



Gujarat National Law University

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GNLU Centre for Sports and Entertainment Law (GCSEL) began a three-day lecture series on Indian Sports Governance, from January 18 to 20

Gandhinagar, January 18, 2021: The GNLU Centre for Sports and Entertainment Law (GCSEL) began a three-day lecture series on Indian Sports Governance, from January 18 to 20.

Today, Mr Vidushpat Singhania, managing partner of Krida Legal delivered a lecture on ‘Indian Sports Governance: COVID Time Highlights.’ Mr Singhania is a leading sports lawyer in the country and has played an integral part in drafting the National Sports Development Bill, 2011, and the Doping Probe Panel. He is on the Election Oversight Panel of the International Amateur Athletics Federation and is also a member of the Indian Super League Regulatory Commission and a consultant to the UK-India Business Council’s Gaming Desk.

To open with, Mr Vidushpat Singhania introduced the subject by taking the participants through the legal developments of the sports code in India. Apart from the difficulties that have been aroused in implementing the Sports Code of 2011, Mr Vidushpat highlighted a unique development that has happened in 2020 during the COVID. Citing the issues raised in the PIL filed by Mr Rahul Mehra in Delhi High Court, he emphasised the order of Delhi High Court by which the notification of Ministry of Youth Affairs giving a blanket renewal to national sports federations without assessing their compliance to Sports Code was struck down. Citing the data on non-compliance he said, “Out of 57 National Sports Federations that were given blanket re-recognition for the year, 41 had not complied with one or the other requirement of the Code. Out of 57, 11 don’t have upper age limits for office bearers, 19 don’t have tenure restrictions of office bearers, 5 have not allocated 25 per cent of seats for sportspersons within their executive council having voting rights. 18 did not limit civil servants to hold a position in federations, 25 did not restrict one person to hold multiple positions. Only 12 abided by the electoral process prescribed in the Code and 45 did not, 17 did not bar proxy voting.” He highlighted how the federations have been violating the code. The change towards efficient sports governance began in 2010-11 when a new and improved sports code was drafted. However, implementation of this code was marred by multiple hurdles.

“The journey has not been easy and change was not accepted upfront. Change always takes time, especially when powerful people are losing their power”.

Next Mr Vidushpat Singhania went on to highlight discrepancies with those provisions which affect athletes the most. Most federations do not have a mechanism to ensure the prohibition of doping, prevention of sexual harassment and such important issues.

“Sports cannot exist without athletes. They are the cog with which sports runs”



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The third point highlighted by Mr Vidushpat Singhania was of the changing view of the Olympic Charter to protests and expressions of political propaganda. *The recent movement in the USA for the furtherance of equality and human rights has played a huge part, especially since corporate entities are now refusing to fund sports organisation which do not take a stand against social issues such as racial discrimination. In light of these developments, the Olympic Charter is also set to be amended to curb hate speeches, discriminatory and any divisive remarks. * This was made from the American context but can be applied to India. However, Mr Vidushpat Singhania expressed concerns with this upcoming amendment, especially with the possibility of differing and extreme interpretations of some remarks.

The lecture was moderated by Dr Niyati Pandey, Assistant Professor and Head of GNLU Centre for Sports and Entertainment Law.

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