

Skrine trio launch Kuala Lumpur boutique

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Lee Shih, Dato' Lim Chee Wee and Kwan Will Sen

Three partners who have collectively worked at Malaysian firm Skrine for over half a century have left to open their own disputes boutique in Kuala Lumpur.

Dato' Lim Chee Wee, Kwan Will Sen and Lee Shih left Skrine to open Lim Chee Wee Partnership earlier this month. The firm's practice will centre on international arbitration and commercial litigation.

Chee Wee leaves Skrine after 30 years, while Will Sen and Lee Shih had both been at the firm for over a decade.

Will Sen tells GAR the trio decided to open their new practice – also known as LCWP – as the “flexible structure of a boutique disputes firm” enables them to provide a more personalised service to clients.

The new firm will also help them avoid conflicts of interest and allow them to act for a broader range of clients. Will Sen adds that opening a new practice also “allows us to craft our own firm culture from the ground up.”

At Skrine, the trio had been involved in representing Thai coal-mining company Thai-Lao Lignite in a dispute with Laos, a case that also spilled into the Malaysian courts.

They also acted for a subsidiary of Malaysia’s national petroleum company Petronas in a billion-dollar Asian International Arbitration Centre with a Shell subsidiary, in which an award was issued in April.

Going further back, they helped a Thai asphalt company win a US\$20 million award against the Singapore arm of Glencore.

Jern-Fei Ng QC of Essex Court Chambers says that LCWP “is an exciting new venture that is helmed by three leaders of the Malaysian Bar.”

“Lim Chee Wee is counsel of choice in many bet-the-company cases, whose smooth but confident style of advocacy can calm the most troubled waters.”

Managing partner Lee Shih is “one of the fastest-rising stars” for commercial disputes with “an innate ability to come up with out-of-the-box solutions to complex problems,” while Will Sen is “a meticulous and pragmatic lawyer.”

Norton Rose partner **KC Lye** says the LCWP founders, who he has recent experience working with, “have always impressed me with their strategic approach, care for detail and infectious enthusiasm.”

He specifically recalls working with Will Sen on a case where, “against the odds,” they managed to persuade the Malaysian Court of Appeal to overturn a lower court’s ruling and grant their client’s application for an injunction against a well-known Malaysian company, “a tremendous result which led to a favourable settlement.”

Tun Zaki Tun Azmi, the former chief justice of Malaysia and current chief justice of Dubai International Financial Centre courts, says that Chee Wee is a “capable counsel with utmost integrity” as well as being “cool-headed and always fully prepared.”

He is confident LCWP will be a leading disputes practice with two “rising stars” in Lee Shih and Will Sen.

Skrine was contacted for comment.