

Interviews Series

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Neeraj Kumar

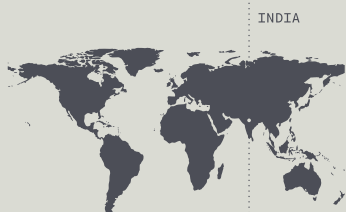
Dua Associates
India



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1. **How does the Legalink Asia group collaborate to address regional legal challenges and opportunities?**

Legalink is a powerful network of legal professionals and firms that fosters cooperation and generates opportunities for collaboration on various legal matters. The Asia group addresses challenges and opportunities through various mechanisms and strategies.

We as members continue to exchange information and share best practices on legal issues affecting the region. This includes referral network, publishing newsletters and updates.

Legalink has recently introduced regional conferences which is a great initiative as it is able to provide platform to enhance the legal skills and knowledge of younger lawyers. This has a great potential and has given immense exposure to younger professionals to exploit this network.

Members could collectively take up collaborative projects and initiatives by creating practice area-based teams to pitch for and cater to requirements of the clients whose interests extend beyond one region.

By leveraging these strategies, we could collectively address regional legal challenges, capitalize on opportunities and foster regional bonds.

2. **What are some of the key achievements of the Legalink Asia group over the past year?**

Legalink has held highly successful meets (in Bangkok and then in Vietnam) which has helped in understanding the requirements of each firm from the other and the evolving legal scenarios in different jurisdictions of our Asian region. These meets have also helped in getting to know younger professionals from the member firm and also providing better insight into the various practice areas of the firms. The focus has been to identify expertise within each member firm and see how the same can be exploited by others (along with their own experts) in their respective jurisdictions.

It has been acknowledged by Asia group member firms that today clients prefer to deal with one firm who can also seamlessly provide services in other jurisdictions due to their ever-expanding presence and business needs.

The lawyers within the Asia group are continuously discussing how to shape the legal landscape in Asia, enhance knowledge and best practices so that as a group we can offer better services and visibility to all the members in the Legalink.

The network has enabled us to collectively celebrate the many awards and ranking recognitions that lawyers and firms in Legalink Asia group have won. This has not only served as morale boosters but have also been encouraging to those vying for their own spot in the awards turntable.

Legalink's Asia group has successfully leveraged its referral network and collaborated on legal matters seamlessly, making it a win-win scenario for all members concerned.

3. How has the Vietnam Regional Meeting in Da Nang contributed to the Asia Group goals? How do you think these events strengthen the connections and collaborations within the Legalink Asia group?

The recent regional meeting in Da Nang, Vietnam has significantly advanced the goals of the Asian legal consortium. Key outcomes include:

Enhanced Legal Collaboration: The meeting strengthened the framework for collaboration among member countries, focusing on the emergence of new trends and productive discussions on addressing regulations to address cross-border legal challenges effectively. An example being the discussions on how members firms can collaborate on dispute resolution matters and other legal areas where standardized legal practices can be adopted across the region.

Exposure to younger lawyers: These regional meets have provided great opportunity for younger lawyers to express their expectations from the Legalink and how they can assist in further developing this amazing network. The theme behind this initiative was to expose younger professionals to the member firms so that they can start building and using the network for enhancing their professional development, growth and marketing skills.

The general discussions and informal exchanges between various members contributed immensely towards strengthening Legalink Asia group's goals.

5. **What are the most pressing legal challenges currently facing the Asia region, and how can Legalink address them? Can you discuss any emerging opportunities in the Asian legal market that Legalink members should be aware of?**

In identifying challenges, it is important to first examine emerging trends, which typically give rise to a new set of issues. The most prominent emerging trend is the transformative role of technology in law firms. The dominance of technology in all business sectors has also led to a definitive shift towards legal specializations in areas such as fintech, e-commerce, automation and robotics, data privacy, etc.

This trend comes with its own set of challenges that include talent acquisition and retention. Recognizing the growing demand for specialized legal advisory services in areas such as arbitration, insolvency, and competition law and a rising demand for expertise in environmental and social governance (ESG) compliances, Legalink can support members in building robust practices in these emerging growth areas, while adapting to the expectations of younger lawyers, who are looking for more flexibility and work-life balance.

6. **How do you anticipate the economic and regulatory environment in Asia evolving over the next few years?**

In tandem with the rapidly evolving business environment, the Indian legal sector too will witness changes, some of which could even be termed as disruptive. While innovations to enhance efficiency is an ongoing process, we believe this will be accelerated in the coming years with AI and Generative AI set to expand its influence exponentially. With the proliferation of online data and identity theft and frauds, data protection and cybersecurity practice are going to gain ascendance.

Alongside, we also foresee a greater emphasis on ethics and professional standards within the legal profession. With increased scrutiny and accountability, there is likely to be a stronger focus on integrity, transparency, and ethical conduct among legal practitioners and firms.

Additionally, increasing competition within the legal sector presents a challenge for both established firms and new entrants. There will inevitably be pressure to differentiate services, maintain competitive pricing, and attract and retain talented legal professionals.

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