

Rajah & Tann

No. of pending cases: 62

Value of all claims: US\$3.9 billion

No. of appearances in *Who's Who*: 1

No. of treaty cases: 0

No. of arbitrator appointments (no. as chair or sole): 10(6)

Although the 100 includes more and more firms in Asia from the pool of indigenous law firms, Rajah & Tann will always be able to say it is the first from its peer group to make the grade. It's been in the book since its first edition and so is Singapore's only charter member of the 100. It earned that honour by being the only all-Asian firm in the region with an arbitration group brought in from one of the field's international players. Its team was, for several years, Jones Day's local arbitration branch, whose members joined Rajah & Tann in 2006. That combination of a top-rank Singapore firm and a team formerly at a global player is unique, and in the absence of extraordinary developments in the market is likely to remain so. Today those lawyers work on disputes regionwide – from Pakistan to the Philippines and everywhere in between – as well as appearing often in Singapore courts on arbitration-related matters. Many of the group's clients are construction and engineering businesses, but energy firms, mining businesses and governments have used it too. As such the practice has become celebrated for what a local player can accomplish in the arena. *GAR 30* researchers note that it has appeared in that ranking twice and again this year.

In contrast to the other, larger home-grown Singaporean law firms, Rajah & Tann has avoided either a merger or a joint venture with a UK, Australian or other international firm. Partners focus on particular jurisdictions. Francis Xavier SC, for example, covers Indonesia, and you can read other designations below. When it comes to rankings, two print sources disagree about precisely where Rajah & Tann belongs in the overall litigation market – level with Drew & Napier or just behind it? – but nobody has any doubt that the arbitration expertise is a distinguishing feature. The firm is ranked in the third band of an Asia-wide arbitration list, making it the highest-placed all-Asian firm, equal in that with Bae Kim & Lee from Korea.

Recent events

In 2009 the firm's managing partner, Steven Chong SC, followed his predecessor's path to the bench; head of international arbitration Sundaresh Menon SC took over. Menon was also appointed deputy chair of the SIAC. The firm reported a substantial tactical victory on behalf of a mining company seeking to preserve its position in a joint venture. The firm assessed the seriousness of the case as a nine or 10 out of 10 on the seriousness scale. It obtained a partial award for the client by characterising one of the points of disagreement as an issue of law purely – reducing expense and speeding up delivery of the award. The award has helped to offset proceedings against the client in local courts. Menon has also become Singapore's representative on the UNCITRAL arbitration working group. The firm also fought 14 court proceedings about arbitration during the same time. 2009 also saw Francis Xavier become an SC, Singapore's equivalent of taking silk.

Names to know at Rajah & Tann:

Singapore: Sundaresh Menon SC (covers: Asia-Pacific/India); Chong Yee Leong and Chong Boon Leong (Asia-Pacific); Francis Xavier SC (Indonesia); Kamilah Kasim (Malaysia);

Toh Kian Sing SC and Yang Lih Shyng (China); and Andre Yeap SC and Lee Eng Beng SC (Singapore).