

PRESS NOTE

“We have to face challenges posed by the Covid Pandemic and we have to overcome these challenges” - Justice U.U. Lalit

Hon’ble Mr. Justice U.U. Lalit, Judge, Supreme Court of India & Executive Chairman, NALSA said that *“Due to the Covid Pandemic, functioning in courts have been severely affected and only urgent matters are taken up. This has put a tremendous amount of burden on the courts, adding to an already heavy docket in courts. Lok Adalats are essential to shed such unwanted burden with respect to cases that can be easily disposed of. The aim of this webinar is to guide Legal Services Authorities in such a way so as to maximise the effort put in and get the best results possible. My endeavour is to speak to you and galvanise the entire apparatus in action, to ensure whatever is possible on 10th July, is carried out.”*

Hon’ble Justice U.U. Lalit stressed upon the challenge that Covid-19 presented and how the said challenge was converted into an opportunity by various SLSAs in order to tackle the large number of pending cases. While addressing the judges and judicial officers involved in Legal Aid Services Administration, His Lordship reiterated that they have to work hard to help the poor and needy in effective dispensation of justice. His Lordship reminded all the stakeholders that *“where there is a will there is a way”*.

Justice U.U. Lalit addressed the judges and judicial officers and emphasized on requirements and preparations to be taken up by all Legal Services Authorities

for smoothly conducting the National Lok Adalat. He deliberated on the preparations and Strategies for the National Lok Adalat, Standard Operating Procedure, meetings and interactions with all stakeholders prior to the Lok Adalat, ensuring cooperation between all stakeholders, optimum utilisation of resources, and publicity through mass media.

His Lordship pointed out the ways in which matters are taken up in Lok Adalats,

“Three ways in which matters are taken up:

- 1. When parties come before the Lok Adalat*
- 2. When only one party approaches the Lok Adalat*
- 3. When the court takes up any matter on its own accord.”*

Emphasising on having pre-Lok Adalat sittings, Justice U.U. Lalit apprised that

“Legal Services Authorities should try and have pre-Lok Adalat sittings with all stakeholders including private parties, respective advocates, representatives of insurance companies, and representatives of the government to ensure smooth functioning of the National Lok Adalat proceedings.”

His Lordship further stated that *“If our efforts are well directed but we must not be bother for the end result or the rate of success.”*

His Lordship appreciated the fact that SLSAs in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, through the optimum utilisation of technology, organised E-Lok Adalats across the country wherein over 4.4 lakh cases were disposed of.

The above-mentioned observations were made by Justice U.U. Lalit during a national-level webinar was organised by the National Legal Services Authority on the 26th of June, 2021. The webinar was organised in light of the upcoming National Lok Adalat to be held on the 10th of July 2021. This webinar on *“National Lok Adalat: Challenges and way forward”* was organised with the aim to sensitize all the District Legal Services Authorities in order to ensure smooth and proper functioning of the National Lok Adalat to be held in the coming month. All Executive Chairpersons of State Legal Services Authorities, Chairpersons of High Court Legal Services Committees and Ld. Member Secretaries of SLSAs and Chairpersons and Secretaries, DLSAs and Judicial Officers attended the webinar.

During the course of the webinar, Executive Chairpersons of various SLSAs shared not only their success stories, but they also apprised Hon’ble Executive Chairman, NALSA about the manner in which they have made preparations and are making efforts to achieve targeted success in the upcoming second National Lok Adalat to be held on 10th July.

Inputs were put forward by Hon’ble Mr. Justice Aravind Kumar, Executive Chairperson, Karnataka SLSA, Hon’ble Mr. Justice Munishwar Nath Bhandari, Executive Chairperson, Uttar Pradesh SLSA, Hon’ble Mr. Justice N. Kotiswar Singh, Executive Chairperson, Assam SLSA, Hon’ble Mr. Justice Ashwani Kumar Singh, Executive Chairperson, Bihar SLSA, Hon’ble Mr. Justice Prashant

Kumar Mishra, Executive Chairperson, Chhattisgarh SLSA, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Prakash Shrivastava, Executive Chairperson, Madhya Pradesh SLSA, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sangeet Raj Lodha, Executive Chairperson, Rajasthan SLSA and Hon'ble Mr. Justice A.A. Sayed, Executive Chairperson, Maharashtra SLSA, who shared their insights, previous experiences with Lok Adalats, success stories and ideas that can be implemented by other Legal Services Authorities.

The National Lok Adalat is scheduled to be held on 10th July, 2021 pan-India, subject to due observation of Covid-19 guidelines issued by Central and State Governments from time to time.