

## Interview with Lex:lead judge Anurag Bana (India), International Bar Association

Anurag—please describe your general background and 1-2 highlights of your career:

I am originally from Delhi, the capital of India but studied law in the western part at the Indian Law Society's (ILS) Law College, University of Pune. My legal career started in 2002 when, after qualifying as an Indian lawyer, I was selected to work as a law clerk to Justice N Santosh Hegde, Judge of the Supreme Court of India at the time. It was the perfect training ground for the application of constitutional and administrative law while looking at local and global best practice precedents. The clerkship has been one of the highlights of my career as it gave me a deep conviction in the importance of quality research that helps to implement the rule of law and to shape the future of law.



I started working as a project lawyer in 2006 at the London head office of the International Bar Association (IBA). In almost 18 years at the IBA, I have been fortunate in gaining valuable experience developing and helping to implement best practices across jurisdictions with a focus on international development law, judicial reform, professional legal practice and more recently on legal technology, cybersecurity law, social media law and information governance.

As Chair of the IBA social media working group, I led the social media law project to develop a legal instrument titled 'International Principles on Social Media Conduct for the Legal Profession' which was unanimously adopted by the IBA Council in 2014 on behalf of 200 global member bar organisations. This has been another highlight of my career thus far.

What in your life has led you to an interest in development and how do you think law can shape positive development trends? What do you think are the most important law and development trends currently?

I would say it is the initial education followed by work experience in my home country and then being able to pursue these further across different jurisdictions that helped me realise the dynamic nature of development and its inherent connection to the legal landscape. I was interested in studying international law (both public and private) and policy in my postgraduate studies at Oxford which led me to pursue legal internships at international organisations such as the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) and with the Hague Conference. This helped me learn about the role and impact of legal standards and international rules in helping developing states achieve their development aims.

Law provides a structure for developing legal frameworks and systems required for governance, the protection of rights and securing access to justice. Effective legal systems positively influence development and economic growth. In terms of current trends, there is an increasing interface between law and technology these days. There is a great need to ensure the responsible development and use of emerging technologies (such as artificial intelligence). Technology can revitalise channels of mutual dependence to transform diversity into inclusivity and promote overall development thereby contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG16 (i.e., the promotion of just, peaceful and inclusive societies). Other areas to focus on are the environmental, social and governance (ESG) frameworks as they assess crucial developmental factors for the sustainability of companies and countries as they continue to evolve and face new challenges and opportunities.

When were you first introduced to Lex:lead and what are your thoughts on the initiative?

I had heard of Lex:lead around the time of its inception in 2010 through my work at the IBA. However, it was only in 2017 when I met Anne Bodley through a common friend that I then got to know more about the work of the organisation. In 2021, Anne was kind enough to reconnect me and to ask if I was interested in being a Lex:lead judge for the essay competition to which I immediately agreed as it was an exciting opportunity in which to be a part. I feel this is a brilliant initiative as it gives a chance to each and every member of the legal community to contribute and engage in meaningful and impactful work that not only motivates us all but makes a huge difference in people's lives around the world.