

National Law School of India University, Bangalore

Press Release

6th Sept 2020

1. The National Law School of India University, Bengaluru (“NLSIU”) had on several occasions raised concerns about the delay of the CLAT 2020 exam with the Governing Body and Executive Committee of the Consortium of National Law Universities (“Consortium”). NLSIU proactively presented several options to the Consortium to ensure the conduction of the CLAT 2020, which included:
 - Carving out an exception for NLUs to design their own admission process for 2020-21 as a single national examination may not be feasible in 2020;
 - Allowing for CLAT 2020 to be conducted in two or more series so that Universities may choose either the earlier or later date series;
 - Allowing for individual NLUs to conduct an examination, permitting CLAT-enrolled candidates to appear for a separate examination with no further need for registration or fee payment;

These options were repeatedly rejected by the Executive Committee of the Consortium of NLUs. On the one hand the Consortium was unwilling to confirm the date for the conduct of CLAT 2020. On the other it was unable to consider any of the options proposed by NLSIU, or permit individual NLUs to develop their own approach in the exceptional circumstances presented in a COVID-affected academic year. The Consortium’s decisions to postpone CLAT on 05.08.2020 and 27.08.2020 were not taken unanimously as has previously been reported.

2. Faced with no option, NLSIU by its Notification dated 3.09.2020, introduced a revised Admissions Procedure for the B.A., LL.B. (Hons) and LL.M. candidates through a new entrance examination, the National Law Aptitude Test (“NLAT”) for the year 2020-2021, in view of the inordinate delays in the conduct of CLAT 2020, and in order to avoid a Zero Year.
3. On 4th September, 2020 the Consortium of National Law Universities held a Governing Body Meeting where the Consortium requested NLSIU, Bangalore to reconsider its decision to hold a separate examination, namely, NLAT. The Consortium claimed that such an action was in violation of Clause 15.3.3 of the Consortium Bye-Laws and if NLSIU were to stick to its decision, it would be removed from the Consortium.

4. We understand that the Consortium issued a Press Release, though NLSIU did not receive a copy of this Press Release and learnt about this from the newspapers. Further, no copy of the Resolutions have been received by the University. The University responded to the Consortium in writing to point out that the General Body had no legal authority under the Memorandum of Association or the Byelaws to adopt a resolution removing NLSIU from the Consortium. Moreover, NLSIU reiterated that it would fully support the smooth conduct of CLAT 2020.
5. On 5th September, 2020 the Consortium of National Law Universities in a meeting of its Governing Body resolved that the actions of the Vice Chancellor of NLSIU were in derogation of the Bye-Laws and the Objectives of the Consortium. NLSIU has not received a copy of this resolution and learnt about this decision from a Press Release dated 06th September, 2020. NLSIU is yet to formally receive a copy of this Press Release.
6. NLSIU clarifies that the situation arising out of the repeated postponement of CLAT 2020 was fully discussed by the Faculty and the Executive Council which unanimously resolved and authorized the University, and the Vice Chancellor to conduct a separate admissions process, if there was any further delay of CLAT 2020.
7. NLSIU affirms that the University, and its Vice Chancellor, have not violated the Consortium Bye-Laws. NLSIU has been a Founding Member of the Consortium, and has not acted in derogation of the objectives of the Consortium at any time and in any manner. Moreover, the Vice Chancellor has not acted in any manner that gives rise to any potential for a conflict of interest. Hence, the claims made and decisions reported to have been taken by the Consortium in its Press Release dated 6th September have no legal basis or authority.
8. However, given the statements of the Consortium in its Press Release of 6 September, NLSIU, and its Vice Chancellor, have no alternative but to completely disassociate from CLAT 2020. No member of the University, including the Vice Chancellor or any member of staff shall hereafter participate in CLAT 2020 in any manner, administratively or otherwise.
9. NLSIU confirms that it is fully committed to delivering NLAT 2020 on time and in a student friendly manner.

Registrar
Prof (Dr) Sarasu Esther Thomas