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New academic term at GNLU begins from August 04, 2020

No curtailment of syllabus despite losing one month of teaching time; we will rather extend the semester – GNLU Director Dr Shanthakumar

Curriculum to be reviewed and modified in the wake of the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic – GNLU Director Dr Shanthakumar

Gandhinagar, July 30, 2020: Gujarat National Law University (GNLU) will commence its new academic term from August 04, 2020. Given the current situation of Covid-19 pandemic, classes will be conducted online, to begin with. The situation will be reviewed from time to time and students will be called for on-campus classes at an appropriate time.

“Though we have lost a month of precious teaching time, we are NOT considering any curtailment of the syllabus on account of the lost time as doing so will dilute the programme quality and the same will not be in the long term interest of students. Rather, we will extend the semester,” said GNLU Director Dr Shanthakumar.

GNLU will also review its curriculum in the wake of the Covid-19 to ensure that it remains contemporary and relevant in the changing environment.

Elaborating on the curriculum review exercise, he said, “COVID-19 pandemic is a global health crisis having wide-ranging ramifications on every sphere of human activity. It is already creating devastating social, economic, legal and political effects. We will, therefore, review and modify the course outlines of various courses in the wake of the challenges posed by the pandemic so that our students can hit the ground running in the changing environment.”

For example, a course on Health and Society has become necessary in the face of this global health crisis. The course will focus on how social, cultural, political, historical and economic factors shape health, illness and well-being, and will cover philosophy and health, principles and practice of public health, the critical issues and ethical dilemmas in public health care delivery, current debates in health and illness and social perspectives in mental health.

Similarly, the pandemic has flagged up the fault lines in labour markets necessitating a module on Labour Law Challenges amid Covid-19 with a focus on those employed in the informal sector.

Banking is another sector that is undergoing sweeping changes in the wake of the pandemic. Reserve Bank of India has announced a moratorium on repayment of loans in the wake of the lockdown to

control the spread of coronavirus. The Government has also announced relaxations in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code. The Government is also considering de-criminalization of cheque bounce law. All these changes will change the banking landscape in time to come. We are, therefore, planning to incorporate a module on “After-effects of Covid-19 on Banking Sector” in the course on Banking Laws.

In the field of Contract Law, a new debate has come to the fore, i.e. whether this pandemic will be treated as a ‘force majeure’ event, to excuse a party for non-performance of a contract; or ‘frustration of contract’, to render the contract void. It will be interesting to see the approach of the judiciary in a case where, on account of Covid-19 crisis, the non-performing party is sued for breach of contract on the ground that the force majeure clause did not explicitly include such an event. In this context, contract drafting in future will require special care. We will, therefore, emphasise on proper drafting of force majeure clause in a contract, in the course on Pleading, Drafting and Conveyancing.

Likewise, COVID19 pandemic is an interesting multidimensional case study in international law to teach students on the rules, concepts, principles, institutional architecture, and enforcement issues. China’s role in the spread of Covid-19 has come under strong international criticism. In this context, we are considering a module on the State’s Responsibility in the Context of Global Pandemic in the course on public international law.

Equally, there are potential impacts of Covid-19 outbreak on Private International Law related areas such as on applicable law, jurisdiction, international legal (administrative and judicial) cooperation and recognition of foreign judgments in disputes which are likely to arise in the field of family law, labour law, international business law and overall in cross-border litigation. For example, a U.S. state has filed a lawsuit against China in a U.S. court claiming punitive damages and other reliefs for suppressing crucial information about coronavirus that led to the loss of lives and caused irreparable damage to countries globally. In this context, we are planning to introduce a module on “Extra-territorial Application of Legislation and its Enforcement” in the course on private international law.

The current situation is not conducive to a physical internship. We are, therefore, creating opportunities for virtual internships for our students through our network of recruiters and alumni, this year.

Media Contact:

Ashok Shah

Email: ashah@gnlu.ac.in, ashokshah.iima@gmail.com

Mobile: 9909960240, 8849110049