

**STATEMENT BY GRADUATING STUDENTS OF NLSIU ON THE ACTIONS OF THE
BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA AND CHAIRMAN MR MANAN KUMAR MISHRA**

We, the undersigned students of the graduating batch of 2026 of the National Law School of India University, Bengaluru ("NLSIU"), supported by current students and alumni, unequivocally condemn the recent actions taken by the Bar Council of India ("BCI") vide two letters dated 13.08.2026 and express our unconditional solidarity with the students and faculty of NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad ("NALSAR"). At the time of opening this letter for signatures, we are aware that the BCI has closed all proceedings against NALSAR. However, the fact that such unconstitutional and illegal "proceedings" can be initiated by a statutory body against students and faculty members of a public university in the first place does not alter the nature or the larger impact of such actions or dilute the responsibility of the Chairman and the BCI. At no point, even after the recall of the ban on enrolment and the inquiry order, has the BCI acknowledged the arbitrary and illegal nature of its actions. Hence, we issue this statement to set the record straight and prevent such events from happening in the future.

The BCI's actions are ultra vires The Advocates Act, 1961. While the Advocates Act permits the BCI to lay down standards for professional conduct and promote legal education, it does not allow the BCI to order State Bar Councils to arbitrarily suspend or ban the enrollment of a person otherwise qualified to be an advocate under law. Section 24A of the Act limits disqualification to specific cases of criminal convictions and does not contemplate disbarring enrollment on the basis of having "no regard or respect" for a judicial officer. Further, the Chairman does not represent the entire Bar Council of India which, under Section 4 of the Act, is composed of the Attorney General, the Solicitor General, and one member each from every State Bar Council in India. As such, the Chairman has no legal powers to unilaterally issue orders of this nature. Finally, the BCI's order to the VC, NALSAR to furnish a report on students and faculty members participating in the representation is wholly unconnected to the BCI's limited statutory duty under Section 7.

The BCI's actions are, in fact, a direct attack on the fundamental right to free speech and expression guaranteed by Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. We, the students of NLSIU, have seen the words "*Where the Mind is Without Fear*" before entering our classrooms every day. We believe that the immortal words of Tagore reflect the ethos of all law universities and that students, faculty, and the administration must act and be encouraged to act according to their conscience and constitutional values, without fear. The BCI's direction to NALSAR to investigate and "separately identify" students and faculty members involved in making the representation is nothing less than a witch-hunt. By labeling the constitutionally guaranteed student expression of free speech as "dirty" and "nasty politics" and a "serious situation" of "obstruction" and "disruption," the BCI has sent an unabashed threat against students and faculty members, a modus operandi that we have seen play out over and over again across universities in the country. The BCI's actions create a chilling effect on free speech not only for the students and faculty members at NALSAR but for students and citizens across the country by sending them a clear signal that

any act of dissent will be met with severe personal and professional consequences. The language used in the second letter, claiming that “innocent” students have been “misled” and “instigated” by “outsiders” is patronising, dishonest, and an insidious attempt to isolate certain students and faculty members. To be absolutely clear, we write this letter of our own volition and not under the influence of any amorphous “outsiders.”

The BCI’s illegal and perverse action is part of a concerning pattern of using a statutory regulatory body to make partisan political comments at the whims and fancies of the Chairman. The issuance of the subsequent letter “with the approval of the Council,” conspicuously absent in the first, suggests that the first letter was issued unilaterally by the Chairman. Instead of focusing on the poor state of legal education and professional development in the country, the Chairman has abused his official position to issue official statements calling the protesting students at Jantar Mantar “anti-social and anti-national forces” acting under the influence of “foreign adversaries.” The repeated misconduct of the BCI Chairman has eroded public trust and confidence in the legal profession. As young lawyers and citizens of this country, we demand a better BCI.

A University Convocation is a monumental event in a student’s academic life meant to celebrate years of hard work and perseverance. In a country where access to higher education is severely restricted by barriers of class, caste, and gender and poorly designed and conducted entrance examinations, a Convocation marks an important achievement for families. In this context, inviting persons in high office to confer degrees to students towards whom they have publicly expressed their disdain and condescension is offensive, humiliating, and a mockery of students and their struggles.

We stand in unconditional solidarity with our fellow students at NALSAR who have shown exemplary courage and moral conviction in speaking truth to power. In camaraderie with all the citizens of our country who continue to brave state repression and violence in the exercise of their constitutionally guaranteed freedoms, we hereby:

- DEMAND that the Bar Council of India unconditionally apologises to the student and faculty community at NALSAR for attempting to infringe their fundamental right to free speech and expression;
- CALL UPON the Bar Council of India to explain the protocol for the use of the BCI’s official letterhead by the Chairperson;
- EXPRESS our strong disapproval about Mr Manan Kumar Mishra attending the convocation of NLSIU without taking responsibility for his conduct;
- STAND in solidarity with NALSAR in their request to reconsider the choice of the Chief Justice of India as Chief Guest for their Convocation and express our strong disapproval of the CJI attending the convocation of NLSIU for the same reasons.

Signed,

Graduating Class of 2026, NLSIU: 165 Students [Across BALLB (Hons), LLB (Hons), MPP, and LLM Programmes]

In Solidarity,

Current Students, NLSIU: 409 Students [Across BA (Hons), BALLB (Hons), LLB (Hons), MPP, LLM, and PhD Programmes]

Alumni, NLSIU: 128 Signatories [Across BALLB (Hons), LLB (Hons), MPP, and LLM Programmes]

1. Abhilasha Bansal [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2025]
2. Abhinav [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2014]
3. Abhinav Ashwin [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2005]
4. Abhinav Singh [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2018]
5. Abhiroop Saha [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2020]
6. Aditi Gupta [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2020]
7. Aditya Krishna [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2023]
8. Aditya Kumar [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2013]
9. Aditya Mudgal [MPP, Class of 2023]
10. Aditya Sharma [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2020]
11. Adwiteya [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2018]
12. Akash Meena [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2019]
13. Akshit Singla [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2024]
14. Aman Shukla [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2017]
15. Amit [MPP, Class of 2025]
16. Amit Kumar Meena [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2006]
17. Ananya Nair [LLB (Hons), Class of 2025]
18. Animesh Sharma [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2008]
19. Anindya Kanan [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2022]
20. Anjali Singh [LLM, Class of 2010]
21. Arjun Rajgopal [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2007]
22. Arti Gupta [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2022]
23. Aruj Garg [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2013]
24. Arundhati Katju [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2005]
25. Avirup Nag [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2005]
26. Bhakta Batsal Patnaik [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2002]
27. Bharti [LLM, Class of 2021]
28. Bodhisattwa Som [LLM, Class of 2022]
29. Carina Singh [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2019]
30. Chitra Narayan [BALLB (Hons), Class of 1994]

31. Chitralkha Das [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2011]
32. Devansh Bhatt [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2025]
33. Diviya Kapur [BALLB (Hons), Class of 1994]
34. Divya Kumar Garg [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2021]
35. Divyanshu Dev [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2022]
36. Gautam Bhatia [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2011]
37. Gautam Busi [BALLB (Hons), Class of 1998]
38. Gunjan Jena [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2015]
39. Harshal Sharma [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2018]
40. Harshavardhan Goel [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2017]
41. Hrishika Jain [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2020]
42. Ishaan Goel [LLB (Hons), Class of 2025]
43. Ishit Patel [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2022]
44. Ivy [MPP, Class of 2024]
45. John Daniel [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2005]
46. Jwalika Balaji [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2023]
47. Kanya Rajagopal [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2007]
48. Kanika Kadam [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2012]
49. Karan Dhalla [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2021]
50. Kishor Biradar [LLM, Class of 2023]
51. Lavanya Pangtey [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2018]
52. Leeneshwari Makhijani [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2012]
53. Madhuni Varadarajan [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2021]
54. Mahesh Menon [LLM, Class of 2013]
55. Manoj Menon [BALLB (Hons), Class of 1996]
56. Mansi Sood [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2015]
57. Mayanka S. R. [LLB (Hons), Class of 2025]
58. Meera Chature Sankhari [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2001]
59. Megha Kaladharan [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2012]
60. Mehr Gandhi [LLB (Hons), Class of 2025]
61. Misha [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2005]
62. Mukesh [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2022]
63. N J Warjri [LLB (Hons), Class of 2025]
64. Neel Mason [BALLB (Hons), Class of 1997]
65. Neha Sonawane [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2011]
66. Niharika Rao [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2012]
67. Niladri Maulik [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2005]
68. Poojitha Rao [BALLB (Hons), Class of 1993]
69. Pranav Ravikumar [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2012]
70. Prannv Dhawan [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2022]

71. Prarthana Vaidya [MPP, Class of 2023]
72. Prateek [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2010]
73. Priya Menon [BALLB (Hons), Class of 1996]
74. Pushpam [LLB (Hons), Class of 2025]
75. Rachita Nadig [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2012]
76. Radhika Sarda [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2022]
77. Rahoul Roy [BALLB (Hons), Class of 1999]
78. Ravindra Bandhakavi [BALLB (Hons), Class of 1999]
79. Rhea Prasad [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2024]
80. Richa Roy [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2005]
81. Riya Shankar Sharma [LLB (Hons), Class of 2025]
82. Rohit De [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2005]
83. Rupali Dungdung [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2016]
84. Samiksha Godiyal [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2010]
85. Sania Abbasi [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2022]
86. Santhosh Mathew [BALLB (Hons), Class of 1995]
87. Sanyam Dahiya [LLB (Hons), Class of 2025]
88. Satya Sahu [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2018]
89. Shadan Farasat [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2006]
90. Shaili Parsheera [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2010]
91. Shaneel Mehta [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2025]
92. Sharad [LLM, Class of 2019]
93. Shashank Prabhakar [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2010]
94. Shenoy Gaurav Narasinha [LLM, Class of 2022]
95. Shivani Mittal [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2017]
96. Shloka Rawat [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2013]
97. Shrey Garg [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2025]
98. Shreya Kundu [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2016]
99. Shreyas Sinha [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2025]
100. Shruti A Murali [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2011]
101. Shubhangi [MPP, Class of 2020]
102. Shubhashish Sharma [BALLB (Hons), Class of 1995]
103. Shwetaree Majumder [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2002]
104. Siddharth Baniwal [MPP, Class of 2024]
105. Siddhartha Basu [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2014]
106. Siddhi Gupta [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2021]
107. Sowjanya Shankaran [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2012]
108. Spandan Biswal [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2007]
109. Stuti Rai [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2021]
110. Subhang Nair [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2012]

111. Sujoy Sarkar [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2023]
112. Sumant Prashant [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2006]
113. Sumona Bose [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2005]
114. Sundip Biswas [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2005]
115. Sunil Kumar Mathangi [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2005]
116. Surabhi Ranganathan [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2005]
117. Suryanshu Mishra [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2025]
118. Suyash Ojha [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2020]
119. Tanya Aggarwal [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2007]
120. Udit Singh [LLM, Class of 2021]
121. V Sreedharan [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2024]
122. Vani Sharma [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2019]
123. Varun Mathew [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2011]
124. Vatsala Sahay [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2012]
125. Veena Gowda [BALLB (Hons), Class of 1995]
126. Vikrant Singh [MPP, Class of 2019]
127. Vishnu Jerome [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2002]
128. Yelamanchili Shiva Santosh Kumar [BALLB (Hons), Class of 2015]