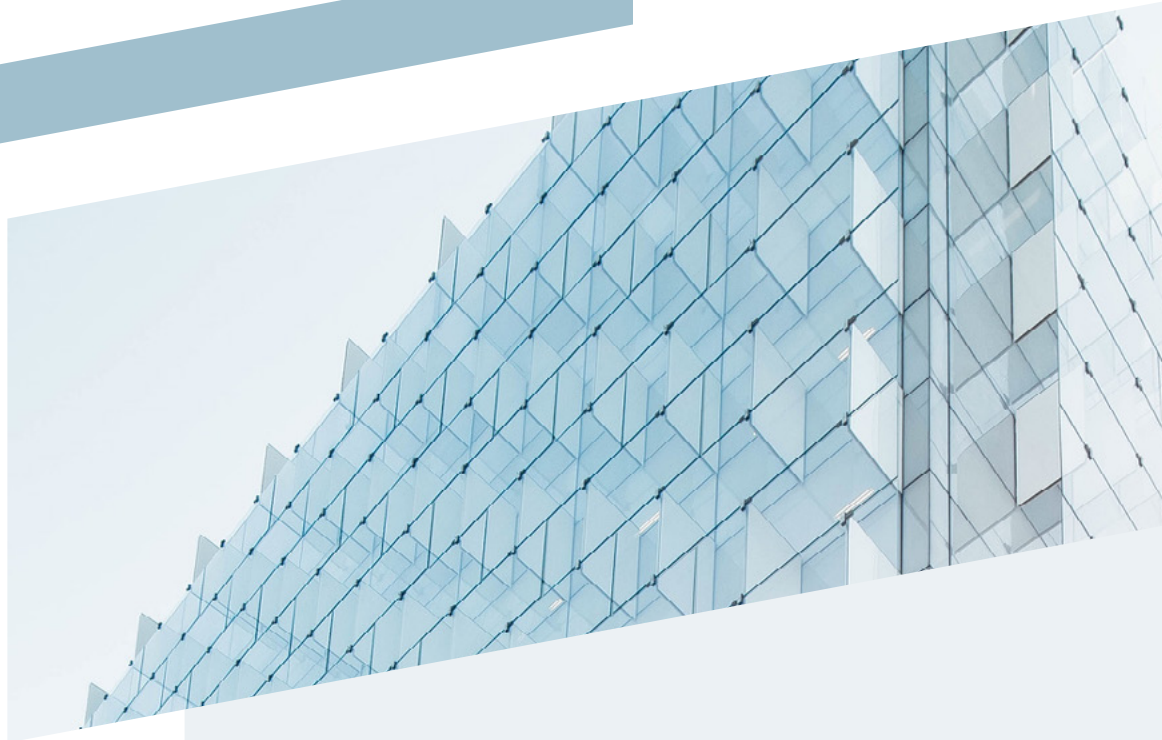


ABA NEWSLETTER 2026

March Issue



About ABA

The Asian Bankers Association (ABA) was initially established in 1981 as Asian Bankers Council as one of the Product and Service Councils of the Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI).

The ABA aims to provide a forum for advancing the cause of the banking and finance industry in the region and promoting regional economic cooperation. Its primary objectives include the following:

- To serve as a venue for an exchange of views and information on banking opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region;
- To facilitate the meeting of bankers in the region in an atmosphere of fellowship and friendship;
- To encourage joint activities that would enhance the role of its members in servicing the financial needs of their respective economies and in promoting regional development; and
- To undertake projects that will encourage trade, industrial, and investment cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.



The Asian Bankers Association (ABA) is excited to share with members and friends that the 42nd ABA General Meeting and Conference will be held at Kurumba Resort Maldives on September 1-3, 2026. Stay tuned or write to the Secretariat at aba@aba.org.tw for more information.

ABA Featured in PCAAE Podcast: Advancing Regional Banking Advocacy in a Transforming Financial Landscape

The Asian Bankers Association (ABA) is pleased to share that its Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. Darson Chiu, Ph.D., was featured in a podcast hosted on March 24, 2026 by the Philippine Council of Associations and Association Executives (PCAAE)—a leading institution in the Philippines dedicated to advancing excellence in association leadership, governance, and cross-sector collaboration.

The podcast was hosted by Mr. Bobby Peralta, a distinguished association executive and columnist

of Business Mirror under his weekly column “Association World.” Through PCAAE’s podcast platform, thought leaders from across industries are invited to exchange views on emerging trends, institutional development, and regional cooperation, making it a valuable channel for knowledge-sharing across the Asia-Pacific.

Watch the full podcast on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/8b2HbbSUeWg>

Listen on Spotify: <https://spotifycreators-web.app.link/e/LtHNgNxLK1b>



Policy Advocacy as a Regional Public Good

In the discussion, Dr. Chiu

framed ABA's policy advocacy as a form of regional public good—one that enables banks across diverse jurisdictions to coordinate perspectives on shared challenges while strengthening Asia's collective voice in global financial dialogue.

Through structured engagement among member institutions, ABA consolidates practitioner insights into position papers that reflect common priorities. These outputs are disseminated not only within the membership but also, where appropriate, to regulators, policymakers, and international organizations, helping ensure that policy discussions are conducted by practical banking experience.

Over the years, ABA's advocacy has addressed core areas underpinning financial stability and development, including Basel II and III implementation, accounting standards, corporate governance, credit infrastructure, local currency bond markets, and disaster preparedness. While technical in nature, these issues shape how banks manage risk, allocate capital, and support economic activity across the region.

Bridging Policy Dialogue and Practical Application

A central message of the podcast was that ABA's advocacy is not confined to theoretical discussion—it is grounded in real-world challenges faced by member banks.

In response to the rapid digitalization of financial services, ABA has developed work on cybersecurity and fraud prevention, offering practical guidance on strengthening operational resilience and protecting customers. Its engagement in digital transformation and open banking reflects the need for banks to innovate while maintaining sound risk management practices.

During the COVID-19 period, ABA also facilitated the sharing of practical experiences among member banks in supporting SMEs—highlighting measures to stabilize supply chains and promote digital adaptation. More recently, ABA has contributed to discussions on green finance and climate risk, supporting banks in aligning sustainability objectives while recognizing differing development stages across economies.

A Structured and Credible Institutional Framework

From a governance perspective, ABA's advocacy is supported by a structured institutional framework. Under the strategic direction of the Board, the Policy Advocacy Committee, comprising Board representatives and industry experts, serves as the central platform for identifying priorities and advancing policy initiatives.

The process follows a disciplined sequence:

- Identification of priority issues affecting member banks,
- Preparation of evidence-based draft papers by member institutions and partners,
- Rigorous peer review through committee deliberations, and

- Finalization into official ABA policy outputs.

These outputs are subsequently published and shared through ABA's platforms, providing both practical reference for members and inputs to regional and international policy dialogue. This ensures that ABA's advocacy is not only analytically sound but also operationally relevant.

Emerging Priorities in a Rapidly Evolving Financial System

Looking ahead, ABA is focusing on several interrelated priorities that reflect the transformation of the global financial system:

- *Cybersecurity and fraud prevention: Strengthening regional cooperation to address increasingly sophisticated cross-border fraud and scam networks;*
- *Ethical use of artificial intelligence: Promoting responsible adoption of AI in areas such as customer service, risk management, and compliance;*
- *Green and transition finance: Supporting pragmatic pathways toward sustainability, particularly in emerging economies;*
- *Movable asset financing: Expanding credit access for SMEs through alternative collateral frameworks; and*
- *Cross-border payments: Enhancing efficiency, transparency, and connectivity in regional payment systems.*

These focus areas underscore the dual challenge facing banks today—managing emerging risks while capturing new opportunities—and highlight ABA's role as a platform for coordinated, forward-looking responses.

Enhancing ABA's Visibility and Regional Engagement

The PCAAE podcast provides an important platform for amplifying ABA's voice beyond its membership, reaching a wider audience of policymakers, industry practitioners, and association leaders.

The discussion will also be featured in an upcoming article in *Business Mirror*, further extending its impact and reinforcing ABA's role as a thought leader in regional financial discourse.

ABA expresses its sincere appreciation to PCAAE and Mr. Bobby Peralta for the opportunity to share its perspectives. Such engagements highlight the importance of cross-sector dialogue and collaboration in addressing complex challenges and advancing sustainable development across the Asia-Pacific.

ABA Webinars and Trainings

ABA invites members to join The Wealth Management Summit Asia



The Asian Bankers Association (ABA) is inviting ABA members and friends to join **The Wealth Management Summit Asia** organized by Financial Times' FT Live on 15-16 April 2026 at Park Royal Collection in Singapore. This Summit will become the regional gathering of private banks, family officers and wealth managers to discuss investment approaches and business strategies amid geopolitical realignment and unprecedented wealth creation in the region.

Hear from leading executives on and off the stage:

- Joseph Poon, Group Head of DBS Private Bank, DBS
- Omar Shokur, Regional Head for Asia, Private Clients, and CEO, Singapore, Lombard Odier

- Alice Tan, Head of Group Wealth Management, Maybank
- Steve Brice, Global Chief Investment Officer, Standard Chartered
- Jean Chia, Global Chief Investment Officer, Bank of Singapore
- Albert Chiu, Executive Chairman, Asia Pacific, EFG Bank

Please visit [FT's website](#) for more information.

ABA members please contact programs@aba.com.tw for registration discount code.

About Financial Times:



Financial Times is a British daily newspaper published in broadsheet and digitally that focuses on business and economic current affairs. Based in London, the paper is owned by a Japanese holding company, Nikkei, with core editorial offices across Britain, the United States, continental Europe and Singapore. FT Live, the events arm of FT, runs 270 events per year to gather financial leaders and policy makers on issues of economic and financial importance.

ABA and Fintelekt jointly host "Next Gen Financial Crime Compliance: How Should Bank Leaders Prepare" Conference



The Asian Bankers Association (ABA) invited members and associates to participate in the "Next Gen Financial Crime Compliance: How Should Bank Leaders Prepare" Conference organized in association with Fintelekt Advisory Services, an ABA Knowledge Partner, and held in-person on 26-27 March 2026 in Singapore.

Financial crime risks are evolving faster than many traditional compliance frameworks can keep pace with. Banks across Asia are navigating increasingly complex cross-border flows, a surge in fraud-led financial crime, and more intrusive regulatory scrutiny. Boards and supervisors are no longer satisfied with policies and

controls that exist on paper. They expect demonstrable effectiveness, clear accountability, and evidence that risks are being actively managed. At the same time, emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, offer powerful new tools, while raising fresh questions around governance, explainability, and senior management responsibility.

The Fintelekt-ABA Compliance Masterclass was a two-day, CXO-level programme designed to help bank leaders prepare for the next phase of financial crime compliance over the coming 1-3 years. Drawing on Fintelekt's work with banks, regulators, and industry bodies across Asia, the programme focused on the issues that repeatedly surface in practice: where existing AML and FRAML frameworks are under strain, how regulatory expectations are evolving, and how technology can be deployed realistically and responsibly. Discussions were grounded in real-world examples, highlighting what has worked, what has failed, and the lessons leaders can draw from both.

The programme combined expert insight with

ABA Webinars and Trainings

structured peer exchange to help participants reassess priorities, navigate key trade-offs, and sharpen the questions they take back to boards and executive committees. It is designed to be practical, forward-looking, and directly relevant to strategic, governance, and investment decisions faced by bank leaders today.

The targeted audience of the conference were Chief Executive

Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Compliance Officer, Chief Auditor, Chief Risk Officer, Chief Technology Officer, Head of AML/Money Laundering Reporting Officers/ AMLCOs, Heads of Department and Board Members of banking and financial services institutions in Asia.

Participation fee was USD 1,750, ABA members enjoys a discount of USD1,450.

Participants were expected to make their own arrangements for travel and accommodation for the duration of the programme.

Lunch, refreshments and dinner on 26th March, and refreshments and lunch on 27th March were included in the fees.

ABA Partners Content

Super ATMs: A More Valuable Target Requires a More Complete Defense

Submitted by Oberthur Feerica



A Growing Network in More Exposed Locations

Banks across Southeast Asia are forecast to close around 11,000 branches by 2030, approximately 18% of the current network. The industry's response is a new generation of multi-function ATMs that can dispense cash, accept deposits, recycle banknotes between customers, and offer broader banking services. These are increasingly referred to as Super ATMs. Banks and independent ATM deployers are both investing in them. According to RBR research, Asia-Pacific saw the largest regional increase in independent ATM deployer installations globally, with nearly 11,000 new ATMs added, driven particularly by India and Indonesia.

The security challenge grows with the asset. A cash recycler that accepts deposits of higher denomination banknotes accumulates a significantly more valuable cash load than a basic dispense-only ATM. Super ATMs are also being deployed in new locations where customers demand the service, such as convenience locations that operate late into the night with limited security compared to bank branches. That combination of higher value and greater physical exposure creates exactly the conditions that organised criminals seek out.

Two Threats, Not One

The industry faces two categories of attack on ATMs. Understanding both matters because they require different responses.

The first is jackpotting fraud, also called a cash-out attack: criminals taking control of an ATM's software to instruct it to dispense cash continuously, without a

card or PIN, until the ATM is empty. One increasingly common method is the Direct Memory Access attack, in which criminals open the ATM's top cabinet, connect to an internal port, and alter the ATM's memory directly, bypassing antivirus software and all other operating system controls. The method works across all ATM brands and models. According to the FBI, more than 700 jackpotting incidents were recorded in the USA in 2025 alone. Not every incident reaches law enforcement, so the true scale is almost certainly much higher.

The second category is the physical attack: ram raids, angle grinder attacks, and explosives. Criminals do not commit to one method. They look for the weakest point of any given target. In Europe, as physical safes have become stronger, explosive attacks have become more common. Criminals escalate until they find what works. A Super ATM deployment that hardens against one threat but not the other leaves an obvious opening.

Software Layers and Their Limits

The ATM industry has developed serious software-based protection frameworks. The reality is that consistent application across an entire estate, particularly for smaller institutions and independent deployers, is not always achieved. The cash-out attack method is also specifically engineered to operate below the software layer: once a criminal has physical access to an internal port, software protections can be circumvented. Older ATMs may not support the firmware updates needed for protection.

Where software layers are incomplete or can be bypassed, a physical failsafe is needed. Oberthur Feerica has developed a device that physically monitors the ATM dispenser and detects when an abnormal cash-out is in

progress. When triggered, it shuts the dispenser down, cutting off the criminal before the ATM can be emptied. It is a last line of defence for cash-out attacks that the software layer did not catch.

Removing the Reward from Physical Attack

For physical attacks, the principle is different. EMV chip technology showed the industry how to deal with card fraud: not by catching every criminal, but by removing the value of what they were trying to steal. Once fraud became unprofitable, it stopped being worth attempting.

Intelligent Banknote Neutralisation Systems, known as IBNS, apply that same logic to physical ATM attacks. When an IBNS-protected ATM is attacked, the system permanently stains the banknotes inside. Stained notes are rejected by ATMs, cash-counting machines, and merchants. They cannot be spent or deposited. The attack may still occur, but the criminal leaves with nothing of value and will not return. Unlike bollards, enclosures,

and locking bars, which delay an attacker and can make an ATM look unwelcoming, IBNS is invisible in normal operation and does not affect the customer experience in any way. The technology is proven across Europe and the United States, and it operates within the frameworks of more than sixty central banks globally that have authorised the acceptance and reimbursement of stained banknotes.

For banks and independent deployers building Super ATM networks across Asia, the question is not whether to address security. It is whether the security strategy covers both threats. Criminals will find the weak point. By the time the first wave is visible, it has already begun, and it is far harder to stop than to prevent.

About the Author

Paul Nicholls is the Director of Business Development, Oberthur Feerica. With over 30 years in the ATM industry, Paul brings deep expertise in ATM security and self-service technology, and is a regular industry contributor and conference speaker.

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