



COGNIZANT

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

By- Dr. Rajendra Prasad National Law University, Prayagraj

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COGNIZANT

-A Quarterly Newsletter

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DURING THIS QUARTER, THE UNIVERSITY ACHIEVED NOTABLE MILESTONES, INCLUDING THE SIGNING OF A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA, STRENGTHENING OUR INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS...



FROM THE DESK OF THE HON'BLE VICE-CHANCELLOR

It gives me immense pleasure to present the IV Issue (April-June 2025) of Cognizant, the quarterly newsletter of Dr. Rajendra Prasad National Law University, Prayagraj. This issue reflects the University's sustained dedication to academic excellence, social responsibility, and holistic development of the students.

During this quarter, the University achieved notable milestones, including the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Pretoria, South Africa, strengthening our international academic partnerships. A National Seminar on Constitutional Governance, a series of Faculty Seminars, students' Debate and Discussion, and community-oriented initiatives such as 'Sankalp 51A@Pahalgam', and the International Labour Day outreach exemplified our mission to integrate legal education with meaningful societal engagement. This issue also includes the creative expressions of the students in form of poetry, cartoons and others.

A special highlight of this Issue is the feature "Beyond Judgments: Speaking with **Hon'ble Mr. Justice Pankaj Mithal**, Judge, Supreme Court of India". The interview offers profound insights into the philosophy of law and the moral dimensions of justice. Hon'ble Justice Mithal's reflections on ethics, legal literacy, and humanistic values reaffirm the importance of compassion and integrity in the legal profession. His belief that law must nurture 'mindful nation-builders' aligns closely with the University's vision of education rooted in values and public service.

I extend my appreciation to the editorial team and all contributors whose efforts have enriched this volume. May this issue inspire our readers to continue engaging with the law not merely as a profession, but as a pursuit of justice, wisdom, and humanity.

Senior Prof. (Dr.) Usha Tandon

09th Oct, 2025



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA



Dr. Rajendra Prasad National Law University, Prayagraj, in a landmark development in the field of global legal education, signed a significant **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of Pretoria, South Africa**, through its Faculty of Law on 9th April 2025. This international academic partnership aims to promote legal excellence, research innovation, and cross-cultural understanding between the two globally recognised institutions.

The agreement was virtually signed by **Sr. Prof. (Dr.) Usha Tandon**, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of RPNLUP, and **Prof. Elsabe Schoeman**, Dean of the Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria. The agreement was signed in the presence of **Prof. Zozo Dyani - Mhango**, Chair, Internationalisation & Centre for Environmental Justice in Africa, University of Pretoria, South Africa; **Mr. Satya Prakash**, Registrar, RPNLUP; and other esteemed faculty members from the University of Pretoria and RPNLUP.

This collaboration reflects a shared vision providing a framework for a variety of academic and cultural initiatives, including faculty and student exchange programs, joint research projects, and the organization of seminars, conferences, and symposia in areas of mutual interest. These activities are designed to enhance the global perspectives of both students and faculty members while encouraging comparative legal studies.

A core component of this partnership is the facilitation of faculty and researcher exchange programs, aimed at promoting scholarly collaboration and intellectual exchange. Through this initiative, legal scholars from both institutions will have the opportunity to contribute to ongoing legal issues, develop joint publications, and explore new frontiers in comparative and international law. In addition, research scholarships and training opportunities will be made available, providing students with immersive experiences that encourage academic rigour and cross-cultural dialogue.

Speaking on the occasion, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor remarked, "This alliance opens new avenues for our students and faculty to engage in transnational legal discourse, develop a comparative perspective, and contribute meaningfully to wider legal scholarship. This is a unique association in the sense that RPNLUP, being a nascent University, has joined hands with a century-old University for quality academic exchange. It strengthens our commitment to world-class excellence and academic outreach."

Prof. Elsabe Schoeman emphasized the significance of this partnership in expanding opportunities for both staff and students. She said, "We are very excited about this collaboration. We don't have many agreements with Indian universities. This is actually such a direct engagement with a rapidly growing law school in India, which makes it a landmark moment for us."

SPECIAL LECTURE ON INDEPENDENCE OF JUDICIARY AND THEORY OF CHECK AND BALANCE: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF INDIA AND THE USA



HVC, Sr. Prof. (Dr.) Usha Tandon (RPNLUP) presenting memento to Dr. Pradeep Kulshreshtha, Dean, School of Law, Bennett University

Dr. Pradeep Kulshreshtha, Dean, School of Law, Bennett University, on 17th April 2025, delivered a special lecture on **“Independence of Judiciary and Theory of Check and Balance: Comparative Analysis of India and the USA”** within the Academic Block of Dr. Rajendra Prasad National Law University, Prayagraj. The session commenced with a warm welcome address by Asst. **Prof. Dr. Deepak Sharma**, Head of the Department of Law, RPNLUP. In his address, Dr. Sharma highlighted Dr. Kulshreshtha’s remarkable contributions to legal education and research, emphasizing how his work continues to inspire and shape contemporary legal thought and practice.

Following the address, **Mr. Satya Prakash**, Registrar of RPNLUP, was invited to felicitate Dr. Kulshreshtha, after which Hon’ble Vice-Chancellor, **Sr. Prof. (Dr.) Usha Tandon** presented a memento to him as a mark of respect and appreciation.

Dr. Kulshreshtha began his address by extending heartfelt appreciation to the HVC, Sr. Prof. (Dr.) Usha Tandon, acknowledging her remarkable legacy of leadership, first at Delhi University and now at the present institution. He further noted that numerous esteemed judges across various courts in India have been mentored by her, underscoring her immense contribution to both the legal fraternity and academia.

He commenced his lecture by introducing the concept of constitutionalism, he emphasized its vital importance for the governance of a nation. He explained that the mere existence of a written constitution does not guarantee good governance. Drawing comparisons, he observed that while the United Kingdom does not have a single, codified constitution, it enjoys stable governance due to its deep-rooted constitutional values. Conversely, Afghanistan, despite having a formal constitution, continues to struggle with political instability, there by under scoring the necessity of public adherence, cultural values, and the spirit of constitutionalism beyond the written word.

He also reflected on India's colonial past, describing how British rule systematically divided and dominated the country.

Further, he discussed the early constitutional developments, including the First Amendment and the landmark A. K. Gopalan case, which highlighted the tensions between individual rights and state authority. He explored the ongoing interplay between "established by law" and "due process of law." In his comparative analysis of the Indian and American constitutional systems, he pointed out that the U.S. Constitution is notably concise and has undergone relatively few amendments, owing to its rigorous amendment process. In contrast, India's Constitution is among the most detailed in the world, with over 105 amendments to date, facilitated by a more flexible amendment procedure.

He also remarked that the spirit of constitutionalism has deep roots in Indian civilization, predating the modern Constitution. Drawing from ancient Indian philosophy, he cited examples such as "Satyameva Jayate" and "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", reflecting the principles of Raj Dharma and universal human values.

In his concluding remarks, he emphasized that the true strength of any constitution lies not merely in its text but in the values and commitment of its people and urged students to internalize and embody constitutional values in their everyday lives, reminding them that the endurance of constitutional democracy ultimately rests on public consciousness and ethical governance.



Memorandum of Understanding:

RPNLU, Prayagraj and Bennett University, Greater Noida have agreed to collaborate on Academic events, teaching, training, and research initiatives under mutually agreed terms. Their partnership includes the exchange of study materials and joint organization of law-related events to enhance student learning. Both institutions will offer reciprocal opportunities for students and faculty to participate in seminars, conferences, outreach programs, and specialized teaching sessions. Faculty and researchers may be invited for academic engagements, with financial arrangements determined individually. The MoU also allows shared access to library resources and encourages academic interaction between faculties. Additionally, the parties aim to pursue collaborative research and seek funding from national and international agencies. All financial implications, excluding student fees, will be settled through mutual agreement.

SANKALP 51A

@PAHALGAM

Dr. Rajendra Prasad National Law University, Prayagraj, in collaboration with **Anant Law**, had initiated '**Sankalp 51A@Pahalgam**', a humanitarian endeavour to provide Pro Bono Legal services to families affected by the Pahalgam terror attack of April 22nd, 2025. The brutal assault had claimed lives and left families from various states devastated, calling for immediate civic and legal intervention.

This initiative formed part of the broader 'Sankalp 51A' project series launched by RPNLUP during Maha Kumbh 2025 under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, **Sr. Prof. (Dr.) Usha Tandon**. Inspired by Article 51A of the Constitution, the project stressed fundamental duties and community services. This project was a comprehensive programme that sought to integrate legal assistance, civic support, and humanitarian outreach for those affected by large-scale calamities and acts of violence. The first major intervention under the Sankalp 51A series had been successfully undertaken during Maha Kumbh 2025, where a dedicated team of trained paralegal volunteers from RPNLUP had provided legal and civic assistance to pilgrims, and families in need.

Building upon the lessons and successes of that endeavour, RPNLUP had committed itself to extending similar support to the victims of the Pahalgam terror attack. RPNLUP and Anant Law, a full-service law firm with its head office in New Delhi, had pledged to provide structured legal and civic assistance to the victims' families. Through this programme, a team of trained and

certified paralegal volunteers had attempted to provide structured, Pro Bono assistance to the victims' families. The support encompassed aimed at helping families with documentation processes, filing for compensation claims, navigating insurance claims, and establishing connections with relevant Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and statutory bodies such as the District Legal Services Authorities (DLSA) and the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA).

A key feature of this initiative had been its commitment to providing humble services without any financial burden to the victims' families. All legal and civic assistance had been rendered Pro Bono, ensuring that families already grappling with immense emotional and economic hardships were not subjected to further distress.

'Sankalp 51A@Pahalgam' had represented an innovative model that blended legal services with civic engagement, ensuring that the victims' families received timely, dignified, and comprehensive support.

RPNLUP and Anant Law's joint effort had stood as a testament to the role of academic institutions and the legal community in addressing humanitarian crises and advancing the cause of justice beyond the courtroom. A dedicated team of legal and social experts, including **Dr. Prakash Tripathi**, Asst. Prof., RPNLUP, and **Dr. Sonika**, Asst. Prof., RPNLUP, had been made available to support the families of the victims.

INTRA UNIVERSITY SPORTS TOURNAMENTS

Between **April** and **June** 2025, the **Sports Society** of RPNLUP, organised two major sports events: the 2nd and the 3rd Intra University Sports Tournament. Both tournaments promoted fitness, teamwork, discipline, and sportsmanship among students. These initiatives were guided by the visionary leadership of the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, **Senior Prof. (Dr.) Usha Tandon**, supported by the Registrar and faculty members of RPNLUP, whose encouragement inspired participants throughout.

The 2nd Intra University Sports Tournament was held on **5th April 2025** at the football ground and badminton court (of the Boys' Hostel). The **badminton** competition followed a knockout format. In Men's Singles, Mr. Divyansh Gupta, Mr. Durgesh Yadav, Mr. Aditya Raj, Mr. Kaustubh, Mr. Aditya Dixit, and Mr. Shikhar Pratap Singh competed, while Mr. Ayush Narayan and Mr. Abhishek Rao advanced by draw. Round 2 featured Mr. Ayush Narayan, Mr. Durgesh Yadav, Mr. Kaustubh, and Mr. Aditya Dixit. The semi-finals witnessed Mr. Ayush Narayan and Mr. Kaustubh as finalists, but an injury forced Mr. Kaustubh to withdraw, declaring **Mr. Ayush Narayan** the winner.

In the Women's Singles, Ms. Tejaswi Sharma, Ms. Varsha Joshi, Ms. Stuti Mishra, and Ms. Tanu Grewal advanced from the opening round. The final saw **Ms. Tanu Grewal** edge past Ms. Varsha Joshi after a close contest.

The **football match** that evening, played in two halves of 25 minutes, drew enthusiastic crowds. Team A, led by **Mr. Devansh Upadhyay**, and Team B led by **Mr. Yasharth Mishra**, played intensely resulting in a neck-to-neck match. **Team B** led 1-0 at halftime, but **Team A** equalised in the second half, forcing tie breaker penalty corner to decide the winner. In a tense shootout, Team A won by 5-4. Team A included Mr. Devansh Upadhyay (Captain), Mr. Aditya Dixit, Mr. Abhyuday Sharan, Mr. Ayush Narayan, Mr. Anmol Patel, Mr. Suryansh Mishra, Mr. Viplav Sinha, Mr. Aditya Aggarwal, Mr. Nihar Duggal, and Mr. Shikhar Pratap Singh.



Football Match



Penalty kicks to decide the winner



The boys' cricket match

The 3rd Intra University Sports Tournament (Cricket) was played on **28th and 29th April 2025**. On 28th April, the boys' cricket match featured faculty and non-faculty members. Team A, led by Asst. Prof., **Dr. Suchit Kumar Yadav**, with Vice Captain Mr. Rahul Pandey, included Mr. Abhyuday Sharan, Mr. Aditya Raj, Mr. Abhishek Rao, Mr. Raj Singh, Mr. Ayush Narayan, Mr. Shikhar Pratap Singh, Mr. Nihar Duggal, Mr. Vinod Dubey, and Mr. Ankush. Team B, captained by Asst. Prof., **Dr. Prakash Tripathi**, with Vice Captain Mr. Aditya Dixit, featured Mr. Ashutosh Singh, Mr. Yasharth Mishra, Mr. Viplav Sinha, Mr. Anmol Patel, Mr. Durgesh Yadav, Mr. Devansh Upadhyay, Mr. Abhishek Raj, Mr. Rajendra Dubey, and Mr. Ankit. Batting first, Team A posted 81 runs in 10 overs, with Mr. Rahul Pandey scoring 37. Mr. Yasharth Mishra and Mr. Rajendra Dubey claimed two wickets each to restrict the total. Team B chased the target successfully with three balls to spare, winning by eight wickets under the guidance of Captain Asst. Prof. Tripathi.

On **29th April**, the girls' cricket match was contested in a T7 format. Team A, captained by Ms. Stuti, and including Ms. Himanshi, Ms. Srijal, Ms. Vanya, Ms. Nehal, Ms. Saumya Sachan, and Ms. Ayushi, played against Team B, led by Ms. Tejaswi with Ms. Tanu, Ms. Nandini, Ms. Siddhi, Ms. Babli, Ms. Janhvi, and Ms. Vainizah. Batting first, Team B scored 66 runs in seven overs, but Team A, led by Ms. Stuti Mishra chased it down with resilience, reaching 69 to win the match. Both tournaments exemplified healthy competition, teamwork, and enthusiasm. Strong participation from students, faculty, and staff, coupled with tireless organisational efforts, ensured success.



The girls' cricket match

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR DAY AWARENESS PROGRAMME AT THE BRICK KILN



Dr. Rajendra Prasad National Law University, Prayagraj, through its **Legal Aid Society**, commemorated **International Labour Day** by organizing a legal awareness outreach program at the **New Vindhyavasini brick kiln located at Gohri Village, Soraon, Prayagraj on, May 1st, 2025**. The program was conducted under the noble guidance of Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, **Sr. Prof. (Dr.) Usha Tandon**. A dedicated team of Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs), accompanied by faculty members, carried out the outreach program with the objective of spreading legal awareness among workers about their rights, entitlements, and welfare schemes. The centrepiece of the program was a street play titled **'Utthaan'**, meaning 'upliftment', performed by the University's Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs). Through vivid, emotional, and relatable performances, the PLVs portrayed the harsh realities faced by workers employed in brick kilns. The performance highlighted issues such as child labour, the lack of access to education, hazardous working conditions, the systemic poverty, and inequality that plague the working classes. It demonstrated how parents are often compelled to involve their children in hazardous work and deprive them of education and a safer childhood due to poverty and lack of awareness.

The street play served as an effective medium to educate the audience about labour welfare legislations and labour-

centric welfare government schemes such as e-Shram Card for unorganized workers, the health assurance scheme Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) for health cover, the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, regulations concerning minimum standard of living, working hours and workplace safety, the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 and the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.

The play also sensitized the audience about the legal consequences of employing children in hazardous industries and the significance of ensuring that children are sent to school to break the vicious cycle of poverty and illiteracy. The officials of District Administration, namely, Tehsildar and Lekhpal, assured their support to the University's PLVs, enabling them to conduct more such programs and raise awareness.

The officials enriched the program by explaining welfare scheme registration, urging kiln workers to claim social security benefits, and emphasizing child education. They offered practical guidance, pledged administrative support, and encouraged community awareness, reaffirming the government's dedication to inclusive growth and the upliftment of marginalized groups.



PLVs engaging directly with the community.



Legal Aid Society

Following the street play, an interactive legal awareness session was held where the PLVs engaged directly with the community. Labourers raised their concerns regarding wage disputes, workplace exploitation, and access to social security benefits. PLVs listened empathetically and guided them about the legal remedies and resources available. Labourers were encouraged to approach the Legal Aid Clinic for assistance and to assert their rights through appropriate legal channels. The programme witnessed the enthusiastic participation of local villagers, labourers, grassroots legal workers, and legal dignitaries. The event not only celebrated International Labour Day but also reinforced the University's broader mission to promote legal literacy, justice, and socio-economic empowerment in rural India. Through impactful street performances, expert legal guidance, and direct community engagement, RPNLU, Prayagraj continues to foster a culture of legal empowerment, inclusivity, and grassroots development.



NATIONAL SEMINAR ON “CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE: CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES”



Prof. V. C. Vivekanandan, HVC, HNLU, Raipur; Prof. Uday Shankar; and HVC, Sr. Prof. (Dr.) Usha Tandon, Lightning the Lamp

Dr. Rajendra Prasad National Law University, Prayagraj, organised a **National Seminar** on “**Constitutional Governance: Contemporary Challenges**” on **May 10th, 2025**. In this seminar, leading voices in legal academia critically reflected on the structural tensions and evolving dynamics of India’s constitutional democracy. The deliberations focused on urgent concerns — judicial corruption, the crisis of accountability, the contested process of appointment of judges, and the philosophical underpinnings of power and liberty.

Chief Guest of the seminar, **Prof. V. C. Vivekanandan**, Hon’ble Vice Chancellor, HNLU Raipur, took the discussion to a philosophical plane. Drawing from Montesquieu, Antonio Gramsci, Hiroshi Nishihara, and the Bhagavad Gita, he traced how the idea of separation of powers has traversed centuries and civilizations. His assertion that the Constitution is India’s only shared “religion” was a powerful

reminder of its role in holding together a diverse and complex society. He invoked mythology to illustrate Montesquieu’s idea that “power must check power” and elaborated that this principle is under threat in the contemporary political landscape.

Prof. Dr. Devinder Singh, Panjab University, speaking virtually, brought the spotlight on the collegium system and the unresolved question of judicial appointments. His argument for re-opening the debate on the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) was grounded not in nostalgia but in a constitutional need for transparency and checks. He urged the audience to consider whether any institutional structure could ever be perfect, suggesting instead that our constitutional compass must remain the doctrine of basic structure and the Rule of Law.



Prof. Dr. Devinder Singh (Panjab University) Addressing the Audience

Prof. Uday Shankar from RGS IPL, IIT Kharagpur, identified four dimensions of constitutional governance: the fragility of fundamental rights without redress, the distortion of markets by corrupt practices, the neglected model of horizontal federalism, and the creeping erosion of judicial integrity. He delved into the discussion of corruption in a constitutional democracy, emphasizing not only its legal aspects but also its socio-economic aspects. He called for accountable constitutional governance, pushing the audience to rethink how democratic institutions can serve people meaningfully.

The interactive session saw active engagement from students who raised thoughtful questions on the role of technology in ensuring access to justice, the need for codification of uncodified legal domains such as tort law, and the evolving nature of rights and remedies in a tech-driven society. Prof. (Dr.) Shankar responded by emphasizing the transformative but cautious integration of technology in judicial processes, warning against over-mechanization while encouraging innovation like digital filing and open court platforms. Prof. (Dr.) Devinder Singh and for codification to legal certainty and clarity, particularly in areas like torts where ambiguity often results in inconsistent outcomes. Prof. Vivekanandan encouraged students to view technology as a tool, not a substitute, for constitutional values, urging critical scrutiny over blind adoption.



Dignitaries at the Dais

Hon'ble Vice Chancellor (RPNLUP), aptly stated at the close of the session, "Such intellectually rigorous seminars not only expose our students to the pressing constitutional debates of our times but also nurture in them a critical consciousness that is essential for the making of responsible, ethical legal professionals and engaged citizens."

The seminar reflected RPNLUP's growing role as a centre for meaningful legal dialogue and its focus on educating students for real-world constitutional challenges and to ponder over its possible solutions.

FORTNIGHTLY FACULTY SEMINAR



The 2nd Episode* of the Faculty Seminar was held on 11th April 2025. In which **Dr. Prakash Tripathi** (Asst. Prof. of Sociology) gave presentation on “Reclaiming Forests, Rebuilding Lives: A Critical Ethnographic Study of the Implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006 among the Himalayan Tribes”. In his presentation Dr. Tripathi discussed how the Act has become a landmark step in India’s forest governance. The act was designed to address historical injustices faced by forest-dwelling communities, particularly Scheduled Tribes, who lost control over their lands and resources due to colonial forest policies and post- independence conservation practices. By recognizing their rights, the Act seeks to restore cultural identity, secure livelihoods, and promote community autonomy. It represents a shift from exclusionary forest management to a participatory model that values indigenous knowledge and traditions.

Yet, when discussing its implementation, especially in the Himalayan region, serious challenges come to light. The legal and procedural framework is complex and difficult for local people to access. Limited awareness,

weak local governance, and bureaucratic hurdles often make the process inaccessible. Instead of empowering communities, top- down approaches sometimes further distance them from decision-making.

The study under discussion focuses on the Tharu Tribe of Uttarakhand. Through ethnographic methods—interviews, observations, and group discussions—the research highlights the gap between policy promises and actual outcomes. While FRA provisions have the potential to empower, realities on the ground show resistance from bureaucracy, lack of institutional accountability, and even internal community tensions. The case of the Tharu Tribe reflects broader issues across Uttarakhand.

The presentation emphasizes that with out structural reforms—such as simplifying legal procedures, decentralizing administration, and ensuring culturally sensitive outreach— the FRA risks becoming another missed opportunity in India’s forest governance history.

The 3rd Episode of the Faculty Seminar, held on 25th April 2025, examined systemic failings that distort justice before trial. Assistant Professor, Law, **Dr. Deepak Sharma** (Asst. Prof. of Law), initiated the discussion, foregrounding the routine misuse of preventive detention under Article 22(3) to side step trial safeguards. A comparative lens referenced the European Convention on Human Rights, where proportionality and robust judicial oversight are central, in contrast to India’s wide executive discretion. Investigative gaps were highlighted: persistent reliance on eyewitness accounts, under use of forensic science, and continuing custodial violence. Despite safeguards articulated in *D. K. Basu v. State of West Bengal* and *Joginder Kumar v. State of U. P.*, enforcement remains uneven.

*The 1st episode of the Faculty Seminar was published in the previous issue of *Cognizant Vol. I, Issue III*



The conversation also critiqued the constrained role of the accused at the discharge stage, typically limited to rebutting the prosecution, unlike UK practice where both sides are heard before discharge. Bail jurisprudence drew attention to socio-economic disparities: underprivileged accused often remain incarcerated for want of sureties, while the influential secure quicker relief, with *Moti Ram v. State of M.P.* and *Babu Singh v. State of U. P.* serving as touch stones. Recommendations called for tighter judicial review of detention, concrete measures against custodial violence, accessible and equitable bail practices, and stronger scientific support for investigations-advancing a more humane, transparent, and participatory pre-trial process.



In the 4th Episode of the Faculty Seminar, held on May 13th, 2025, **Dr. Suchit Kumar Yadav** (Asst. Prof. of Political Science), delivered his presentation on the title – “Dalit Women in Academia: Narratives of Inclusion and Lived Experiences.” The participation of Dalit women in higher education remains a crucial and under explored area in the Indian academic landscape. Historically marginalized due to their intersecting identities of caste and gender, Dalit women face specific barriers that differ significantly from those encountered by the male or non-Dalit female counterparts. Despite various affirmative action policies and governmental initiatives to enhance access to higher education, Dalit women continue to experience significant challenges in gaining admission to and thriving within universities.

These challenges are deeply rooted in the historical and systemic oppression of the caste system, further compounded by gender discrimination. Based on field research and primary data, the presentation highlighted the disparity between the official discourse of inclusivity and the everyday realities Dalit women face. While policies such as reservations and scholarships have been established to facilitate their entry into academic institutions, the social and cultural environment within these spaces often remains exclusionary, fostering a climate of discrimination and marginalization.

The presentation also dealt with this subject thematically, such as the persistence of caste-based discrimination, the inter sectionality of caste and gender oppression, and the inadequacy of institutional support systems in addressing these issues. For instance, many Dalit women report experiencing micro aggressions, social isolation, and bias from peers and faculty members, which exacerbate their sense of alienation.

The presentation further examined the role of student organizations, activist groups, and informal support networks in providing a sense of community and solidarity for Dalit women in academia. These spaces offer a critical platform for them to voice their concerns, share experiences, and advocate for systemic changes. The session concluded with discussion and valuable suggestions by faculty members.



In the 5th episode of the Faculty Seminar, a flagship interaction programme of the University in which faculty members discuss their work and research, was held on 26th May 2025. In this episode, **Sr. Prof. (Dr.) Usha Tandon** (Senior Professor of Law) discussed on the Supreme Court's recent judgment in *In Re: Right to Privacy of Adolescents (2025 INSC 778)*.

Ma'am gave a presentation on the case related to POCSO Act on which Calcutta High Court and the Supreme Court of India had given contradictory opinions. The case involved a man convicted under the POCSO Act and IPC for raping a 14-year-old girl. Later, the girl lived with him as a wife and had a child. The Calcutta High Court had acquitted the accused, reasoning that the relationship was consensual. However, the High Court also made controversial remarks, suggesting that adolescent girls must "control their sexual urges". The observations made by the Calcutta High Court were discussed and viewed as patriarchal, unscientific, and irrelevant for a court of law. Later, the Supreme Court overturned this acquittal, clearly stating that minor's consent cannot be legally valid under the POCSO Act. Yet, taking an exceptional step using Article 142 of Constitution of India, the Court avoided giving the mandatory minimum

punishment under Section 6 of POCSO Act, citing the reason that punishing the man might further harm the girl, as she was emotionally and financially dependent on him.

The Senior Professor and faculty members appreciated the Apex Court's humanitarian approach but raised serious concerns on this judgement. They pointed out that mandatory minimum punishment under POCSO Act is a legislative mandate meant to protect children, and bypassing it may weaken the law. Sympathy in one case, they argued, should not override the legal framework designed to deter child sexual exploitation. The discussion also touched on broader issues: adolescent agency, informed choice, and the failures of the justice system—such as stigma, lack of state support, and insensitivity. The Supreme Court's attempt at restorative justice was acknowledged during the discussion but it was also opined that the long-term solutions must come from legislative reforms, not judicial exceptions. The discussion was concluded with a common understanding that while the judgment shows empathy, its use of extraordinary powers must remain rare and carefully scrutinized to preserve the intent of child protection laws.

BOLLYWOOD NIGHT



The **Cultural Society** of Dr. Rajendra Prasad National Law University, Prayagraj, successfully organized a Bollywood Night on the evening of **May 3rd, 2025**, to celebrate the rich heritage and glamour of Indian cinema. The theme of the event was to dress up as an iconic Bollywood character and perform one of their popular scenes. The event began with a ramp walk, where the participants walked the ramp portraying roles such as Geet from *Jab We Met*, Rani from *Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani*, Paro from *Devdas*, and many more.

Following the ramp walk was a competition, in which the participants were asked to perform either a dance, song, or a short dramatic act emulating the character they were portraying. Students entertained the audience by dancing to iconic Bollywood songs and enacting famous scenes from legendary films such as *Om Shanti Om* and *Bharat*.

The competition was judged based on two primary criterias: Talent and the authenticity of the Costume. The event became vibrant and fun as students showcased their creativity and enthusiasm through their costumes. Team of **Mr. Abhyuday Sharan** and **Ms. Saumya Sachan**, won the title of Best Characters who captivated the audience with their portrayal of Raj (Raj Kapoor) and Vidya (Nargis) from the classic film *Shree 420* and performance on the song "Pyaar Hua Iqraar Hua".



WEEKLY STUDENTS' DEBATE AND DISCUSSION SERIES

The **Debate and Discussion Club** of Dr. Rajendra Prasad National Law University, Prayagraj, continues its commitment to fostering open and inclusive discourse through its weekly round-table Debate & Discussion Series. Held every Thursday, these sessions provide students with a platform to engage in meaningful debates on past and present legal developments and their societal implications, encouraging critical thinking and active participation.



Mr. Abhishek Raj and Mr. Nihar Duggal (B.A.LL.B. Hons., II Sem.)

On the 3rd April 2025, the Weekly Debate and Discussion was held on the topic **“Does Delimitation Unfairly Benefit Northern States and Penalise Progressive Southern States, and Will This Create a Deeper North-South Divide in Indian Politics?”**

The presenters in this discussion were Mr. Nihar Duggal and Mr. Abhishek Raj. The points of discussion and contention were whether the proposed delimitation would ensure fairer representation and strengthen democracy, or whether it would deepen the North-South divide and disproportionately benefit certain states while disadvantage others.

On the 17th April 2025, the weekly group Debate and Discussion revolved around the Supreme Court’s recent decision on Governors delaying the bills. It was presented on the topic **“Does the Supreme Court’s Stance on Governors’ Delaying State Bills Protect Legislative Sovereignty or Risk Triggering Fresh Constitutional Power Struggle?”** by Ms. Tejaswi Sharma and Ms. Siddhi Sharma. Legislative powers and Judicial Activism were the focus of the debate, with both sides having a healthy discussion on the doctrine of separation of powers.



Ms. Siddhi Sharma and Ms. Tejaswi Sharma (B.A.LL.B. Hons., II Sem.)



Mr. Shikhar Singh and Mr. Rahul Pandey (B.A.LL.B. Hons., II Sem.)

On 24 April 2025, the Weekly Debate and Discussion was held on the topic **“Supreme Court’s Electoral Bonds Verdict: Step Towards Transparency or Exposure of Deeper Flaws in Campaign Finance?”** The presenters in this discussion were Mr. Rahul Pandey and Mr. Shikhar Pratap Singh. The points of discussion and contention were whether this decision would lead us to more transparent elections or would it open the floodgates for worse fraudulent activities.

On May 1st, 2025, the penultimate weekly round-table Debate and Discussion was held on the subject **“Live Telecast of Court Proceedings: A New Era of Transparency or a Threat to Judicial Secrecy?”**. The presenters were Ms. Saumya Sachan and Ms. Vainizah. During the discussion, some suggested that this would usher us into a new era of openness, while others called it a threat to judicial sanctity.



Ms. Saumya Sachan and Ms. Vainizah (B.A.LL.B. Hons., II Sem.)



Ms. Khushi Shandilya and Ms. Harshita Bharati (B.A.LL.B. Hons., II Sem.)

The final instalment of the Weekly Debate and Discussion session for the first academic year was held on the 15th of May 2025. The topic put forth was **“Prison Reforms in India: Is Rehabilitation Just a Myth?”** and was presented by Ms. Khushi Shandilya and Ms. Harshita K. Bharti. The students laid down their thoughts on whether the prison reforms in India actually act as rehabilitative in nature and practice or are they simply a myth.

BEYOND JUDGMENTS: SPEAKING WITH HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE PANKAJ MITHAL

(JUDGE, SUPREME COURT OF INDIA)



Hon'ble Mr. Justice Pankaj Mithal (Judge, Supreme court of India) interacting with Ms. Janhavi Singh and Ms. Srijal Mishra (Students, B.A.LL.B. Hons., II Sem.)

Q1. Your Lordship, you come from a distinguished family which has deep roots in the legal field, you are a third-generation lawyer and second-generation High Court judge. How did your childhood shape your understanding of law and justice? Are there any particular moments or interactions that still inspire you and reflect in your judicial pronouncements?

Ans. It's a long story. I was born in a family of lawyers. Though I never saw my grandfather, I've always heard that he was a very prominent lawyer in the district of Meerut and was one of the leading names in Western Uttar Pradesh at the time. My father followed in his footsteps and carried forward that legacy with great dedication. From my earliest years, I remember watching my father deeply engrossed in his work. I would see him in his chambers giving dictation, preparing cases, going to court in the morning, and coming back late in the evening only to sit down again at night to prepare for the next day. That left a strong impression on me. It motivated me. Somewhere in my mind, I had already decided that I too would become a lawyer, just like him.

But as a child, I had a very different idea of what it meant to be a lawyer. I thought it was something quite simple you study, show up at court, and begin working. I didn't realise then how challenging it truly was. It was only when I stepped into the profession myself that I came to understand the depth of effort, discipline, and resilience it demands. That early motivation, however, stayed with me and became the foundation of my journey in law.

Q2. During Your Lordship's years as an advocate, your good self-authored the celebrated work "The Birth and Life of the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad", offering a detailed account of the Court's institutional legacy. Now, as an Honourable Judge of the Supreme Court, how does His Lordship reflect on the evolution of the Indian judiciary since the period he once documented, as both an observer from the Bar and now, from the Bench?

Ans. Yes, when I was practising as a lawyer in the Allahabad High Court, there came a time when the entire legal fraternity went on a prolonged strike. The protest was against the demand for a High Court bench in Western Uttar Pradesh. With no court work during that period, I found myself idle. That's when the idea struck me, I thought I should use the time productively and write something meaningful.

I began researching the history of the Allahabad High Court and ended up writing a detailed article, which was later published in the local newspapers and also in *Laws*, a well-known legal magazine published from Delhi. To my surprise, the article was very well received. Even the then Chief Justice appreciated it greatly and encouraged me to continue writing. I still remember he told me, "Promise me you'll keep writing such pieces". Whether the article was truly remarkable or not, I can't say—but people appreciated that it concisely presented the entire institutional journey of the Allahabad High Court.

As for your second question, I view the evolution of the judiciary well, I've witnessed significant changes. The Indian judiciary is constantly evolving. The kinds of cases we dealt with in the past are very different from what we see today. Earlier, matters were simpler and more traditional. But now, we are dealing with a whole new legal landscape: cyber law, intellectual property rights, economic offences, digital privacy. These were not even in our contemplation two or three decades ago. The scenario has completely transformed, and with it, the judicial approach must adapt and grow as well.

Q3. Having served as a Judge at Allahabad High Court and Chief Justice in both Jammu & Kashmir, and Rajasthan High Court, what did Your Lordship observe about the diversity of judicial practice across regions? And how does such experience influence Your Lordship's judgments on the national stage?

Ans. I've had the opportunity to serve in three High Courts—Allahabad, Jammu & Kashmir, and Rajasthan and while all three are part of northern India and share certain commonalities, each had its own unique character and challenges. In terms of procedure and language, they all operate in both Hindi and English. But the experience in Srinagar, for example, was markedly different. The volume of work there was quite low compared to Allahabad or Rajasthan, and I must say the overall quality of legal work was also not on the same level. However, it was a far more challenging environment. Every decision required extra care, especially given the sensitive context in which the court functioned.

Srinagar had its own legal culture. Most lawyers argued in English and were well-read and articulate. Jammu had a higher volume of cases and felt more typical in terms of workload. In contrast, in Srinagar, cases involving high stakes were few and far between. Still, the depth of the arguments and the unique sensitivities of the region made every hearing significant. As for Rajasthan, there was an interesting divide between the two benches. In Jodhpur, the focus was primarily on civil and criminal matters, while Jaipur saw more taxation-related litigation. Even the lawyers at both places had very different styles and strengths, which became apparent over time.

These varied experiences across different courts have certainly helped shape my judicial outlook. They've taught me to adapt, to be sensitive to regional contexts, and to appreciate the diversity of legal practice across India, something that's immensely valuable at the national level.



H.M.J. Pankaj Mithal
at the Threshold of Legal Profession

4. Your Lordship, through the Justice Narendra Nath Mithal Memorial Foundation, established in Lordship's father's memory in 1998, your family continues to serve society with a commitment to legal awareness, education, and public service. In a profession often defined by courtroom rigour and constitutional boundaries, does Sir believe that such sustained engagement with society outside the formal judicial framework adds a vital and humanising dimension to the role of a judge?

Ans. I believe societies like this are crucial not just for the development of law, but also for nurturing moral values within our society. When my father passed away in 1996, there was something very close to his heart that we wanted to carry forward. He believed deeply in the idea of complete legal literacy not just basic literacy, but legal literacy. He used to say that every citizen is presumed to know the law, but in truth, they should actually understand it. That was his vision; to honour that, my mother took the initiative and established the Justice Narendra Nath Mithal Memorial Foundation in his memory in 1998. Unfortunately, over time, we haven't been able to take it as far as we had hoped. We've organised a few elocution contests and talks, but the Foundation has remained largely under utilised.

That said, I do hope and truly intend that once I retire or demit office, I'll be able to devote more time and energy to it. It's something I want to take up very closely. I see great potential in it to contribute meaningfully to legal awareness and to bridge the gap between the judiciary and the public. These engagements, outside the formal courtroom setting, offer a humanising dimension to what we do as judges—and they're deeply important.

5. Your Lordship, in *Gobind Rai v. State of Uttar Pradesh (2023)*, Your Lordship was a part of the vacation bench that stayed a direction mandating astrological testing of a rape survivor's Mangal Dosh, asserting the primacy of scientific reasoning and constitutional dignity over superstition. In light of this, how does Your Lordship view the role of courts in addressing pseudoscientific practices that enter legal proceedings?

Ans. The role of the courts in matters of social concern is absolutely critical. Courts often show the way forward when society hesitates to evolve on its own. Whether it's in cases like Nirbhaya, where the judiciary laid down fundamental guidelines for justice and procedure, or the Vishaka judgment, which filled a legislative vacuum on workplace harassment, the courts have consistently stepped in when needed. Unfortunately, in many areas, society does not take the initiative to develop or reform on its own. People often wait for judicial directions before taking any meaningful step. In that sense, court-issued-guidelines become instrumental, not just legally, but socially as well. They influence thought, policy, and behaviour. So yes, I believe judicial pronouncements play a key role in addressing not just pseudo scientific practices, but all kinds of outdated or harmful beliefs that might otherwise find their way into legal or social processes.

Q6. Your Lordship, at the recent NLIU-SBA Law Conclave 2025, Your Lordship advocated for an 'Indianised' Lady Justice, draped in a saree, eyes open, and holding the Constitution alongside our scriptures. What deeper message does this reimagined symbol send about India's legal identity and how might it reshape public perception of justice in a post-colonial society?

Ans. The idea of the Indianised Lady Justice was originally the brainchild of our then Chief Justice, Dr. D. Y. Chandrachud. We wanted to install a statue of Lady Justice in the Supreme Court library, and as part of that vision, a mural was created. In that mural, the entire attire of Lady Justice was transformed replacing the traditional Western tunic with a saree, removing the blindfold, and substituting the sword with the Constitution. The balance scales and a book remained, but the representation became uniquely Indian in its symbolism.

I felt it was a significant and thoughtful step toward the Indianisation of our judiciary. Personally, I suggested we go even further. Instead of the figure holding only the Constitution, I proposed that scriptures like the Vedas and the Gita could also be shown along side it, because our legal system, to some extent, draws from Vedic jurisprudence. While not all, many foundational principles such as those from Mimasa philosophy are still relevant and continue to influence our legal thinking today.

Even the motto of the Supreme Court, “Yato Dharmastato Jayah” (Where there is Dharma, there is Victory) comes directly from the Mahabharata. It reflects the deep- rooted connection between our legal ethos and ancient Indian texts. These scriptures are not merely relics of the past; they offer timeless values and insights that can guide the future of law in India. So for me, the reimagining of Lady Justice in Indian attire is not just about changing her clothing, it is about aligning our legal symbolism with the cultural and philosophical foundation of our Nation.

Q7. In today’s milieu of heightened public scrutiny and emotionally charged social media discourse especially around several pending Supreme Court cases like the Maratha quota challenge, the Waqf (Amendment) Act petitions, and the PIL seeking suspension of Air India’s Boeing fleet, how does the judiciary sustain public confidence while remaining insulated from populist pressures and online activism?

Ans. In such cases, there is certainly pressure on the judiciary, primarily because even before a matter is formally listed or heard, media coverage begins in full swing. In a way, the media trial starts much earlier than the legal proceedings. Naturally, this creates a charged atmosphere and can influence public opinion. It’s only human that such an environment might also impact those involved in the adjudicatory process. However, as judges, we are trained and expected to remain above such external noises. I believe most judges are very clear about their responsibilities. We ignore the media commentary and social pressure. Decisions are taken independently, after we go through the case papers thoroughly and hear the arguments presented before us in the Court. So, while the pressure exists, I would say it does not influence judicial decision-making. Judges base their rulings solely on the merits of the case, and in that sense, judicial independence remains intact.

8. Your Lordship, with over 5.2 crore cases pending across Indian courts, the pressure to prioritise speed and disposal has intensified. However, many argue that the quality of justice reflected in well-reasoned judgments and robust jurisprudence should not be compromised in the race to clear backlogs. In Your Lordship’s view, should judicial performance be measured more by disposal statistics or by the depth and consistency of jurisprudence produced?

Ans. In my view, the focus must be on delivering quality judgments rather than chasing disposal numbers. Proper reasoning and robust jurisprudence ultimately resolve issues better and strengthen the justice system. The issue of pendency cannot be seen as a failure of judges or lawyers alone. Judges are working sincerely; time is not being wasted. Pendency also arises due to litigants who often seek unnecessary adjournments or delay proceedings. In fact, there are many old cases that no longer require urgent attention. What we need is a prioritised hearing system, where cases are listed based on urgency and relevance. Moreover, the government should also step in to assist the judiciary in addressing systemic delays. Time-bound frameworks should be considered, not just for judges but also for litigants, to make the system more efficient and accountable.

Q9. Your Lordship, as India accelerates its judicial digitisation, through e-filing, virtual hearings, and AI-assisted court processes, poignant concerns around digital exclusion continue to persist. The 2024 report of The Ministry of Electronics and IT notes that only 38% of the Indian population is digitally literate. In this context, how can the judiciary balance the push for technological efficiency with the constitutional mandate of ensuring equal access to justice for digitally marginalised communities?

Ans. Technology has become essential for the legal system. Through the hybrid court system in India, even a litigant sitting in a remote area like Assam can attend hearings virtually. It has significantly streamlined processes, reduced the need for physical presence, and even helped in minimizing adjournments. However, the challenge lies in the fact that not all citizens in India are digitally literate. To bridge this gap, we must focus on increasing digital awareness and providing basic education in technology. Only then can we ensure that the benefits of judicial digitisation truly reach every corner of the country.

Q10. Your Lordship, we often speak of the immense intellectual and constitutional weight that judges carry in a democracy as vast and diverse as India, where each judgment can have far-reaching societal and political consequences. But behind every robe is a human being. May we know, how personal hobbies, interests, creative pursuits and non-judicial passions help Your Lordship revitalize amidst the sustained pressures of constitutional adjudication?

Ans. A judge's personal habits and interests significantly influence their mindset and the way they approach judicial work. In my case, I have always been a keen reader of Hindi literature. Reading has not only been a source of personal joy, but has also shaped my thinking while writing judgments. Two books that deeply impacted me are *Devaki Ka Beta*, which presents the life of Lord Shri Krishna; and *Ram Rajya*, which offers a scientific perspective on governance and society through the lens of Lord Ram's life. Such literary works stay with you and subtly guide your reasoning and understanding of justice, morality, and human conduct.

Q11. Your Lordship, the late Shri Arun Jaitley in his 2013 Parliamentary Speech remarked that 'post-retirement jobs affect pre-retirement judgments,' raising concerns about judicial independence. Recently, Hon'ble Chief Justice B. R. Gavai also echoed this sentiment. In Your Lordship's view, how valid are these concerns, and what steps, if any, can be taken to ensure that judicial integrity remains uncompromised?

These are important concerns, and they deserve serious attention. Appointments of retired judges to quasi-judicial bodies like tribunals and commissions should be approached with caution. In my personal opinion, such appointments should ideally be avoided. They often lead to unintended consequences, many times, the decisions passed by these retired judges are challenged in regular courts, which may, in a way, undermine the dignity and institutional integrity of the judiciary. It is not merely about extending a judge's working life after retirement. Judges already dedicate their lives to the service of justice, and continuing in such roles may not always serve the larger interest of the judicial system. The priority must be to preserve the independence, dignity, and credibility of the institution above all else.

So, all these things should be avoided. We can stay away from this post-retirement system unless the enactment or statute itself provides. See, for Human Rights Commission, the Chairman has to be a Supreme Court Judge, so how can one avoid that thing? Someone has to be appointed. How can we avoid that? But in the longer interest of judiciary, if this can be avoided, it would be the best way out.

Q12. Your Lordship, having observed generations of lawyers and judges shape the legal landscape—in Your Lordship’s view, what qualities distinguish those legal professionals who simply succeed in their careers from those who leave a lasting, transformative impact on the justice system?

Ans. The key difference lies in the attitude with which one enters the profession. There are lawyers who earn well and build successful careers, and then there are those who leave a lasting impact on the system. The former often work for financial gains, while the latter serve for status, responsibility, and the cause of justice. In the judiciary, earning is always secondary. Many lawyers today are drawn to corporate sectors merely for monetary benefits, which is not a healthy professional practice, especially when such work benefits only the large corporations and not the common citizen. A lawyer’s duty is to serve society. Therefore, there should be a reasonable cap on legal fees, just as there is an MRP for consumer goods, so that justice remains accessible. When lawyers prioritise the welfare of society over profits, they truly contribute to the justice system in a meaningful and transformative way.

Q13. As the Chief Guest at the Valedictory Session of RPNLU, Prayagraj’s International Conference held in March this year, Your Lordship engaged with the hopes and voices of India’s future legal fraternity, reflecting on law as both a profession and a promise. Your Lordship, in your view, how can law schools become spaces where justice is not only taught but lived and students emerge not just as lawyers, but as mindful nation-builders?

Ans. Justice can be lived only when education is rooted in strong moral values. Unfortunately, in India, moral science is neither widely taught nor deeply practiced. Today, many professionals, whether in law or other fields, pursue careers primarily to sustain a lifestyle, and in doing so, the ethical foundation of their work is often overlooked. True nation-building cannot happen this way. Moral responsibility must be emphasised alongside technical knowledge. For example, we often talk about women empowerment, but we must also focus on sensitising male children, teaching them how to behave and respect others. If boys grow up with the right values, societal crimes will reduce, and genuine empowerment will follow. Only through such holistic education can we shape students into mindful lawyers and strong nation-builders.



Interviewed by-

- Ms. Janhavi Singh &

- Ms. Srijal Mishra

(Students of B.A. LL.B. Hons., II Sem.)

Photographed by –

- Mr. Sujal Sonkar

(B.A.LL.B. Hons., II Sem.)

FACULTY FOOTPRINTS



Dr. Usha Tandon, Senior Professor of Law

Publications

- "What a common gendered phrase says about the persistence of sexism in law" Express Opinion, Indian Express (online), May 16th, 2025.
- "Informational Privacy in the Age of AI: A Critical Analysis of India's DPDP Act, 2023", (co-authored), Legal Issues in Digital Age, 6 (2), 87-117, (2025) (published on 7th July 2025) <https://doi.org/10.17323/2713-2749.2025.2.87.117>.

Address / Speech / Public Lecture

- Delivered the Inaugural Lecture (online) at BRICS Law School Consortium, Moscow, on "BRICS at Crossroad: Mapping BRICS' Commitment to Climate Change Mitigation", April 24th, 2025.
- Spoke in the Technical Session of National Conference on "Mediation", organized by Ministry of Law and Justice & Offices of AGI of India, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, May 3rd, 2025.
- Spoke in the CNLU Vice Chancellors' Conclave on "Nurturing the Next Bench: Legal Education as the Judicial Incubator", at Kodaikanal, May 30th, 2025.
- Delivered the Inaugural Address as the Chief Guest in One-Week Workshop on Research Methodology with Hands-on Training in SPSS and SEM, organized by HPNLU, Shimla, 8th to 12th June 2025.

Participation in Academic Discourse

- Participated in the online open lecture by Prof. Dr. Daria Boklan, HSE University, Russia on "Exceptions from the WTO Rules: Defending Non-Trade Interests", May 15th, 2025.

Meetings

- Participated in the General Body (GB) meeting of Consortium of National Law Universities, May 16th, 2025, and 31st May 2025.
- Participated in the Selection Committee Meeting for Assistant Professors and Associate Professors, GNLU, Silvassa Campus, June 13th-14th, 2025.
- Participated in the 99th AIU Annual General Body Meeting of the Association, through 'Virtual Mode', June 30th, 2025.
- Special General Body Meeting, Consortium of National Law Universities, through 'Virtual Mode', July 20th, 2025.

Evaluation

- Reviewed a manuscript for Scopus indexed Journal "University of Bologna Law Review", Italy (May 17th, 2025).

Nominations / Recommendations

- Nominated student got admission with scholarship to pursue LL. M. from Jigme Singye Wangchuck School of Law (JSW Law), Paro Bhutan, June 06th, 2025.

Recognition

- Contribution towards RPNLUP recognised in Hindi Newspaper-'Hindustan', dated 5th April, 2025.
- Co-Convener, Working Group on Ecology, BRICS Law Schools Consortium, Russia (since April 2025).



Dr. Deepak Sharma, Assistant Professor of Law

Conference

- On 6th June 2025, Dr. Sharma served as the Co-Chair of a Technical Session at the "International Conference on the Role of Forensic Sciences in Criminal Investigation: Contemporary Issues and Challenges", organized by the Centre for Criminology and Forensic Science, Himachal Pradesh National Law University, Shimla.

Reviewed

- In April 2025, Dr. Deepak Sharma was invited by the Amity Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, Amity University Noida, to review the LL. M. Criminal Law curriculum.



Dr. Sonika, Assistant Professor of Law

- Adjudged Preliminary Rounds of 13th RGNUL National Moot Court Competition, 6th April 2025.

STUDENTS SPOTLIGHT



Mr. Saurabh Singh (B.A.LL.B. Hons., II Sem.)

Publication

- "Shortcomings in Emerging Criminal Legislation" – Published in the White Black Legal International Law Journal (Vol. 3, Issue 1 | ISSN 2581-8503). – 3rd June 2025.

Participations

- Participated in the 1st NUJS National Disability Rights Article Writing Competition and Conclave.
- Participated in the 2nd National Essay Writing Competition, organized by the Literary and Debating Society, Maharashtra National Law University, Mumbai.



Ms. Pratibha Gaur (B.A.LL.B. Hons., II Sem.)

Publication

The following articles were published in the Centre for Study and Research in Intellectual Property Rights (CSRIIPR), NUSRL Ranchi:

- "Navigating Key Issues in Attempts to Protect Expressions of Folklore under Copyright Law in Model Provisions for National Laws on the Protection of Expressions of Folklore Against Illicit Exploitation and Other Forms. of Prejudicial Action, 1985" – June 23rd, 2025
- "Assessing the Efficacy of Absolute Grounds for Trademark Refusal in the Digital Era: A Comparative Analysis of India, the USA, the EU, and the UK"- June 23rd, 2025
- **Student Ambassador**- Eastern Book Company & SCC Online (2025–2026)



Mr. Abhishek Raj (B.A. LL. B. Hons., II Sem.)

- Completed official 40-hour Mediation Training Programme, certified by the Supreme Court Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee (MCPC).

JUDICIAL TRENDS

I. **Clarifying Judicial Powers Under the Arbitration and Conciliation Act: Supreme Court Recognizes Limited Modification Power, (*Gayatri Balasamy v. ISG Novasoft Technologies Ltd.*, 2025 SCC On Line SC 986,)**

A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court of India (Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justices B. R. Gavai, Sanjay Kumar, Augustine George Masih, and K. V. Viswanathan) addressed the question whether courts have the power to modify arbitral awards under the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996. By a 4:1 majority, the Court held that courts possess a limited power to amend arbitral awards. The majority opinion was delivered by Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna.

The principal issue was whether, under Sections 34 and 37 of the Act, courts are confined to setting aside arbitral awards or can also modify them, particularly where only part of an award is found defective. The Court noted conflicting precedents: *Project Director, NHAI v. M. Hakeem and Larsen Air Conditioning v. Union of India* had denied any such power, while *Vedanta Ltd. v. Shenzhen Shandong Nuclear Power Construction Company*, *Oriental Structural Engineers v. State of Kerala*, and *J. C. Budhraja v. Orissa Mining Corporation Ltd.* permitted limited modification to prevent injustice. Owing to this divergence, the matter was referred to a Constitution Bench.

The Court acknowledged that the 1996 Act, modelled on the UNCITRAL Model Law, does not expressly provide for modification. However, it reasoned that statutory silence does not mean complete absence of power. Section 34 provides for judicial intervention on specified grounds without restricting the form of relief. Applying the maxim *omne majus continet in se minus* ("the greater power includes the lesser"), the Court held that the authority to set aside an entire award necessarily

includes the power to set aside a part or correct it, provided the invalid portion is severable.

The Court distinguished between setting aside an award and modifying it, clarifying that modification does not convert the process into appellate review. Courts may exercise this power only in cases of clear errors, such as typographical mistakes, clerical errors, or interest miscalculations, and not on the merits of the arbitral decision. The Bench also explained that while Section 33 enables the arbitral tribunal to correct mistakes, Section 34 implicitly empowers courts to correct obvious errors directly, without remitting every matter back to the tribunal.

Addressing *Kinnari Mullick v. Ghanshyam Das Damani*, the Court overruled the earlier position that remand under Section 34(4) required a written application. It held that remand could be ordered orally and even at the appellate stage under Section 37. The Bench clarified that remand and modification are distinct but complementary remedies. The majority thus concluded that although the Act does not explicitly confer a power of modification, courts may exercise such power in limited and exceptional circumstances, where the error is apparent, severable from the rest of the award, and does not involve a reassessment of facts or merits.

Justice K. V. Viswanathan delivered a dissenting opinion, holding that Section 34 does not empower courts to modify awards. He reasoned that neither Section 151 of the Code of Civil Procedure nor the doctrine of implied powers can be invoked for this purpose. In his view, modification risks conflating supervisory and appellate roles, undermines party autonomy, and may affect the international enforceability of awards under the New York Convention. He stressed that any such change must come through legislative amendment rather than judicial interpretation.

II. No More Delays, No More Silence: SC Says Governor Must Assent to Repassed Bills,

(State of Tamil Nadu v. Governor of Tamil Nadu & Anr., 2025 SCC On Line SC770)

A two-judge Bench comprising Justice J. B. Pardiwala and Justice R. Mahadevan considered a constitutional dispute between the elected Government of Tamil Nadu and the Governor concerning delays and denials of assent to Bills duly passed by the State Legislature. The Court unanimously held that the Governor's withholding of ten legislative Bills was "illegal" and "erroneous." The judgment was authored by Justice J. B. Pardiwala.

The matter arose when the Governor withheld assent to ten Bills, largely concerning higher education reforms, on 13 November 2023. The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly repassed the Bills without changes on 18 November 2023, but the Governor did not grant approval. Instead, he referred them to the President without assigning reasons. The State approached the Supreme Court under Article 32, arguing that once the Assembly had repassed the Bills, the Governor was constitutionally bound to assent and could not reserve them again for the President. The State also contended that withholding assent without reasons was mala fide and contrary to the constitutional scheme.

In adjudicating the issue, the Court examined the history and purpose of Article 200 through Constituent Assembly Debates, the Sarkaria Commission Report, and the Punchhi Commission Report. It also relied on precedents including *State of Punjab v. Principal Secretary to the Governor and Samsher Singh v. State of Punjab*, which emphasised that the Governor's role is largely symbolic and subject to the aid and advice of the elected Council of Ministers.

Justice Pardiwala, writing for the Bench, noted that the framers of the Constitution had envisaged the

Governor as a constitutional head and adviser, but the events in this case reflected a departure from that vision. The Court held that once a Bill has been repassed by the Legislature, the Governor is constitutionally bound to give assent and cannot again reserve it for consideration of the President. The expression "shall not withhold assent therefrom" in Article 200 was interpreted as leaving no scope for further discretion.

The Court further clarified that the Governor cannot employ delay or inaction—commonly referred to as a "pocket veto"—to obstruct the legislative process. It interpreted the phrase "as soon as possible" in Article 200 to mean within a reasonable time, indicating that a period of three months would be an appropriate maximum.

Regarding the Governor's claim that the Bills conflicted with central laws, particularly Entry 66 of the Union List relating to education, the Court found that no specific statutory conflict had been demonstrated. It held that vague objections were insufficient and that issues of repugnancy fall within judicial determination, not unilateral decision by the Governor.

Accordingly, the Court reaffirmed that the Governor is not an independent power centre but a constitutional functionary bound to act in accordance with the Constitution and on the advice of the elected government.

III. Supreme Court Restructures Judicial Promotions: Restores LDCE Quota and Mandates three years of legal practice at the Bar to be eligible for appointment as a Civil Judge *(All India Judges Association v. Union of India, 2025 SCC On Line SC 1184)*

A three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court (Chief Justice B. R. Gavai, Justice Augustine George Masih, and Justice K. Vinod Chandran) delivered a unanimous judgment introducing structural changes to the system of promotion and recruitment in the subordinate judiciary, particularly concerning promotion of Civil Judges to the District Judge cadre.

The judgment, authored by Chief Justice B. R. Gavai, arose out of a writ petition pending since 1989, through which the Court has periodically issued directions on judicial appointments and promotions. Earlier rulings in 2002 and 2010 had prescribed a three-part model: 50% promotion by merit-cum-seniority, 25% through the Limited Departmental Competitive Examination (LDCE), and 25% by direct recruitment from the Bar. Because several States had not fully utilised the LDCE quota, it was reduced to 10%. In the present decision, the Court restored the LDCE quota to 25%, stating that this would preserve the purpose of encouraging merit-based advancement. It further directed that if LDCE seats remain vacant, they must be shifted to the general promotion quota.

Eligibility for LDCE was also relaxed: a judicial officer may now sit for the examination with three years' service as Civil Judge (Senior Division), provided they have seven years of total judicial service. Data from States showed that under the earlier rule many officers became eligible for regular promotion before they could attempt the LDCE.

The Court also created a 10% accelerated promotion quota from Civil Judge (Junior Division) to Civil Judge (Senior Division) for officers with at least three years' service, based on a competitive assessment. This aims at earlier recognition of performance.

On calculation of LDCE vacancies, the Court directed that the quota be applied to the total cadre strength of District Judges, not to annual vacancies. It also directed High Courts to conduct suitability tests for merit-cum-seniority promotions, covering legal knowledge, quality of judgments, ACRs, and interviews.

The Bench revisited its 2002 decision permitting appointment of fresh law graduates as Civil Judges (Junior Division). In view of concerns raised, it restored the earlier requirement that candidates must have at least three years' practice at the Bar before appointment.

Chief Justice Gavai explained: "If a judicial officer even otherwise gets entry in the Cadre of District Judge through regular promotion after five years,

the LDCE scheme loses its purpose. The restoration of the 25% quota with relaxed eligibility ensures both incentive and fairness."

IV. **Public Trust Doctrine Reinforced: SC Cancels Forest Land Allotment and Upholds Environmental Sanctity** (*In Re: Construction of Multi-Storeyed Buildings in Forest Land, Maharashtra, 2025 SCC OnLine SC 1134*)

A three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court (Chief Justice B. R. Gavai, Justice Augustine George Masih, and Justice K. Vinod Chandran) unanimously delivered a judgment concerning the conversion of forest land in Maharashtra and the role of politicians, bureaucrats, and builders. The judgment, authored by Chief Justice B.R. Gavai, nullified the allotment of nearly 30 acres of protected forest land in Pune and directed restoration of the land to its original forest status, along with initiation of criminal proceedings against those involved.

The dispute involved 29.15 acres of land in Kondhwa Budruk, Pune, notified as Reserved Forest in 1879. In 1998, the State Government allotted the land to a private entity, the 'Chavan Family', without the Central Government's approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. The land was then transferred to Richie Rich Cooperative Housing Society (RRCHS), which undertook residential and commercial projects.

The Court held that the land retained its status as Reserved Forest and that diversion without statutory approval was unlawful. It rejected the argument that the land had lost its forest character through non-use, clarifying that the doctrine of desuetude has no application to notified forest land. A Gazette Notification relied upon by RRCHS to claim de-reservation was found to be forged, as confirmed by a CID inquiry. The Court accepted the findings of the Central Empowered Committee (CEC), which documented procedural and legal violations, and noted that the Chavan Family acted as a front for the builder.

The Court declared the allotment and subsequent transfers illegal, cancelled the sale, revoked building permissions, and directed restoration of the land as forest. It invoked the doctrine of public trust, emphasising that the State holds natural resources as trustee for present and future generations. The Court reiterated that commercial exploitation of forest land through forged documents and political-bureaucratic collusion cannot be permitted, and that no private interest can override the constitutional obligation to protect the environment.

V. Balancing Business Autonomy and Worker Protections: Supreme Court Clarifies Section 25-O of Industrial Dispute Act, 1947 (*Harinagar Sugar Mills Ltd. (Biscuit Division) v. State of Maharashtra & Ors., 2025 SCC On Line SC 1303*)

A two-judge Bench of the Supreme Court (Justice Sanjay Karol and Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra), in a landmark decision unanimously overturned the Bombay High Court's judgment and upheld the claim of "deemed closure" under Section 25-O(3) of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and interpreted procedural compliance under labour legislation. The judgment was authored by Justice Sanjay Karol. The case stemmed from a legal dispute concerning the winding up of the biscuit manufacturing division of Harinagar Sugar Mills Ltd. (HSML), following the termination of its long-standing job work agreement with Britannia Industries Ltd. (BIL). The matter was whether HSML's application dated 28 August 2019, seeking permission for closure, could be treated as complete, thus setting in motion the statutory 60-day period for deemed approval under Section 25-O (3). Under this provision, if the appropriate government does not respond within sixty days of receiving a complete closure application, permission is deemed granted. The appellants contended that no formal order had been communicated within the statutory period, and that no valid extension or rejection had been made by the competent authority. The State of Maharashtra, however, argued that the application was materially incomplete and that the Deputy Secretary's letter dated 25 September 2019, seeking further particulars, amounted to a refusal that halted the statutory clock. The High Court had

ruled in favour of the State, holding that HSML's act of submitting additional material on 10 October 2019 itself demonstrated that the original application was defective. Reversing that decision, the Supreme Court held that HSML's application was complete and valid when first submitted, and no law required fresh submission merely because the State found the reasoning inadequate. The Court emphasized that the Deputy Secretary was not the "appropriate Government" under the Act, and no valid notification existed authorizing him to exercise such powers. The Court found that the Labour Minister who is the designated authority, had not applied his mind independently and the internal notings on file could not substitute a formal and reasoned quasi-judicial decision. Relying on precedents such as *Bachhittar Singh v. State of Punjab* and *Shanti Sports Club v. Union of India*, the Court reiterated that internal file notings do not amount to enforceable government orders unless formally authenticated and communicated. Further under scoring the principle laid down in *Excel Wear v. Union of India* and *Orissa Textile and Steel Ltd.*, the judgment balanced the fundamental right to carry on business under Article 19(1)(g) with the interests of labour under Article 21. It clarified that procedural safeguards imposed by Section 25-O are meant to protect employees from arbitrary closures but cannot be invoked to deny an employer's legitimate right to wind up operations if the State fails to act within the time prescribed. As a result, the Court allowed the appeal and held that HSML had validly closed its unit based on deemed permission under Section 25-O (3). The Court also took note of HSML's undertaking to pay compensation over and above statutory dues and directed the company to enhance this amount from ₹10 crores to ₹15 crores, in addition to the gratuity amounts already owed. The Court clarified that payments already made by HSML to workers during pendency of proceedings would not be recoverable. The Supreme Court observed that Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution includes the right to shut down a business but the same is subject to reasonable restrictions. The decision thus reaffirms the importance of procedural discipline, transparency, and legal certainty in administrative actions affecting industrial closures, preserving both the rights of enterprise and the dignity of labour.

VI. Narco-Analysis is Test Cannot Be Conducted Without Consent: High Court Erred in Accepting Investigating Officer's Submission During Bail Hearing

A two-judge Bench of the Supreme Court (Justice Sanjay Karol and Justice Prasanna B. Varale), reaffirming the constitutional right against self-incrimination and bodily integrity, unanimously ruled that the High Court erred in accepting the State's submission to conduct narco-analysis, thereby violating constitutional safeguards. The Court set aside an interim order of the Patna High Court which had permitted administration of a narco-analysis test on the accused and witnesses during an ongoing investigation. The judgment was authored by Justice Sanjeev Khanna.

The case arose from a dowry-related criminal proceeding where the appellant's wife had gone missing. An FIR dated 24 August 2022 was registered under Sections 341, 342, 323, 363, 364, 498A, 504, 506, and 34 of the IPC against the appellant and his family. While other co-accused were granted bail, the appellant's bail was rejected by the Sessions Court, relying on statements of co-accused allegedly implicating him in disposal of the missing woman's body. When the appellant sought regular bail before the High Court, the State proposed conducting narco-analysis of the accused and certain witnesses, and the High Court accepted this through an interim order dated 9 November 2023.

Challenging this direction, the appellant relied on *Selvi v. State of Karnataka* (2010), where a three-judge Bench held that involuntary narco-analysis, polygraph, or brain mapping tests violate Articles 20(3) and 21. The Supreme Court reiterated this principle, noting that such tests infringe the right to remain silent and personal liberty. It also observed that even voluntary narco-analysis cannot form the sole basis for conviction and that results are not directly admissible as evidence. The Court stressed that bail adjudication under Section 439 CrPC must rest on material evidence and procedural fairness, not on investigative measures such as scientific tests conducted without consent. Referring to *Sangitaben Shaileshbhai Datanav. State of Gujarat*

(2019), the Bench reiterated that courts should avoid conducting mini-trials or ordering coercive tests at the bail stage.

Answering three issues framed during the hearing, the Court held that voluntary narco-analysis test results, even with safeguards, cannot by themselves justify conviction. There is also no indefeasible right under Section 233 CrPC to demand such a test; any request must be judicially assessed for voluntariness and legality. Accordingly, the Supreme Court quashed the High Court's order and clarified that involuntary scientific testing is impermissible under Indian constitutional law. The ruling reaffirmed protections under Articles 20(3) and 21 and reiterated that criminal proceedings must adhere to due process and evidentiary requirements.



-Dr. Deepak Sharma,
Asst. Prof., Law

EXPRESSIONS

SACRED SILENCE

He holds the power to end the tie,
She pleads for rights, yet men deny,
But not Allah, not the Quran's say,
It's patriarchy that twists the way.
She cannot choose to walk away,
Her right to END is stripped away.

He marries four, with pride, with ease,
She stays bound, told to please.
This isn't Islam, this is control,
Man-made chains that bind her soul.

She gets half, her brother reigns,
Inheritance split through human chains,
But even that, a lie in ink,
Ask for her share, and watch families sink,
If she dares to speak, to claim her part,
She's called a traitor, torn apart.

The child she raised, the womb she gave,
Still, he decides what path they pave,
Love and care don't win the fight,
The law gives him the final light.

This is not divine. This is not just.
It is rusted power wrapped in trust.
Faith may guide, but not enslave,
No God would want a woman caged.

Article 25 stands high,
While 14 and 15 silently die.
In the name of God, she's denied her place,
Her Constitution erased with grace.

Worse than the men who build the cage,
Are women who guard it and call it faith.
They wear the chains and guard the walls,
While watching their own sisters fall.

They suffer too but still defend,
The prison that will never bend.
Both trapped inside and holding keys,
Their silence locks the ones who plead.

Enough of silence, enough of shame,
Enough of bearing someone else's blame.
This rage is hers, this voice is flame;
This time, she's rising, no longer tame.

Uniform law is not a war,
It's justice knocking on every door.
It's dignity, it's breath, it's light,
It's every silenced soul reclaiming her right.

Darain Zaidi

(B. A. LL. B. Hons., II Sem.)



SCARS BEYOND THE WIN

For world justice was served,
Those monsters were caught.
They said I should smile, with my head high
now,
But no one asks what justice really brought.
They're behind bars, but I'm in a cage.
Not the one of steel, but one of rage,
of silence, of intent stares.
Of questions I never deserved.

"Why were you there?"
"Did you scream?"
"Didn't you fight?"
"Did you lead them?"
As if my pain only counts
If I bled on their terms.
I walk down streets suffocated,
Fear shadowing every breath,
And they...
They just fade into the past,
As if nothing was ever torn.
Tell me,
Why are they free, and I will never be?
They served sentence of sometime,
I served life.
They wore cuffs.
I wore shame like skin.
Every laugh, every whisper behind my back,
A trial I never asked to begin.
I can't close my eyes
Without unlocking that door,

Where I'm dragged back to the night
They made me less than before.
And still,
Still, when a man is hurt,
All eyes turn to us again.
"Women lie."
"Women trap."
"Women tea."
As if our existence is lame,
And our pain is pretend.
How long must we suffer, bound and bruised,
Before they stop asking how we were used?

Don't tell me it's over.
Don't tell me I've won.
Justice doesn't end with a verdict.
It will end when I no longer run.
When I walk without checking behind me.
When I can sleep without screams.
When I can say I'm a warrior.
And not be met with some shabby memes.

Until then, you may call it justice.
I will call it a wound with a gavel on top.
And I'll keep asking, loud and clear,
Till everyone hears,
"Why do they walk while I barely breathe?"
"Why are they free... but...! I'll never be?"

-Siddhi Sharma

(B. A. LL. B. Hons., II Sem.)



Legal Humour

1. A man walks into a lawyer's office and asks, "How much do you charge?"

The lawyer replies, "I charge 5000 rupees for three questions."

The man says, "Wow, that's too much, isn't it?"

The lawyer says, "It is. Now, what's your third question?"

2. Never lie to your lawyer...

He's the one who's supposed to do that for you.

3. Why did the lawyer bring a ladder to court?

Because his client wanted to make a high-level appeal.

4. They say, "justice delayed is justice denied."

But lawyers say: "Justice delayed is billable hours."

5. Before joining law school: "I will fight for justice."

After 1st semester: "I will fight for attendance."

6. Lawyer: "I have bad news and worse news."

Client: "What's the bad news?" Lawyer: "The judge ruled against you." Client: "What's worse?"

Lawyer: "I just realized I'm your lawyer."

7. Exam paper: "Explain the difference between common law and civil law."

Student: "In common law, you don't sleep. In civil law, you don't wake up."

8. Judge: "Do you have any thing to say before I pass the sentence?"

Accused: "Yes, can you make its hort? My lawyer charges by the minute."

9. Professor: "What is hearsay?"

Student: "Sir, when a senior says, 'This paper is easy.'"

10. "Law student logic: If I don't understand it, I'll just cite a Latin maxim."

TOONIFIED

LIFE CYCLE OF A LAW STUDENT



TOONIFIED



-Collected and AI generated by

- Mr. Durgesh Yadav

- Ms. Samradhi Jain

(Students of B.A.LL.B.Hons., II Sem.)

Construction of the Permanent Campus in Progress

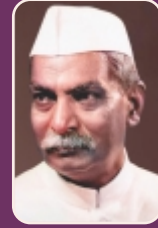




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“ In attaining our ideals, our means should be as pure as the end. ”



Dr. Rajendra Prasad



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