

**APPLICABILITY OF INTERNATIONAL SPACE LAW: INDIAN PERSPECTIVE**  
**GUEST LECTURE ON NATIONAL SPACE DAY (23 AUGUST 2023)**

**EVENT REPORT**

On 23rd August 2024, the Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Punjab organised a guest lecture on ‘Applicability of International Space Law: Indian Perspective’ by Professor (Dr.) Sandeepa Bhat, to commemorate the maiden National Space Day in India. Professor Bhat is a Professor of Law at West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata and has immense experience in the field of space law. The lecture was conducted under the able guidance of the Vice Chancellor, Professor (Dr.) Jai Shankar Singh and Registrar, Professor (Dr.) Anand Pawar.

Professor Bhatt started with an exposition of the historical evolution of space exploration, recounting the early endeavours led by the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, leading up to the developments in international law in this regard. He talked about the emergence of space law consciousness in the United Nations, and various UNGA resolutions expressing concerns about peaceful space exploration. This introductory leg of his lecture served as an effective backdrop for his further discussions on international space law as it stands today.

Professor Bhat further delved into the core principles of international space law, envisaged in the five treaties – the Outer Space Treaty, the Rescue Agreement, the Liability Convention, the Registration Convention, and the Moon Agreement. These core principles, namely, ‘Common Rights Regime’, ‘National Non-Appropriation’, ‘Freedom of Exploration, Use, and Scientific Investigation’, and ‘Cooperation between States’ form the cornerstones of international space law, and Professor Bhat explained the corresponding treaty provisions as well as their implications on state parties.

Not only did Professor Bhat give an overview on the salient features of international space law, he also expounded on India’s obligations in relation to the various treaties. He talked about the binding obligations of India with respect to the first four treaties in which India is a state party. Regarding the Moon Agreement, he emphasised the principle enshrined in Article 18 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, which states that as a signatory, India is not allowed to act against the object and purpose of the Moon Agreement. Further, he also gave an insight into the National Space Policy, 2023, and other initiatives of India with respect to space law.

The lecture was followed by an interactive session, where Professor Bhat answered questions from the attendees. Professor Bhat’s answers and comments were replete with interesting insights on contemporary issues like space tourism, jurisdiction and control, and patent regime with regard to space law. Seeing the curiosity of the participants, Professor Bhat shared resources and readings for further learning and exploration. The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Faculty Coordinator and Assistant Professor of Law, Dr. Sukhwinder Kaur Virk who thanked her colleague, Dr. Sangeeta Taak and student coordinator, Kusha Grover, for the smooth conduction of the event.