

HISTORY OF NATIONAL JUDICIAL ACADEMY

The idea of National Judicial Academy was first conceived in the Conference of Chief Justices on 18-19 September 1992. Having discussed its Item no. 4 on "Setting up of a National Judicial Academy", the Conference resolved that:

"Chief Justices of High Court may send their views and suggestions regarding setting up of the National Academy of Judicial Administration, to Hon'ble Mr. Justice S.C. Agarwal of Supreme Court of India., on or before 31 Oct. 1992. The Chief Justices of those High Courts under whose auspices institutions for imparting training to Judicial Officers are being run will also send curricula and other materials relating to those institutions to Hon'ble Mr. Justice S.C. Agarwal."

In order to establish the Academy, a society in the name of National Judicial Academy was registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1960 at Delhi with its General Body and a Governing Council consisting of the Chief Justice of India as its Chairman; two senior Judges of the Supreme Court of India; the Secretary of the Home Government of India; the Secretary Expenditure, Government of India; the Secretary, Department of Legal Affairs Government of India as members and the Registrar-General cum Courts Administrator of the Supreme Court as member secretary. It was followed by search for a piece of land in a city where the Academy could be established.

While the work relating to selection of piece of land for the campus was going on, the then Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shri Digvijay Singh met the then Chief Justice of India, Hon'ble Mr. Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah in 1994 and suggested that Bhopal has a better climate, and eco-friendly green city with several lakes and was almost in the center of the India with well-connected through trains and roads. Shri Digvijay Singh offered that his government would provide appropriate site available for locating the Academy in case the Hon'ble Supreme Court found it suitable for the same. Hon'ble Mr. Justice Agarwal was entrusted the job of exploring appropriate piece of land which Madhya Pradesh government was willing to offer. He visited Bhopal and was shown a couple of sites by the revenue authorities of the State Government of Madhya Pradesh. Having failed to find piece of land suitable for its purpose, he approached the then Secretary Law and Legislative Department of Madhya Pradesh Government, Shri N.K. Jain (later on elevated to the High Court of Madhya Pradesh) and the Chief Minister. Both of them gave assurance for other appropriate site. Shri N.K. Jain personally went thereafter around the city of Bhopal with revenue officials and selected the present site. Hon'ble Chief Justice of India, through the good offices of the then Registrar General of the Supreme Court, Mr. M.S.A. Siddiqui, was then approached and requested for one more chance. Thereafter, the then senior most puine Judge of the Supreme Court, Hon'ble Mr. Justice A.M.

Ahmadi visited Bhopal in April 1994. He was shown the present site by the then Additional Secretary, Department of Law & Legislative Affairs of Madhya Pradesh Government. Hon'ble Mr. Justice A.M. Ahmadi preferred this site. Accordingly, he went back to Delhi and immediately thereafter the Governing Body of the Academy decided to accept the offer of the Government of Madhya Pradesh. The Secretary, Law and Legislative Department was accordingly informed, who in turn got the present piece of land measuring about 60 Acres, allotted to the Academy by the Government of Madhya Pradesh.

In the meantime, the Governing Body selected Mr. Kadri of Bombay as architect, who assisted by his colleagues Shri Rahul Kadri and Shri Soeb Kadri architects, planned a layout for foundation stone. Thus, the present site was developed and the foundation stone was laid by the authorities of the Capital Project of Bhopal under the State Government. The foundation stone was laid by Hon'ble Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah, the Chief Justice of India on 11 September 1994.

As Mr. M.S.A. Siddiqui was recommended for elevation to High Court, Mr. Justice Chandresh Bhushan was selected as his successor to the office of Registrar General cum Court's Administrator of the Supreme Court and *ex-officio* Member Secretary of the National Judicial Academy. After negotiations with Shri Kadri, the Governing Council of the Academy ultimately decided to have him as its consultant-Architect. A sum of approximately Rs. 48 crores was initially sanctioned by the Government of India for the project. A plan with a model of the building, submitted by Shri Kadri, was approved by the Governing Council. It was decided that the construction of the building shall be done by contractors under the supervision of a separate agency instead of regular agencies like CPWD. Finally, the construction unit of Larsen and Toubro was given contract for the civil work and the construction started taking shape. The civil work was almost complete by 1998, but its progress was affected because of discontinuance of work by electrical contractor and others. However, the construction work was completed and campus was dedicated to the nation by the then President of India. His Excellency Mr. A. Kalam on 5 September 2002.

The first course of the Academy was designed for judicial officers from almost all the states of India and they were sensitized against gender bias. This academic event was developed by the Academy in association with and under a project by a faculty member Ms. A. Stuart of Warwick University of Great Britain. During 1996-1999, some officers from different states were sent to Britain for a part of training there. Hon'ble Justice K.N. Saikia, Retd. Judge, Supreme Court of India was appointed as the first Director of the Academy and Shri Bose, former Additional Secretary, Department of Justice as the first Registrar of the Academy. Hon'ble Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah was the first Chairman and Justice M.S.A. Siddiqui was appointed as the first Member Secretary of the National Judicial Academy.