AILET

Interview of CLAT Bihar Topper, Shivam Sharan [AIR 61]: 1st Attempt Rank 6700ish; 2nd Attempt, 61

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CLAT went well? That's great! Congrats!

Didn't go well? You can take a 2nd chance (this interview will give your inspiration)!
Lawctopus' advice: don't take a complete 'drop year'. CLAT requires, at best, 200-250 hours of preparation which can easily be managed with a full-time undergraduate course.

Didn't do well even in the 2nd attempt? Don't worry. There's much more to a career than the name of the college you study at.

Read this interview for more perspective!

Please tell the readers about yourself?

I'm currently a student in 4th year, at NALSAR University of Law. I'm trying to explore as many avenues as possible that will help me in deciding what I wish to pursue post my graduation.

When and why did you decide to pursue law?

I decided to pursue law somewhere in the middle of my JEE preparation. I was in 12th grade at that point of time. The decision was more a result of elimination rather than a prudent choice (at first, as later I did my research and concluded that this is what I want to do), I would say.

The only thing which helped me was that instead of wasting time and continue doing something I didn't have a predilection for, I decided to go for something which I could wholeheartedly get involved with.

When did you take CLAT?

My first attempt was in the year 2015, where my AIR was somewhere around 6700-ish. Later I decided to take a year's drop and prepare for the test.

In 2016, I managed to attain AIR 61 and topped in the state (Bihar).

Editor's note: Read CLAT 2019's analysis and cut-off prediction by CLATapult here.

What did you do differently in your second attempt?

I guess more than knowing what to study, one should know what not to read/study and break your head over. It is better to sleep (or you can do whatever pleases you the most) than wasting your time on useless material.

Of course, one can say that knowledge never goes waste, but unfortunately, if you are solely concerned with qualifying the test, then the record is straight I feel. It's less about knowledge and more about strategy.

Most important was to keep track of the current affairs, for which I use to make my own notes daily. Since reading newspaper took a lot of time (tho it is advisable, and a habit one should inculcate), I tried to compile my notes using various platforms like GKToday or Jagran Josh.

Apart from that, I tried to give some time to each of the five subjects daily. What needs to be kept in mind is that CLAT is more about practice.

The more you practice the questions the more you will understand about what your weak points are. It's not that you have to attempt all 200 questions. In those 120 minutes if you know how to attempt the right question and score maximum marks that will help you to get through the test with high score.

So, practice helps you to identify those questions in which you take less time and on the day of CLAT it helps you immensely.

What is the significance of the CLAT coaching center in clearing this exam?

Clat coaching institutes help you in 2 ways:

1. They provide you with the study material which includes modules and worksheets.
2. They give you the atmosphere which motivates you to study. Like regular tests, mocks and guidance from teachers really go a long way in ensuring that you are focused on your goal of clearing the exam.

Otherwise, if a person can manage the distractions and is focused enough, then they can clear it without coaching also. But in that case, make sure you subscribe to regular mocks at least.

Which paper was your weakest and how did you tackle it?

I hated general knowledge a lot. It's so vast and you have no set syllabus. I realised that whining about it won't help so I studied past year papers and noted few conclusions on it (based on personal experience, if you don't agree with my conclusions you are free to differ).

Static general knowledge is always connected to current affairs. So randomly a question won't come, it would be connected to some recent event that is why it is the exam.

For e.g. in past one year we saw names of Indian cities changing thanks to A1 priorities of our central and state governments.

Allahabad was renamed as Prayagraj. Here, the question for the current affair will be what is the new name of Allahabad?

For static GK, the question can be related to history, geography, and politics of Allahabad. They might ask about the meaning of 'Prayag' and stuff like that also.

PS: Don't just know news, read around it also.

This section just takes 10-15 mins. There is no thinking in it, either you know the answer or you don't know it. So don't do the stupidity of getting so busy with other sections that you leave this section entirely.

Should the aspirants focus on modules or past year papers?

They should focus on both ideally. But if an aspirant has less time then they can just do Maths, Logic, English and Legal Reasoning from past year papers.

GK and Legal aptitude you have to build up through modules related to same and newspaper.

How is the NLU life?

It is a life worth living. You get to know so many new things which change your perspective about a lot of things in life. You become more socially aware and politically correct.

Your personality definitely goes for an upgrade in a law school, subject to the fact that you keep good company in law school.

Do you think NLU students have an edge over the non-NLU students?

The brand value does matter, but it can help you only to a certain extent.

So you might get good corporate Internships and hence a better chance of scoring a high package job because of your law school. But apart from that you also need a good CV which includes publications, Internships, co-curricular and grades.

So it's more of what you do inside an NLU that helps you than just having an NLU tag.

According to my knowledge, if you want to litigate, then your college plays no role, it all depends on your legal acumen and soft skills. So we can say NLU tag hardly matters in the field of litigation.

What do you plan to do when you graduate?

It's too early for me to answer. As I said above I am still figuring out stuff. But mostly I am looking forward to making a career in the corporate world and to make a decent living out of a law firm job.

I have some long term plans for paying back to society but they haven't been conceptualized as of yet.

What mantra would you like to pass on to the aspirants?

There is nothing you don't know in this exam. Take it as a revision of all that you have studied till class 10th. Just stay updated with news, try reading every day, it goes a long way in improving reading comprehension. Strategise, Give frequent mocks, analyze them, see what went wrong, improve the timing.

Also, chill out, it's just an entrance exam, not the end of your life.

If you get through and get a good law school, amazing. If you don't, it's ok, your college doesn't decide your place in the field of law. Good luck!