

Employment Law Conference 2026

*Future-Proofing Work:
Law, Culture and the Modern
Employee Experience*

 @barcouncilelc2026

 Bar Council ELC 2026



**23 and 24 Apr 2026 (Thursday and Friday)
9:00 am to 5:30 pm**



M Resort and Hotel, Kuala Lumpur



Commemorative e-Booklet



Organised by:
Bar Council Industrial and
Employment Law Committee ("IELC")

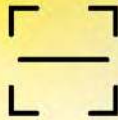


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Conference Information



M Resort & Hotel Kuala Lumpur
Jalan Damansara, Bukit Kiara, 60000 Kuala Lumpur



Parking Information:

Parking is available at the adjacent multistorey car park at a flat rate of RM10 per day.

Social Media:

For the latest updates on ELC 2026, including speaker and moderator profiles, session highlights, and pre-recorded interviews, please follow our official social media platforms:



@barcouncilelc2026



Bar Council ELC 2026

Conference Materials:

Scan here for conference materials



Foreword by the President of the Malaysian Bar

It is a privilege to welcome all attendees to the Employment Law Conference 2026 (“ELC 2026”). The theme of this conference, “**Future-Proofing Work: Law, Culture and the Modern Employee Experience**”, captures our present challenges in the workforce and sets the tone for a meaningful and enriching conference.

The post-COVID-19 world we live and work in has given rise to significant challenges to existing employment laws. Remote and hybrid work arrangements, once the exception, are now par for the course. I have myself been a digital nomad. Malaysia is not a passive observer of this trend, as it is one of the countries that operates a digital nomad visa scheme. Closer to home, the Malaysian Bar is in the thick of the evolving landscape of the modern workforce and continues to advocate for gig economy reforms to ensure fair protections for gig workers.

The Industrial Court continues to be instrumental in developing Malaysian employment jurisprudence, particularly through its stance against workplace harassment and bullying. Our Members too deserve credit for this development, as it is through their advocacy that the Industrial Court has upheld¹ that cyberstalking a subordinate constitutes workplace harassment and that persistent verbal abuse has no place in a workplace environment.² Such contributions to our jurisprudence are worth acknowledging, and this conference is a fitting occasion to do so.

Over the next two days, this conference will explore the intersections of law with emerging issues such as digital conduct, mental health, the integration of artificial intelligence (“AI”) and environmental, social and governance (“ESG”) principles. Finally, let us not forget that it is employment law that has been in the forefront of the development of administrative law, with landmark judgments in *R Rama Chandran v The Industrial Court of Malaysia*,³ *Hong Leong Equipment Sdn Bhd v Liew Fook Chuan*⁴ and many others. Employment law has benefited Malaysia by being a conduit through which Malaysian administrative law has also been modernised and improved.

I congratulate the Bar Council Industrial and Employment Law Committee (“IELC”) for their tremendous efforts and dedication in organising this conference. I extend to them my appreciation and gratitude, as well as to our distinguished speakers and panellists for sharing their invaluable expertise and time. I wish you a productive and insightful conference.

Anand Raj
President
Malaysian Bar

¹ *Prabakaran Balakrishnan v Entegris Malaysia Sdn Bhd* [2022] 2 ILR 325.

² *Nik Hishamuddin Nik Mansor v Petroliam Nasional Berhad* [2024] 4 ILR 35.

³ [1997] 1 MLJ 145.

⁴ [1996] 1 MLJ 481.

Foreword by the Co-Chairpersons of the Bar Council Industrial and Employment Law Committee (“IELC”)

On behalf of the Bar Council Industrial and Employment Law Committee, it is our pleasure to welcome you to the Employment Law Conference 2026.

The theme of this Conference, **“Future Proofing Work: Law, Culture and the Modern Employee Experience”**, reflects the profound changes shaping today’s workplaces. Generational shifts in the workforce, rapid technological advancement, evolving expectations around mental well-being and inclusivity, and the growing influence of artificial intelligence and environmental, social and governance (“ESG”) principles all present complex challenges for employers and practitioners alike.

As employment lawyers and human resource practitioners, we occupy a unique position. We advise at moments that matter — when livelihoods are at stake, when reputations are on the line and when organisations are making decisions that will shape their corporate culture for all to follow. This Conference reminds us that our role is not just to say what the law allows, but also to guide clients and stakeholders towards outcomes that are fair, sustainable and defensible.

In that spirit, the sessions over these two days are designed not only to deepen legal understanding, but also to encourage reflection on the broader responsibilities that come alongside advising in this field. Ultimately, it is through this collective engagement that we ensure employment law remains principled in its foundation and responsive to the increasingly intricate realities it seeks to govern.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the distinguished speakers, moderators and members of the organising committee for their time, commitment and insight in bringing this Conference together. Most importantly, we would like to thank you for joining us. We hope you find the Conference engaging, enriching and meaningful, and that it provides genuine and lasting value to your professional practice.

Karthigesan Shanmugam and Wong Keat Ching
Co Chairpersons
Bar Council Industrial and Employment Law Committee (“IELC”)

Welcome Address by the Chairperson, Employment Law Conference 2026 Organising Committee

It is my great pleasure to welcome each of you — delegates, speakers and distinguished guests — to the Employment Law Conference 2026 (“ELC 2026”).

ELC 2026 brings together Members of the Bar, in-house counsels, human resource practitioners, and industry stakeholders for a timely and important exchange of ideas. Your presence reflects a shared commitment to navigating the evolving world of work with insight, integrity and purpose.

Our theme — **“Future-Proofing Work: Law, Culture, and the Modern Employee Experience”** — speaks to the urgency of this moment. The workplace is changing faster than at any point in recent memory, driven by technological advancement, shifting employee expectations, and the relentless pressures of a dynamic business environment. Employment law must not only respond to these changes; it must help shape them.

Over the coming sessions, we will explore the issues redefining employment relationships today: talent retention, workplace culture, the impact of artificial intelligence, disciplinary processes, and managing change in increasingly complex organisations. These are not abstract debates. They affect real people, real organisations and the laws that bind them together.

But compliance, as important as it is, has never been the full story. Our deeper work is to help build workplaces that are genuinely fair, inclusive and resilient — places where people can do their best work and be treated with dignity. That requires honest dialogue, practical solutions and a willingness to be challenged.

I encourage you to engage fully in the sessions, share your perspectives freely and make the most of the connections you will form here. The conversations that happen in the corridors can matter just as much as those on the main stage.

A conference like this does not happen without many people giving generously of their time and talent. My sincere thanks to my Deputy Chair, Ms Sumitha Kishna, whose support has been invaluable throughout, the Organising Committee, the Social Media team — made up of some of the most energetic and inspiring young members practising in industrial relations at the Bar — and to the Malaysian Bar Secretariat, whose quiet professionalism keeps everything moving: I am deeply grateful. To our Speakers and Moderators, thank you for the thought and care you have brought to your contributions.

To our delegates: thank you for being here and for being part of something that matters. I hope ELC 2026 leaves you with new ideas, new connections and renewed conviction in the importance of the work we do.

Welcome, once again.

Janice Anne Leo
Chairperson
ELC 2026 Organising Committee

Employment Law Conference 2026 Organising Committee



Janice Anne Leo
Chairperson
ELC 2026 Organising Committee



Sumitha Shaanthinni Kishna
Deputy Chairperson
ELC 2026 Organising Committee



Wong Keat Ching
Co-Chairperson of IELC



Donovan Cheah Swee Kin
Deputy Co-Chairperson of IELC

Members



Angeline Low Lu-Yen



Devanathan s/o Seperamaniam



Sonia Abraham



R Ravindra Kumar



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Tan Qian Hui



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For further information about our Employment, Health & Safety practice, please contact:



Jack Yow
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Neoh Jin Keat
Partner
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Programme

Day 1 (23 Apr 2026 – Thursday)

Time	Agenda
8:00 am to 9:00 am	Registration
9:00 am to 10:15 am	Opening Ceremony Welcome Address Karthigesan Shanmugam, <i>Partner, Karthig Shan; Co-Chairperson, IELC</i> Opening Address Anand Raj, <i>President, Malaysian Bar</i> Keynote Address Datuk S Nantha Balan, <i>Retired Judge, Court of Appeal; Consultant, Adnan Sundra & Low</i>
10:15 am to 10:45 am	Morning Coffee Break
10:45 am to 11:45 am	Session 1 Future-Proofing the Workplace: How Ready Are We for the Changing Generation of Work? <p>The modern workplace is undergoing one of the most significant generational shifts in history. With Gen Z entering the workforce, millennials stepping into leadership roles and technology reshaping how, when and where we work, employers face new challenges in attracting, retaining and engaging talent. This session will explore the legal, cultural and organisational implications of a multigenerational workforce — from evolving employee expectations and hybrid work arrangements, to emerging issues such as the right to disconnect, mental well-being, diversity and inclusion. It will also examine how employment laws are adapting and where gaps remain, as well as the strategies organisations may adopt to foster an inclusive and agile workplace. The discussion will also include practical steps to ensure organisations are ready for the changing generation of work.</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) The Honourable Dato’ Anand Ponnudurai, <i>Judge, High Court of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur (Civil Division)</i>(2) Datuk (Dr) Nora Manaf, <i>Chairman, Manaf Gardner Associates (“MGA”); Board Member, MBSB Group Berhad</i> <p>Moderator: Janice Anne Leo, <i>Chairperson, Employment Law Conference 2026 Organising Committee; Member, IELC; Partner, Steven Thiru</i></p>
11:45 am to 1:00 pm	Session 2 Retaining Talent in the New Horizon: Evolution of Workplace Allegiances <p>The shifting dynamics of the modern workplace have profound legal implications for how employers attract, engage and retain talent. Traditional notions of loyalty and long-term employment are giving way to values-driven, flexible and purpose-oriented engagement. As a result, organisations must adapt their employment frameworks to address new expectations around flexibility, autonomy and fairness.</p>

This session examines how employment law intersects with modern retention strategies — from contractual arrangements to evolving obligations related to flexible work arrangements, mental health and workplace culture. It will also explore how flexibility, fair treatment and compliance with anti-discrimination and harassment laws contribute to sustaining trust and reducing attrition risks.

Speakers:

- (1) **Chen Fong Tuan**, *Chief People Officer, Valiram Group*
- (2) **Donovan Cheah Swee Kin**, *Co-Deputy Chairperson, IELC; Partner, Donovan & Ho*
- (3) **Zamir Hamdy Hamdan**, *Senior Manager, Human Resources Business Partner and Industrial Relations, Etika Sdn Bhd*

Moderator: **Wong Keat Ching**, *Co-Chairperson, IELC; Partner, Zul Rafique & Partners*

1:00 pm to 2:00 pm

Lunch Break

2:00 pm to 3:15 pm

Session 3

Bullying, Harassment and Reasonable Reprimands

What separates firm leadership from workplace bullying and harassment? In today's evolving workplace, delivering feedback is no longer just about correcting mistakes — it is about balancing accountability with sensitivity. This session explores what constitutes bullying, harassment and reasonable reprimands in the context of modern employment, particularly when managing different generations' expectations and communication styles. It will also examine how to maintain fairness, avoid claims of harassment and ensure that performance management remains both compliant and effective in fostering growth.

Speakers:

- (1) **The Honourable Tuan Paramalingam s/o J Doraisamy**, *Chairman, Industrial Court of Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur)*
- (2) **Santhi Latha**, *Dean, Rajah & Tann Asia Academy*
- (3) **Anishaa Sundramoorthy**, *Advocate and Solicitor, Sreenevasan*

Moderator: **Tham Li Vyten**, *Partner, Raja Darryl & Loh*

3:15 pm to 4:15 pm

Session 4

Artificial Intelligence and Environmental, Social and Governance Principles: Effective New Methods of Entrenched Practices

The modern workplace is undergoing rapid transformation as Artificial Intelligence ("AI") and Environmental, Social and Governance ("ESG") principles redefine how organisations manage people, compliance and accountability. This session explores how these forces are replacing outdated employment practices with smarter, fairer and more transparent approaches.

Speakers will discuss how AI is enhancing recruitment integrity and monitoring workplace conduct, and the legal and ethical challenges of algorithmic decision-making. The session will also explore how ESG frameworks are pushing employers to embed ethics and sustainability into everyday operations.

Speakers:

- (1) **Deepak Pillai**, *Partner, Christopher & Lee Ong*
- (2) **Dr Yeoh Ken Kyid**, *Director, Group Sustainability, Bursa Malaysia*
- (3) **Priscilla Faith Lim**, *Advocate and Solicitor, Steven Thiru*

Moderator: **Donovan Cheah Swee Kin**, *Co-Deputy Chairperson, IELC; Partner, Donovan & Ho*

Sponsored by:



4:15 pm to 5:30 pm

Session 5

Transfers, Closures and Mergers: Handling Human Resources Effectively

Business restructurings — whether through transfers, closures or mergers — present complex human resources and legal challenges. This session examines how employers can manage these transitions lawfully and effectively while maintaining fairness and transparency.

The session will discuss statutory obligations under the Employment Act 1955, including the handling of continuity of service, accrued benefits and consultation requirements. It will also explore best practices for employee communication, managing redundancies or redeployments and mitigating the risk of unfair dismissal or trade dispute claims.

Speakers:

- (1) **R Jayabalan**, *Secretary, Malaysian Bar*
- (2) **Muhendaran Suppiah**, *Member, IELC; Partner, Muhendaran Sri*
- (3) **Mathew Johnson**, *Head, Operations Industrial Relations, Group Industrial Relations, Maybank*

Moderator: **Vijayan Venugopal**, *Member, IELC; Partner, Shearn Delamore & Co.*

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5:30 pm

Evening Tea Break and Close of Day 1

Day 2 (24 Apr 2026 – Friday)

Time

Agenda

9:00 am to 9:30 am

Session 6

Role Play and Mock Disciplinary Action: From Complaint to Closure

This interactive session brings workplace discipline to life through role play and mock scenarios. Participants will witness the whole journey from complaint to closure, exploring proper procedures, common pitfalls and legal missteps along the way. The session will examine, through realistic skits, how conversations in the workplace can cross legal or ethical lines — particularly in relation to inclusivity — covering topics such as neurodiversity, gender and identity. The discussion will also unpack how age and gender perspectives influence perceptions of conduct and disciplinary action.

Presented by **Young Lawyers practising in Industrial Relations**

9:30 am to 10:45 am

Session 7

Sexual Harassment and Inappropriate Behaviour: Complaints to Consequences

Addressing sexual harassment in the workplace requires more than just policy — it demands a comprehensive, sensitive and legally sound approach. This session will examine the key provisions of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act 2022 and recent case law, employer and vicarious liability risks, and the importance of clear internal procedures. Participants will gain insight into the requisite standards of protection today, investigation techniques that protect the rights of all parties, as well as strategies for restoring confidence and rebuilding trust after an incident.

Speakers:

- (1) **The Honourable Tuan Atan Mustaffa Yussof Ahmad**, *Judge, High Court of Malaya (Johor Bahru)*
- (2) **Puan Nurshuhaida bt Zainal Azahar**, *Head, Claims and Legal Section, Tribunal for Anti-Sexual Harassment*
- (3) **Lee Sze Ching (Ashley)**, *Partner, Gan Partnership*

Moderator: **Brenda Rangithan**, *Co-Chairperson, Gender Equality and Diversity Committee, Kuala Lumpur Bar Committee; Partner, Mohanadass Partnership*

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10:45 am to 11:15 am

Morning Coffee Break

11:15 am to 12:45 pm

Session 8

Obligations vs Expectations: Advocating Work-Life Balance and Well-Being

The modern workplace increasingly values flexibility, mental health and holistic well-being. As a result, the balance between legal obligations and employee expectations continues to evolve. This session examines how Malaysian employment law intersects with the growing demand for work-life balance, the right to disconnect and employer initiatives to promote well-being.

Speakers will explore how employers can fulfil their statutory and common law duties while fostering mutual trust and confidence in employment relationships. The session will also address the legal and practical boundaries of flexible work, mental health policies and wellness initiatives — ensuring that support for employee well-being aligns with operational needs and legal compliance.

Speakers:

- (1) **Cynthia Junavence**, *Legal Director, Labour and Employment, APAC, Baker Hughes*
- (2) **Larissa Ann Louis**, *Member, Bar Council; Partner, Azri, Lee Swee Seng & Co*
- (3) **Natasha Sim**, *Partner, TurksLegal (Australia)*

Moderator: **Yong Hon Cheong**, *Partner, Zaid Ibrahim & Co*

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12:45 pm to 2:30 pm

Lunch Break

2:30 pm to 3:30 pm

Session 9

Social Media, Cancel Culture and Employee Discipline

In the age of social media and limitless connectivity, an employee's off-duty conduct can quickly become an employer's reputational crisis. This session examines where the boundaries lie when addressing online behaviour, from controversial posts to participation in "cancel culture" debates. The session will explore the limits of privacy and free speech in the employment context, legal risks of disciplinary action, and the role of clear policies in guiding both employers and employees. The session will also discuss strategies for managing public backlash while ensuring fair, consistent and legally defensible decision-making.

Speakers:

- (1) **The Honourable Puan Pravin Kaur Jessy**, *Chairman, Industrial Court of Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur)*
- (2) **Adrienne Sena**, *Advocate and Solicitor, Steven Thiru*
- (3) **Christina Lau Zhi Yan**, *Partner, Mah-Kamariyah & Philip Koh*

Moderator: **Teng Wei Hun**, *Advocate and Solicitor, Skrine*

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3:30 pm to 5:00 pm

Session 10

Beyond Compliance: Building Trust, Fairness and Resilience in the Modern Workforce

Compliance is only the starting point for creating a resilient and future-ready workforce. This session examines the most pressing regulatory updates that came into force in 2025 and offers recommendations for strengthening Malaysian employment laws to meet emerging challenges. The session will explore the evolving work models, such as the gig economy, and how employers can balance flexibility with fair treatment and workers' rights. Moving beyond minimum legal standards, participants will learn how to develop company policies that embed trust, fairness, dignity and diversity into everyday practice, ensuring both legal compliance and long-term organisational strength.

Speakers:

- (1) **Dato' Dr Punitha Silivarajoo**, *Deputy Director General (Policy and Development), Legal Affairs Division, Prime Minister's Department*
- (2) **Rajeswari Karupiah**, *Partner, Rosli Dahlan Saravana Partnership*
- (3) **Lia Alizia**, *Principal, Alizia & Partners (Indonesia)*

Moderator: **R Ravindra Kumar**, *Member, IELC; Consultant, Skanthan Kumar Chambers*

5:00 pm to 5:15 pm

Closing Ceremony

Closing Address:

- (1) **Wong Keat Ching**, *Partner, Zul Rafique & Partners; Co-Chairperson, IELC*
- (2) **Janice Anne Leo**, *Chairperson, Employment Law Conference 2026 Organising Committee; Partner, Steven Thiru*

5:15 pm to 6:00 pm

Evening Tea Break

6:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Cocktail Reception

Speaker and Moderator Profiles

Keynote Address

Datuk S Nantha Balan, *Retired Judge, Court of Appeal; Consultant, Adnan Sundra & Low*



Datuk S Nantha Balan is a retired Judge of the Court of Appeal of Malaysia with over three decades of legal experience spanning private legal practice and the Malaysian judiciary. He was admitted as an advocate and solicitor of the High Court of Malaya in 1988. Prior to his appointment to the Bench, he practised for 25 years and was a partner in the Dispute Resolution Practice Group of two major law firms in Kuala Lumpur. He regularly handled trials and appeals across various practice areas, including employment and administrative law. He was appointed as a Judicial Commissioner of the High Court of Malaya in 2013, confirmed as a High Court Judge in 2016 and elevated to the Court of Appeal in 2019. He retired from the Malaysian judiciary in October 2025.

Datuk S Nantha Balan is a strong advocate of alternative dispute resolution beyond adversarial litigation and was actively involved in court-led mediation, including in complex disputes. He is a regular speaker at legal seminars and an active trainer in the Advocacy Training Course organised by the Bar Council Advocacy Training Committee. He is also the Co-General Editor of *Malaysian Civil Procedure (2024)* published by Thomson Reuters Asia Sdn Bhd.

Day 1 (23 Apr 2026 – Thursday)

10:45 am to 11:45 am

Session 1

Future-Proofing the Workplace: How Ready Are We for the Changing Generation of Work?

The Honourable Dato' Anand Ponnudurai, *Judge, High Court of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur (Civil Division)*



The Honourable Dato' Anand Ponnudurai is a Judge of the High Court of Malaya. Prior to his appointment to the Bench, His Lordship practised as an employment lawyer for over 25 years and appeared in numerous landmark cases, including *Woo Vain Chan v Malayawata Steel Bhd* [2016] 2 MLJ 848; *Harianto Effendy Zakaria v Mahkamah Perusahaan Malaysia & Anor* [2014] 6 MLJ 305; and *Michael Brian Davis v Microsoft (M) Sdn Bhd* [2000] 1 CLJU 221.

Having served as Chairperson of the Bar Council Industrial and Employment Law Committee for many years until 2019 and as a member of the Employment Law Conference 2010 Organising Committee, His Lordship has previously contributed to the Employment Law Conference.

Drawing on his experience in practice and on the Bench, His Lordship will share insights on how evolving workplace dynamics are increasingly coming before the courts and the considerations involved in resolving such disputes.



Datuk (Dr) Nora Manaf, Chairman, Manaf Gardner Associates (“MGA”); Board Member, MBSB Group Berhad

Datuk (Dr) Nora Manaf is the Chairman of Manaf Gardner Associates (“MGA”) and an Independent and Non-Executive Director and board member of several corporates, including MBSB Group and Agensi Kaunseling dan Pengurusan Kredit (“AKPK”).

Datuk (Dr) Nora is a qualified Chartered Accountant; Chartered Banker (CIB, Scotland); Master Professional (IHRP, Singapore); Chartered Fellow CIPD (CIPD, UK); Strengths Coach Level 2 (Gallup); and Black Belt Sustainability Practitioner. She is also an appointed Adjunct Professor at several prestigious universities.

Datuk (Dr) Nora is an alumnus of Harvard (HBS AMP), Heriot-Watt (PhD by Practice), Cornell (School of Industrial Relations) and Universiti Teknologi Mara (“UiTM”) (School of Accountancy).

Datuk (Dr) Nora is also on the Board of Trustees of Yayasan Khazanah (“Khazanah Foundation”); the Board of Investment of UiTM; the Advisory Board of Yayasan Peneraju; the Asian Advisory Board of Harvard Business Publishing; the Chief People Officer Board of i4CP; the Board of Examiners of Asian Institute of Chartered Bankers; the Asia Pacific Industry Advisory Panel of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants; the University-Industry Advisory Council of Universiti Utara Malaysia; and the Academic Advisory Board Member of Putra Business School.

Datuk (Dr) Nora was conferred the 2026 ASEAN Outstanding Banker of the Year Award earlier this year. She received the World Women Legend and Icon Leadership Award 2025; the Global Women Leadership Lifetime Award 2024; the national-level LAWA CHRO Champion Award 2023; the national-level Woman Beacon of Light Award 2016; Outstanding Global Islamic Women Manager Icon Excellence Award 2023; and the Top 50 Impact Lifetime Achievement Award for Women Excellence 2021 by KSI Strategic Institute for Asia Pacific. In March 2026, she was conferred the Global Women Leader Business Excellence Award 2026 by HR Today.

Datuk (Dr) Nora is also the Immediate Past President of the Malaysian Commercial Banks Association; Chairman of the Banking Sector Human Resource Networking Group; Council Member of the Malaysian Employers Federation; Co-Chair of the ASEAN Research Centre; Council Member of the Industrial Advisory Council and the National Labour Advisory Council.

She was appointed Project Champion in 2024 for the Industry’s Future Skills Framework, launched by the Governor of the Central Bank of Malaysia and the Human Resources Minister in July 2024. She is the Founder Sponsor of the acclaimed eMpowering Youths Across ASEAN programme and inaugural First EXCO Sponsor of Maybank’s Sustainability Culture and Governance Pillar. Datuk (Dr) Nora is also a Founder Council Member of the Malaysia Chapter of the 30 Percent Club, Executive Sponsor for Maybank’s Women Mentor Women Council and a mentor for the ICAEW-TalentCorp Women in Leadership Programme. She was recently featured in the “Top 10 CHROs to Follow on LinkedIn” by NewInAsia.com, a leading platform for business insights across Asia.

The globally recognised principle “Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast” is demonstrated in her work alongside the Group President CEO and his top team in the Milestone Leap30 transformation of Maybank, a leading bank in the ASEAN region and Malaysia’s largest listed company by market capitalisation. In her capacity as Group Chief Human Capital Officer, appointed in September 2008, Datuk (Dr) Nora influenced and ensured

that the key success factors of the business strategy were enabled and targeted results were realised. This was captured in a case study written and published by the Singapore Management University in 2019 titled “Maybank: Organisational Transformation through Human Resources”.

Moderator



Janice Anne Leo, *Chairperson, Employment Law Conference 2026 Organising Committee; Member, Bar Council Industrial and Employment Law Committee (“IELC”); Partner, Steven Thiru*

Janice Anne Leo is the Head of the Employment and Labour Law Practice at Steven Thiru and an experienced legal practitioner who advises and represents clients across diverse industries in all aspects of employment and labour law. She frequently appears before all levels of the court and the Industrial Court, acting in various employment-related disputes.

In addition to dispute resolution, Janice advises on employment matters, including drafting and implementing human resources and disciplinary policies. Her expertise spans workplace practices, disciplinary frameworks, harassment and discrimination issues, workplace bullying, restructuring exercises, dismissals, and occupational health and safety compliance. She is also experienced in advising on union-related disputes, including collective bargaining and union registrations and recognition.

Janice also acts as an independent external investigator for clients in employment-related matters, including allegations of misconduct, harassment and whistleblower complaints, ensuring impartiality and compliance with procedural fairness throughout the investigation process.

An experienced speaker and trainer, Janice regularly conducts training sessions on employment law topics. She is the Co-Deputy Chairperson of IELC and contributes to the Malaysian Bar’s Continuing Professional Development programmes. She is also a trainer for the Malaysian Bar’s Advocacy Training courses, mentoring and developing the next generation of legal professionals. She is a member of the LAWASIA Employment Law Committee and a Faculty Trainer of the Bar Council Advocacy Training Committee.

Janice obtained her LL.B (Hons) degree from the University of London and holds a Master’s degree in Industrial Relations and Human Resource Management from the University of Sydney. She was admitted as an advocate and solicitor of the High Court of Malaya in 2000.

Janice is recognised for her experience in employment and industrial relations law. She is ranked as a “Noted Practitioner in Employment and Industrial Relations” by Chambers and Partners (2019–2025). She was also named “Litigation Star in Labour and Employment” by Benchmark Litigation (2024–2025); “Leading Lawyer in Labour and Employment” by Asialaw (2018); and “Recognised Practitioner in Industrial Relations” by Legal 500 Asia Pacific (2017). She is the author of the chapter on “Domestic Inquiry in Malaysia” in *Law and Practice of Employment Law in Malaysia* (2021), published by Sweet & Maxwell.

11:45 am to 1:00 pm

Session 2

Retaining Talent in the New Horizon: Evolution of Workplace Allegiances



Chen Fong Tuan, *Chief People Officer, Valiram Group*

Chen Fong Tuan leads the Group's overall people and culture transformation, driving a bold talent strategy and building a future-fit workforce embedded in a performance-driven culture to support the Group's growth agenda. He is a Chartered Fellow of CIPD (UK) and a qualified professional engineer holding an honours degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering. He holds a Master in Business Administration (MBA) in Organisational Behaviour and a Chartered Financial Analyst qualification. He is currently a doctoral candidate researching the reliability of quantitative correlation between psychometric traits and success profiles.

He began his career with Tenaga Nasional, Malaysia's power utility company, where he was a scholar, and subsequently held senior HR leadership roles for global MNCs and blue-chip corporations, including Coca Cola, OCBC, Watson Wyatt, British American Tobacco, Maybank Group, B Braun, Samsung and Berjaya Corporation, one of Malaysia's largest and most diverse consumer group. Most recently, he led people strategy, practices and policies at Maybank to accelerate the bank's transformative, purpose-driven people agenda.

Fong Tuan has been recognised regionally. He was named among the "40 Most Influential HR Leaders in Southeast Asia 2022"; the Economic Times HR Icon (2023–2025); and included in the "100 Top HR Leaders in Southeast Asia".



Donovan Cheah Swee Kin, *Co-Deputy Chairperson, IELC; Partner, Donovan & Ho*

Donovan Cheah Swee Kin is the co-founding partner of Donovan & Ho, where he heads the firm's employment and dispute resolution practice. His work has been consistently recognised by legal directories such as Legal 500, Chambers and Partners, Asialaw and Benchmark Litigation. He regularly advises employers on employment contracts, handbooks and workplace policies, as well as complex issues such as workforce restructuring, termination of employment and regulatory compliance. Donovan also represents corporate clients in employment disputes, including unfair dismissal claims, civil litigation involving employees, judicial review proceedings and appellate matters.

Donovan previously served as regional counsel for one of the world's largest paints and coatings manufacturers, where he managed the company's in-house legal function across Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

Beyond practice, Donovan is the Co-Deputy Chairperson of IELC. He is a Contributing Editor to the *Annotated Statutes of Malaysia* for the Employment Act 1955, the Industrial Relations Act 1967, and the Employees Provident Fund Act 1991. He is also the author of *Navigating Employment Disputes in Malaysia* (Second Edition, 2024).



Zamir Hamdy Hamdan, Senior Manager, Human Resources Business Partner and Industrial Relations, Etika Sdn Bhd

Zamir Hamdy Hamdan is a human resource and legal professional with a specialisation in industrial relations and a passion for people management.

He was admitted as an advocate and solicitor of the High Court of Malaya in 2011 and remained in legal practice in one of Malaysia's leading law firms until the end of 2016. His legal practice focused on employment / industrial relations, litigation and advisory, privacy / data protection, immigration, taxation and general litigation.

After leaving legal practice, Zamir joined a few corporations and headed the Industrial Relations team across business sectors, including construction, water treatment, plantation, technology, broadcast and entertainment, healthcare, and fast-moving consumer goods ("FMCG"). In his in-house roles, he held senior human resource management responsibilities and successfully defended employers against unfair dismissal claims, managed manpower planning / downsizing exercise, dismissals, retrenchments, separations, and spearheaded culture and transformation initiatives.

Moderator



Wong Keat Ching, Co-Chairperson, IELC; Partner, Zul Rafique & Partners

Wong Keat Ching's practice areas are employment and industrial relations, litigation, legal forensic investigation and compliance, and ESG, including compliance of international labour standards. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Law from the University of Nottingham and a Certificate in Legal Practice ("CLP"). She was admitted as an advocate and solicitor of the High Court of Malaya in 1998.

An experienced litigator, Keat Ching has appeared at all levels of the Malaysian courts, advising on workplace misconduct, corporate restructuring and labour due diligence, among others. She has conducted legal forensic investigations and advised on related legal actions.

Keat Ching has international experience, including a stint with Maddocks in Melbourne and participation in the 7th China-ASEAN Legal Training Course. She is the Co-Chairperson of IELC and Chair of the LAWASIA Employment Law Committee. She is also an active trainer for the Advocacy Training Course organised by the Bar Council Advocacy Training Committee and speaks regularly at local and international conferences.

She is recognised as a "Distinguished Practitioner in Labour and Employment" by Asialaw; a "Band 1 Lawyer in Employment and Industrial Relations" by Chambers Asia-Pacific. Keat Ching has also been named to the Legal 500 Asia Pacific's "Hall of Fame" and recognised as a "Global and National Leader for Labour and Employment" by Who's Who Legal.

Keat Ching is a former netball player for the Malaysian Bar and was awarded the Malaysian Bar Sports Personality Award in 2008. She also completed the Malaysian Bar Fitness Challenge in 2021, running 300 km in 30 days with her team "Aunties on the Run."

2:00 pm to 3:15 pm

Session 3 Bullying, Harassment and Reasonable Reprimands



The Honourable Tuan Paramalingam s/o J Doraisamy, Chairman, Industrial Court of Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur)

The Honourable Tuan Paramalingam s/o J Doraisamy enrolled in the Bachelor of Laws (LL.B) degree programme with the University of London after completing his primary and secondary education. In 1991, he graduated with an LL.B (Hons) degree and obtained his CLP in 1993.

Subsequently, he completed his pupillage at H B Lim Farha & Lim in Batu Pahat, Johor. He was admitted as an advocate and solicitor of the High Court of Malaya in 1994 and was retained by H B Lim Farha & Lim as a legal assistant. He handled various types of civil litigation matters. In 1996, he was invited to join K Sila Dass & Partners in Kluang, Johor as a legal assistant, where he handled both civil and criminal litigation.

In 2000, he joined the legal firm of Krish Maniam & Co. in Kuala Lumpur and was subsequently made a senior partner of the firm in 2004. He had developed an immense first-hand experience in various legal cases, ranging from civil, criminal and commercial litigation, handling a number of complex cases in the Court of Appeal and the Federal Court. He was also involved in commercial contract and corporate due diligence work.

Besides his firm's home base in Malaysia, he also handled matters for numerous corporate and individual clients from other ASEAN countries, China, India and the United Kingdom. While being involved in commercial litigation, he learned the ropes of international arbitration from his arbitration mentor, Dr Rutsel Silvestre Martha, who was the former Minister of Justice of the Netherlands Antilles and former General Counsel and Director of Legal Affairs of INTERPOL.

He also handled arbitration matters and is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. He had handled OIC as well as ICDR arbitrations in Hong Kong and Singapore, involving the Singapore penny stock crash of October 2013, respectively. He had also worked with the former Attorney-General (Jaksa Agung) of Indonesia, Basri Arief, and the former Solicitor-General of Indonesia, the late Yoseph Suardi Sabda, in relation to the case involving the collapse of Bank Century Indonesia. Tuan Paramalingam is also one of the founding members of the Sports Law Association of Malaysia.

In April 2018, he left private legal practice after 24 years to join the Industrial Court as a Task Force Chairman. Tuan Paramalingam was appointed as a Contract Chair with the Industrial Court and at present he sits as the Chairman of Court 22 in the Industrial Court of Kuala Lumpur.

During his tenure in the Industrial Court, Tuan Paramalingam has issued almost 750 awards, of which almost 360 were written awards. Several of these awards were reported in print and online media. Among the awards are the following:

(1) *Harry Wong Wei Chen v Petroliam Nasional Berhad* [Award No 3 of 2021]

A case involving charges of sexual harassment, where it was held that corroboration is not required in sexual harassment cases;

(2) *Ng Ying Yiing v Symphony Life Berhad* [Award No 1678 of 2024]

A case involving a boardroom dispute, where the Chief Financial Officer was dismissed following a whistleblowing report against the Group Chief Executive Officer. The dismissal was found to be without just cause or excuse and actuated by ulterior motives. The claimant was subsequently charged in the Shah Alam High Court but was later acquitted after the Attorney General's Chambers accepted representations made on her behalf, taking into account the Industrial Court decision;

(3) *Janarthen Subramaniam v Auto Abundance Sdn Bhd* [Award No 1031 of 2024]

A case involving allegations that the employer referred to race in the decision to dismiss the employee, and the dismissal was held to be without just cause or excuse;

(4) *Faizah Hassan v TATI University College Sdn Bhd* [Award No 869 of 2024]

A case involving a lecturer alleged to have awarded marks to students who did not attend examinations and failed to award marks to some who did attend;

(5) *Nizatul Asmar Chek Umar v Petaling Jaya Dairy Sdn Bhd* [Award No 760 of 2024]

A case of forced resignation where the circumstances indicated that the resignation was not entirely voluntary;

(6) *Jagen Manoharan v Agarcorp Sdn Bhd* [Award No 518 of 2024]

A case where the Industrial Court held that secret recordings of meetings in dismissal cases may be admitted into evidence, even if obtained without consent, for the purpose of determining facts in dispute;

(7) *Persatuan Bank-Bank Perdagangan Tanah Melayu v National Union of Bank Employees, States of Malaya* [Award No 174 of 2025]

A case concerning the enforceability of collective agreements, where it was held that collective agreements and variations must be deposited with the Industrial Court for cognisance under the Industrial Relations Act 1967 to be enforceable.

Santhi Latha, Dean, Rajah & Tann Asia Academy

Santhi Latha's career is focused on advancing professional development within the legal sector.

She served as Director of the Malaysian Bar's Continuing Professional Development department for seven years, where she established its learning and development framework.

Since 2019, she has been part of the Rajah & Tann Asia ("RTA") network, where she spearheads the development of its RTA Academy, which provides learning and development access through virtual and in-person events and online courses for more than 1,000 legal and 500 business professionals across 10 countries.

She actively contributes to the legal community in the Bar Council Legal Profession Practical Course Committee, Cyber and Privacy Laws Committee, Legal Tech, AI and Sandbox Committee and the Peer Support Network.



Santhi also served as President of the Association of Women Lawyers from 2021 to 2023 and remains on its Executive Committee.

Her contributions have been widely recognised. Asia Law Portal named her one of the “30 People to Watch in the Business of Law in Asia in 2022”, and one of the “30 Women Legal Innovators in Asia to Follow in 2022”. She was also listed among Prestige Malaysia’s “100 Women of Power 2022”.



Anishaa Sundramoorthy, Advocate and Solicitor, Sreenevasan

Anishaa Sundramoorthy was admitted as an advocate and solicitor of the High Court of Malaya in 2021. She practises general litigation with a focus on civil and commercial disputes. Anishaa has appeared in trials and hearings across all levels of the Malaysian courts and maintains a diverse portfolio of public interest files. She is also a qualified mediator with the International Mediation Institute. Anishaa serves as the Co-Chairperson of the Bar Council National Young Lawyers and Pupils Committee.

Moderator



Tham Li Vyten, Partner, Raja Darryl & Loh

Tham Li Vyten joined the Attorney-General’s Chambers upon graduation and served as a Deputy Public Prosecutor and Federal Counsel. After her call to the Malaysian Bar, she practised for a number of years in the medico-legal practice group at Raja Darryl & Loh. Her core practice area is employment and industrial relations.

In the course of her work, she has advised various clients on the management and handling of employment and industrial relations issues such as business rationalisation and cost-cutting measures as well as retrenchment exercises, particularly those arising from the global pandemic. Other areas in her portfolio include mutual separation and domestic inquiries arising from misconduct or poor performance. In this regard, she has structured performance review plans and prepared templates for retrenchment exercises and mutual separation agreements. She also advises on occupational health and safety concerns. Her clientele ranges from large multinational corporations to small and medium-sized enterprises.

Li Vyten is an experienced litigator representing employers in claims brought against them in the Industrial Court for unfair dismissal and constructive dismissal. She has been listed as a “Leading Individual” and “Leading Partner” by Legal 500 Asia Pacific (2024–2026), after having been named a “Next Generation Partner” in previous years.

In addition, Benchmark Litigation named her a “Future Star” (2019–2025). She has also been named a “Rising Star” by Asialaw (2023–2025).

3:15 pm to 4:15 pm

Session 4

Artificial Intelligence and Environmental, Social and Governance Principles: Effective New Methods of Entrenched Practices



Deepak Pillai, Partner, Christopher & Lee Ong

Deepak Pillai heads the Technology, Media and Telecommunications (“TMT”), Data Privacy and Protection, and Intellectual Property and

Intangible Assets Practice Groups. Deepak has practised in the areas of TMT law and data protection since 1997. He is regarded as an experienced technology and telecommunications lawyer in Malaysia.

He has been consecutively listed by established legal directories since 2001, such as Asia Business Law Journal's "Top 100 Malaysian Lawyers to Watch", as well as being the only "Band 1 Leading Lawyer" to be ranked for TMT by Chambers Asia Pacific. Deepak is also ranked as a "Tier 1 Leading Individual for TMT" by Legal 500 Asia Pacific.



Dr Yeoh Ken Kyid, *Director, Group Sustainability, Bursa Malaysia*

Dr Yeoh Ken Kyid possesses deep expertise in corporate governance and sustainability, having held various senior roles spanning academia, regulatory / policymaking bodies, and the banking sector. In his current role as the Director of Group Sustainability at Bursa Malaysia, Dr Ken drives the sustainability strategy, including elevating ESG-related practices and disclosures, as well as facilitating adoption of the same among Malaysian public limited companies.

Previously, Dr Ken led the Corporate Governance and Sustainability section under Bursa Malaysia's Regulation division. He was primarily responsible for inculcating good corporate governance and sustainability-related practices and disclosures among public listed companies. This included, among others, the development of relevant disclosure requirements, provision of comprehensive guidance, continuous monitoring and assessment, and involvement in various multi-stakeholder capital market initiatives.

Dr Ken holds a PhD in Corporate Governance from Northumbria University (UK) and is a Fellow of the UK's Higher Education Academy. He has also served as a senior academic in reputable institutions of higher learning, including Nottingham University and Northumbria University.



Priscilla Faith Lim, *Advocate and Solicitor, Steven Thiru*

Priscilla Faith Lim acts in a variety of matters involving, among others, public and administrative law, the exercise of statutory powers and duties, industrial relations and employment law, and contractual and tortious disputes. Her experience extends from advising clients in the pre-action stage to arguing novel points of law at the Federal Court.

In addition to her litigation practice, Priscilla is active in corporate law and advisory matters. She regularly advises clients on the review, drafting and negotiation of various contractual agreements. She is also well-versed in personal data protection and ESG compliance.

Priscilla also helms the firm's knowledge management and business development initiatives. She is also a member of the Bar Council Publications Committee.



Moderator

Donovan Cheah Swee Kin, *Co-Deputy Chairperson, IELC; Partner, Donovan & Ho*

4:15 pm to 5:30 pm

Session 5

Transfers, Closures and Mergers: Handling Human Resources Effectively



R Jayabalan, *Advocate and Solicitor, Messrs R Jayabalan; Secretary, Malaysian Bar*

R Jayabalan graduated with Bachelor of Laws (LL.B) (Hons) from the International Islamic University Malaysia in 1996 and obtained an MBA from the same university in 2004.

Jaya was admitted as an advocate and solicitor of the High Court of Malaya in 1997 and has been in active practice based in Johor Bahru. He is the founder of Messrs R Jayabalan. His main area of practice is dispute resolution and he is an active litigator at the trial and appellate court levels. He also appears at the Industrial Court and Labour Court for employment related disputes.

Jaya's other areas of practice include professional negligence, industrial relations and employment law, general tort, commercial and administrative law, among others. He actively writes and speaks on various issues of law and procedure, as well as matters concerning legal practice in the country.

Jaya is currently the Secretary of the Malaysian Bar. He has previously served as the Chairman of the Johore Bar Committee, Treasurer of the Malaysian Bar and Chairperson of several Bar Council Committees.



Muhendaran Suppiah, *Member, IELC; Partner, Muhendaran Sri*

Muhendaran Suppiah was admitted as an advocate and solicitor of the High Court of Malaya in 1991. He is currently a partner at Muhendaran Sri, a law firm based in Kuala Lumpur, with a focus on employment and industrial relations law.



Mathew Johnson, *Head, Operations Industrial Relations, Group Industrial Relations, Maybank*

Mathew Johnson is the Head of Operations Industrial Relations, Group Industrial Relations at Maybank.

He completed his law degree and obtained the CLP in 2004. He underwent pupillage with Bodipalar Ponnudurai Nathan and was admitted as an advocate and solicitor of the High Court of Malaya in 2005, and subsequently practised as a legal assistant for five years, focusing on industrial relations disputes.

He later transitioned into the corporate sector, where he acquired extensive experience in managing labour and industrial relations across industries including manufacturing, asset management, infrastructure solutions and banking.

His legal training and corporate experience enable him to provide practical, balanced and effective solutions in managing complex industrial relations matters.

Moderator

Vijayan Venugopal, Member, IELC; Partner, Shearn Delamore & Co



Vijayan Venugopal is a partner of the firm, experienced in employment and administrative law. He is also the Head of the Employment and Administrative Law Practice Area.

He has been with the firm for more than 30 years and has dedicated all that time focusing on employment and industrial disputes.

He graduated with a Second Class Honours (Upper Division) from the London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London, and was called to the Utter Bar of England and Wales in 1993. He was subsequently admitted as an advocate and solicitor of the High Court of Malaya in 1994. He was also called to the Singapore Bar in 1997. In addition, he also holds a Master's degree from the University of Malaya.

His experience includes advising on labour issues, industrial relations, collective bargaining, industrial actions, trade disputes, contracts of service, mergers and acquisitions, restructuring, reorganisation and retrenchment, occupational health and safety, employee provident funds and social security, statutory benefits, dismissals, judicial review, administrative law and union issues.

Vijayan has conducted hearings at various levels of the employment judicial hierarchy, including the Labour Court, Industrial Court, Magistrates' Court, Sessions Court, High Court, Court of Appeal and Federal Court.

His experience includes acting in employment and industrial relations disputes at various levels of the courts and the Industrial Court, including *Beatrice AT Fernandez v Sistem Penerbangan Malaysia & Anor* [2005] 2 CLJ 713, minimum wage cases relating to the hotel industry and cases concerning the rights of foreign nationals to be deemed permanent employees. His accolades include recognition in Who's Who Legal as an "Expert in Labour, Employment and Benefits" (2017–2018); "Global Leader in Labour and Employment" (2019–2023); and "National Leader (Southeast Asia) in Labour, Employment and Benefits" (2021–2023). He was named "Recommended Lawyer in Labour and Employment" by Legal 500 Asia Pacific in 2022 and "Other Key Lawyer in Labour and Employment" in 2023 and 2024, before being ranked as a "Leading Partner" in 2025. He has been recognised as a "Band 2" lawyer in Employment and Industrial Relations by Chambers Asia-Pacific from 2011 to 2025. He was also listed as a "Distinguished Practitioner in Labour and Employment" by Asialaw Leading Lawyers from 2020 to 2024 and was recognised as Recommended in Labour, Employment and Benefits in the Lexology Index – Southeast Asia Guide (2024).

Vijayan is a member of IELC, the Employment and Industrial Relations Committee of the International Bar Association ("IBA") and the Diversity and Equality Law Committee of IBA. He is also a contributor to the Malaysian chapter of the *Chambers Global Practice Guide: Employment* (2019 and 2021) and *The Law and Practice of Employment Law in Malaysia* (2022) published by Sweet & Maxwell.

Day 2 (24 Apr 2026 – Friday)

9:30 am to 10:45 am

Session 7

Sexual Harassment and Inappropriate Behaviour: Complaints to Consequences



The Honourable Tuan Atan Mustaffa Yussof Ahmad, *Judge, High Court of Malaya (Johor Bahru)*

The Honourable Tuan Atan Mustaffa Yussof Ahmad is a Judge of the High Court of Malaya, currently sitting in the Criminal Division of the Johor Bahru High Court. He was appointed as a Judicial Commissioner in 2019 and confirmed as a High Court Judge in 2022.

Prior to his elevation to the Bench, he was an active employment law practitioner. During his time at the Bar, he served on the Kuala Lumpur Bar Committee as Chair of the Professional Development Committee, and was also a Malaysian Bar advocacy trainer. He continues to serve as an advocacy trainer on the Bench.

He previously sat in the Commercial Division of the Kuala Lumpur High Court, where he presided over complex corporate, banking and fraud-related disputes.



Nurshuhaida bt Zainal Azahar, *Head, Claims and Legal Section, Tribunal for Anti-Sexual Harassment*

Nurshuhaida Zainal Azahar graduated from the International Islamic University Malaysia (“IIUM”) with a Bachelor of Laws Degree in 2008 and the International Centre for Education in Islamic Finance (“INCEIF”) with a Master’s Degree in Islamic Finance in 2012. Nurshuhaida began her career in legal service in 2008 as a Deputy Public Prosecutor with the Commercial and Cyber Crimes of the Attorney General’s Chambers (“AGC”)’s Prosecution Division for eight years before getting promoted as the Principal Assistant Director at the Judicial and Legal Training Institute (Institut Latihan Kehakiman dan Perundangan, “ILKAP”).

In 2018, she joined the Special Litigation Unit in AGC, which was then tasked to conduct high-profile criminal prosecution cases. Nurshuhaida next served in the Legal Adviser’s Office of the Ministry of Health and the Public Services Department for two years before her transfer to the AGC’s Law Revision and Law Reform Division as a Senior Federal Counsel in 2022.

She currently heads the Claims and Legal Section of the Tribunal for Anti-Sexual Harassment of the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Putrajaya since 1 Mar 2024.



Ashley Lee Sze Ching, *Partner, Gan Partnership*

Ashley Lee Sze Ching is a partner at Gan Partnership and a member of its Employment and Industrial Relations Practice Group. She appears regularly before all levels of the Malaysian courts and in arbitration, with a focus on employment and industrial relations matters.

Her practice encompasses a broad range of contentious and advisory work, including unfair dismissal claims, disciplinary proceedings, retrenchment exercises and trade union matters. She also advises employers on employment structuring, workplace policies and regulatory compliance.

Ashley has contributed to legal publications on employment law and corporate liability, and brings a measured and analytical approach to addressing complex workplace issues.

Moderator



Brenda Rangithan, *Co-Chairperson, Gender Equality and Diversity Committee, Kuala Lumpur Bar Committee; Partner, Mohanadass Partnership*

Brenda Rangithan is a partner at Mohanadass Partnership and predominantly practises in litigation, with a focus on commercial, corporate, construction and employment disputes.

She currently serves as Co-Chair of both the Gender Equality and Diversity Committee and the Professional Development Committee of the Kuala Lumpur Bar. In these roles, she has been actively involved in initiatives to promote equality within the profession, address mental health concerns, and advance conversations on harassment and safe workplace practices.

Brenda's commitment to justice and equality extends beyond the courtroom. Through her professional and committee work, she continues to advocate more inclusive, respectful and accountable workplace environments, bringing practical and legal perspectives to discussions on sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour in the workplace.

11:15 am to 12:45 pm

Session 8

Obligations vs Expectations: Advocating Work-Life Balance and Well-Being



Cynthia Junavence, *Legal Director, Labour and Employment, APAC, Baker Hughes*

Cynthia Junavence is a cross-border employment law counsel with over 19 years of experience. She excels in providing effective support on multijurisdictional employment issues, including employment-related policy development, employment-related legal compliance, advising on employment rights and obligations, performance management, disciplinary actions, workforce restructuring, investigations, wage and hour practices, and employment strategies for international mergers and acquisitions, as well as trade union negotiations.

Cynthia began her legal career at Zaid Ibrahim & Co, where she became a partner before moving to Accenture as its Southeast Asia Employment Law Counsel. She later advanced to become one of Accenture's Global Mergers & Acquisitions Employment Law Counsel. Currently, she serves as the Legal Director for Labour and Employment, APAC at Baker Hughes.



Larissa Ann Louis, *Member, Bar Council; Partner, Azri, Lee Swee Seng & Co*

Larissa Ann Louis graduated from the University of Reading, UK, and was called to the Bar of England and Wales (Middle Temple) in 2014. She was subsequently admitted as an advocate and solicitor of the High Court of Malaya in 2016. She is currently a partner at Azri, Lee Swee Seng & Co., where she leads the firm's Pro Bono Unit.

Larissa is an elected Bar Councillor and currently serves as the Co-Chairperson of the Bar Council's Human Rights Committee. Throughout her career, she has been actively involved in constitutional and human rights litigation, representing organisations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees ("UNHCR"), the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suruhanjaya Hak Asasi Manusia Malaysia, "SUHAKAM"), the Bar Council, and various non-governmental organisations ("NGOs").

She is also the Founder of HaKita ("our rights"), an organisation dedicated to human rights empowerment.



Natasha Sim, Partner, TurksLegal (Australia)

Natasha Sim is a partner at Turks Legal, a commercial law firm with offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Newcastle and Brisbane, providing services to clients across Australia. She began her legal career working for a national trade union. She acts for international and Australian employers and employees across numerous sectors.

Natasha advises clients on all aspects of employment and industrial relations laws, including employee entitlements in the context of cross-border transfers of business, collective bargaining, anti-discrimination laws, and management of executive employees and employment-related privacy issues.

Natasha is known for her clear communication style, commercially pragmatic advice and sensitivity to cultural issues that may affect the outcome of a matter. She regularly appears as a solicitor-advocate in the Fair Work Commission and other courts and tribunals. She also delivers professional development training to senior management and lawyers on workplace laws.

Natasha has a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Arts from The University of Melbourne.

Moderator



Yong Hon Cheong, Partner, Zaid Ibrahim & Co

Yong Hon Cheong was admitted as an advocate and solicitor of the High Court of Malaya in 1995 and currently heads the Human Capital Services practice in Zaid Ibrahim & Co.

From the advisory and transactional perspective, he has advised on employment issues in various merger and acquisition and restructuring projects in the country. He also works closely with international law firms and multinational organisations, dealing with employment issues for Malaysia in global or regional corporate exercises.

From a litigation perspective, Hon Cheong deals with employment disputes on behalf of a range of corporate clients. He is experienced in handling review and appellate matters. His litigation experience cuts across diverse employment matters, which include unjust dismissal claims, trade disputes and collective bargaining.

2:30 pm to 3:30 pm

Session 9 Social Media, Cancel Culture and Employee Discipline



The Honourable Puan Pravin Kaur Jessy, *Chairman, Industrial Court of Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur)*

The Honourable Puan Pravin Kaur Jessy was appointed as Chairman of the Industrial Court of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, effective 1 July 2024.

She graduated with an LL.B (Hons) degree from the University of Northumbria at Newcastle, UK, in 1993. She completed her CLP in 1994 and was admitted as an advocate and solicitor of the High Court of Malaya on 27 Oct 1995.

In January 1996, Puan Pravin joined her father, Dato' Ajit Singh Jessy, at Jessy & Associates, a firm focused on industrial relations and employment law. She became a partner in 2004, a position she held until her recent appointment as Chairman of the Industrial Court.

With over 28 years of practice, Puan Pravin has represented both employers and employees, offering unique insights and effective advice from both perspectives. She has appeared before the Labour Court, Industrial Court, High Court, Court of Appeal and Federal Court, handling diverse cases including trade disputes, employment issues, industrial actions, judicial reviews, *certiorari*, and contractual and commercial disputes. She has secured several landmark decisions, particularly in employment law and cases involving breaches of fiduciary duty by high-ranking employees.

In addition to representing clients in court, Puan Pravin has provided advice on employment-related issues such as dismissals, reorganisations and retrenchments, voluntary and mutual separation schemes and trade disputes.

Puan Pravin has served as the Chairperson of the Bar Council's Legal Aid Centre, Penang, the Penang Bar Committee's Human Rights Committee, and the Penang Bar Committee's Industrial Court Practice Committee. In 1998, she was selected by the Bar Council for a pioneering two-week study-cum-work experience programme in Sydney, Australia.

Puan Pravin is actively involved with IELC and the Malaysian Bar's Advocacy Training courses as a speaker and trainer.

Adrienne Sena, *Advocate and Solicitor, Steven Thiru*



Adrienne Sena is an advocate and solicitor at Steven Thiru, with a focus on general litigation and employment law.

She holds a first-class LL.B. degree from the University of Manchester, UK, and was called to the Bar of England and Wales (Middle Temple) in 2019. She was admitted as an advocate and solicitor of the High Court of Malaya in 2020.

Adrienne has handled numerous employment disputes at the Industrial Court and has assisted in judicial reviews and appeals before the High Court, Court of Appeal, and Federal Court.

She also provides legal advice to individuals and corporations on a range of employment law matters, including the management and resolution of workplace disputes, poor performance issues, and retrenchment exercises. Her advisory work spans the entire disciplinary process, from conducting preliminary investigations and issuing show-cause letters to overseeing domestic inquiries and advising on final decisions, including the appropriate punishment as well as merits and risks of dismissal.

In addition, she assists clients in drafting and reviewing employment contracts, workplace policies, and procedures to ensure legal compliance and best practices. She also conducts webinars and training sessions for private and government-linked corporations on employment law and industrial relations issues.

A regular speaker at conferences and seminars, Adrienne was recognised as a “Leading Individual (Associate)” in labour and employment by The Legal 500 in 2024.

She also contributed the chapter, “Domestic Inquiry in Malaysia”, to *Law and Practice of Employment Law in Malaysia* (Sweet & Maxwell, 2021).

Christina Lau Zhi Yan, Partner, Mah-Kamariyah & Philip Koh



Christina Lau Zhi Yan obtained a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) degree from Northumbria University, UK, in 2010. She then undertook and completed the Bar Professional Training Course and became a member of the Middle Temple, Inns of Court and was called to the English Bar in 2011. She then chambered with a property and litigation law firm and was admitted as an advocate and solicitor of the High Court of Malaya in January 2013.

Prior to joining Mah-Kamariyah & Philip Koh (“MKP”) in May 2019, Christina practised in the areas of civil and commercial litigation, handling general litigation matters, professional negligence (under professional indemnity insurance), banking litigation, medico-legal claims, tenancy disputes, insolvency and debt recovery matters.

Since joining the Litigation & Dispute Resolution Department of the firm, she has been handling civil and commercial litigation, construction litigation and arbitration, statutory adjudication, industrial relations and employment and dispute resolution matters on behalf of clients of the firm. She leads the firm’s employment and industrial relations practice, including advising on and handling disputes relating to disciplinary procedures, termination of employees, unfair dismissal matters, employment contracts, severance agreements, human resources handbooks, and policies and labour relations.

Christina has appeared as junior or lead counsel in adjudications, arbitrations and at all levels of the Malaysian court hierarchy.

Christina became a partner in MKP on 1 Sept 2024.

Moderator

Teng Wei Hun, Advocate and Solicitor, Skrine



Teng Wei Hun is an advocate and solicitor in Skrine’s Employment, and Maritime and Shipping practice. His key practice areas include employment disputes, employment advisory and compliance, employment fraud management and investigations, civil and commercial litigation, restructuring and insolvency and medical negligence.

He was admitted as an advocate and solicitor of the High Court of Malaya in 2019, and Barrister-at-Law (Lincoln's Inn) in 2017. He graduated from the University of Reading, UK, with an LL.B (Hons) degree in 2016.

3:30 pm to 5:00 pm

Session 10

Beyond Compliance: Building Trust, Fairness and Resilience in the Modern Workforce



Dato' Dr Punitha Silivarajoo, *Deputy Director General (Policy and Development), Legal Affairs Division, Prime Minister's Department*

Dato' Dr Punitha Silivarajoo is currently the Deputy Director General for Policy and Development at the Legal Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Department. She is responsible for, among others, issues pertaining to policy, research and law reform under the Prime Minister's Department and overall coordination of domestic human rights issues. She was directly involved in high-impact projects, such as serving as secretary of the Taskforce for the Review of the Mandatory Death Penalty and chaired the implementation committee for the re-hearing of 1,020 death row and natural life prisoners. Dato' Dr Punitha led the policy team for the development of the COVID-19 legislation for Malaysia in 2020.

In 2023, she led the policy team for the constitutional amendments for the anti-hopping provision and was instrumental in the amendments to the Penal Code and Criminal Procedure Code on stalking and decriminalising attempted suicide. Recently, Dato' Dr Punitha was involved in the amendments to the Penal Code and Criminal Procedure Code on mule accounts and cyberbullying. She also led the policy team for the amendments to the Trustee Act 1949 and Trustees (Incorporation) Act 1952 to include provisions on beneficial ownership.

Dato' Dr Punitha also headed the Regulatory Unit of the Green Technology Sector of the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water, where she was responsible for the development and application of Green Technology. She was appointed a Task Force member for the Asia-Pacific Economic Corporation ("APEC")'s Low-Carbon Model Town Project. She was instrumental in obtaining the funds for the Global Environment Facilities (GEF 5) for Malaysia, and was the key player in initiating the Green Jobs Manpower Study in collaboration with the International Labour Organization. In addition, she initiated a preliminary study on the Low Carbon, Green Growth Legislation in Malaysia and contributed to the implementation of the region's largest International Greentech and Eco Products Exhibition and Conference for four consecutive years.

Dato' Dr Punitha is currently an associate with the International Institute of Public Policy and Management at Universiti Malaya and a supervisor for the Master in Sustainable Development Management Programme with the Jeffery Sachs Center on Sustainable Development at Sunway University, Malaysia. She holds a PhD in policy and law from Imperial College London.

Rajeswari Karupiah, *Partner, Rosli Dahlan Saravana Partnership*



Rajeswari Karupiah is a partner at Rosli Dahlan Saravana Partnership. Prior to that, she served as Chairman of the Industrial Court between 2008 and 2024, where she heard and decided more than 500 employment disputes.

As Chairman of the Industrial Court, she sat on various committees, including the Consultative Committee on Industrial Law and the Law Amendment and Rules Committee. She also presented papers at the Industrial Court Chairmen's Biennial Conference and at ILKAP.

Aside from her domestic professional experience, Rajeswari served at the World Bank in Washington DC as a Legal Advisor and Consultant, where she undertook projects on improving and streamlining labour policies in Malaysia to be congruent with comparable economies of East Asia and the Pacific Region. Her notable contribution at the World Bank includes the introduction of minimum wage for workers in Malaysia in 2012.



Lia Alizia, Principal, Alizia & Partners (Indonesia)

Lia Alizia is the Principal of Alizia & Partners, Jakarta, Indonesia. She is a trusted advisor and litigator with over two decades of experience, and advises multinationals and global brands on corporate law, commercial transactions, employment, restructuring, insolvency, anti-competition, intellectual property and dispute resolution. Her practice includes corporate governance, civil and family law, intellectual property ("IP") enforcement and arbitration.

Lia is recognised by Legal 500, IFLR1000, Asialaw, AsiaIP, and Who's Who Legal for her work in employment, IP, commercial litigation, corporate governance, and mergers and acquisitions. She contributes to law publications and seminars.

She is an honorary secretary and a Board Member in the British Chamber of Commerce in Indonesia ("BritCham Indonesia"), Deputy Chair for International Cooperation in the Indonesian Bar Association (Perhimpunan Advokat Indonesia, "PERADI"), Chairwoman of the Board of Inter-Agency Cooperation of the Indonesia Labor Law Consultant Association, Deputy Chair of the LAWASIA Employment Committee and is a registered IP consultant in Indonesia.

Moderator



R Ravindra Kumar, Member, IELC; Consultant, Skanthan Kumar Chambers

Ravindra Kumar Rengasamy holds a Bachelor of Laws (Honours) degree from the University of London in 1985 and obtained his CLP from the Legal Profession Qualifying Board in 1986. He was admitted as an advocate and solicitor of the High Court of Malaya in 1987.

After practising in Kuala Lumpur in litigation — initially focusing on insurance, motor accidents, and probate — he joined a large firm in Malaysia in December 1992. In 1999, he was elevated to partner; he remained a consultant until June 2025.

Ravindra is experienced in employment law and industrial relations, both in litigation and advisory capacities. Over the years, he has represented employers at all levels of the Malaysian court system, in unfair and constructive dismissal claims, judicial review and injunction proceedings. He also advises on redundancy / retrenchment, separation agreements, employment contracts, employee handbooks, and collective agreements.

His clients span multinational and Malaysian corporations across diverse sectors, such as oil and gas, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, education, IT, financial services, hospitality, automotive, FMCG and manufacturing.

Ravindra is consistently ranked in leading legal directories as a “Leading Individual”, “Leading Lawyer”, “Distinguished Practitioner”, and “Litigation Star”.

Apart from his practice, Ravindra has held many leadership roles within the legal profession. He served as Chairman of the Kuala Lumpur Bar Committee for the 2007/08 and 2008/09 terms, during which time he was also a member of the Bar Council. He chaired the Bar Council Industrial Court Practice Committee from 2008 to 2009 and was a member of the Disciplinary Committee Panel appointed under the Advocates and Solicitors’ Disciplinary Board until 2024.

He is also the Immediate Past President of the Malaysian Society for Labour and Social Security Law and Past Chairman of the Human Resource Committee of the European Union-Malaysia Chamber of Commerce and Industry.



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