

## Practice Overview

Sooraj specializes in advisory and advocacy work in a wide range of commercial and white-collar crime cases. He provides strategic advice and representation to sovereign states, international organizations, business conglomerates, and individuals in cross-border matters. He has extensive experience in high-value transnational litigations and arbitrations (both domestic and international, including enforcement matters) involving complex factual and legal issues.

Sooraj's practice is diverse, ranging from advising and acting on some of the largest and most intricate corporate, commercial, and shareholder disputes and strategic battles involving substantial financial interest conducted before Indian and foreign courts as well as international arbitral tribunals under both ad hoc (UNCITRAL Rules and Indian Arbitration Act) and institutional rules (ICC, LCIA, ICADR, SIAC, DIAC, PCA); to acting in politically sensitive matters that span multiple jurisdictions, including claims for international protection, asset tracing, recovery and freezing, extradition (notable work includes some of the most significant extradition matters concerning Indian nationals declared fugitive economic offenders), seeking access, correction/deletion of data and cancellation of Interpol Red Notices and Diffusions; representing prominent individuals, entrepreneurs, and C-suites in complex international cases related to mutual legal assistance treaties and investigations into cross border financial crimes, including fraud, anti-bribery, anti-money laundering and conflict of interest.

Collaboration is a key aspect of Sooraj's practice, and he frequently works with lawyers outside India, providing strategic guidance and addressing legal challenges in national and international cases. Experienced in large-scale disputes, he also undertakes litigation work before India's trial and appellate courts, particularly the Supreme Court of India.

Sooraj's experience with multijurisdictional matters spans various sectors, including banking and financial services, media and entertainment, energy and natural resources, construction, engineering and infrastructure, real estate, insurance, pharmaceutical and life sciences, blockchain and cryptocurrency, technology, artificial intelligence and data privacy, commodities, and trusts. Additionally, he has

considerable experience advising clients on various ESG-related matters.

He has been recognized as a Future Star by Benchmark Litigation Asia Pacific, 2023.



**Sooraj Sharma**  
Partner

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## Education

- Master of Laws- McGill University
- Post Graduate Studies in Comparative & International Dispute Resolution- Queen Mary University of London
- CAS in Arbitration- Joint degree from University of Lucerne & Université de Neuchâtel in cooperation with Swiss Arbitration Academy
- Post Graduate Diploma in Alternate Dispute Resolution- Indian Law Institute
- Private International Law- The Hague Academy of International Law
- Dual bachelor's degree in law & humanities- Gujarat National Law University

## Bar Admission & Memberships

- Advocate- Bar Council of India
- Mediator- ICADR
- Member- Supreme Court Bar Association
- Member- Delhi High Court Bar Association
- Member- International Bar Association

## Expertise

### Asset Recovery, Enforcement, Global Investigations & White-Collar Defence

Sooraj has extensive experience advising clients on asset tracing, recovery, and preservation, including obtaining injunctive relief, worldwide asset freezing orders, and search and seizure orders. He is well-versed in handling enforcement proceedings before Indian and foreign courts.

Sooraj has significant experience conducting sensitive internal investigations and managing regulatory and criminal investigations. He assists clients in conducting internal investigations, responding to government inquiries, and effectively mitigating reputational risks. Sooraj possesses a deep understanding of the regulatory landscape and has demonstrated success in managing complex cross-border investigations.

As a key member of our firm's white-collar defence team, Sooraj specializes in offering strategic advice and representation to clients confronted with criminal investigations and prosecutions related to white-collar crimes.

Due to the sensitive nature of much of Sooraj's work in this field, there may be limitations on the information that can be disclosed.

### Notable Work

- Acted as secretary/special counsel to a court-appointed High Powered Committee led by a former judge of the Supreme Court of India to investigate a significant case of real estate fraud affecting thousands of investors.
- Advised a foreign state concerning global enforcement proceedings and execution of a worldwide freezing order.
- Advised the former Chairman of one of the world's largest liquor makers (declared a fugitive economic offender in India) in multiple legal proceedings in India and UK concerning bankruptcy,

money laundering, debt enforcement and claims for international protection.

- Acted for an Indian public sector bank in proceedings concerning attachment of mortgaged properties as proceeds of crime by the Enforcement Directorate in India under the anti-money laundering laws.
- Acted for a leading Indian investment and financial company in an internal inquiry concerning allegations of financial misconduct and violation of foreign exchange laws.
- Acted for a C-Suite executive of a Canada and UK-linked Indian financial services company concerning an internal inquiry relating to allegations of professional misconduct and conflict of interest.
- Acted for a leading real estate lender concerning an internal inquiry initiated against a C-suite executive for allegations of corruption and violation of the employee code of conduct.
- Acted for the President of one of Asia's most expensive residential housing societies in a politically sensitive case before the High Court and the Supreme Court of India concerning allegations of a massive real estate fraud.
- Acted for the Chairman, Director, and Senior Executive of a leading mining and trading company in India in criminal proceedings initiated by the Central Bureau of Investigation concerning allegations of bribery and corruption.
- Acted for a prominent land aggregator in India in multiple proceedings before various tribunals and courts, including the Supreme Court of India, concerning allegations of money laundering arising from India's biggest spot exchange scam.
- Advised a prominent businessperson with interests in aviation, hospitality and real estate concerning one of the first

proceedings in India under the Black Money Act.

- Acted for a Dominican HNI in a plea for anticipatory bail before the Supreme Court of India concerning allegations of cross-border cyber and crypto fraud in the United States and India.
- Acted for the directors and guarantors of a leading food manufacturer concerning criminal investigation for fraudulent misappropriation of finance facility.
- Acted for the aggrieved investors against a prominent real estate developer facing charges of fraud and cheating in a multi-million-dollar real estate investment fraud case.
- Advised a prominent UAE-based entrepreneur with interests in finance and manufacturing concerning criminal proceedings emanating from an alleged willful default on a loan facility in India.
- Acted for a prominent individual facing charges of corruption and money laundering in a significant scam in India concerning medical entrance examination, admission and recruitment.

### **Corporate & Commercial**

Sooraj's corporate and commercial practice straddles between contentious and non-contentious work. His extensive experience lies in providing invaluable counsel on corporate governance and cross-border commercial issues.

Sooraj is a trusted legal advisor to HNIs, C-suite executives and boards embroiled in complex business situations. He is adept in formulating and executing effective crisis management plans and strategic responses that guide clients through turbulent and uncertain times. Clients turn to him to solve their most significant legal problems in and out of the courtroom. His specialization in commercial and transactional disputes brings high proficiency to corporate matters, ensuring optimal outcomes before courts and tribunals.

Due to the sensitive nature of Sooraj's practice in this area, there may be limitations on the information that can be disclosed.

### **Notable Work**

- Acted for the promoters of one of the largest luxury goods manufacturers in the Middle East in disputes relating to the Family Business Governance Agreement and apportionment of multi-billion-dollar group assets spread worldwide.
- Advised a leading global audit firm concerning the applicability and interpretation of a specific provision in Indian company laws in a case concerning a multi-billion-dollar financial fraud.
- Advised a leading Indian housing finance company concerning disclosure requirements for listed companies under SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015.
- Advised in the acquisition of a controlling stake in a leading industrial development bank in India by a state-owned entity.
- Advised one of the world's leading EPC contractors concerning the imposition of liquidated damages in a turnkey contract for a supercritical thermal plant.
- Acted for India's leading battery manufacturer in proceedings before the commercial court and the High Court in disputes relating to the invocation of bank guarantee.
- Acted for the largest international airport in India in issues concerning the online sale and purchase of duty-free liquor and the interpretation and application of the relevant laws.
- Acted for one of the busiest airports in India in a significant commercial dispute with airline operators.

- Advised India's leading construction company concerning the interpretation and application of termination and force majeure clauses in a significant metro construction contract.
- Acted for a South Africa-linked green technology company in relation to the development of two green sustainable township projects in North-East India.
- Acted for an Agri-tech company concerning a mega commercial plantation project in Northeast India.
- Advised an Indian company concerning the acquisition of a South African company's controlling stake in a prominent beverage company in India.
- Advised a consortium of investors with interests in hospitality concerning an over USD 800 million purchase bid of an iconic hotel property in New York City from its India-based owners.
- Advised a Singaporean company concerning a government bid to procure and supply health equipment in India.
- Advised a leading energy company in India on post-acquisition issues concerning the state's imposition of land transfer fees.
- Advised one of the largest telecom majors in India concerning the Supreme Court of India's decision on the Adjusted Gross Revenue for levying License fees and Spectrum Usage Charges.
- Advised a South African entity on issues concerning the acquisition of a majority stake in the Indian subsidiary of a leading Construction & Engineering company engaged in a mega infrastructure development project.
- Advised the Director of a leading Indian luxury hotel group concerning a case of oppression and mismanagement.
- Advised a Special Purpose Vehicle (a joint venture between two notable Indian business corporations

undertaking a major road development project) on a commercial dispute with the state regarding the interpretation of the concession agreement and revenue sharing from toll collection.

- Acted for a leading real estate developer in Northern India in proceedings before various courts and tribunals in disputes on the sale and auction of one of the most expensive commercial real estates in central Delhi.
- Advised a leading real estate developer in Delhi (NCR) concerning a complex asset swap scheme with another prominent developer involving a mega township project.
- Advised an Indian business enterprise on the acquisition of industrial assets from the United Kingdom.
- Joint Venture dispute between a real estate major and a leading retail and hospitality company.
- Acted for a religious trust on issues concerning breach of construction contract by a leading Indian construction and engineering contractor in relation to the construction of the world's tallest religious skyscraper.

### **Defamation And Reputation Management**

Sooraj is a specialist in defamation and reputational risk matters. He provides strategic counsel and representation to clients facing defamation claims and helps mitigate reputational risks. With extensive knowledge of defamation laws, Sooraj guides clients through legal processes, both in pursuing and defending against defamation claims. He also assists in proactively managing reputational risks, offering tailored strategies for crisis management, media relations, and communication.

The sensitive nature of much of Sooraj's work in this practice area limits the information that can be disclosed.



### **Notable Work**

- Acted for one of the world's largest business conglomerates in multiple cases of civil and criminal defamation against various Indian and global media outlets and persons concerning allegedly defamatory and factually incorrect publications.
- Acted for one of the world's largest non-profit organizations and its office bearers in civil and criminal defamation proceedings in India.
- Acted for a former C-suite executive in criminal defamation proceedings against a leading Indian financial services company.

### **Debt Recovery, Insolvency and Restructuring**

Sooraj is skilled in managing a broad range of cases involving debt recovery processes, insolvency proceedings, and corporate restructuring. His expertise includes acting for financial and operational creditors, corporate debtors, and personal guarantors in insolvency proceedings in India and advising clients on issues related to cross-border insolvency. He has extensive experience advising resolution professionals and the committee of creditors on complex insolvency issues. He is proficient in leading complex corporate restructurings and litigations alongside devising innovative and compliant strategies. Sooraj has delivered significant recoveries for clients and provides bespoke solutions for businesses under distress.

### **Notable Work**

- Advised a Petrochemical major on issues pertaining to debts and non-performing assets amounting to USD 750 million.
- Advised the world's leading integrated steel and mining company concerning its USD 5 billion acquisition bid of a debt-laden company undergoing insolvency.

- Acted for a leading housing bank concerning enforcement of a financial debt before the National Company Law Tribunal.
- Advised the former chairperson of India's largest spirits company and a defunct airline concerning personal bankruptcy proceedings before the High Court of England and Wales.
- Advised the resolution professional of an infrastructure major in India undergoing corporate insolvency concerning the admission of claims by creditors.
- Advised a leading asset reconstruction company on various issues concerning debt enforcement and corporate insolvency.

### **Extradition, Mutual Legal Assistance, and INTERPOL**

Sooraj has considerable experience in handling high-profile extradition cases involving Indian nationals declared as fugitive economic offenders. He has successfully assisted clients in dealing with various challenges related to data access, correction/deletion, and the cancellation of Interpol Red Notices and Diffusions. Additionally, Sooraj has a proven track record of representing prominent individuals, entrepreneurs, and C-suite executives in complex international cases. These cases often involve mutual legal assistance treaties and investigations into cross-border financial crimes, such as fraud, anti-bribery, anti-money laundering, and conflicts of interest.

Due to the confidential and sensitive nature of Sooraj's practice in this area, there are limitations on the information that can be disclosed.

### **Notable Work**

- Advised a former diamantaire (declared a fugitive economic offender and the subject of an extradition effort by the Indian government from the UK on allegations of a multi-billion-dollar fraud

and money laundering) concerning claims for international protection.

- Acted for the C-suite executives of a leading Indian business conglomerate concerning investigative requests by a foreign state made under the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty and in proceedings before the Commission for Control of Interpol Files (CCF), Interpol for cancellation of Diffusion Notices issued by the National Central Bureau (NCB) of a foreign state on charges of cross border financial fraud and money laundering.
- Acted for an Indian business tycoon and former politician facing extradition to India concerning claims for international protection.
- Advised a prominent Indian defence contractor concerning extradition proceedings under the UK-India Extradition Treaty.
- Acted for two prominent Belgian residents on proceedings before the CCF, Interpol, for cancellation of Red Notices issued at the request of NCB, India, on allegations of a multi-billion-dollar cross-border financial fraud and money laundering.

### **Transnational Litigation, Arbitration & Dispute Resolution**

Sooraj is a dispute resolution specialist. He brings significant experience in multijurisdictional disputes before Indian and foreign courts and international arbitral tribunals. He has acted as counsel and assistant/secretary to the tribunal in over 75 international arbitration proceedings seated in India, Singapore, London, Paris, DIFC, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Bhutan, and Nepal under both ad hoc and institutional rules. This experience also includes arbitration-related litigations before Indian and foreign courts, strategizing and acting for clients in enforcement, and setting aside proceedings worldwide.

One of Sooraj's unique contributions to arbitration proceedings is his background as a tribunal secretary and assistant to arbitral tribunals. He has worked alongside esteemed common law and civil law arbitrators, giving him a distinctive perspective and valuable insights into handling complex arbitration cases. He is also a trained international mediator and cross-culture negotiator and accepts appointments as a mediator in civil and commercial disputes.

Due to confidentiality constraints, there are limitations on the information that can be disclosed regarding Sooraj's practice in this area.

### **Notable Work**

- Acted for a sovereign state/head of state in a complex international litigation concerning a mega cross-border fraud and asset tracing, freezing and recovery.
- Acted for the Italian Republic on issues concerning Indian law and the law of the seas in an inter-state arbitration before the Permanent Court of Arbitration, Hague, under Annex VII of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)- PCA Case No. 2015-28: The 'Enrica Lexie' Incident (*Italy v. India*)
- Advised a state-owned entity concerning the enforcement of an arbitral award in a European State.
- SIAC arbitration between a significant Private Equity Fund and a leading global manufacturer of PVC-based products concerning the validity and enforceability of a put option deed under Indian laws.
- Advised a global biopharmaceutical major concerning patient confidentiality and privacy under Indian laws in a motion for a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunctive relief before the United States Southern District of New York.

- Advised an international oil and gas exploration company on various aspects of Indian law and interpretation of a Production Sharing Agreement in relation to enforcement proceedings before the United States District Court of Columbia.
- Advised a major financial institution on issues of Indian commercial laws in proceedings before the High Court of England and Wales.
- Acted for India's leading steam coal importer before the Supreme Court of India against a leading Swiss energy and commodities trader in proceedings concerning the enforcement of a London-seated foreign arbitral award.
- Advised a leading Indian multi-format retailer on issues of Indian law in a SIAC arbitration with the world's leading technology and e-commerce company.
- Ad hoc arbitration between an Indian state-owned power generation corporation and a construction contractor (a joint venture between two construction and engineering majors from Austria and India) concerning a 520 MW Hydropower project.
- A multi-billion-dollar ad hoc arbitration between a Russian state-owned industrial conglomerate and an Indian state-owned energy major concerning the construction of a Mega Power Plant.
- Two consolidated arbitrations under ICC Rules between a Slovenian heavy machinery manufacturer and an Indian engineering, construction and infrastructure major.
- Dispute between a foreign state nuclear corporation and a leading Indian business conglomerate-Hong Kong seated arbitration.
- Ad hoc arbitration between a major General Insurance company and one of the world's largest Petrochemical conglomerates concerning a business interruption claim arising out of a Mega Package Insurance Policy.
- LCIA arbitration between an Indian pharmaceutical major and an Italy-linked global biopharmaceutical company concerning the breach of an exclusive distribution agreement.
- Two consolidated ad hoc arbitrations between a Singapore-based trading company and an Indian manufacturer and supplier of furnace consumables.
- Ad hoc arbitration between a leading Indian marketing and events company and a US-linked entity
- UNCITRAL arbitration concerning multiple disputes arising between an Indian energy major and a Swiss global engineering conglomerate concerning the construction of a grassroots oil refinery.
- ICC arbitration between a consortium of two Japanese & Indian companies and an Indian state-owned entity concerning an FIDIC modelled construction contract.
- SIAC arbitration arising from a Shareholders Agreement between a Mauritius-based investment fund and an Indian construction major.
- Ad hoc arbitration between one of the world's largest oilfield services companies and an Indian Oil & Gas major concerning the exploration of shale gas reserves.
- Ad hoc arbitration between a Canadian oil field services company and an Indian hydrocarbon exploration and production company.
- ICA arbitration between a Singapore-based trading major and India's largest state-owned trading corporation concerning the supply of imported steam coal of Indonesian origin to India.
- Ad hoc arbitration between a leading Chinese Construction and Engineering company and an Indian Aluminium

major concerning the construction of a captive power plant.

- Ad hoc arbitration emanating from an EPC Contract between a leading construction contractor in India and the National Highways Authority in a dispute concerning delay and price escalation.
- Two consolidated arbitrations between an Indian gas line transmission company and a consortium of a leading Indian and Iranian EPC contractor concerning the high-pressure natural gas pipeline construction.
- Two consolidated arbitrations concerning two major expressway construction projects in India.
- LCIA arbitration concerning a supply contract between a German and an Indian company.
- Two consolidated ad hoc arbitrations between the Indian subsidiary of a leading Canadian construction consulting company and an Indian infrastructure company concerning a contract for consultancy services.
- Dispute between a leading Singapore-based international luxury hotel management and operations company and a leading Indian retail mall developer.
- Ad hoc arbitration between a leading real estate developer and an Australian construction major.
- Two consolidated arbitrations between a French global energy management company and a leading Indian renewable energy major concerning two solar power plants.
- Two consolidated arbitrations concerning a Production Sharing Agreement between India's biggest energy conglomerate and a leading upstream oil and gas company.
- ICC arbitration concerning a project for setting up a sinter plant between India's

largest steel producer and a consortium of Indian and German engineering and construction contractors.

- Ad hoc arbitration between a multinational shipping corporation and an Indian public sector undertaking on termination of a shipping contract.
- Advised a leading manganese ore trader with mining interests in Africa against a leading Hong Kong-based commodities trader concerning the enforcement of a SIAC award.
- Advised the Director of a Singapore-based technology company in setting aside proceedings concerning a post-M&A dispute under Singapore Law.
- Advised a global technology consulting and digital solutions company in the enforcement of an ICC award seated in DIFC against a UAE-based EPC contractor.

### **Public Law & Policy**

Sooraj has a strong background in public law and policy practice in India. He provides strategic advice on constitutional law, administrative law, and regulatory compliance. Sooraj represents clients in significant litigation cases before Indian courts, including the Supreme Court. He also offers advisory services to government bodies and stakeholders on policy development and regulatory compliance. Sooraj's expertise helps clients navigate the complexities of public law and policy in India, ensuring adherence to legal frameworks and achieving favourable outcomes.

### **Notable Work**

- Acted for the aggrieved landowners in a multi-billion-dollar eminent domain dispute before the Supreme Court of India concerning a prominent land parcel in Mumbai, India.
- Acted for a leading higher education institution in Northeast India before the Supreme Court of India against the dismissal of a writ petition by the High Court of Orissa concerning the grant of



approval to run teacher training courses by the National Council for Teacher Education, India.

- Acted in a petition seeking special leave to appeal before the Supreme Court of India in a case impugning a decision of the High Court on the administrative side concerning a court staff.
- Acted for a public charitable trust running the world's biggest free school lunch programme in matters pertaining to government contracts before the Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court of India.
- Advised on legal and policy issues on the Mid-Day Meal scheme (free school lunch) under the National Food Security Act, including successful representation on behalf of a leading non-profit in the sector before the government authorities on significant policy issues impacting over 2 million school-going children in India.
- Special Counsel to a Supreme Court-appointed High-Powered Committee led by a former judge of the Supreme Court of India for dealing with issues concerning the transfer and import of captive wild animals in India.

### **Sports & Gaming**

Sooraj's sports and gaming practice revolves around providing legal and policy advisory services to prominent sports associations and gaming companies in India. This includes serving as a trusted advisor to a leading fantasy sports platform and other significant players in the game of skill domain. Drawing from his experience as an advisor to the office of the Ombudsman for two prominent cricket associations in India, Sooraj brings valuable insights to his clients. Sooraj's expertise in this field allows him to offer strategic guidance and counsel in navigating India's legal and regulatory landscape of sports and gaming.

### **Awards & Recommendations**

“He is energetic, helpful, and good with strategy and delivery.” - **Benchmark Litigation Asia Pacific, 2023**

“He is a young and dynamic lawyer with a keen eye for detail. I have been mightily impressed by his responsiveness and understanding of international business and commerce.”- **Benchmark Litigation Asia Pacific, 2023**

“He is extremely sharp-witted, hardworking and thorough. He is truly an outstanding lawyer of his generation.”- **Benchmark Litigation Asia Pacific, 2023**

“Sooraj is in a class of his own. He is exceptionally talented, incredibly sharp, and possesses an encyclopedic knowledge of the law from different jurisdictions.”- **Benchmark Litigation Asia Pacific, 2023**

