

2020 INDIA FIRMS TO WATCH

This year's list of India Firms to Watch features a diverse group. While some have been in the business for decades, others were only set up in the past 12 months. What unites them is strong commitment to client service and a great deal of ambition.

RANKING BY ASIAN LEGAL BUSINESS; TEXT BY APARNA SAI

Ajay Sahni & Associates, which was launched in 1983, recently opened its Mumbai office. The firm specialises in intellectual property, trademark, copyright, patent, design, geographical indication, disputes, licensing, enforcement, protection, audit, transactions, valuations, commercialisation, monetisation, investigations, legal, technology, media, and telecommunication. It is the first law firm in India to offer blockchain-based IP solutions.

Meanwhile, **GameChanger Law Advisors** specialises in commercial contracts, corporate law, employment law, FDI/foreign trade, intellectual property and venture capital transactions. Founded in 2011 by Amrut Joshi, the firm has three partners, and offices in Bangalore and Delhi. The firm has represented clients from various sectors including fintech, sports, entertainment, and gaming, social enterprises/impact investments, and venture capitals.

Established in 2004, **LexCounsel Law Offices** is a Delhi-headquartered corporate/commercial and litigation law firm with four partners and 35 fee-earners. The firm recently opened an office in Bhubaneswar. LexCounsel specialises

in areas such as M&A, corporate, labour and employment, real estate, venture capital and private equity, education laws, defence and aviation, franchising, media and entertainment, dispute resolution, insolvency, software/information technology, and general corporate and commercial matters.

Pioneer Legal, which was founded in April last year, represents domestic and international clients on corporate and commercial laws, employment laws, insurance, intellectual property, telecommunications, information technology, infrastructure and project finance among others. The firm currently has an office in Mumbai, but is in the process of expanding its operations and will soon set up its commercial litigation and arbitration practice.

Another firm which made the list is **PSL Advocates & Solicitors**. Established in 2012, the firm has offices in Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Chandigarh, with the latter two being set up last year. The six-partner boutique hired five associates over the past year. PSL has represented clients from sectors including automotive, food, hospitality and real estate.

Established in 2002 and headquartered in Delhi, **Singh and Associates (S&A)** has offices in Gurgaon, Mumbai and Bangalore. The firm specialises in litigation and ADR, contracts and transactions, corporate and tax, and intellectual property. In 2019, the firm won arbitrations for clients which amounted to approximately 60 billion rupees (\$812.7 million). Over the past year, S&A's headcount has increased from 105 to 151.

Singularity Legal is an Asia-and-Africa-focused international disputes boutique which was established in 2017 by Prateek Bagaria. In 2019, the firm was named the Rising Law Firm of the Year at the ALB India Law Awards. The firm handles cross-border disputes across sectors including energy and resources, construction and infrastructure, shipping and insurance, international trade and business, and private equity and finance.

Noida-based boutique **Sujata Chaudhri IP Attorneys** was founded in 2014 by Sujata Chaudhri. The firm specialises in all aspects of trademark law, branding issues, designs and copyrights. The firm has been involved in major litigation matters in the past year and has represented major brand owners from India and overseas.

UBR Legal Advocates was founded by Bharat Raichandani in 2015. In 2019, the firm opened offices in Vapi and Delhi. It focuses on tax litigation such as direct, indirect taxation and foreign trade and advisory-related matters. UBR Legal also advises on commercial laws, arbitration and contractual laws.

LAW FIRM SHOWCASE:

Lex Consult
Lex Consult is a Mumbai-based corporate commercial and transactional advisory boutique law firm with two partners and six fee-earners. Founded in 2019, the firm specialises in mergers and acquisitions, strategic alliances and joint ventures, private equity and venture capital, structured finance, dispute strategy and real estate.

The firm's clients include Pioneering Ventures, Arshya Limited, Sukkhi Online,

BROUGHT TO YOU BY LEX CONSULT

Lex Consult

Nyay Sagar, 2nd Floor, Kalanagar, Bandra East, Mumbai - 400 051, India
E contact@lexconsult.co.in W lexconsult.co.in

Key Personnel



Naresh Pareek, Partner, +91 90 0407 3498

Naresh Pareek is a partner at Lex Consult, and has an experience of over a decade in corporate commercial and transactional advisory. His primary areas of practice are joint ventures, financial & technical collaborations, mergers (including demergers), acquisitions, private equity investments, business restructuring and cross border transactions. Having worked at top law firms before co-founding Lex Consult, Naresh has advised clients on a wide range of issues relating to acquisitions, structuring (including entry and exit strategies), regulatory trends and compliances, strategic issues and developments in a variety of sectors such as manufacturing, power/infrastructure, healthcare, retail/consumer goods, financial services, real estate, media & technology, e-commerce, fintech, insurance and hospitality. As a trusted advisor to a number of his clients, Naresh is often requested to go beyond the limits of a typical transactional lawyer and advise on contentious matters such as shareholder disputes, arbitrations, liquidation proceedings and fraud investigations.



Majid Afsar Siddiqi, Partner, +91 88 7961 4511

Majid Afsar Siddiqi specialises in joint ventures and acquisition, shareholder exits and disputes. He has, in the past, also advised leading banks and financial institutions in their lending and structured financing transactions. While having primarily represented investors, Majid has also represented Indian promoters on a variety of deals in sectors ranging from pharmaceuticals, agri-business companies, logistics and real estate to financial services, retail, education and technology consulting services. Majid has successfully been able to use his sectoral experience to implement methodical due diligence strategies, efficient negotiations, effective drafting and faster deal-closing. Majid has spent his formative years at top law firms prior to turning entrepreneurial and has regularly advised international clients in structuring their investments in India, especially in relation to heavily regulated sectors such as real estate and retail. He was one of the key members of the team which successfully obtained the requisite government approvals and concluded the first and only foreign direct investment deal in the multi-brand retail sector in India.

Accelerated Learning Edutech, Mestech India Services, Niyogin Fintech, Arevuk Advisory Services and Lesma Limited. Notable work of Lex Consult includes representing Pioneering Ventures in the acquisition of a further 28 percent stake in Desai Fruits and Vegetables from Deepak Fertilizers and Petrochemicals Corporation; acting in the court-approved merger of Valiant Organics and Amariyot Chemicals; representing Accelerated Learning Edutech, which operates the School of Accelerated Learning, in its seed funding round from Astar Ventures and others; and representing Niyogin Fintech Limited in its acquisition of a majority stake in InvestDirect Capital Services, the holding company for Moneyfront - a platform for direct investments in mutual funds.

The firm attributes its success in the past year to focused partner attention on each deal; recognition by clients and counterparties of its transactional experience; the approach to the unique requirements of a young millennial workforce;

adapting to the dynamic requirements of clients in a responsive, effective and efficient manner; training associates while giving them the necessary guidance and space to showcase their abilities; and leveraging the collective knowledge of the firm's lawyers to service clients in various sectors like manufacturing, chemicals, fintech, agriculture and agrotech, media and entertainment, edutech, hospitality, real estate, retail and more. Some of the changes in business conditions which the firm believes worked in its favour include the dynamic nature of the regulatory regime which saw numerous clients requiring guidance to operate in a compliant manner resulting in a closer working relationship between both the parties; government policy and legislative measures such as IBC, RERA, GST, FDI liberalisation and others.

The firm's growth strategy includes addition of practice areas through inorganic acquisition of partner practices; leveraging the firm's existing network to make further inroads in the industry;

encouraging a work environment that attracts new generation lawyers; and retaining talent as the firm believes that it is equivalent to hiring new ones. Additionally, this year, Lex Consult intends to consider fresher ideas along with building a connect with various law schools in India (through internships, presentations and so on).

Partners Majid Afsar Siddiqi and Naresh Pareek, who each have more than a decade of experience in the legal industry, are key members of Lex Consult along with associate Shubham Soni. Siddiqi specialises in joint ventures, structured finance, cross border acquisitions/investment, real estate and retail. Meanwhile, Pareek is well versed in joint ventures and court approved mergers, cross border/private equity transactions, and infrastructure power manufacturing.

In the future, the firm intends to grow further while expanding their team as well as developing a knowledge management team and leveraging the latest technology. 📍

