy's has sold over a million pairs, gained 450,000 new customers in 2020, and achieved unicorn status in 2021. Its inclusive workforce, coupled with sustainability initiatives, has fostered strong customer loyalty and rapid growth.

Unilever's "Sustainable Living Plan", which integrates ESG across operations, has also driven higher stock valuations and bolstered investor confidence, further proving ESG's strategic value.

2. Enhancing Brand Value and Customer Loyalty: Sustainability

significantly enhances brand value and loyalty. Patagonia's environmental activism and fair labour practices, embodied in its "Don't Buy This Jacket" campaign, have resonated deeply with eco-conscious consumers, strengthening its brand identity and customer base.

Apple is another leader in aligning its business model with sustainability through its "Trade-In Program". The program allows customers to trade in old devices for credit towards new purchases, reducing e-waste and promoting a circular economy. This initiative not only reduces environmental impact but also fosters customer loyalty by making sustainability part of the purchasing process.

- 3. Improving Operational Efficiency: ESG-focussed companies often discover operational efficiencies that lead to cost savings. Walmart's energy efficiency and waste reduction initiatives have resulted in substantial savings while boosting its sustainability credentials.
- 4. Risk Mitigation and Compliance: Strong ESG practices help companies mitigate risks and avoid regulatory penalties. Nestlé's commitment to sourcing 100% sustainable palm oil reduces reputational and regulatory risks linked to deforestation and human rights' violations. By proactively addressing these challenges, Nestlé has enhanced its ESG credentials and corporate reputation.
- 5. Tailoring Products for ESG-Conscious Consumers: Companies designing products that cater to environmentally conscious customers enhance their ESG credibility. IKEA's use of renewable materials and energy-efficient technologies aligns with its "People & Planet Positive" strategy, while Lush Cosmetics' ethical sourcing and minimal packaging "naked" products (which do not require packaging), have appealed to environmentally conscious consumers, driving sales growth and enhancing brand appeal.

The growing "right to repair" movement is another example of how brands are empowering consumers to extend product lifespans and reduce waste. Nudie Jeans offers lifetime repairs, while Levi's runs workshops to help customers repair their products. Even large companies like Apple are embracing this movement by providing access to replacement parts and repair guides.

Conclusion

India's ESG landscape is evolving rapidly, with regulatory frameworks set by SEBI, RBI, and IRDAI shaping the future of sustainable business practices. While compliance is crucial, companies must go beyond reporting by investing in education, skill development, and cultural integration of ESG principles. Leading companies globally have shown that robust ESG practices not only enhance market position but also drive profitability through efficiency, risk mitigation, and customer loyalty.

General counsel can play a pivotal role in advancing ESG by advocating for comprehensive and strategies ensuring compliance. As India faces mounting environmental and social challenges, adopting ESG as a core business strategy is essential for sustainable growth. By embracing ESG as a growth opportunity rather than a regulatory burden, businesses can build a more resilient, sustainable, and profitable future for themselves and their stakeholders.



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Key Regulatory Considerations For Mergers & Acquisitions In India

While there is a general thrust to make India an attractive destination for investments, the regulators are treading cautiously on this path by maintaining certain levels of restrictions and scrutiny.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian regulatory landscape governing foreign investments in India has undergone major changes in the last few years, with the Government of India ("GOI") focussing on ease of doing business and the Make in India campaign. There has been strong focus on streamlining and easing the procedural requirements for inbound investments, by way of digitisation and eliminating unnecessary procedural requirements. While there is a general thrust to make India an attractive destination for investments, the regulators are treading cautiously on this path by maintaining certain levels of restrictions and scrutiny.

India has strict capital control policies under its foreign exchange regulations and the type of investment (whether domestic or cross-border) is of significant importance while evaluating the applicable regulations. Indian regulations for investment and acquisitions are complicated and one has to navigate through many laws and regulations when implementing a merger or an acquisition (M&A), joint venture (JV) or setting up a greenfield project. We have set out some of the key regulatory considerations for M&As in India.

KEY LEGISLATIONS

(a) Corporate laws are primarily governed by the Companies Act, 2013 and the rules notified therein

- ("CA 2013"). All corporate entities must ensure compliance with the provisions of the CA 2013. CA 2013 also largely governs any amalgamation, mergers and demerger of corporate entities. The regulations were recently relaxed to permit the merger of foreign companies with Indian companies, thereby easing the process of 'reverse flipping', under which the holding / parent company is moved from overseas to India.
- (b) Securities laws are primarily governed by the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956 and the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992 and the rules and regulations notified therein ("SEBI Act"). The Securities and Exchange Board of India ("SEBI") is the regulatory body overseeing the compliance of the securities laws. Any investment in an Indian listed company mandates compliance with inter alia the SEBI Act. The regulations also set out guidelines and scenarios triggering mandatory open offers, and/or disclosure requirements. Mergers/ demergers involving listed companies require the approval of the company law tribunal which may direct further approvals from regulatory bodies including SEBI, the Registrar of Companies (ROC) and the Reserve Bank of India ("RBI"), as applicable.
- (c) Competition / antitrust laws are governed by the Competition Act, 2002. The regulatory body overseeing the compliance of the antitrust laws is the Competition Commission of India ("CCI"). Any investments involving combinations and M&As must



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be notified to the CCI if the asset size or turnover exceeds the thresholds notified under the Competition Act, 2002. Further, "combinations" in terms of the Competition Act, 2002, are reviewed by the CCI to assess if the transaction would have an adverse effect on competition or would lead to monopolistic dominance in the market. Deal value thresholds have been recently introduced in terms of which any M&A / combination transaction with a global transaction value exceeding ₹ 2,000 crore with the target company having 'substantial business operations' in India, will be subject to an approval from the CCI. The amended regulations define 'deal value' broadly, encompassing all types of consideration including direct, indirect, cash, non-compete payments, deferred payments, or otherwise.

- (d) The Indian foreign exchange laws are encapsulated in the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 and the rules, regulations and directions notified thereunder ("FEMA"). The government updates and consolidates its foreign direct investment policy from time to time with the extant version being the FDI policy dated October 15, 2020 ("FDI Policy"). The FDI Policy along with the rules framed under FEMA (collectively the "FDI Laws"), require careful evaluation before undertaking any cross-border investment transaction. The RBI is the central bank of India and nodal authority regulating the compliance of FEMA, banking, and other financial activities in India. Additionally, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, GOI ("DPIIT") is a key regulator of any foreign investments in India.
- (e) Tax laws in India govern the applicability of direct and indirect taxes. The income which is deemed to accrue and arise in India including from capital gains, gifts, business and profits is covered under the Income Tax Act, 1961. Indirect taxes such as on goods and services, on registration of documents and properties, and stamp duty on documents are covered under various legislations governing such other taxes. It is important to consider various double taxation avoidance agreements and the conventions to which India is a signatory for structuring cross-border investments.

M&A AND FDI LAWS

While there has been significant liberalisation over the years from the early 1990s, the regulators have been cautious while opening up sectors for foreign investment, especially in certain sensitive areas to avoid dilution of sovereign control. The FDI Policy and tax laws in India have provisions that prohibit transactions that may lead to speculation, money laundering, corruption and avoidance of taxes.

The FDI Policy provides for segregation of investment routes into either the automatic route or an approval route, and expressly prohibits foreign investment in certain sectors which include lottery business, gambling and betting including casinos, chit funds, investment in Nidhi company (a non-banking finance company doing the business of lending and borrowing with its members or shareholders) and trading in transferable development rights and real estate business or construction of farmhouses. In sectors where FDI is permitted, either certain ownership and control limits are specified with or without approval of the government or investment is permitted up to 100% ownership without any approval requirement. Any cross-border

transfer of shares (including with a foreign owned and controlled company in India) would have to comply with pricing guidelines linked to the fair market value of the shares, which dictate the value at which the transfer should take place. There are additional layers of conditions or restrictions that may have to be complied with for certain sectors. Some key sectors that are subject to limits and conditions are broadcasting content services, print media, retail (wholesale or single brand), construction development, telecom, banking, aviation and defence. Foreign investment in such restricted sectors may be limited to a certain percentage or may require specific approvals or licenses from the relevant regulators prior to making the foreign investments and there may be additional conditions such as minimum capitalisation or lock-in requirements.

Curbing Opportunistic Takeovers

Amidst the trail of destruction left behind by the pandemic in 2020, failing business and trade, falling valuations and depleting cash flows resulted in organisations gasping for survival. This, in addition to the growing geo-political constraints developing in the subcontinent and India took a cautious step to curb opportunistic takeovers of devalued organisations from countries that shared a land border with India. The GOI thus notified Press Note 3 (2020) dated 17 April 2020 ("PN3"), imposing restrictions on direct and indirect foreign equity investments from land bordering countries into India. The investments originating or having beneficial ownership from the territory of the Peoples Republic of China including Hong Kong ("PRC"), Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar and Afghanistan ("Restricted Countries") were thus made subject to approval ("PN3 Approval") even if the investment would have otherwise qualified for an automatic route prior to the notification of PN3. It is pertinent to note that during this time, there were significant attempts made by entities from PRC to take over organisations in other jurisdictions at low valuations. This resulted in several countries bringing about similar restrictions to avoid a takeover of their local organisations by entities from PRC.

The Approval Dilemma: Significant and crucial investments have been made globally from PRC in certain sectors such as information technology, manufacturing, and trading. With PN3 Approval being sparsely given by the GOI, investments and growth across sectors have been adversely impacted. Indian investee companies which have had to seek alternate (and usually expensive) modes of investments such as debt funding. While there was a logic and rationale for the curbs imposed by the GOI under the PN3 during the time of its notification, it has evidently had a negative impact on genuine businesses curtailing their growth and restricting their operations. The average time taken to process an application for a PN3 Approval was significantly more than the 12-week period stated in the standard operating procedure for processing PN3 Approval applications, with the application going through a complicated and intricate scrutiny process within various governmental departments.

A New Dawn: There is a consistent effort by the GOI to make the FDI process easy and improve India's position on the global 'ease of doing business' rankings. We note that PN3 Approvals are being given in genuine cases in far less time than the previous years. There are also instances of authorised dealer banks with delegated power from the RBI, approving investments from PRC where the beneficial ownership is less than 10%.



ISHAAN WAKHLOO Associate

The GOI thus notified Press Note 3 (2020) dated 17 April 2020 ("PN3"), imposing restrictions on direct and indirect foreign equity investments from land bordering countries into India

Since there is no written policy on this stance, there is no certainty that every authorised dealer bank will take the same position, thus adding to the woes of investee companies that have marginal investments from Restricted Countries.

The good news is that based on our positive experience with procuring PN3 Approvals, we note that there is a genuine effort by the GOI to ease the stance. Based on our experience, we note that the sector in which the investment is proposed to be made and the rationale for investment is of significant importance. The GOI is considering applications for investment that will have a positive impact on the Indian economy such as creation of enhanced manufacturing capabilities, increase employment opportunities, reduced dependence on imports and transfer of material technology to India. In our experience, typically an application for PN3 Approval goes through three levels of scrutiny:

- 1. Micro-economic Clearance the relevant ministry/department of the ministry depending on which sector the investment is being made in, reviews and scrutinises the economic and overall impact of the investment on the sector.
- 2. Security Clearance details of the investor and investee are required to be furnished, including granular details of the directors and shareholders are reviewed by the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- 3. Political Clearance the Ministry of External Affairs evaluates the details of the proposal, especially with respect to the beneficial ownership of the investor.

Various representations have been made by the industry and global organisations to the GOI for easing the restrictions under the PN3. During her budget speech in 2024, the finance minister alluded to an easing of the PN3 restrictions. Similarly, the fact that PN3 Approvals are now trickling in also suggests a dilution of the rigid stand in the rise for a demand for economic growth by the industry.

India is one of the few nations that has a positive growth expectation despite the slowdown brought about by various factors including the pandemic and the global conflicts. While caution and restraint has helped India weather the storms, it may be time for India to evaluate its strategy and perhaps, ease some of these constraints and provide clarity on its current stand on PN3 to help catapult the FDI inflows and provide the much-needed fillip to Indian companies and businesses.

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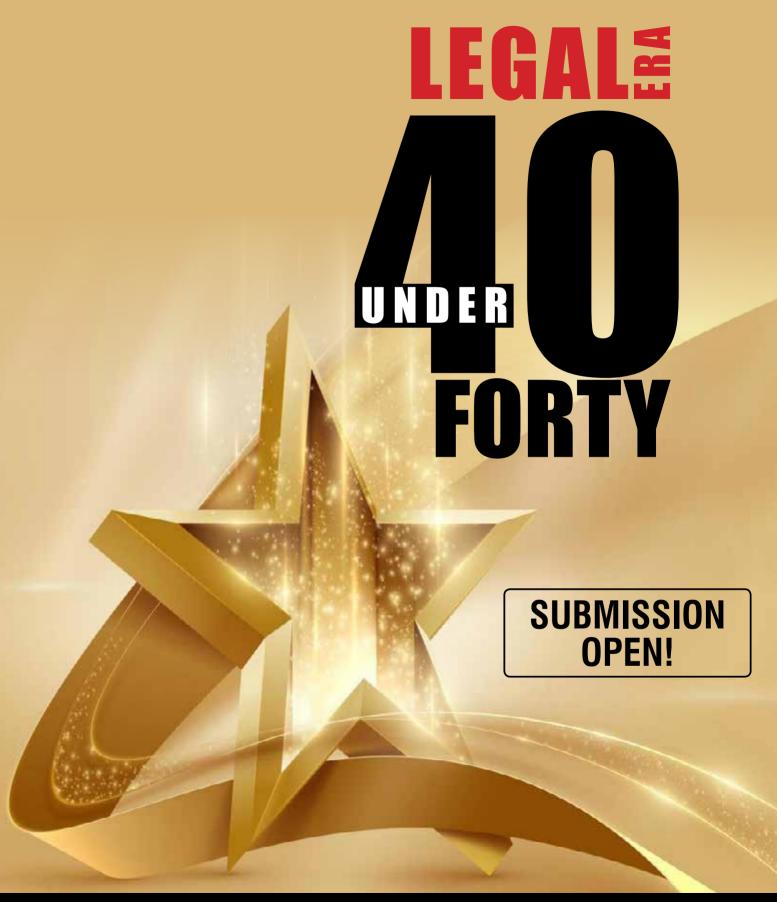
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RAJIV MALIKDy. General Manager



Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Data are at the heart of the technological transformations reshaping industries today. They are the driving forces behind manufacturing industries. These two elements, when combined, have the potential to drive innovation, efficiency, and growth across various sectors. This article explores the symbiotic relationship between AI and data, their practical applications—particularly in manufacturing industry and the future direction of these technologies, including considerations around Data Privacy, Biasness, Accountability issues as well as the risk of model collapse.

Understanding AI and Data

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the development of computer systems capable of performing tasks that traditionally require human intelligence. These tasks include recognising patterns, making decisions, and even learning from experience. AI is powered by algorithms—complex sets of rules and calculations—that process data to produce insights and actions.

Data, in this context, is the raw material that AI systems use to operate. Whether it's numbers, text, images, or sensor readings, data provides the essential input that allows AI to learn and make decisions. In essence, data



While AI can excel at tasks like data analysis, pattern recognition, and automation, it cannot fully replicate the human capacity for intuition, empathy, and rapid decision-making in complex, dynamic situations.



is the fuel that powers AI, enabling it to generate accurate predictions, identify trends, and optimise processes.

The AI-Data Symbiosis

The relationship between AI and data is one of mutual dependence. AI needs large volumes of high-quality data to learn effectively, while data, often too vast and complex for humans to analyse manually, requires AI to extract meaningful insights.

1. Data Collection and Curation: In any industry, from manufacturing to retail, data is collected from various sources. For example, in a factory producing electronic goods, sensors might track the performance of

- machinery, recording data on temperature, pressure, and operational speed. The more comprehensive the data, the better the AI can learn and improve its predictive capabilities.
- 2. Data Processing: Once collected, data must be cleaned and organised. In an automotive plant, for example, data from production lines must be standardised so that AI algorithms can accurately identify patterns—such as predicting when a piece of machinery might fail or when a product defect is likely to occur.
- Machine Learning: A key aspect of AI, machine learning involves training algorithms on vast datasets to recognise patterns and make predictions. In manufacturing, AI can analyse historical production data to optimise assembly processes, reducing waste and improving efficiency.
- 4. Actionable Insights: AI's ability to process and analyse data far surpasses human capabilities, especially in complex environments. For instance, in the automotive industry, AI can analyse data from connected vehicles to predict maintenance needs, improving vehicle reliability and customer satisfaction.

Practical Applications in Industry

AI and data are revolutionising industries in countless ways. From optimising production schedules to enabling global logistics, AI is streamlining operations and reducing costs. For example, AI-powered systems can analyse vast amounts of data to predict equipment failures, preventing costly downtime. In logistics, AI can optimise routes, reducing transportation costs and emissions. Additionally, AI-enabled robotics can automate tasks like picking, packing, and inventory management in warehouses.

Beyond operational efficiency, AI is also driving innovation. By analysing consumer data, businesses can identify trends and tailor their products to meet customer needs. AI can also assist in product design, helping to create more efficient and sustainable products. Moreover, AI can help businesses comply with complex regulations by automating compliance tasks and identifying potential risks.

AI can also play a crucial role in sustainability. By analysing data, businesses can identify opportunities to reduce waste, minimise carbon footprints, and optimise resource usage.

These advancements are particularly evident in industries such as electronics and automotive, where AI and data are driving significant transformations.

Electronics Industry: The electronics industry is heavily data-driven, from product design to customer support. AI algorithms analyse data from user interactions, allowing companies to refine product features and enhance user experience. For example, a smartphone manufacturer might use AI to analyse data on how consumers use different features, guiding the design of future models. AI also plays a critical role in quality control, where it can quickly identify defects during the manufacturing process, ensuring that only the highest-quality products reach the market.

 Automotive Industry: The automotive industry is undergoing a profound transformation with AI at its core. AI is integral to the development of autonomous vehicles, where it processes from data cameras. sensors, and radar systems to navigate roads safely. Beyond autonomous driving, AI helps manufacturers optimise production lines, manage supply chains, and even personalise the driving experience for consumers. For example, AI-driven systems in smart cars can learn a driver's habits and preferences, automatically adjusting seat positions, climate control, and even music playlists.

Challenges and the Risk of Model Collapse

The integration of AI and data into industry, while promising, also presents challenges:

- Data Privacy: The vast amounts of data collected by AI systems raise privacy concerns. The more we use technology, the more susceptible we become to data privacy breaches, cyberattacks & other misuses. Industries must ensure that they protect sensitive information and comply with GDPR, DPDPA, IT Act & other related regulation to maintain consumer trust.
- Bias and Fairness: AI systems can inadvertently perpetuate biases present in the data they are trained on. This is particularly concerning in applications like hiring or customer service, where biased AI could lead to unfair treatment. Addressing these biases is critical for the ethical deployment of AI. Industries should ensure that data



collected for the recruitment tool is not biased against any specific gender, religion, native, physical characteristics and other such considerations.

- Job Displacement: The automation of tasks traditionally performed by humans is another concern.
 As AI Robots become more capable, there is a risk of job displacement, particularly in roles that involve repetitive tasks. However, this also presents an opportunity for workforce reskilling and the creation of new types of jobs.
- IPR Issues: AI's ability
 to generate content and
 analyse data raises important
 questions about intellectual
 property. For instance, when
 AI systems generate content—
 whether it be text, music,
 design, process or artwork—
 who owns the rights?
 Additionally, AI systems often
 rely on large datasets, some of
 which may include copyrighted

- material. This raises concerns about how that data is used and whether it infringes on existing copyrights. Industries must navigate these issues carefully, ensuring that their use of AI and data complies with copyright laws and respects the intellectual property rights of others.
- Model Collapse: One of the lesser-known but significant risks associated with AI is model collapse. This occurs when an AI model, due to continuous training on its own outputs or on increasingly homogenous data, begins to lose accuracy and generalisation ability. In industries like manufacturing or automotive production, where AI models are often used for predictive maintenance or quality control, model collapse could lead to inaccurate predictions and faulty operations. To mitigate this risk, it is crucial to ensure that AI models are trained on diverse, high-quality data and regularly updated with new information.

Conclusion

The Digital Dawn, marked by the convergence of data and AI, is ushering in a new era of industrial transformation. AI, as a new element in production, is revolutionising the way industries operate. While its capabilities are impressive, its success hinges on its symbiotic relationship with human intelligence.

While AI can excel at tasks like data analysis, pattern recognition, and automation, it cannot fully replicate the human capacity for intuition, empathy, and rapid decision-making in complex, dynamic situations. The human touch remains indispensable, particularly in scenarios requiring immediate response, ethical judgement, and the ability to navigate unforeseen challenges. As industries continue to evolve, the optimal approach will likely involve a harmonious blend of AI-driven efficiency and human-centred ingenuity.

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Rajiv Malik is the Legal Leader at LG Electronics India, where he manages the legal team for the company's Noida manufacturing subsidiary. With over 20 years of legal experience, he specialises in litigation, contract management, data privacy, anti-trust issues, and compliance. He holds an LLB from Delhi University and is a qualified Company Secretary. Additionally, Rajiv has pursued further education in Cyber Laws from Amity University and AI & Law from Lund University.

In his role at LG Electronics, Rajiv oversees key legal functions, including intellectual property rights (IPR), alternative dispute resolution (ADR), and competition law. His extensive expertise extends beyond his corporate responsibilities; he is a respected speaker at industry conferences and seminars, where he provides valuable insights into legal and compliance matters.

Rajiv's qualification as a Company Secretary enhances his understanding of corporate governance and compliance, enabling him to help organisations adhere to legal obligations and manage potential risks effectively. He is dedicated to promoting ethical practices and ensuring that businesses operate within legal frameworks, contributing significantly to the company's legal and compliance strategies.



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LEGAL UPDATES FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE

United States of America

GOVERNOR GAVIN NEWSOM PASSES LAWS TO PROTECT ACTORS AGAINST ILLEGAL USE OF AI



The legislation will be effective from 2025.

California Governor Gavin Newsom has passed legislation to protect Hollywood actors and performers against unauthorised artificial intelligence (AI) use for creating digital clones without their consent.

The legislators made efforts to regulate the marquee industry affecting the Americans but had little to no oversight in the US.

The laws reflect the priorities of the Democratic governor who's walking a tightrope between protecting the public and workers against potential Al risks and nurturing the rapidly evolving homegrown industry.

In a statement, Governor Newsom said, "We continue to wade through uncharted territory on how Al and digital media is transforming the entertainment industry, but our North Star has always been to protect workers. This legislation ensures the industry can continue thriving while strengthening protections for workers and how their likeness can or cannot be used."

Inspired by the Hollywood actors' strike last year over low wages and concerns that studios would use AI technology to replace workers, the law will allow performers to back out of existing contracts if vague language allows studios to use AI to digitally clone

their voices and likeness.

Effective from 2025, the law is supported by the California Labor Federation and the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA).

Signed by Governor Newsom, another law supported by SAG-AFTRA prevents dead performers from being digitally cloned for commercial purposes without the permission of their estates.

The supporters stated that the law was crucial to curb the practice, citing the case of a media company that produced a fake, Al-generated hour-long comedy special to recreate the late comedian George Carlin's style and material without his estate's consent.

Fran Drescher, the President of SAG-AFTRA remarked, "It is a momentous day for SAG-AFTRA members and everyone else because the AI protections we fought so hard for last year are now expanded upon by California law thanks to the legislature and Governor Gavin Newsom. They say as California goes, so goes the nation!"

California is among the first states in the US to establish performer protection against Al. In March, Tennessee, long known as the birthplace of country music and the launchpad for musical legends, led the country by enacting a law protecting musicians and artists.

While the supporters said the new laws would help encourage responsible AI use without stifling innovation, opponents, including the California Chamber of Commerce, felt they were unenforceable and could lead to lengthy legal battles.

The two new laws are among a slew of measures passed by lawmakers this year to reign in the Al industry.

Earlier, the governor had indicated signing a proposal to crack down on election deepfakes. He has until 30 September to sign the proposals, veto them, or let them become law without his signature.

EPIC GAMES SUES GOOGLE AND SAMSUNG IN DISTRICT COURT OVER APP STORE PRACTICES

Stated that the Auto Blocker feature covertly blocked the ability to instal apps from other sources. Fortnite videomaker Epic Games has sued tech giants Google and Samsung in the US District Court for the Central District of California, accusing them of illegally colluding to block competition on Samsung devices. It has requested the court to prohibit anti-competitive conduct and mandate that Samsung remove Auto Blocker as the default setting on its devices.

Tim Sweeney, Epic's CEO said the company approached the California court from where it won a long legal battle with Google in 2023. He stated taking the fight to Europe and Asia, amid his long-running battle to force Apple and Google to open their smartphones to other app stores.

Sweeney remarked, "This is a major global fight, which is ultimately for the right of consumers to get all the benefits of competition and choose freely who they want to do business with."

Epic claimed that the Auto Blocker feature was implemented in coordination with Google to undermine a recent US court decision against Google's app store practices. It recently launched its app store, allowing users to bypass the Google-run store and offer content directly to smartphone users. Epic alleged that Auto Blocker surreptitiously blocked the new app store and others, obstructing the ability to instal apps from sources other than Google Play Store and Samsung Galaxy Store. It added that in July 2024, Samsung changed Auto Blocker from an 'opt-in' feature to the default setting, forcing users to navigate a cumbersome 21-step process to download apps from third-party stores or the web.



Epic argued that the move cemented Google Play Store's monopoly and violated the jury verdict in Epic's court victory against Google. (The jury had stated that Google's app-store practices, including agreements with phone manufacturers, were illegal). The American video game and software developer stated, "Allowing this coordinated illegal anti-competitive dealing to proceed hurts developers and consumers and undermines both the jury's verdict and regulatory and legislative progress worldwide." In its ongoing battles with major tech companies over app store policies and fees, the company previously sued Apple. Meanwhile, Google argued that its app store practices were monopolistic and harmed developers and consumers.

The new lawsuit comes when there's increasing scrutiny of big tech companies' market power by regulators and lawmakers worldwide. Europe, Japan and South Korea passed new laws, limiting how tech giants can do business.

US DISTRICT COURT REJECTS \$847M 5G PATENT INFRINGEMENT JURY VERDICT AGAINST VERIZON

Grants re-trial, setting 06 December as the date of hearing.

Telecommunications giant Verizon has convinced the US District Court, Eastern District of Texas to grant a retrial after a jury in June ordered it to pay a patent holding company \$847 million for patent infringement.

District Judge Rodney Gilstrap ordered a retrial concluding that the jury's verdict was "against the great weight of the evidence to such a material degree that a new trial is necessary."

The jury had decided that Verizon infringed two patents



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owned by the patent holding company General Access Solutions (GAS) and relating to wireless access devices in 5G technology.

Though Gilstrap stated having "great respect for a jury's verdict", he added that the issues raised by Verizon warranted a new trial on the case, including issues of infringement, invalidity and damage.

Verizon had stressed not infringing any asserted claims and that all those were invalid and lacked written description and enablement.

Dallas-based GAS had filed a lawsuit against Verizon in 2022 for infringing two patents that cover key inventions

of the 5G technology – 'beamforming' and 'hot spotting'. While beamforming makes 5G connections more focussed toward a receiving device, hot spotting is where people can access wireless internet with a mobile device.

The May 2024 court rulings during the pre-trial conference and the original June 2024 jury trial would apply to the new trial, including the pre-admission of all trial exhibits

Verizon was represented by a Gibson Dunn & Crutcher team led by Partner Josh Krevitt.

Bartlit Beck led by Glen Eric Summers appeared for General Access Solutions.

US LAWSUIT CLAIMS BYJU'S SIPHONED-OFF MONEY FROM US AFFILIATES



It transferred \$700,000 amid bankruptcy proceedings.

A lawsuit filed in the Delaware Federal Court said that Byju's, a software company controlled by Indian entrepreneur Byju Raveendran has drained cash from US affiliates in violation of US bankruptcy rules.

The lenders sought to recover \$533 million (allegedly hidden by Byju's), involving complex legal battles in the US and India.

A court-appointed trustee for the affiliates said that the amount meant for repaying creditors was instead siphoned off to Whitehat Education Technology.

The trustee, bankruptcy attorney Claudia Springer, sued to get back nearly \$700,000 from entities under her control.

The dispute is among the many between Byju's, and lenders owed more than \$1.2 billion. For over a year, the lenders tried to track down \$533 million that the company allegedly hid from them.

A Byju's affiliate that once held the missing \$533 million was taken over by lenders and put into Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Also, three other units were forced into insolvency and placed under Springer's control.

The US-based entities are in bankruptcy court in Wilmington, Delaware, while Byju's is facing bankruptcy proceedings in India.

(In the US, when a company comes under court protection, initially, cash cannot be moved or used to pay bills without the judge's approval). However, Byju's violated the rules.

Between 26 September and 27 October, the US affiliates' Stripe Inc account transferred the funds from the bankrupt companies to a Wells Fargo bank account associated with Springer.

Meanwhile, Springer alleged that individuals in India have been attempting to access the US debtors' account from Byju's email account. The company sought a court order preventing Wells from transferring funds out of Whitehat's account.

Byju's faces a fraudulent transfer lawsuit in a US bankruptcy court related to that. The case involves Byju's Alpha, a shell company created to tap US capital markets.

But after Byju's defaulted, the lenders seized control of the shell company, put it under court protection, and sued to get the money back.

US BANKRUPTCY COURT ALLOWS J&J TO PURSUE TALC PRODUCT'S MATTER IN TEXAS

The opponents had demanded the case to be sent to New Jersey.

The US Bankruptcy Court in Houston, Texas, has rejected the arguments raised by the Department of Justice (DoJ), the office of the US Trustee, its bankruptcy watchdog, and attorneys representing women suing Johnson & Johnson (J&J) subsidiary, Red River Talc.

Judge Christopher Lopez ruled that the company could pursue its third attempt to resolve thousands of lawsuits alleging its talc products caused cancer. It was allowed to avoid a venue that shot down its two previous efforts.

The opponents had demanded the case to be sent to a bankruptcy court in New Jersey, which oversaw and dismissed two previous bankruptcies meant to resolve the same talc lawsuits.

However, Judge Lopez said that J&J's latest effort should be treated as a new case because it gathered votes from claimants supporting the settlement. "I think this bankruptcy case is different," he said.

New Jersey-headquartered J&J faces lawsuits from over 62,000 plaintiffs alleging its baby powder and other talc products were contaminated with asbestos and caused ovarian and other cancers.

However, the company, while refuting the claims stated that bankruptcy was the best way to equitably compensate the plaintiffs, who would have to wait years for their cases to be heard in a 'lottery-like' system that often results in no recovery for the plaintiffs.

Erik Haas, the worldwide vice president of litigation at J&J stated that the court's ruling would aid the company's settlement efforts. "Today's decision is another step closer to full-and-final resolution of the talc litigation for the benefit of all stakeholders."

Recently, Red River filed for bankruptcy protection in Houston, seeking advantage of the court's ability to enforce global settlements that permanently halt all related lawsuits and forbid new ones. It proposed a \$9 billion settlement to resolve claims by women alleging they developed gynaecological cancers after using J&J talc products.

Meanwhile, outside of bankruptcy, any settlement that the company reached with some claimants would leave holdouts or future plaintiffs with the right to sue and expose the company to potential multibillion-dollar



verdicts.

The adversaries stated that J&J should not be allowed to choose a new bankruptcy court after previous rulings that its subsidiary was not eligible for bankruptcy protection.

Earlier, after J&J and its subsidiary filed for bankruptcy a second time, a federal appeals court ruled that none of the companies were in 'financial distress' that bankruptcy was meant to resolve.

At the hearing, Linda Richenderfer, an attorney for the US Trustee remarked that if companies could seek out new bankruptcy courts to escape a ruling, the entire system would be undermined.

Similarly, law firms opposing the settlement pointed out that since 2021, J&J's forum shopping led to three bankruptcies filed in three courts.

Attorney Sunni Beville told the judge, "If that isn't abusive forum shopping, I don't know what is."

Bankruptcy reform advocate, and former head of the US Trustee program, Cliff White said the court's decision highlighted the need for new rules to prevent bankruptcy forum shopping. "There are no rules anymore."

The proposed bankruptcy settlement has divided attorneys representing cancer victims. While some supported the deal as the best way to get compensation for their clients, others opposed stating the settlement value was very low. They felt that wealthy companies like J&J should not be allowed to use the legal system to gain bankruptcy protection meant for people and companies that cannot afford to pay their debts.

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NOYB APPROACHES DATA PROTECTION AUTHORITY FOR PRIVACY COMPLAINT AGAINST MOZILLA



Alleges that its feature turns the browser into a tracking tool for websites without directly telling its users. Vienna-based advocacy group, NOYB (None Of Your Business), founded by privacy activist Max Schrems, has filed a complaint with the Austrian Data Protection Authority against Mozilla accusing the Firefox browsermaker of tracking user behaviour on websites without consent.

(Firefox was once a top browser choice among users due to its privacy features but now lags market leader Google's Chrome, Apple's Safari and Microsoft's Edge with a single-digit market share).

The digital rights organisation accused Mozilla of

enabling a "privacy-preserving attribution" feature that turns the browser into a tracking tool for websites without directly telling its users.

However, Mozilla stated it wanted to help websites understand how their ads performed without collecting data about individuals. By offering a non-invasive alternative to cross-site tracking, it hoped to reduce the collection of individual information.

NOYB argued that Firefox turned on the feature by default. While it may be less invasive than unlimited tracking, it interfered with user rights under the European Union privacy laws.

Felix Mikolasch, the data protection lawyer at NOYB held, "It's a shame that Mozilla believes that users are too dumb to say yes or no. Users should be able to choose and the feature should have been turned off by default."

NOYB wants Mozilla to inform users about its data processing activities, switch to an opt-in system and delete all unlawfully processed data of millions of affected users.

It had recently filed a complaint against Alphabet for allegedly tracking users of its Chrome browser. It also filed hundreds of complaints against big tech companies, leading to huge penalties.

COMCO COMPETITION COMMISSION SHUTS PROBE AGAINST NOVARTIS



Swiss authority stated there was no unlawful practice.

COMCO Competition Commission has terminated an investigation against Novartis into using blocking patents, without results.

In 2022, the Commission began its probe to determine whether the pharmaceutical giant intended to unlawfully protect one of its medicines by filing various patent infringement lawsuits.

In a statement, Switzerland's Commission stated, "The investigation revealed that Novartis' actions were common practice in the field of patent law. It did not confirm the indications of an unlawful restraint of competition."

Singapore

SINGAPORE COURT GRANTS 4-MONTH CONDITIONAL MORATORIUM TO WAZIRX AFTER \$230 MILLION HACK

The ruling comes with conditions designed to maintain transparency and restore confidence among creditors and users.

A Singapore court has granted cryptocurrency exchange WazirX a four-month conditional moratorium, providing temporary relief and allowing it to focus on resolving the aftermath of a major hack that led to over \$230 million (45 percent of customers' funds) loss.

WazirX had pleaded for a six-month moratorium under Section 64 of the Insolvency, Restructuring, and Dissolution Act (IRDA).

The ruling comes with conditions, wherein WazirX must publicly disclose wallet addresses via a court affidavit; respond to user queries raised during court proceedings; release its financial information, including books of accounts, within six weeks, and ensure that future voting on court applications is conducted through an independent platform, scrutinised by third parties.

Transparency, particularly the disclosure of wallet, ensures that stakeholders have full visibility into the firm's actions as it navigates the recovery process.

The court acknowledged the proactive steps of WazirX, including its prompt filing for the moratorium. The move facilitates the fastest, creditor-approved, and legally binding resolution to restore users' crypto balances.

The company stated, "We are working diligently with our advisors and stakeholders to develop a comprehensive plan that addresses the needs of all involved parties. WazirX appreciates the court's trust and confidence in our actions."

Nischal Shetty, the founder of WazirX remarked, "We are thankful for the court's decision, allowing us to focus



on our path to resolution, recovery, and restructuring. Our immediate filing for the moratorium was a decisive step to ensure the fastest, fairest, creditor-approved, legally binding path, where creditors have a token choice and potential upside in a bull run."

The court's decision follows a massive security breach in July 2024. It resulted in WazirX losing over \$230 million in customers' funds. The hacker reportedly laundered the stolen funds using Tornado Cash to obscure transactions. The court acknowledged that despite challenges, WazirX acted in good faith by seeking the moratorium.

However, the legal advisers of WazirX have cautioned that customers may not fully recover their funds, especially in cryptocurrency terms, raising concerns about the extent of recovery for affected users.

While emphasising the importance of transparency in the process, during the court proceedings, the judge asked the representatives of WazirX to reveal any additional assets beyond the crypto tokens held by the exchange.





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