

GRADS FROM LAW COLLEGES SANS BCI APPROVAL CANNOT PRACTICE: CHAIRMAN

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No enrolment for grads from unapproved law colleges: BCI chairman

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"Students are bound to suffer if they study in unapproved colleges," Mishra said. "When we receive complaints about such institutions, we shut them down and impose heavy fines. But by then, the damage to students' careers is already done."

According to BCI's latest online list, several law colleges in Maharashtra are operating with expired approvals — some lapsed as early as 2013 — while others have not renewed recognition since 2018 or 2022. The list has triggered anxiety among students, many of whom say their colleges never informed them of the lapse.

The consequences are severe. Without BCI approval, graduates are denied enrolment with their state bar coun-



Bar Council of India chairman and Rajya Sabha member Manan Kumar Mishra addressed the convocation ceremony for the 2025–26 batch of Kirit P Mehta School of Law, NMIMS, on Saturday.

cil and the mandatory Certificate of Practice. Some applicants to LLM programmes within India have also been rejected for the same reason. "It is a clear case of cheating," Mishra said. "Admitting students without BCI approval is playing with their futures."

The process for opening a law college involves obtaining a no-objection certificate from the state government, securing university affiliation, and finally, BCI approval. Mishra stressed that universities — as the immediate regulators — should ensure compliance before affiliation. "We only approve colleges that are affiliated," he said. "If any college admits students without our approval, we usually find out only when complaints come from students."

Law student activist Sachin Pawar criticised lax oversight, saying some colleges secure approval merely by filing affidavits claiming adequate faculty and infrastructure. "In reality, quality is neglected," he said. "We urge BCI to strengthen inspections like

other professional bodies, so students receive proper legal education."

Mishra said BCI has introduced a system of surprise inspections by a panel led by a retired high court judge, accompanied by two or three senior law professors. These teams assess faculty, infrastructure, and academic standards, submitting a report within a month. Non-compliant institutions are closed.

He painted a grim picture of the sector, estimating that "more than 70% of colleges" lack basic facilities such as libraries or moot courts. "Even LLMs and PhDs are sold in the market," he alleged.

"That is why BCI has introduced the All India Bar Exam — as a filter to ensure only competent graduates enter the profession."

During the convocation, degrees were conferred upon graduates of BA LLB (Hons.), BBA LLB (Hons.), and LLM programmes, followed by the administration of a graduate oath and a sustainability pledge.