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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

% **Judgment reserved on: 09.04.2025**
Judgment pronounced on: 23.04.2025

\+ W.P.(C) 4157/2025

SHIVRAJ SHARMA .....Petitioner

Through: Ms. Niyati Kohli, Mr.Rishab Parakh and Mr.Prathambir Agarwal, Advs.

versus

CONSORTIUM OF NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITIES AND ORS .....Respondents

Through: Mr. Rajshekhar Rao, Senior Advocate with Mr. Arun Sri Kumar, Mr. Shubhansh Thakur and Mr. Wamic Wasim, Advocates for Consortium of NLU.

\+ W.P.(C) 4375/2025

YAJAT SEN .....Petitioner

Through: Petitioner-in-person

versus

CONSORTIUM OF NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITIES AND ORS .....Respondents

Through: Mr. Rajshekhar Rao, Senior Advocate with Mr. Arun Sri Kumar, Mr. Shubhansh Thakur and Mr. Wamic Wasim, Advocates for Consortium of NLU.

\+ LPA 1250/2024, CM APPLs. 76373/2024 & 76374/2024

ADITYA SINGH (MINOR) .....Appellant

Through: Mr.Dhanesh Relan, Mr.Arjeet Gaur, Mr.Naveen Malik, Mr. Suryansh Jamwal and Ms.Sakshi Arora, Advs.

versus

CONSORTIUM OF NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITIES .....Respondent

Through: Mr. Rajshekhar Rao, Senior Advocate with Mr. Arun Sri Kumar, Mr. Shubhansh Thakur and Mr. Wamic Wasim, Advocates for Consortium of NLU.

\+ LPA 1251/2024, CM APPL. 76410/2024 & CM APPL. 76411/2024

CONSORTIUM OF NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITIES...Appellant

Through: Mr. Rajshekhar Rao, Senior Advocate with Mr. Arun Sri Kumar, Mr. Shubhansh Thakur and Mr. Wamic Wasim, Advocates for Consortium of NLU.

versus

ADITYA SINGH (MINOR) THROUGH HIS FATHER...Respondent

Through: Mr.Dhanesh Relan, Mr.Arjeet Gaur, Mr.Naveen Malik, Mr.Suryansh Jamwal and Ms.Sakshi Arora, Advs.

\+ W.P.(C) 2363/2025

HARSHITA AND ORS .....Petitioners

Through: Ms. T. Archana, Mr. Archit Mishra and Mr. Digvijay, Advocates

versus

CONSORTIUM OF NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITIES AND ORS
.....Respondents

Through: Mr. Rajshekhar Rao, Senior Advocate with Mr. Arun Sri Kumar, Mr. Shubhansh Thakur and Mr. Wamic Wasim, Advocates for Consortium of NLU.

\+ W.P.(C) 2365/2025

MASTER TIAMBAK EASHWAR THROUGH HIS NATURAL GUARDIAN VASUDHA THIAGARAJAN .....Petitioner

Through: Ms. T. Archana, Advocate

versus

THE CONSORTIUM OF NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITIES AND ORS .....Respondents

Through: Mr. Rajshekhar Rao, Senior Advocate with Mr. Arun Sri Kumar, Mr. Shubhansh Thakur and Mr. Wamic Wasim, Advocates for Consortium of NLU.

\+ W.P.(C) 2366/2025

PRABHAS KUMAR (MINOR) THROUGH HIS NATURAL GUARDIAN MR. PRAKHAR KUMAR .....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Yash Dadriwal and Mr. Amol Jagtap, Advocates

versus

CONSORTIUM OF NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITIES

.....Respondent

Through: Mr. Rajshekhar Rao, Senior Advocate with Mr. Arun Sri Kumar, Mr. Shubhansh Thakur and Mr. Wamic Wasim, Advocates for Consortium of NLU.

\+ W.P.(C) 2367/2025

ASLESHA AJITSARIA (MINOR) REPRESENTED BY HER FATHER VINAY AJITSARIA .....Petitioner

Through:

versus

CONSORTIUM OF NLUS AND ORS .....Respondents

Through: Mr. Rajshekhar Rao, Senior Advocate with Mr. Arun Sri Kumar, Mr. Shubhansh Thakur and Mr. Wamic Wasim, Advocates for Consortium of NLU.
Mr. Nishant Gautam, CGSC with Mr. Vardhman Kaushik, Mr. Prithviraj Dey and Mr.Vipul Verma, Advocates for R-3.

\+ W.P.(C) 2516/2025

HARDIK GARG .....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Ajay Vohra, Senior Advocate with Mr. Aniket D Agrawal and Mr. Ram Krishna Rao, Advocates

versus

CONSORTIUM OF NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITIES AND ORS .....Respondents

Through: Mr. Rajshekhar Rao, Senior Advocate

with Mr. Arun Sri Kumar, Mr. Shubhansh Thakur and Mr. Wamic Wasim, Advocates for Consortium of NLU.
Mr. Vardhan Kaushik with Mr. Prithviraj, Advocates for R-3.

\+ W.P.(C) 2517/2025

HARSHIT GARG .....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Ajay Vohra, Senior Advocate with Mr. Aniket D Agrawal and Mr. Ram Krishna Rao, Advocates

versus

CONSORTIUM OF NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITIES AND ORS .....Respondents

Through: Mr. Rajshekhar Rao, Senior Advocate with Mr. Arun Sri Kumar, Mr. Shubhansh Thakur and Mr. Wamic Wasim, Advocates for Consortium of NLU.

\+ W.P.(C) 2559/2025

A VAISHNAVI (MINOR) THROUGH HER FATHER SHRI T. ARUN .....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Uddyam Mukherjee, Mr. Rohit Sinha, Mr. Swapnil Pattanayak and Mr. Agnibha Chatterjee, Advocates

versus

CONSORTIUM OF NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES THROUGH ITS PRESIDENT .....Respondent

Through: Mr. Rajshekhar Rao, Senior Advocate with Mr. Arun Sri Kumar, Mr.

Shubhansh Thakur and Mr. Wamic Wasim, Advocates for Consortium of NLU.

CORAM:
HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE TUSHAR RAO GEDELA

JUDGMENT

1. A peculiar situation has arisen in this batch of writ petitions and Letters Patent Appeals inasmuch as, the appeals arise from the judgement dated 20.12.2024 passed by the learned Single Judge of this Court in W.P.(C)17138/2024 whereas, the writ petitions objecting to certain questions, which were filed across various High Courts, have been transferred to this Court by the Hon'ble Supreme Court *vide* order dated 06.02.2025. In this piquant situation, this Court is examining each and every question objected to by the candidates (petitioners) before this Court, while mindful of the reason and rationale opined by the learned Single Judge of this Court in the judgment dated 20.12.2024 impugned in LPA Nos.1250/2024 and 1251/2024.

2. The admission notification for Common Law Admission Test (CLAT-2025) was issued by the respondent/Consortium inviting applications for admission to Undergraduate (UG) programme leading to award of B.A., LL.B or B.Com., LL.B degree. The petitioners submitted their online applications seeking admission to five year Integrated Law Programmes conducted by NLUs. The entrance examination was scheduled on 01.12.2024 wherein the petitioners appeared and were assigned different sets

out of the four sets of question papers i.e. Sets A, B, C and D. The question paper comprised of 120 questions wherein one mark was to be awarded for every correct answer and 0.25 mark was to be deducted for every incorrect answer.

3. The respondent/Consortium released a Provisional Answer Key (for all four paper sets of the UG-CLAT 2025) *vide* notification dated 02.12.2024. *Vide* the same notification, it also invited objections to the question paper and to the Provisional Answer Key. The candidates were to file their objections by 03.12.2024 by 4:00 PM, upon payment of a nominal fee for every question objected to. After consideration of the objections so filed by the candidates, the final answer key was published on 07.12.2024.

4. Aggrieved by the final answer key, the present writ petitions have been filed whereas LPA Nos. 1250/2024 and 1251/2024 have been filed impugning the judgment dated 20.12.2024 rendered by learned Single Judge.

5. Before adverting to the facts of each LPA and writ petition, it would be apposite to consider the law settled by a catena of judgements rendered both by the Hon'ble Supreme Court as well as Coordinate Benches of this Court in respect of the principles governing as to how and in what circumstances could a writ Court intervene and examine the correctness of such provisional or final answer key and the extent thereof. In this context, it would be pertinent to extract relevant portions of such judgements which are as under:-

(i) ***Ran Vijay Singh and Others v. State of Uttar Pradesh & Ors., (2018) 2 SCC 357*:-**

*"**30.** The law on the subject is therefore, quite clear and we only propose to highlight a few significant conclusions. They are:*

***30.1.** If a statute, Rule or Regulation governing an examination permits the re-evaluation of an answer sheet or scrutiny of an answer sheet as a matter of right, then the authority conducting the examination may permit it;*

***30.2.** If a statute, Rule or Regulation governing an examination does not permit re-evaluation or scrutiny of an answer sheet (as distinct from prohibiting it) then the court may permit re-evaluation or scrutiny only if it is demonstrated very clearly, without any "inferential process of reasoning or by a process of rationalisation" and only in rare or exceptional cases that a material error has been committed;*

***30.3.** The court should not at all re-evaluate or scrutinise the answer sheets of a candidate—it has no expertise in the matter and academic matters are best left to academics;*

***30.4.** The court should presume the correctness of the key answers and proceed on that assumption; and*

***30.5.** In the event of a doubt, the benefit should go to the examination authority rather than to the candidate."*

(ii) ***Staff Selection Commission v. Shubham Pal, 2024 SCC OnLine Del 7144*:-**

***"10.** Before we advert to the specific question under challenge, we may address a preliminary objection raised by Ms Lakra to the effect that courts are ordinarily proscribed from interfering with answers suggested in answer keys to examinations, as these pertained to the academic sphere, which is, to some extent, no man's land to the Judge. This is especially so in cases where the challenge has been examined by subject experts, whose opinion is ordinarily entitled to deference. There are several decisions which hold that courts do not possess the requisite expertise to sit in appeal over the decisions of the subject experts and that therefore, such challenges should, if at all, be entertained with a pinch of salt.*

***11.** That said, however, it is equally obvious that the sphere of judicial review cannot be all together foreclosed when such challenges arise. There may be gross cases, or cases in which it is evident without any necessity for ratiocination or intricate reasoning that the answer under challenge is palpably incorrect. In such case, the interests of substantial justice have to prevail, and students who have attempted the examination cannot be allowed*

to suffer merely because of an obviously incorrect answer suggested by the subject experts.

12. *One of us (C. Hari Shankar J.) has had an occasion to examine the law on this aspect in considerable detail in Om Prakash Verma v. National Testing Agency. After a chronological excursion through Kanpur University v. Samir Gupta, Manish Ujwal v. Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati University, Guru Nanak Dev University v. Saumil Garg H.P. Public Service Commission v. Mukesh Thakur, Rajesh Kumar v. State of Bihar, Ran Vijay Singh v. State of U.P., Rishal v. Rajasthan Public Service Commission and U.P. Public Service Commission v. Rahul Singh, the following takeaway emerged:*

(i) Circumspection is the general rule, especially where experts have considered the objections raised to the answer key.

(ii) It is, however, equally the rule that there is no absolute proscription against courts examining the challenge to the key answers, even where experts have opined. The law does not commend, or even recommend, a "hands-off approach".

(iii) In an appropriate case, the court can even examine, for itself, the correctness of the key answers under challenge, in which process the court is also empowered to refer to authoritative textbooks on the subject, especially those which form part of the students' curriculum.

(iv) Where the question is simple, and not admitting of any complexity, and can command only one answer, which is apparent to the court, the court is not proscribed from taking a view based on its own perception of the question to take an extreme example, the sum of two and two. That, however, would have to be in a rare case in which the answer is so apparent that there can be no doubt about it, and not one where the opinion of someone with greater expertise would help, or where there is ambiguity.

(v) In any case, the guiding principle is that the general rule against accepting the suggested answer key stands relaxed only where the suggested answer is proved to be wrong, not by an inferential process of reasoning or rationalisation, but clearly and demonstrably wrong, in that no reasonable body of men well versed in the subject would regard the key answer as correct.

(vi) Another guiding principle, which the court was required to bear in mind in such cases, is that, where it was beyond doubt that the key answer was wrong, it would be unfair to penalise students for not giving the suggested, demonstrably wrong answer. Any refusal on the part of the court to interfere, even in such a case, would amount to a serious illegality.

(vii) Where questions were unacceptably vague, the principle advocated in Saumil Garg case is required to be followed. Any student who attempted all or some of said vague questions would be entitled to be marked out of a total after deleting the marks assigned to the questions which she, or he, had attempted.

(viii) Even where a large number of key answers were found to be incorrect as in Rajesh Kumar case, which involved 45 wrong key answers out of 100 it would not be justifiable to direct cancellation and reholding of the examination. Revaluation of the papers on the basis of the corrected answer keys would still be the only correct approach.

(ix) Interference has, therefore, to be only in "rare and exceptional cases", and to a "very limited extent".

(x) In the event of doubt, the benefit of doubt would go to the examining authority, not to the candidate.

(xi) The general principle is that relief cannot be restricted to the candidates who approached the court, but must be extended to all who are similarity situated. While so doing, the court can direct that the revaluation, would not result in any negative impact on candidates who had attempted the disputed questions and whose answers corresponded to the suggested answer key.

***13.** Thus, while circumspection is expected of courts while dealing with challenges to answer keys in examinations, a hands-off approach is not always advocated. If the court is satisfied that the answer provided in the impugned answer key is obviously incorrect, so that allowing the answer to remain would result in injustice, the court has necessarily to step in and set aright the situation. Any Judge who, perceiving obvious injustice taking place before him, professes inability to interfere, breaches his solemn oath of office. Howsoever circumspect an approach the law may advocate, the approach can never be so circumspect as would allow injustice to occur, unredressed."*

(iii) ***Salil Maheshwari v. High Court of Delhi, 2014 SCC OnLine Del 4563*:-**

"7. This Court is of the opinion that the petitioner cannot be heard to challenge the answer key to a particular question, after having discovered that he was awarded no marks for his response, it being at variance with the answer key. Here, the last date for communicating objections was 23.6.2014, and the respondent released its response to the objections on 2.7.2014. The results were only published on 8.7.2014. It appears that the petitioner did not

think it necessary to object to this question before the deadline for objections, but only sought to object after the results were published on 8.7.2014 by way of this petition filed on 1.8.2014. This Court finds that the petitioner was therefore estopped from raising a challenge at this belated stage, since a challenge cannot be advanced against a selection process only after the candidate has discovered his or her unsuccessful performance in the process. See Dhananjay Malik v. State of Uttaranchal (2008) 4 SCC 171 and Madan Lal v. State of J&K (1995) 3 SCC 486. Consequently, no findings will be recorded in regard to this question."

6. Having regard to the above, we now proceed to scrutinize and examine each question to which parties have raised their objections.

In re: Question no.5 (Passage no.I) of the Master Booklet:-

7. Mr. Rajshekhar Rao, learned senior counsel appearing for the respondent/Consortium submitted that so far as Question no.5 of the Master Booklet is concerned, the learned Single Judge has committed a manifest error in doubting the answer as per the final answer key which is option (d), *"Sellers of stolen hardware"* and contrary to the well settled law, substituted her opinion in considering the answer as option (c), *"auctioneers of cheap bags"*, as the correct answer. According to the learned senior counsel, the passage provided was in relation to English Comprehension and the *"Sellers of stolen hardware"* was not a legal trade or an occupation. In other words, he emphasized that the sellers of stolen hardware could not be considered to be a legal trade or occupation, even if the question was related to English Comprehension and had nothing to do with legal reasons. In that context, he urged that auctioneers of cheap bags will surely be a trade which could not be stated to be illegal or unlawful.

8. So far as Question no.5 of the master booklet is concerned, we have read the passage in the context whereof the question was framed. The

passage actually referred to *"an auctioneer of cheap cloth"*. The question posed was, *"Which among the following is not a trade or occupation represented in the pathway running through the town hall park?"*. It is manifest from the passage that there is no reference to "*auctioneers of cheap bags*", thus, the answer to the Question no.5 of Master Booklet clearly and manifestly could only be option (c), *"auctioneers of cheap bags"*, without applying any legal reasoning. It is pertinent to note that the question was not formed to find the legality or otherwise of the trade, but what is not a trade or occupation in the pathway, as per the passage. It is also to be noticed that this question formed part of "English Comprehension" and not "Legal Reasoning". Thus, it is clear that it is an apparent mistake/error which was rightly considered by the learned Single Judge while upholding option (c) as the correct answer. Notwithstanding the above analysis, we may, at the cost of repetition, emphasize that it is relevant and of great significance to appreciate the fact that the passage related to "English Comprehension" and had no relation, whatsoever, to deal with a legal context. On that count too, the argument of learned senior counsel does not impress us. To that extent, we uphold the conclusion drawn by the learned Single Judge and direct that necessary consequences shall follow.

In re: Question no.14 (Passage no.III) of the Master Booklet :-

9. In respect of the Question no.14 of the Master Booklet, learned senior counsel for the respondent/Consortium submitted that within the window period provided by the respondent/Consortium, none of the candidates had availed of such facility and only one of the petitioners herein namely Ms. Harshita had objected to, for the very first time in the writ petition bearing

W.P.(C) 2363/2025 preferred by her. He stoutly contended that this type of objections being raised at this stage before this Court under Article 226 is not permissible. According to him, this question, not having been objected to, was neither referred to the Expert Committee nor reviewed further by the Oversight Committee. In such circumstances, learned senior counsel submitted that this Court cannot examine the said objection in place of an Expert Committee and substitute its own view. He relies upon the judgment of this Court in ***Salil Maheshwari*** *(supra)*, wherein it was held that an individual cannot be heard to challenge the answer key to a particular question after discovery that no marks have been awarded particularly when such individual did not think it necessary to object to the question before the deadline for submission of objection were not availed of.

10. We find from the record that the submission of learned senior counsel is factually correct. The petitioner in W.P.(C) 2363/2025 did not ever file any objection within the window period provided by the respondent/Consortium and only after declaration of the final results, has petitioned this Court to consider her objection for Question no.14 of the Master Booklet. In case this Court were to entertain such highly belated objections, it would open a pandora's box. We can take note of the fact that sympathy in the above context would entail an unending multitude of litigations, what with any and every individual filing writ petition at any time on their whims and fancies resulting in there being no finality to the examination process or to the final result. This is clearly impermissible. Additionally, there is no averment in the pleadings with respect to this question. In our considered opinion, no such question, which has not been challenged at the appropriate stage, can or should be permitted to be

objected to before a Court under Article 226 of the Constitution of India. It would also be relevant to note that Courts are not sitting as expert bodies or subject matter experts over the questions formulated by the examination conducting authority; nor can a Court assert expertise over multifarious subjects. It is trite that the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Ran Vijay Singh*** *(supra)* and this Court in ***Shubham Pal*** *(supra)*, reiterated the principle that if two views are possible, then the view taken by the examination conducting authority should be preferred and upheld. We concur with the view taken in ***Salil Maheshwari*** *(supra)* that an individual cannot be permitted to challenge the answer key in relation to a particular question after discovery that no marks have been awarded, particularly when such individual did not think it necessary to object to the question before the deadline for submission of objection. Ergo, since in the present matter, the petitioner had admittedly not submitted her objection within the window period provided, it would preclude her from raising the objection before this Court for the first time. On that score, we refrain from rendering any opinion one way or the other.

In re: Question no.37 (Passage no.VII) of the Master Booklet :-

11. With respect to Question no.37 from the Master Booklet, Mr. Rao, learned senior counsel argued that from the context contained in the passage relatable thereto, the provisional answer key provides option (c) as the correct answer. He contended that the passage was replete with references as to how the relations between India and China were developing; and the opening up of dialogue between the two premiers/Heads of State after a passage of 5 years was emphasized. He also submitted that the other answers

as provided, did not reflect the correct status of the Indo-China relations, particularly in the excerpt contained in the passage. He also stated that this passage was relatable to Current Affairs which included General Knowledge as well, as the topic of examination and that the question posed and the answer provided, have to be understood in that context. Learned senior counsel emphasized that the query related to what the BRICS Summit had achieved, and thus the only correct and possible answer was option (c), *"Diplomatic dialogue between India and China"*.

12. Though at the initial stage when the provisional answer key was published, 6 candidates/aspirants had submitted their objections, however, before us, only 1 such aspirant has raised an objection in relation to Question no.37 of the Master Booklet, namely Mr. Triambak (in W.P.(C) 2365/2025). According to Mr. Rao, learned senior counsel, this issue was referred to the Expert Committee who did not recommend any change, thus it was not further referred to the Oversight Committee. In contrast thereto, the petitioner urged that in the said Summit, BRICS currency was also launched therefore, option (d), *"All of the above"* would be the proper and correct answer.

13. We agree with the submission of the respondent/Consortium. The reason is not far to see. A reading of the passage relatable to Question no.37 of the Master Booklet discloses that it is replete with references to the status of Indo-China relations primarily, and there is no reference at all to the launch of any currency, much less BRICS Currency. That apart, the argument of the petitioner herein overlooks and ignores the fact that the other remaining options, viz., (a) and (b) are not borne from the passage. Thus, looked at any which way, the only possible and plausible answer in

the context of the passage appears to be option (c). Thus, the issue in respect of Question no.37 of the Master Booklet is resolved in favour of the respondent/Consortium.

In re: Question no.49 (Passage no.IX) of the Master Booklet :-

14. Question no.49 of the Master Booklet was also objected to by about 148 aspirants after publication of the provisional answer key. However, no change was recommended by the Expert Committee nor was it further referred to the Oversight Committee. This question was related to the passage regarding passing of the "Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam Bill, 2023" respecting reservation of one third of all seats in the Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies and Delhi, for women. The promulgation of this Bill was linked to implementation of two long term exercises of census and delimitation. According to Mr. Rao, learned senior counsel, the passage coupled with the query in Question no.49 of the Master Booklet clearly ruled out any possibility of an answer other than option (d), *"None of the above"*. He contended that answers in options (a), (b) and (c) were neither the correct answers nor probable. He also stated that a mere look at the three options other than option (d), *ex facie*, demonstrate those to be clearly out of place and are not made out.

15. Learned counsel appearing for the petitioners contended that answer provided in option (c), *"Will come to force after Census"* is the correct answer. The rationale, according to some of the petitioners, is that the Bill was to be passed upon conducting census and delimitation and since option (c) did refer to *"census",* it would be the correct answer even if it did not refer to *"delimitation"*. The petitioners also insist that so long as there is a

correct answer in the form of option (c), answer in option (d) would not be available and therefore, the final answer key to that extent is demonstrably and palpably wrong.

16. Upon hearing learned counsel for the parties, so far as Question no.49 of the Master booklet is concerned which is part of Current Affairs including General Knowledge, the view taken by the respondent/Consortium appeals to us. Surely the examination conducting authority has the leverage to provide questions which may create puzzling situations requiring the aspirant to be careful in opting for the right answers. Moreover, such an Authority does indeed and must be deemed to have the right to pose confounding situations, though neither absurd nor ambiguous and frame appropriate questions, lest the ability to test and evaluate the aspirants is lost. Institutions must also be given the leeway to choose competent candidates, though not as a right, but to ensure excellence in higher education. The question under consideration does exactly that. The option (c) contended to be correct, at the first blush, appears to be attractive, however, on careful reading, it is not a complete or correct answer. The passage referred to the passing of the Bill subject to census *"and"* delimitation. Read plainly, it is apparent that the Bill could be passed only after both census and delimitation is carried out. Thus, option (c), *"Will come to force after Census"* being incomplete, may not be the correct answer and the option (d), *"None of the above"* appears to be the correct answer. It is trite that this Court does not sit as a super expert over the subject matter experts who have evaluated and considered the right answers; nor can Courts, ordinarily, substitute their opinion to that of the subject matter experts and can only examine whether the answers are absolutely

absurd or palpably or demonstrably wrong. This burden is upon the individual raising the challenge. Clearly, the petitioners have not been able to muster such doubt in our mind. The objections to this question are therefore rejected.

In re: Question no.56 (Passage no.X) of the Master Booklet :-

17. In regard to Question no.56 of the Master Booklet, around 451 objections were submitted after the publication of the provisional answer key. Out of those, three petitioners had objected to the same apart from two others who have directly approached this Court. The question under enquiry appears to have been formulated from the topic *"Supreme Court of India bolts Right to Life with climate justice"*. Though the passage commences with the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court ruling that both the State and its residents have a fundamental duty to preserve and protect their natural resources, yet, traverses and concludes with such duty obligated on the State and recognizing the right of the citizens against climate change. The final answer key projected option (d), *"State has the duty to maintain ecological balance and citizens have the right against climate change"* as the correct answer. Whereas, the petitioners claim option (c), *"Both the state and citizen have the duty to preserve and protect natural resources"* to be the correct answer.

18. Mr. Rao, learned senior counsel submits that in the context of the aforesaid passage, options (a), (b) and (c) cannot be the correct answers as the passage concludes with duties assigned to the State and the rights of the citizens over the climatic change affecting them. In support of the submission, learned senior counsel brings attention of this Court to the

underlined portion of the passage extracted for the convenience of the Court in Vol. II of the compilation handed over during arguments. He emphasizes that the underlined portions at the end of the passage, *"It also establishes duty of the state to maintain ecological balance and hygienic environment. Although right to clean environment has existed, by recognising the right against the climate change it shall compel the state to prioritize environmental protection and sustainable development."*, clearly demonstrate that option (d), in contradistinction to the other options, is the only correct answer. He also contends that it is not enough for the petitioners to merely show that another option is a plausible answer. According to him, option (d) has to be shown as palpably and demonstrably wrong which the petitioners have failed to do.

19. In contrast, the petitioners bring our attention to the first three lines of the passage which states that "*In many judgments, the Supreme Court ruled that both the state and its residents have a fundamental duty to preserve and protect their natural resources*". According to the learned counsel for the petitioners, having regard to the clear specification in the passage, option (c) in the said circumstances would be the correct answer. Alternatively, they also urge that since the passage itself contains references to both underlined portions, the respondent/Consortium has been unable to demonstrate as to why option (c) could not be an answer. Thus, they contend that either option (c) can be considered as the right answer or the question itself may be deleted as being ambiguous and the marks be given to all the candidates who have attempted to give answer to the subject question.

20. Having heard learned counsel for the parties in respect of Question No.56 of the Master Booklet, we tend to agree with the submissions of the

respondent/Consortium. Though it is correct that the underlined portion in the first part of the passage appears to conform to the option (c), yet the underlined portion at the end of the passage demonstrates the law as is applicable on date. The passage and the question posed have to be understood in the context that it pertains to Legal Reasoning. If one were to read the first portion of the passage, it is apparent that the topic is in respect of a recent judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court which has paved way for an enforceable right of a citizen and a corresponding potential duty on the State, unless the same is overturned by an Act of the Parliament. In the concluding portion, referring to the latest judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of March 21, 2024 the passage clearly indicates that disturbance to elements of environment would amount to violation of Article 21 of the Constitution of India, 1950 and also emphasizes the duty of the State to maintain ecological balance and hygienic environment. Penultimately, the passage declares that the right against climate change has been recognized compelling the State to take the burden of protecting the environment. Read in the above context, there is no doubt that option (d) is the only correct answer. Moreover, in conformity with the ratio laid down in ***Ran Vijay Singh*** (*supra*) and ***Shubham Pal*** (*supra*), where there are two possible views, the view taken by the examination conducting authority should be preferred. In the present case, the petitioners have not succeeded in establishing that option (d) is palpably and demonstrably wrong or incorrect. Thus, in view of the above, we reiterate option (d) as the correct answer.

<u>In re: Question no.77 (Passage no.XIII) of the Master Booklet:-</u>

21. The Question no.77 of the Master Booklet is in respect of *"contracts"* as defined under Section 2(h) of Indian Contract Act, 1872 and pertains to the topic Legal Reasoning. The passage refers to void and voidable agreements and cursorily defines and expresses distinction between both. In that context, Question no.77 states, "*An agreement made by an adult but involving a minor child where the signatory is a minor child himself, this agreement would be:".* It provides four options out of which according to the respondent/Consortium, option (b), *"A voidable agreement"* is the correct answer. Mr. Rao, learned senior counsel defended option (b) on the ground that once it is indicated in the passage that a party who is at a disadvantage due to any circumstance applicable to the contract, it has the ability to render the agreement voidable coupled with reference to the fact that a voidable agreement is liable to be rectified and that certain voidable agreements have remedies in law. He contended that learned Single Judge had rightly relied upon the judgments of ***Ran Vijay Singh*** *(supra)* and ***Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission, through its Chairman & Anr. vs. Rahul Singh & Anr.; (2018) 7 SCC 254***, to conclude that where the Expert Committee had concluded that the answer key was correct and agreed with the justification by the paper setter, the Courts should not step in unless the error is manifest and palpable.

22. Learned counsel for the appellant and the petitioners hotly contested the aforesaid submissions. It is their contention that the passage does not refer to a minor or to the incapacity of a minor to enter into contract. They also contended that though the passage refers to and shows the distinction between void and voidable agreements, no such distinction on the basis of a minor being incapable of entering into contract is at all discernible from the

plain reading of the passage. They also contended vehemently, that the passage is conspicuous by the absence of the word *"minor"*. In other words, the petitioners as also the appellant contended that the passage being ambiguous on the aforesaid aspect, the question should be considered to be "Out of Syllabus" and should be deleted and treated as withdrawn. That apart, petitioners stoutly contended that though the syllabus in respect of Legal Reasoning stated that aspirants need not have prior knowledge of law, yet, the question as posed is, *ex facie*, contrary to such condition. In that context too, they contended that the Question no.77 ought to be withdrawn.

23. Having heard learned counsel for the parties and on a plain reading of the passage, we find that the passage neither refers to minors nor gives any indication as to their incapacity or lack of competence to enter into or execute any contract. All that the passage refers to is a bare definition of void and voidable agreements coupled with slight broad distinctions between both. Other than that, there is apparently no reference at all to the word *"minor"*. The learned Single Judge was right to opine that Courts are not to enter into minute or finer disputes and leave it to the wisdom of the Expert Committee in accordance with the ratio laid down in the aforesaid judgments. Notwithstanding the reasoning of the learned Single Judge, the answer to Question no.77 would, in our opinion, require prior knowledge of law regarding who would be competent to enter into a valid agreement, despite the syllabus "Legal Reasoning" providing that aspirants need not have any prior knowledge of law. This would be violative of the conditions specified by the respondent/Consortium. Though we are conscious that answers to such questions are not meant to be apparent on the face of the passage, yet in the present context there being no reference to the aforesaid

factual discrepancies, we are persuaded to rule otherwise. In that view of the matter, the Question no.77 is held to be "Out of Syllabus" and is excluded and treated as withdrawn.

In re: Question no.78 (Passage no.XIII) of the Master Booklet:-

24. So far as Question no.78 of the Master Booklet is concerned, this too arises from the aforesaid Passage no.XIII. In this context, Mr. Rao, learned senior counsel stoutly defended option (c), *"An agreement to pay 10 lakhs on getting a government job"*, as the correct answer. He stated that the question itself indicated clearly as to which of the options, would *"most likely"* result in a void agreement. He emphasized that as submitted in the aforesaid paragraph, the definition as also the distinction between void and voidable agreement has been clearly specified in the passage itself. Moreover, according to him, there is no ambiguity at all, and any aspirant with a general knowledge of law would be able to answer the said question. In contrast, the appellant and the petitioners hotly contested the submissions of the respondent/Consortium. The petitioners have given option (d), *"A contract with a minor who understands the terms."*, as answer and are *ad idem* that option (c) is definitely not the correct answer. They also unanimously contended that option (a) as also option (d) cannot be ruled out for the reason that an agreement signed by someone under duress and a contract with the minor who understands the terms are also void agreements. According to learned counsel in unison, if there is more than one correct answer to the question, the question needs to be treated as inapplicable, and marks for attempting such question ought to be given to all the candidates.

25. We are unable to accede to the contentions and submissions addressed on behalf of the candidates in respect of Question no.78 of the Master Booklet. Even if we were to agree with the submission that there are more answers than one, it is apparent that the question itself states *"most likely result in a void agreement"*. In other words, the proposed answer ought to have a greater tendency and likelihood of the transaction being declared a void agreement. Though the other two answers may result in void or voidable agreements, the question specified only a void agreement. In that view of the matter, it is clear that option (c), *"An agreement to pay 10 Lakhs on getting a government job"* is obviously a void agreement being illegal and violative of law. Moreover, the examination conducting authority is neither required nor mandated to provide answers in a platter. It is trite that this Court does not sit as a super expert over the subject matter experts who have evaluated and considered the right answers; nor can Courts, ordinarily, substitute their opinion to that of the subject matter experts and can only examine whether the answers are absolutely absurd or palpably or demonstrably wrong. This burden is upon the individual raising the challenge. Clearly, the petitioners have not been able to muster such doubt in our mind. The objections to this question are therefore rejected.

In re: Question no.79 (Passage no.XIII) of the Master Booklet :-

26. The next question objected to is Question no.79 of the Master Booklet. It is relevant to note that only 12 aspirants had submitted their objections to the provisional answer key within the time provided in the window period. Before this Court, only one petitioner-in-person Mr.Yajat Sen (in W.P.(C) 4375/2025) has challenged the provisional answer key who

admitted that he was not one of the 12 aspirants as he never submitted his objections at all. The petitioner-in-person argued that the question posed is out of syllabus on the premise that the Passage no.XIII does not at all remotely refer to the word *"consideration"*. According to him, the word consideration in a contractual context has great relevance and significance to the contract itself, yet unless some indication was provided in the passage itself, an aspirant would have to have prior knowledge of law to attempt the said question. In order to support his contentions, he drew our attention to the syllabus regarding "Legal Reasoning" which prescribes that aspirants need not have any "prior knowledge of law". Predicated thereon, he contested that in contravention thereto, Question no.79 clearly required prior knowledge of law without which the same could not be attempted. He thus prays that the question in hand may be treated as "out of syllabus" and be deleted and withdrawn.

27. Though we appreciate the arguments rendered by the petitioner-in-person, yet we are not inclined to interfere with the objections raised *qua* Question no.79 of the Master Booklet. This Court is not inclined to interfere for the reason that the petitioner-in-person never objected at all when the respondent/Consortium had provided a window period for raising such objections post publication of the provisional answer key. This lacunae/default propels this Court to not interfere in the final answer key as declared by the respondent/Consortium, lest it may have a deleterious effect and work to the disadvantage of the candidates who may have attempted and given the correct answers. In case any such indulgence is shown by a writ Court to such persons who are apparently fence sitters, it would result in injustice and at times travesty of justice. We cannot countenance any such

situation. This Court is fortified in its view taken by a Co-ordinate Bench of this Court in ***Salil Maheshwari*** *(supra)*, wherein it was held that an individual cannot be heard to challenge the answer key to a particular question after discovery that no marks have been awarded particularly when such individual did not think it necessary to object to the question before the deadline for submission of objection were not availed of. Thus, the arguments rendered in objection to Question no.79 are rejected.

In re: Question no.80 (Passage no.XV) of the Master Booklet:-

28. The petitioner in person Mr. Yajat Sen also raised objection to Question no.80 of the Maser Booklet on the ground that the same is out of syllabus as it requires prior knowledge of law and is violative of the conditions specified in the syllabus regarding the section Legal Reasoning. According to him, the answer of the respondent/Consortium mentioned is option (d), *"When the President of India gives the Assent"*, would itself imply that an aspirant is to have a prior knowledge of law as to how and in what manner a Bill is passed in the Parliament and at what stage would it become a law in force. He further urged that the question would also require pre-requisite knowledge of law to understand that it is only when the President of India gives an assent that a Bill would formally become the law of the land. In that context, Mr. Sen vehemently contended that the question being clearly "out of syllabus" ought to be deleted and withdrawn with the direction to the respondent/Consortium to give consequential benefits.

29. We have heard the petitioner-in-person in respect of Question no.80. Apart from rejecting the same on the ground that no objection was raised by the petitioner during the window period provided by the

respondent/Consortium, we also additionally reject the same since the passage clearly and unambiguously stated, *"The Bill had received assent from the President of India on the 13th February 2024"*. Thus, the answer being discernible clearly from the passage, as also for the reason that the petitioner-in-person miserably failed to show or indicate that the answer in option (d) is either palpably or demonstrably wrong, the said objection is rejected.

In re: Question no.81 (Passage no.XV) of the Master Booklet:-

30. The next question is in respect of Question no.81 of the Master Booklet. It is informed that 69 aspirants had challenged the provisional answer key within the window period provided. Out of those, one petitioner Mr.Hardik Garg has filed the W.P.(C) 2516/2025 objecting to the said question apart from one more petitioner Mr.Harshit Garg (in W.P.(C) 2517/2025) who had not challenged the same originally. The passage relatable to the said question is Passage no.XV which referred to an Act promulgated to prevent unfair means employed in public examinations with provisions providing for imprisonment and fine apart from barring the service provider from being assigned any responsibility for conduct of public examination for a period of four years. In the aforesaid context, the question was posed relatable to various punishments/penalties imposed upon *"a service provider"* for the violations contemplated in the Act. According to the respondent/Consortium, the correct answer is option (d), *"none of the above"*, whereas the two petitioners had opted for option (b), *"be liable to be punished with imposition of a fine up to ₹1 crore"*, as the correct answer.

31. Mr. Rao, learned senior counsel while defending option (d) emphasized that so far as the service provider is concerned, the violations would make such person liable to be punished with imposition of fine up to ₹1 crore and recovery of proportionate cost of the examination apart from being barred for a period of four years. Contending that the passage itself provided clear answer as to what would be the maximum fine and the proportionate costs which could be recovered coupled with the service provider being barred for a period of four years, there was no ambiguity to attempt the answer. He forcefully contended that the answers in options (a) and (c) were wrong and option (b) is incomplete, leaving no option other than option (d) as the correct answer. In contrast, learned counsel appearing for the petitioner contended that the answer in option (b), though may not be the complete answer but cannot be said to be an incorrect answer. He thus submits that option (d), *"None of the above"*, stated to be the correct answer by the respondent/Consortium is palpably and demonstrably wrong and incorrect. In that view of the matter, he contended that the objection may be held in favour of the petitioners.

32. The submissions on behalf of the candidates *qua* Question no.81 of the Master Booklet does not commend to us. The Passage no.XV clearly provided that *"A service provider, engaged by the public examination authority for conduct of examinations, shall also be liable to be punished with imposition of a fine up to ₹1 crore "and proportionate cost of examination shall also be recovered" from it, according to the Act. Such service providers, shall also be barred from being assigned with any responsibility for the conduct of any public examination for a period of four years".* We have to bear in mind that Passage no.XV is in context of Legal

Reasoning. Having regard thereto, it is apparent that a violation by a service provider would make it liable not only to be punished with imposition of a fine up to ₹1 crore, but also proportionate cost of examination. Between both the penalties, the word *"and"* has been employed. Generally, the word *"and"* would be used between two events or instances or situations to connote jointedness and cannot be taken to be separate or disjunctive. Having regard thereto, we fail to understand as to how the submission of the petitioners would establish that the final answer key is palpably or demonstrably wrong. For the aforesaid reason, we are not inclined to interfere with the answer in option (d) as stated by the respondent/Consortium.

In re: Question no.88 (Passage no.XVI) of the Master Booklet:-

33. With respect to Question no.88 of the Master Booklet posed in relation to Passage no.XVI, Mr. Rao, learned senior counsel has submitted that the Oversight Committee had suggested that the answer key should be changed to option (d) by holding that the data provided is inadequate. Having regard to the intricacies involved in coming to the correct answer of the question and having analyzed the question, we are of the opinion that the data provided for coming to the correct conclusion appears to be inadequate. However, since no conclusion about the same can be drawn without entering into the question intricately, we are also of the opinion that such exercise by the Court would be outside the parameters of judicial review to be applied in such matters. Therefore, we will go by the opinion expressed by the Oversight Committee, which has suggested that the correct answer to this question will be 'option-(d)' i.e. *"data inadequate"*. Accordingly, amongst

the candidates, whosoever has attempted this question and opted for option '(d)' should accordingly be given full marks assigned to this question, and answer book of all the candidates shall accordingly be evaluated.

In re: Question no.91 (Passage no.XVII) of the Master Booklet:-

34. Question no.91 of the Master Booklet pertains to Passage no.XVII in respect of homelessness faced by many countries in the world. The said question was objected to by 224 aspirants after the publication of provisional answer key. None of the aspirants who had originally submitted the objection is before this Court and only one petitioner Mr. Triambak (in W.P.(C) 2365/2025), has raised an objection *qua* the question before this Court. The objection is compounded also by the fact that there is a split opinion between two subject matter experts, one suggesting option (d), *"All of the above"* as suggested by the paper setter, and the other suggested option (c), *"Homelessness increases due to major turbulence on the economic and cultural aspects"*, as the correct answer. The Oversight Committee accepted the change to the answer of paper setter and recommended option (c) as the correct answer. Learned senior counsel for the respondent/Consortium defended the acceptance of option (c) by the Oversight Committee as the correct answer on the suggestion of one of the experts, since the option (a) & (b) as provided were not borne out of the instant passage. He submitted that once option (a) & (b) were not found to be borne out of the passage, axiomatically, option (d), *"All of the above"* would be incorrect. Thus, on the consideration of the objections raised, following the subject matter expert's advice, the Oversight Committee changed the answer from option (d) to option (c). Additionally, learned

senior counsel also reiterates the ratio in ***Ran Vijay Singh*** *(supra)* and ***Shubham Pal*** *(supra)* in support of the aforesaid submission to the extent that - (i) Courts ordinarily should not interfere and substitute its own view in place of the experts since the Court itself is incapable of any such expertise over the subject matter and (ii) where two views are possible, the view taken by the expert body or the examination conducting authority ought to be preferred.

35. *Per Contra,* learned counsel appearing for the petitioner stated that the answer in option (d) is borne out fully from the Passage no.XVII coupled with the fact that it was the original answer as per the provisional answer key which has been unnecessarily reviewed by the Oversight Committee. Learned counsel also contended that where there was a split opinion in the two member Expert Committee, one of which reiterated the answer suggested by the original paper setter, the review of the same by the Oversight Committee was beyond its mandate. In view thereof, the petitioner sought quashing and setting aside of the review exercised by the Oversight Committee and reversion to the original answer in option (d).

36. Having perused the Passage no.XVII and examining the explanation provided for by the respondent/Consortium, it is apparent that answer in option (a) & (b) appear to be not borne out of said passage nor can they be said to be deduced. Resultantly, option (d) which stated *"All of the above"* would be incorrect and the exercise of review was rightly exercised by the Oversight Committee in changing the answer to option (c). We hold so. Thus, the objection raised to Question no.91 of the Master Booklet is rejected.

In re: Question no.93 (Passage no.XVII) of the Master Booklet:-

37. The question no.93 of the Master Booklet arises from the Passage no.XVII and thus, we are avoiding reference to the contents of the passage *"in extenso"*. Around 26 aspirants are understood to have submitted objections to the provisional answer key and one of them Mr.Triambak has filed petition bearing W.P.(C) 2365/2025. Apart from that, two other petitioners Mr.Hardik Garg (in W.P.(C) 2516/2025) and Mr.Harshit Garg (in W.P.(C) 2517/2025), have raised objections for the first time before this Court. So far as this question is concerned, yet again there is a split opinion suggested by two subject matter experts. One expert suggested option (d), *"All of the above"*, which was originally suggested by the paper setter as the correct option whereas the other suggested option (c), *"Poor mental health predisposes individuals to homelessness and homelessness exposes individuals further to particularly severe health problems"*. Learned senior counsel for the respondent/Consortium submitted that the question posed was in relation to homelessness in case of mental illness which may be amplified for certain reasons enumerated as four different answers. He contended that though the paper setter and one of the subject matter experts suggested option (d), yet the Oversight Committee concurred with the other subject matter expert for preferring option (c) as the correct answer. While reiterating the aforesaid submission of the same passage in relation to Question no.91 of the Master Booklet, he contended that answer in option (a) & (b) are similarly not borne out from the plain reading of the said passage. He stated that in such a situation while considering the objections received, and also examining the split opinion of both the subject matter

experts, the Oversight Committee preferred option (c) as the correct answer. He submitted that once option (a) & (b) were not found to be borne out of the passage, axiomatically, option (d), *"All of the above"* would be incorrect. Thus, on the consideration of the objections raised, following the subject matter expert's advice, the Oversight Committee changed the answer from option (d) to option (c). Additionally, learned senior counsel also reiterates the ratio in ***Ran Vijay Singh*** *(supra)* and ***Shubham Pal*** *(supra)* in support of the aforesaid submission to the extent that - (i) Courts ordinarily should not interfere and substitute its own view in place of the experts since the Court itself is incapable of any such expertise over the subject matter and (ii) where two views are possible, the view taken by the expert body or the examination conducting authority ought to be preferred.

38. *Per Contra,* learned counsel appearing for the petitioner stated that the answer in option (d) is borne out fully from the Passage no.XVII coupled with the fact that it was the original answer as per the provisional answer key which has been unnecessarily reviewed by the Oversight Committee. Learned counsel also contended that where there was a split opinion in the two member Expert Committee, one of which reiterated the answer suggested by the original paper setter, the review of the same by the Oversight Committee was beyond its mandate. In view thereof, the petitioner sought quashing and setting aside of the review exercised by the Oversight Committee and reversion to the original answer in option (d).

39. Having perused the Passage no.XVII and on examining the explanation provided for by the respondent/Consortium, it is apparent that answer in option (a) & (b) appear to be not borne out of said passage nor can they be said to be deduced. A perusal of the passage and the question posed

clearly indicate that the question has been posed in respect of homelessness in case of mental illnesses, whereas in the entire passage there is no reference, even remotely, to mental illness being one of the contributors to homelessness or even the corollary has been referred to. In that situation, the question was rightly reviewed by the Oversight Committee by changing the answer to option (c). We hold so. Thus, the objection raised to Question no.93 of the Master Booklet is rejected.

In re: Question no.97 (Passage no.XVIII) of the Master Booklet:-

40. Question no.97 of the Master Booklet pertains to Passage no.XVIII regarding how lifestyle is creating an epidemic of mental ill health. In that context, Question no.97 sought an answer in the form of "most suitable title" for the said passage. At the relevant stage, 8 of the aspirants are stated to have submitted their objections to the provisional answer key, none of whom have filed any writ petition before this Court. Only one petitioner, namely, Mr.Hardik Garg (in W.P.(C) 2516/2025) has raised objections to the said question. Mr. Rao, learned senior counsel in the context of Question no.97 submits that answer in option (a), *"Lifestyle and Mental Health"*, is the correct answer on the ground that a plain reading of the passage unambiguously indicates that the lifestyle being led today by the youth is leading to various forms and incidences of mental illnesses being suffered by them. In that context, he contended that answers in option (b), (c) and (d) are in relation to the outcome of economic growth, impact of technology or language and cultural change respectively, which may be contributors for mental illness suffered by the youth directly and thus cannot be independently considered as title to the passage. In other words, according to

him, the passage clearly refers to and indicates various parameters of lifestyle being led today, which have majorly contributed to the mental illness suffered by the youth. He contends that therefore, there was no requirement for the Expert Committee or the Oversight Committee to recommend any change.

41. In contrast, learned counsel for the petitioner contended that the passage also relates to various technological developments taking place which too contributes to the mental illness suffered by the youth of today. By referring to the passage, learned counsel seeks to impress upon us that the topic answer in option (c), *"Impact of Technology on the Youth"*, is well founded as the said passage discloses a study on a large data base which are based on the youth owning smart phones which are directly connected with the mental illnesses being suffered by them. Premised thereon, learned counsel vehemently opposes the submission that option (a) is the correct answer.

42. Having heard the parties, two things seem to be apparent while reading the passage as also the title of the news item wherefrom the passage has been summarized, (i) the title of the news item itself appears to be indicative of the answer since it states *"How our lifestyle is creating an epidemic of mental ill health"* and (ii) the passage unambiguously commences with reference to how lifestyles are impacting the youth and proceeds to refer to how the electronic gadgets are impacting their mental health which is clearly discernible from plain reading of the passage. This is also clear from the narration in the passage which actually examines various factors and parameters like technological advancements, higher financial capacities and consumption of ultra processed foods resulting in mental ill

health. It is also significant to note that the question posed was not "a suitable title" but "the most suitable title". Having regard thereto, we find that the petitioners have failed to project option (a) as palpably or demonstrably wrong. Thus, we maintain "hands off approach" as coined by learned Single Judge.

In re: Question no.114 (Passage no.XX) of the Master Booklet:-

43. The petitioner in W.P.(C) 2365/2025, namely, Mr. Triambak had raised objections within time after the provisional answer key was published and has also filed the writ petition before this Court. Learned counsel appearing for the petitioner on instructions, stated that the petitioner accedes to the answer in option (d) as contained in the Master Booklet in reference to Passage no.XX and thus, does not wish to continue the challenge. In view thereof, no expression of opinion is being rendered by this Court.

In re: Question no.115 (Passage no.XXI) of the Master Booklet:-

44. In respect of Question no.115 of the Master Booklet regarding Passage no.XXI, Mr. Rajshekhar Rao, learned senior counsel very fairly admitted, on instructions, that the answer in option (a), *"Rs.204 approx."* as provided in the provisional answer key has been found to be incorrect and the answer in option (d), *"None of these"* is the correct answer. Since the respondent/Consortium itself had given a wrong option as an answer without rectifying or reviewing the same, no fault can be found with the candidates for giving correct or incorrect answers. As a result, he submitted that consequential benefits may be granted to all the candidates who had attempted this question. In view of the fair admission by the learned senior

counsel on behalf of the respondent/Consortium, we direct that only those candidates who had attempted Question no.115 of the Master Booklet, correctly or incorrectly, shall, as a consequence, be granted the marks indicated against the said question.

In re: Question no.116 (Passage no.XXI) of the Master Booklet:-

45. With reference to Question no.116 of the Master Booklet which was based on Passage no.XXI as considered by us above in relation to Question no.115 of the Master Booklet, Mr. Rao, learned senior counsel fairly submitted that an error had crept in the various sets handed over to the aspirants for participating in CLAT UG 2025. He stated that Question no.116 *"With reference to the information in Ques. 115 above, which region of the below mentioned states offers the least wages to the woman workers in any sector?"*, was posed in reference to the information/answer to Question no.115 of the Master Booklet meaning thereby that in attempting answer to Question no.116, the aspirants would necessarily have to relate the same to the answer given by them to Question no.115. Concededly, in all the sets, though Question no.115 of the Master Booklet may not have been assigned the same number, yet the Sets 'B', 'C' & 'D' referred to wrong question numbers in the corresponding question i.e. Question no.116 of the Master Booklet. To make things clear, Mr. Rao, referred to the table mentioned by the appellant/petitioner in the written submission of the appeal filed herein which is reproduced hereunder:-

Question No. as per Master Booklet	*Question No. as per Set A*	*Question No. as per Set B*	*Question No. as per Set C*	*Question No. as per Set D*
115 (about	*109*	*112*	*118*	*117*

wages paid to women in Goa)				
116 (With reference to information in Question 115, which region offers least wages to women workers?	*110*	*113 and seeks answer in reference to Question 109*	*119 and seeks answer in reference to Question 115*	*118 and seeks answer in reference to Question 115*

46. We have carefully scrutinized the table as extracted hereinabove and accede to the submissions made by the learned counsel for the petitioner as also learned senior counsel for the respondent/Consortium. Since the error as occurred on the part of the respondent/Consortium itself, while publishing Sets 'B', 'C' & 'D' of question papers, no fault can be found with the candidates for giving or not giving correct or incorrect answers. In view of the fair admission by the learned senior counsel on behalf of the respondent/Consortium, we direct that all the candidates who participated in CLAT UG 2025 with respect to the Sets 'B', 'C' & 'D' of question papers shall, as a consequence, be granted the marks indicated against the said question. Since Set 'A' did not have this error, we do not deem it fit to interfere with the marks obtained by all those candidates who answered correctly.

47. The parties before this Court have copiously referred to many judgements out of which we have referred to and relied upon some of them which appear to be applicable to the facts of the present appeals and writ petitions. The other judgements which seem to be not relevant or laying down the ratio already settled have not been referred to for the sake of brevity.

48. In view of the aforesaid detailed analysis and conclusions, we direct the respondent/Consortium to revise the marksheet and to re-publish/renotify the final list of selected candidates within 04 weeks from date. It is clarified that the respondent/Consortium shall apply the aforesaid evaluation to each of the appellant and petitioners before this Court, the candidates who may have attempted certain questions considered hereinabove as also all the candidates in respect of whom certain benefits can be granted in view of the aforesaid analysis. Resultantly, the appeals as also the writ petitions are disposed of.

49. We put on record our appreciation for the hard work and efforts made in collating details of relevant information in respect of the questions considered by us above, by Mr.Rajshekar Rao, learned senior counsel alongwith his team members for the respondent/Consortium as also Mr.Dhanesh Relan and his team for collecting all the information from various petitioners and learned counsel before us and placing the same very conveniently in the written submission and the documents filed in support thereof.

(DEVENDRA KUMAR UPADHYAYA)
CHIEF JUSTICE

(TUSHAR RAO GEDELA)
JUDGE

APRIL 23, 2025
"shailndra"/MJ*/ms/kct/yrj/rl*