

Nishith Desai starts in Delhi with Goldman Sachs GC, opens Bandra office, buys Rs 1 crore of IT

Written by Kian Ganz | Monday, 05 September 2011 13:06 | Law firms |



NDA inaugurates new home in BKC with judicial and Bollywood magic (click to enlarge)

Exclusive: Nishith Desai Associates (NDA) has hired former Goldman Sachs India legal head Pratibha Jain to start up in Delhi, as the firm opened its second Mumbai office in the Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) last week and invested Rs 1 crore (\$219,000) in advanced IT infrastructure.

NDA has leased an office of 2,000 square feet in the Defence Colony area with Jain having joined on 1 September. She said: "The idea is to head up the office and build it up to mirror what we have in Mumbai and Bangalore - a practice dedicated to servicing clients based on our existing expertise in a few areas rather than aiming to be full service provider. I'm looking at about five or six people along with me, that's the target for the first year."

Having relocated to Delhi for family reasons, Jain will focus on servicing existing NDA clients and local business development and will work on a flexible time schedule. "As long as your get your hours done I can do it at the place I want – I can build it the way I want and in the timeframe, instead of rushing to building something tomorrow," she said.

Jain holds law degrees from the University of Delhi, Oxford and Harvard and had worked at US firms Sullivan Cromwell and Skadden Arps Slate Meagher and Flom before joining Goldman Sachs in Mumbai as vice president and head of legal until April 2011.

"She has a terrific background and she is interested in research and academics which is the DNA of our firm," said NDA managing partner Nishith Desai. "We believe there is a higher spirit to our profession than just being a commercial law firm."

Suburban high-tech

NDA inaugurated its second Mumbai office on Friday in BKC's Maker Maxity building with former Chief Justice of India (CJI) PN Bhagwati attending as the chief guest (*pictured above*).

Siddharth Shah, head of NDA's fund formation group, will be permanently based in and head up the BKC office that has space for up to around 18 fee-earners. He told *Legally India* that the office would cater to the increasing number of financial services institutions that were based around BKC. Some associates from NDA's existing

South Mumbai office would also relocate from Nariman Point permanently.

The interior and layout of the office designed by Krishna D Misra, chairman of architecture firm Misra & Associates, who worked closely with NDA's information technology (IT) manager Milind Prabhakar to integrate technology into the new office.

Prabhakar, who has been with NDA for 12 years, and his team of four last month concluded the Rs 1 crore information technology (IT) project that includes large high-speed video conferencing systems in all meeting rooms and some senior lawyers' rooms, linking the Mumbai, Bangalore, Silicon Valley and ultimately Delhi offices in real time and high definition video.

All associates' workstations were also in the process of being outfitted with video phones and advanced computer instant messaging software allowing secure instant video conferencing and file transfers between all NDA lawyers.

The lion's share of the Rs 1 crore budget was spent on fees to a multinational IT consultancy, which provided and installed high-speed cables, hardware and software. Desai said that the new systems would increase efficiency of communications between fee-earners.

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