

News

Candidates for CLAT PG petition the Kerala High Court to contest counseling fees.



The Bar Council of India, the University Grants Commission (UGC), the Consortium of National Law Universities (NLUs), and the Central government were all notified by the Court.

The Kerala High Court has received a petition contesting the Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) 2025 counseling fee schedule for admission to postgraduate law programs at National Law Universities (NLUs). [**Union of India & Ors. v. Sandhra Eliza Suresh & Ors.**]

On June 17, Justice **DK Singh** sent notice of the petition filed by three candidates presently enrolled in the CLAT PG 2025 counseling process to the Central government, the Consortium of NLUs, the University Grants Commission (UGC), and the Bar Council of India (BCI).

There are two cost tiers for the CLAT admission counseling process. Candidates from the

general category must first pay a counselling registration fee of ₹30,000, while those from the Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Persons with Disabilities (PWD), Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), and Other Backward Classes (OBC) must pay ₹20,000.

Candidates who exercise the "freeze" (accepting the assigned seat) or "float" (retaining the seat with eligibility for upward mobility) options after being assigned a seat in any of the counselling rounds are then required to pay a mandatory, non-refundable confirmation fee of ₹20,000.

The petitioners claim that this violates the right to equality guaranteed by Article 14 of the Indian Constitution and puts economically disadvantaged candidates at an unfair disadvantage.

According to the appeal,

Although this charge is uniform in theory, it ignores socioeconomic differences, which effectively excludes deserving applicants from underprivileged backgrounds. The constitutional goal of equitable and merit-based access to professional education is thwarted by such exclusion, which is incompatible with substantive equality.

Since the fees are not covered by scholarships or education loans, the petitioner-candidates argued that the price structure is unreasonable, opaque, and places an excessive financial burden on applicants before to acceptance.

They contend that the NLU consortium is not providing adequate service to support the imposition of such astronomical costs.

Additionally, they contended that the non-refundable nature of ₹20,000 also violates UGC's Fee Refund Policy 2024–2025.

"A candidate who has been provisionally assigned a seat is supposedly able to secure their place by paying the confirmation fee. It functions as a punishment for withdrawal, though. Regardless matter whether the seat is eventually given to another worthy applicant, the policy stipulates that this cost is non-refundable," the submission stated.

As a result, the petitioners asked the court to require the consortium to reimburse them in full

in the event that they were not chosen for admission and to set aside the counseling registration and confirmation fees.

On July 22, the issue will be discussed further.

Advocates Sarath KP, Risvi Muhammed, and Gokul Krishnan R represented the petitioners.

The Legal Collective for Students' Rights (LCSR), a student-led legal organization that promotes students' rights via grassroots legal aid, policy reform, and strategic litigation, provided them with assistance.

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