RULES & REGULATIONS

1st NATIONAL TRIAL ADVOCACY COMPETITION, 2026

Organised by

Adv. Shardulrao Sudhakarrao Jadhavar College of Law

in collaboration with

Jadhavar College of Law, Pune

27th and 28th November 2026 | Jadhavar College of Law, Pune

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Name of the Competition

The Competition shall be called the **"Jadhavar 1st National Trial Advocacy Competition, 2026"** (hereinafter referred to as "JNTAC 2026" or "the Competition"), organised by Adv. Shardulrao Sudhakarrao Jadhavar College of Law in collaboration with Jadhavar College of Law, Pune (hereinafter, collectively, "the Organisers").

All participating Teams shall be deemed to have read, understood, and agreed to abide by these Rules & Regulations ("the Rules").

2. General Information

The Competition shall be conducted on 27th and 28th November 2026 at Jadhavar College of Law, Pune. The Competition is a national-level Trial Advocacy Competition, structured around a fictional criminal trial to be conducted between Teams representing the Prosecution and the Defence. A maximum of twenty-four (24) Teams shall be permitted to participate, with one Team representing each participating institution.

3. Definitions

In these Rules, unless the context otherwise requires:

"Bench" means the panel of Judges presiding over a round of the Competition.

"Closing Argument" means the concluding submission made by Counsel for each side, summarising the case theory and the evidence led during the trial.

"Competition" means the Jadhavar National Trial Advocacy Competition, 2026 (JNTAC 2026).

"Counsel / Speaker" means the two Participants of a Team responsible for making the Opening Statement, Closing Argument, Examination-in-Chief and Cross-Examination on behalf of their Team.

"Cross-Examination" means the questioning of a witness by Counsel for the opposing side, conducted in accordance with Rule 30.

"Defence" means the side representing the accused in the criminal trial forming the subject matter of the Trial Proposition.

"Examination-in-Chief" means the questioning of a witness by Counsel for the side that has called the witness, conducted in accordance with Rule 29.

"Exhibit" means a document, photograph or other material forming part of the Trial Proposition that has been marked and proved in accordance with these Rules.

"Organisers" means Adv. Shardulrao Sudhakarrao Jadhavar College of Law and Jadhavar College of Law, collectively responsible for organising and conducting the Competition.

"Preliminary Rounds / Advanced Rounds" "Preliminary Rounds" means the rounds conducted prior to the knockout stage for the purpose of determining the Teams that qualify for the Quarter-Final Round; "Advanced Rounds" means, collectively, the Quarter-Final, Semi-Final and Final Rounds.

"Prosecution" means the side presenting the case against the accused in the criminal trial forming the subject matter of the Trial Proposition.

"Researcher / Witness" means the two Participants of a Team who, in addition to assisting their Team's Counsel, perform the role of witnesses in the Preliminary and Quarter-Final Rounds in accordance with Rule 23.

"Team" means a group of four Participants registered to participate in the Competition in accordance with these Rules.

"Team Code" means the unique code allotted to a participating institution by the Organisers upon completion of registration.

"Trial Proposition" means the official case file of the Competition prepared by the Organisers, including all annexures, exhibits and witness statements, and any clarifications issued thereto.

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4. Language

The official language of the Competition shall be English. All oral submissions, materials and communications by Participants shall be made exclusively in English.

5. Key Dates

Particulars	Dates
Commencement of Registrations	19.10.2026
Final Registration Deadline	25.11.2026
Release of the Trial Proposition	19.10.2026
Last Date for Seeking Clarifications	14.11.2026
Declaration of Clarifications	20.11.2026
Reporting at the Venue	27th November 2026

Particulars	Dates
Competition Dates (Preliminary Rounds to Final Round)	27th and 28th November 2026
Valedictory Ceremony & Declaration of Results	28th November 2026

Note: Witness briefings for each round shall be conducted immediately prior to that round in accordance with Rule 24, and are accordingly not separately listed above.

6. Interpretation of Rules

The Organisers shall have the exclusive authority to interpret these Rules in the interest of fairness and equality. Any interpretation placed upon these Rules by the Organisers shall be final and binding on all Teams. The Organisers reserve the right to amend, modify or supplement these Rules at any stage of the Competition at their discretion, and any such amendment shall be communicated to all Teams.

II. GENERAL RULES

7. Date and Venue

The Competition shall be held on 27th and 28th November 2026 at Jadhavar College of Law, Pune.

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8. Eligibility

Participating Team members must be students enrolled in a three-year LL.B. programme or a five-year integrated law degree programme at an institution recognised by the Bar Council of India.

9. Registration

(a) Only one (1) Team from a given College or Institution shall be permitted to register for the Competition. The registration shall stand completed when the College send the Registration Form to this email address researchcell.jcl@gmail.com, get a confirmation email and clears the registration fees. The payment QR code is attached with the Flyer/Brochure. Participants shall ensure that the subject line of the e-mail is "**Registration -JNTAC 2026**".

(b) In the event of multiple registrations being initiated from the same College or Institution, priority shall be given to the Team that completes the registration procedure first.

(c) The formation of inter-college Teams comprising students from different colleges or institutions is strictly prohibited.

(d) The registration fee shall be **₹3,000/- (Rupees Three Thousand only)** per Team. Teams shall complete registration in the manner, by the mode of payment, and by the procedure to be separately notified by the Organisers.

10. Team Composition

Each Team shall consist of four (4) Participants, comprising two Speakers/Counsel and two Researchers, in accordance with the table below:

Role	Number per Team	Principal Function
Speaker / Counsel	2	Presents the Opening Statement, Closing Argument, and conducts Examination-in-Chief and Cross-Examination, allocated between the two Counsel in accordance with Rule 26.
Researcher / Witness	2	Assists the Team's Counsel and, in the Preliminary and Quarter-Final Rounds, performs the role of witnesses in accordance with Rule 23 and each Researcher shall play two witnesses.

The registered composition of a Team shall remain unchanged throughout the Competition. A change in Team composition may be permitted at the discretion of the Organisers only in unforeseeable circumstances, and upon justifiable reasons being submitted prior to the commencement of the Competition.

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11. Team Code and Anonymity

(a) Successfully registered Teams shall be assigned a Team Code by the Organisers, which must be used in all correspondence and materials submitted in connection with the Competition.

(b) Teams are strictly prohibited from displaying or disclosing the name, logo, or any other identifying particular of their College, University or Institution in any communication or material connected with the Competition.

(c) Any violation of the anonymity requirement shall attract penalties, including possible disqualification, as determined by the Organisers.

12. Dress Code

Participants shall be appropriately attired for all rounds and official functions of the Competition. The dress code shall be as follows:

(a) For Gentlemen — Western formals (white formal shirt, formal black trousers, and a black blazer).

(b) For Ladies — Western formals (white formal shirt, black formal trousers/a black formal skirt, and a black blazer), or black and white Indian formals.

13. Scouting

Teams shall not be permitted to observe the trial of another competing Team. Any attempt at scouting by a Team or its member(s) may attract penalties, including disqualification, at the discretion of the Organisers. The Final Round may, however, be open for Participants to watch if permitted by the Organisers.

14. Legal Materials and Internet Access

The Trial Proposition is set in a fictional jurisdiction and relies upon fictional legislations, namely the Ashvale Nyaya Sanhita, 2023; the Ashvale Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023; and the Ashvale Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, which are pari materia with the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023; the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023; and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, respectively. Participants may accordingly rely on Bare Acts, judgments, commentaries, legal authorities, printed material, and their own notes concerning the corresponding provisions of the actual enactments. Internet access shall not be permitted during the trial rounds.

III. ACCOMMODATION AND TRANSPORT

15. Accommodation

Accommodation shall be available at an additional cost of **₹1,000/-** per Team, as applicable, in accordance with the final accommodation arrangement to be notified by the Organisers.

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16. Transport

The Organisers shall provide transportation from the accommodation venue to the College/Competition venue. Participants shall be responsible for their own transportation to and from Pune/the railway station/airport/bus station, unless otherwise specified by the Organisers.

IV. COMPETITION FORMAT

17. General Trial Structure

The Competition shall be conducted in four phases: the Preliminary Rounds, the Quarter-Final Round, the Semi-Final Round, and the Final Round. Twenty-four (24) Teams shall compete in the Preliminary Rounds, of which eight (8) Teams shall qualify for the Quarter-Final Round, four (4) Teams shall qualify for the Semi-Final Round, and two (2) Teams shall qualify for the Final Round, in accordance with Rule 42.

18. Preliminary Rounds

(a) The Preliminary Rounds shall be conducted in such number of matches as the Organisers may determine, provided that every participating Team shall compete once as Prosecution and once as Defence.

(b) The allocation and order of sides for the Preliminary Rounds shall be determined by the Organisers in advance of the rounds, and shall not be by random draw.

19. Quarter-Final Round

(a) The eight (8) highest-scoring Teams at the conclusion of the Preliminary Rounds shall qualify for the Quarter-Final Round.

(b) The side to be represented by each Team in the Quarter-Final Round shall be determined by a draw of lots conducted by the Organisers.

20. Semi-Final Round

(a) The four (4) highest-scoring Teams at the conclusion of the Quarter-Final Round shall qualify for the Semi-Final Round.

(b) The side to be represented by each Team in the Semi-Final Round shall be determined by a draw of lots conducted by the Organisers.

(c) Witnesses for the Semi-Final Round shall be provided by the Organisers, in accordance with Rule 23.

21. Final Round

(a) The two (2) highest-scoring Teams at the conclusion of the Semi-Final Round shall qualify for the Final Round.

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(b) The side to be represented by each Team in the Final Round shall be determined by a draw of lots conducted by the Organisers.

(c) Witnesses for the Final Round shall be provided by the Organisers, in accordance with Rule 23.

(d) The Team with the higher score in the Final Round shall be declared the "Winning Team"; the other Team shall be declared the "Runner-Up Team".

22. Side Allocation

For ease of reference, the side allocation across the Competition shall be as follows:

Stage	Manner of Side Allocation
Preliminary Rounds	Determined by the Organisers in advance, ensuring every Team appears on both sides.
Quarter-Final, Semi-Final and Final Rounds	Determined by draw of lots conducted by the Organisers.

23. Witnesses

A clear distinction shall be maintained between Team-member witnesses and Organiser-provided witnesses, as follows:

(a) Preliminary and Quarter-Final Rounds: The two Researchers of a Team shall act as witnesses for their Team. Each Researcher shall play two witnesses, such that each Team provides a total of four witness performances in a round.

(b) Semi-Final and Final Rounds: Witnesses shall be provided by the Organisers, and shall not be performed by the Teams' own Researchers.

24. Witness Briefing

The Organisers shall conduct a witness briefing of thirty (30) minutes immediately before the relevant round, for both Team-member witnesses (Preliminary and Quarter-Final Rounds) and Organiser-provided witnesses (Semi-Final and Final Rounds). The precise manner and material of the witness briefing shall remain within the discretion of the Organisers.

25. Time Allocation

The time allocation for the Preliminary and Quarter-Final Rounds shall be as follows:

Proceeding	Time
Opening Statement — Prosecution	2 minutes
Opening Statement — Defence	2 minutes
Examination-in-Chief — Prosecution	10 minutes
Cross-Examination by Defence	10 minutes
Examination-in-Chief — Defence	10 minutes
Cross-Examination by Prosecution	10 minutes
Closing Argument — Prosecution	8 minutes
Closing Argument — Defence	8 minutes
Total	60 minutes

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The time allocation for the Semi-Final and Final Rounds, in which witnesses are provided by the Organisers, shall be as follows:

Proceeding	Time
Opening Statement — Prosecution	3 minutes
Opening Statement — Defence	3 minutes
Examination-in-Chief — Prosecution	12 minutes
Cross-Examination by Defence	15 minutes

Proceeding	Time
Examination-in-Chief — Defence	12 minutes
Cross-Examination by Prosecution	15 minutes
Closing Argument — Prosecution	10 minutes
Closing Argument — Defence	10 minutes
Total	80 minutes

(a) The times specified above are exclusive of reasonable administrative and witness-transition time, and of the time taken for witness briefings under Rule 24.

(b) The Bench may, at its discretion, grant an extension of time to either side.

(c) The time taken by a witness in answering questions shall count towards the time allotted to the Counsel conducting that Examination-in-Chief or Cross-Examination.

26. Role Allocation of Counsel

(a) Each Team shall have two Counsel. Each Counsel must perform both (i) one of the Opening Statement or Closing Argument functions; and (ii) one of the Examination-in-Chief or Cross-Examination functions.

(b) The Team may decide internally the precise allocation of these functions between its two Counsel, provided the requirement in sub-clause (a) is satisfied.

(c) The allocation of roles between the two Counsel may be changed at any time before the relevant round begins. Once a round has commenced, the allocation of roles for that round cannot be changed.

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V. TRIAL PROCEDURE

27. Order of Trial

Subject to these Rules, the order of proceedings in every round shall be as follows, and there shall be no Re-Examination:

1. Opening Statement — Prosecution

2. Opening Statement — Defence

3. Examination-in-Chief of Prosecution Witnesses

4. Cross-Examination of Prosecution Witnesses by Defence

5. Examination-in-Chief of Defence Witnesses

6. Cross-Examination of Defence Witnesses by Prosecution

7. Closing Arguments — Prosecution

8. Closing Arguments — Defence

28. Opening Statements

Both sides shall make an Opening Statement, with the Prosecution presenting first, followed by the Defence. The Opening Statement shall be confined to the case theory, material facts, issues, and the broad evidentiary narrative of the side making it, and shall not be used as a Closing Argument. No rigid format is prescribed for the Opening Statement.

29. Examination-in-Chief

Examination-in-Chief shall be conducted in accordance with the applicable principles of evidence law. Leading questions shall be prohibited during Examination-in-Chief, except where permissible under the applicable law. Counsel shall be expected to establish the relevant testimony of the witness through appropriate questioning. Witnesses may be shown documents, photographs or other material only in accordance with the applicable procedure set out in Rule 34.

30. Cross-Examination

Cross-Examination shall be one of the principal components of the Competition. Leading questions shall be permitted during Cross-Examination. Participants may test the credibility, consistency, accuracy, reliability and version of the witness, and may confront the witness with relevant portions of statements, documents or other evidence in accordance with the applicable law. Counsel may use contradictions, omissions and relevant documentary or evidentiary material where legally permissible. Cross-Examination is not merely an opportunity to repeat facts already elicited but is intended to test and challenge the evidence given by the witness.

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31. Re-Examination

There shall be no Re-Examination in the Competition, and no mechanism therefor shall be permitted in any round.

32. Objections

(a) Objections shall be permitted during Examination-in-Chief and Cross-Examination. No exhaustive list of permissible objections is prescribed; Participants may raise objections based on applicable principles of evidence and trial procedure.

(b) The Bench shall decide all objections raised during the trial, and the decision of the Bench on an objection shall be final for the purposes of that round.

(c) The Bench may, of its own accord, intervene where it considers a question, answer, conduct or procedure to be inappropriate.

(d) No particular form of words is required for raising an objection.

33. Documentary Evidence and Exhibits

(a) The Trial Proposition and its annexures shall constitute the complete evidentiary and documentary universe available to Participants. No Participant may introduce any

document, fact, evidence or material outside the Trial Proposition and any material officially supplied by the Organisers.

(b) A document or item of evidence contained in the Trial Proposition shall not automatically become proved evidence merely because it appears in the Trial Proposition; it must be formally proved in accordance with Rule 34.

(c) Participants shall be permitted, subject to the procedure set out in Rule 34 and the permission of the Bench, to seek to mark documents/exhibits, identify documents, show documents to witnesses, confront witnesses with documents, and use photographs or material objects where applicable.

(d) The Bench shall determine the admissibility and evidentiary weight of all documents and exhibits.

(e) Physical exhibits shall not be separately provided unless the Organisers decide otherwise.

34. Proving of Documents and Witness Statements

Participants must formally establish and prove documents through the appropriate witness and in accordance with the applicable law. A witness may be shown a document or other material only after the appropriate legal and procedural foundation has been laid. Participants must follow the correct procedure when showing documents to witnesses, seeking identification, proving documents, confronting witnesses, or establishing contradictions with a witness statement, and shall not simply hand a document to a witness without following the appropriate procedure.

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35. Closing Arguments

Closing Arguments shall be presented by the Prosecution followed by the Defence, within the time specified in Rule 25. The Closing Argument shall summarise the case theory and the evidence led during the trial, and shall not introduce any new evidence or material not already led during the round.

36. Courtroom Conduct

Courtroom etiquette and professional conduct shall form part of the assessment of Participants. Participants may approach the Bench, approach the witness, move within the courtroom, and show documents or material to the witness or to the Bench, provided the same is done with appropriate courtroom etiquette and in accordance with the applicable procedure. Participants shall maintain professional courtroom decorum at all times. The manner of addressing the Bench is left to the Participants, provided it remains respectful and appropriate; no particular form of address is mandated.

37. Powers of the Bench

The Bench shall have the power to decide all objections and questions of admissibility arising during a round, to intervene of its own accord where necessary, to grant extensions of time under Rule 25, and to otherwise regulate the conduct of the trial. The decision of the Bench on any procedural matter arising during a round shall be final for the purposes of that round.

VI. SCORING AND EVALUATION

38. Total Marks

Each Team shall be evaluated out of a total of 300 marks from one single Judge, distributed as follows:

Component	Marks
Speaker 1	100
Speaker 2	100
Researcher/Witness 1	50
Researcher/Witness 2	50
Total	300

The final team score in any round shall be the total of all four individual scores. There shall be no separate written or memorial score.

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39. Speaker Evaluation Criteria

Each Speaker/Counsel shall be evaluated out of 100 marks, on the following criteria:

Marking Criteria	Marks
Courtroom Mannerism	20
Clarity of Facts	20
Precision & Responsiveness	20
Examination-in-Chief/Cross Examination	20
Opening Statement / Closing Argument advocacy	20
Total	100

40. Researcher/Witness Evaluation Criteria

Each Researcher/Witness shall be evaluated out of 50 marks, on the following criteria:

Marking Criteria	Marks
Understanding of the witness statement	10
Consistency & Realistic Portrayal	15

Marking Criteria	Marks
Ability to withstand Examination/Cross-Examination	15
Credibility and courtroom conduct	10
Total	50

No separate research score shall be awarded to a Researcher, as Researchers are assessed primarily in their role as witnesses.

41. Round Structure and Qualification

Twenty-four (24) Teams shall participate in the Competition. The eight (8) highest-scoring Teams at the conclusion of the Preliminary Rounds shall qualify for the Quarter-Final Round, in which the side shall be determined by draw of lots. The four (4) Teams qualifying for the Semi-Final Round and the two (2) Teams qualifying for the Final Round shall thereafter be determined according to the Teams' competition scores at each preceding stage.

42. Tie-Breaker

In the event of a tie between Teams for qualification to a subsequent round, or for placement at any stage of the Competition, the Cross-Examination score of the Teams shall be applied as the primary tie-breaker. If the tie persists after applying the Cross-Examination score, the matter shall be resolved at the discretion of the Organisers, whose decision shall be final and binding.

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VII. AWARDS

43. Awards

The following awards shall be conferred in the Competition:

Award	Prize
Winning Team	INR 35,000 + Trophy
Runner-Up Team	INR 25,000 + Trophy
Best Advocate — Final Rounds	INR 10,000 + Trophy
Best Advocate — Preliminary Rounds	INR 5,000 + Trophy
Best Witness — Preliminary Rounds	INR 5,000 + Trophy

The Organisers reserve the right to withhold or modify any award in the event of insufficient merit or unforeseen circumstances.

VIII. CLARIFICATIONS

44. Clarifications

(a) Teams may seek clarifications concerning the Trial Proposition within the deadline specified by the Organisers in the Key Dates at Rule 5 by sending your clarifications on researchcell.jcl@gmail.com.

(b) Clarifications shall ordinarily relate to factual ambiguities in the Trial Proposition, and shall not be used to seek legal advice, suggested arguments, or an interpretation of the merits of the case.

(c) Any official clarification issued by the Organisers shall become part of the Trial Proposition and shall be binding on all Teams.

IX. CODE OF CONDUCT

45. Code of Conduct and Misconduct

Participants shall maintain professional decorum throughout the Competition. Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, the following shall constitute misconduct and shall attract penalties, including disqualification, at the discretion of the Organisers:

(a) Copying another Team's trial strategy or material;

(b) Fabrication of evidence;

(c) Introduction of any material or evidence not forming part of the Trial Proposition or officially supplied by the Organisers;

(d) Impersonation of any person;

(e) Coaching of a Team member during a round where such coaching is prohibited;

(f) Any act of scouting in violation of Rule 13;

(g) Misconduct or inappropriate behaviour towards witnesses, Judges, or opposing Counsel.

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X. FORCE MAJEURE

46. Force Majeure

In the event of any unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the Organisers, including but not limited to technical disruptions, natural calamities, or administrative exigencies, the Organisers reserve the right to modify the schedule or format of the Competition.

XI. DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND ORGANISERS' DISCRETION

47. Dispute Resolution

Any dispute arising during the Competition shall be subject to the exclusive decision of the Organisers, which shall be final and binding on all Teams.

48. Organisers' Discretion

The Organisers reserve the right to interpret, amend, or modify these Rules at any stage, in the interest of fairness and the smooth conduct of the Competition. The decision of the Organisers on any matter not expressly provided for in these Rules shall be final and binding.

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