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भारतीय विधिज्ञ परिषद्
BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA

(Statutory Body Constituted under the Advocates Act, 1961)
21, Rouse Avenue Institutional Area, Near Bal Bhawan, New Delhi - 110002

CIRCULAR

BCI:D: 4657/2026

Date: 17.07.2026

To,

1. **The Chairman/Secretaries of all State Bar Councils;**
2. **The Presidents/Secretaries of all Bar Associations;**
3. **All Vice-Chancellors/Registrars/Deans/Principals/Directors/Heads of Centres of Legal Education;**
4. **All Senior Advocates, Advocates, law firms, chambers, legal offices, internship coordinators and legal content creators;**
5. **All law students, interns, research scholars, students enrolled in LL.B., LL.M., Ph.D., certificate, diploma and other law related courses;**
6. **All social media intermediaries and digital platforms, for information and cooperation wherever offending content concerning Courts, Judges, Advocates, litigants, Court proceedings or the legal profession is hosted or circulated;**

Sub. Circular regarding maintenance of dignity, restraint and professional ethics in the use of social media by Advocates, law students and interns; and against making reels/videos, sensational clips or disparaging social media content relating to Court premises, Court proceedings, chambers, judicial hearings, live-streamed proceedings and professional work.

AND Mandatory standalone affidavit at the stage of enrolment, student undertakings at the stage of admission and at the time of admission to a law degree course/before internships, stakeholder adoption of social media conduct principles, monitoring and reporting mechanisms, and prohibition of AI generated images, deepfake videos, voice cloned audio or synthetic content depicting Judges, counsel, litigants or Court proceedings.

AND Prevention of legal misinformation by unqualified persons, fake or fabricated judgments, misleading legal influencer content, clickbait guarantees, undisclosed AI generated legal content, improper digital self-promotion and misuse of professional identity on social media and digital platforms.

AND Establishment of a structured implementation mechanism

including State Bar Council Digital Ethics Committees, BCI Digital Ethics Nodal Cell, online complaint and monitoring portal, graded breach classification, platform liaison process, enrolment and renewal linked compliance, Bar Association and Centre of Legal Education adoption, and proposed insertion of a separate Chapter in the Bar Council of India Rules on digital ethics and social media conduct.

Sir/s, Ma'am/s,

The Bar Council of India has taken serious note of a growing and disturbing tendency among some Advocates, law students, interns and social media users to create, upload, circulate, forward or promote reels, videos, short clips, edited visuals, thumbnails, memes, dramatic presentations, promotional posts and other social media content depicting Court premises, Court corridors, court-related activities, chambers, internships, professional engagements, judicial hearings and, in some cases, selected portions of live-streamed Court proceedings.

The concern is not limited to recording or filming in Court premises. A larger and equally serious issue has emerged in respect of selective clipping, editing, captioning and circulation of portions of live-streamed proceedings, often with sensational, mocking, disparaging or scandalising comments directed at Judges, arguing counsel, litigants or the judicial process itself. Such acts, if unchecked, can undermine public confidence in Courts and the administration of justice.

The Council has further noticed that the digital space is increasingly being used for legal misinformation by persons who are not enrolled Advocates and, in some instances, by law students, interns or self-styled legal influencers who present oversimplified, sensational or inaccurate content as legal advice. The circulation of fake judgments, fabricated extracts of orders, misleading summaries, anonymous legal opinions, artificial court experience narratives and posts suggesting guaranteed outcomes has the tendency to misguide litigants, exploit vulnerable persons and erode public confidence in the administration of justice.

The Bar Council of India has also noted that the Kerala High Court Advocates Association has issued a circular to Advocates cautioning them against videos and reels in and around High Court premises, referring to Section 49(1)(c) of the Advocates Act, 1961, the Bar Council of India Rules and the possibility of action under Section 35 of the Advocates Act, 1961. The Bar Council of India appreciates such timely institutional concern and considers it necessary to issue this broader circular in the larger interest of the dignity of the Bar, the majesty of Courts and the purity of the justice delivery system.

The Bar Council of India has also considered that a social media draft circular for the profession was earlier placed before the Council on 08.06.2026, whereby a subcommittee was constituted to deliberate and examine the said issue, and, by communication bearing BCI:D:3498/2026

dated 09.06.2026, was circulated to the Sub-Committee constituted pursuant to Item No. 122/2026 of the meeting of the General Council held on 08.06.2026. The Committee placed its report before the Council in its meeting dated 11.07.2026, vide Item No 154/2026 which after deliberation was duly approved by the council with modifications, as deemed fit and proper.

Subsequently, on 14.07.2026, the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, in Anil Pandey and Another v. The Bar Council of India, Writ Petition (Civil) No. 817 of 2026, issued notice to the Bar Council of India, returnable on 15.09.2026. The public interest petition, as instituted by the petitioners, raises concerns regarding the alleged increasing use of social media by certain Advocates for direct or indirect advertising, solicitation of professional work, promotional reels, monetised legal content, influencer collaborations, client testimonials and other forms of digital self-promotion. The petition also seeks the formulation of a comprehensive Digital Ethics Code and Code of Digital Professional Conduct for the legal profession and raises issues concerning the alleged misuse of Court premises, Court attire, judicial proceedings and professional identity for attracting clientele or enhancing commercial visibility. The said proceedings constitute a subsequent development and further reinforce the relevance and necessity of the institutional exercise already undertaken independently by the Bar Council of India through the constitution of the Sub-Committee on 08.06.2026 and the subsequent consideration and approval of the proposed measures by the General Council on 11.07.2026. The present Circular thus represents a pre-existing, considered and comprehensive institutional response of the Bar Council of India, founded upon the Advocates Act, 1961 and the Bar Council of India Rules presently in force.

The legal profession in India is not merely an occupation, trade, business or avenue of personal publicity. It is a noble and learned profession, integrally connected with the administration of justice. An Advocate is an officer of the Court, a privileged member of the community and a participant in the solemn process of justice.

The Council is conscious that access to legal information is valuable and that many Advocates, teachers, researchers and students contribute positively to legal literacy. The concern of the present circular is with content which crosses the line from education into solicitation, misinformation, impersonation, breach of confidentiality, manufactured authority, commercial self-promotion, sensationalism or conduct inconsistent with the dignity of Courts and the Bar.

The Council also notes that a clause buried in a standard enrolment form or admission form may not command adequate attention. A separate affidavit or undertaking, executed as an independent document, serves a preventive, educative and evidentiary purpose, and makes it clear to every Advocate, candidate, student and intern that professional freedom is inseparable from professional responsibility.

The Council is further of the view that conventional circulation of advisories, though necessary, may not by itself create sufficient ground level impact.

The circular must therefore be accompanied by a visible and separate compliance mechanism, namely a standalone sworn affidavit at the stage of enrolment, a separate undertaking at the stage of admission in a Centre of Legal Education,/before commencement of internship, institutional monitoring by State Bar Councils, Bar Associations, chambers, law firms and Centres of Legal Education, and a stakeholder inclusive adoption exercise so that the principles are not treated as a routine formality.

The Preamble to Chapter II, Part VI of the Bar Council of India Rules, namely the Standards of Professional Conduct and Etiquette, provides:
"An advocate shall, at all times, comport himself in a manner befitting his status as an officer of the Court, a privileged member of the community, and a gentleman..."

The same Preamble further clarifies that conduct which may be lawful or moral for a person who is not a member of the Bar may still be improper for an Advocate.

The aforesaid Preamble is itself wide enough to cover new forms of professional conduct which were not technologically foreseeable when the Rules were framed, because it states that the rules are general guides and that specific mention of particular canons shall not be construed as a denial of the existence of other equally imperative duties. The present circular therefore does not create a foreign or independent ethical code. It applies the existing duties of dignity, restraint, confidentiality, fair conduct, avoidance of solicitation and proper use of professional identity to digital and social media conduct.

1. Statutory basis of this circular

This circular is issued in furtherance of the statutory functions and obligations of the Bar Council of India under the Advocates Act, 1961, including:

Section 7(1)(b)—to lay down standards of professional conduct and etiquette for Advocates;

Section 7(1)(d)—to safeguard the rights, privileges and interests of Advocates;

Section 7(1)(g)—to exercise general supervision and control over State Bar Councils;

Section 49(1)(c)—to make rules prescribing standards of professional conduct and etiquette to be observed by Advocates;

Section 35—disciplinary action where an Advocate is alleged to be guilty of professional or other misconduct.

Under Section 35(3) of the Advocates Act, 1961, after giving the Advocate concerned and the Advocate-General an opportunity of being heard, the disciplinary committee may dismiss the complaint, reprimand the

Advocate, suspend the Advocate from practice for such period as it deems fit, or remove the name of the Advocate from the State roll of Advocates.

Therefore, this circular is not merely moral guidance. It is rooted in the statutory scheme of professional regulation under the Advocates Act, 1961 and the Rules framed thereunder.

The proposed Rules chapter is intended to operate within Part VI of the Bar Council of India Rules and is expressly derived from the Preamble to Chapter II, Part VI, Rules 1 and 2 concerning dignity and respect towards Courts, Rule 3 concerning improper influence upon Courts, Rule 4 concerning restraint, fair conduct and avoidance of scurrilous or intemperate language, Rules 5 and 7 concerning prescribed dress and limited use of robes and bands, Rule 15 concerning fair and honourable means, Rule 17 concerning professional confidentiality, Rule 18 concerning fomenting of litigation, Rule 24 concerning abuse of client confidence, Rule 36 concerning advertisement and solicitation, and Rule 37 concerning unauthorised practice of law. It regulates professional conduct and does not purport to regulate the internal administration of any Court in derogation of the powers of the Supreme Court, High Courts or other Courts. Court rules, live streaming rules, security protocols and orders of the concerned Court shall prevail in relation to access, recording and use of Court proceedings or Court premises.

The Council further records that, in view of the spread, frequency and continuing nature of digital misconduct, the present circular shall operate as an immediate professional direction under the existing Advocates Act, 1961 and the existing Bar Council of India Rules. For removal of doubt, the immediate operation of the present Circular is not dependent upon the formal insertion of a separate Chapter in the Bar Council of India Rules. The Circular presently explains, applies and facilitates compliance with professional obligations already existing under the Advocates Act, 1961 and Chapter II, Part VI of the Bar Council of India Rules. The Bar Council of India shall separately consolidate and codify these existing obligations in relation to digital ethics and social media conduct through the applicable statutory rule-making process under Section 49 of the Advocates Act, 1961.

In addition to the Advocates Act, 1961 and the Bar Council of India Rules, the misuse of social media, digital platforms, AI tools, deepfake technology, voice cloning tools, edited audio visual content, synthetic media and personal data may also attract consideration under the Information Technology Act, 2000, the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, as amended from time to time, including amendments relating to synthetically generated information, the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 and the Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, wherever applicable.

The reference to the above statutes is not intended to convert every social media lapse into a criminal or regulatory proceeding. It is intended to

remind all concerned that digital content involving personal data, impersonation, synthetic media, confidential professional information, Court proceedings, litigants, victims, witnesses and judicial institutions may have legal consequences beyond professional discipline.

For removal of doubt, fake judgments, fabricated citations, manipulated cause lists, false claims of appearance, invented client success stories, impersonation of Advocates or Judges, and AI generated material passed off as real Court content may, depending upon facts, attract professional, civil, criminal, contempt, privacy or platform related consequences. At the same time, no person shall be treated as guilty merely because a complaint is received. Any adverse action by a Bar Council, Centre of Legal Education, chamber, law firm, Bar Association or other institution must follow a fair, proportionate and legally permissible process, including opportunity of explanation wherever required.

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 recognises obligations in relation to processing of digital personal data and corresponding rights of Data Principals, including access, correction, erasure and grievance redressal in accordance with law. Accordingly, images, videos, voices, personal details, case related information and other identifiable digital material concerning litigants, clients, witnesses, victims, students, interns, Advocates or other persons must not be collected, processed, published or circulated casually or without lawful basis.

The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, as amended, also recognise due diligence obligations of intermediaries and, in relation to synthetically generated information, the need for labelling, identification, accountability and appropriate handling of such content. Social media platforms and intermediaries are therefore requested to cooperate promptly in relation to offending content concerning Courts, Judges, Court proceedings, Advocates, litigants, witnesses, victims or confidential legal material, when a lawful complaint or request is made by an affected person, Court, Bar Council or competent authority.

2. Duty to Court and professional dignity

Rule 1 of Section I, Chapter II, Part VI of the Bar Council of India Rules provides:
"An advocate shall, during the presentation of his case and while otherwise acting before a court, conduct himself with dignity and self-respect."

Rule 2 further provides:
"An advocate shall maintain towards the courts a respectful attitude, bearing in mind that the dignity of the judicial office is essential for the survival of a free community."

Thus, the professional obligation of an Advocate does not end when the Court rises, nor does it disappear on social media. Digital conduct which relates to Court premises, Court proceedings, judicial conduct, client work,

chamber work or professional identity must also conform to the dignity and restraint expected of an Advocate.
This duty is also supported by Rule 3, which forbids influencing the decision of a Court by illegal or improper means and forbids private communications with a Judge relating to a pending case, and by Rule 4, which requires an Advocate to restrain and prevent a client from resorting to sharp or unfair practices, to avoid scurrilous attacks and to use restrained language. Digital posts, captions, comments, thumbnails, private forwards, edited clips or AI generated material concerning pending proceedings, Judges, opposing counsel or parties must therefore be tested against these same existing duties.

3. Advertisement, solicitation and indirect self-promotion

Rule 36 of Section IV, Chapter II, Part VI of the Bar Council of India Rules provides:
"An advocate shall not solicit work or advertise, either directly or indirectly..."

The Rule prohibits direct or indirect advertising through circulars, advertisements, touts, personal communications, unwarranted interviews, furnishing or inspiring newspaper comments, or producing photographs to be published in connection with cases in which the Advocate has been engaged or concerned. The Rule permits only limited website information as prescribed in the Schedule and approved/intimated in accordance with the Rule. Any additional input beyond the approved particulars may amount to violation of Rule 36 and may expose the Advocate to misconduct proceedings under Section 35 of the Advocates Act, 1961.
Rule 36 also permits only limited website information in the prescribed Schedule, including name, address, telephone number, email id, enrolment particulars, Bar Association membership, professional and academic qualifications and broad areas of practice. The proposed disclosure requirement for responsible legal awareness content is therefore only an accountability extension of the existing Schedule to the digital environment. It shall not be used as a device for advertisement, claim of superiority, guarantee of results or client solicitation.

In the age of social media, the Bar Council of India is of the considered view that reels, short videos, thumbnails, dramatic posts, chamber-display clips, court-corridor videos, promotional internship posts, "lawyer life" content or edited hearing clips may, depending on content and purpose, amount to indirect advertising, self-promotion, solicitation, trivialisation of the Court process, or conduct unbecoming of an Advocate.

The test is not merely whether the post expressly says "hire me" or "contact me". The test is whether the content, viewed as a whole, uses the Court, Court premises, judicial proceedings, professional work, robe, chamber, client matter, litigation experience or internship to promote oneself, sensationalise legal work, gain followers, create a personal brand, commercially exploit legal access, or lower the dignity of the institution.

Accordingly, legal content should not be packaged as bait for client

acquisition through claims such as guaranteed bail, divorce in a few days, sure acquittal, assured stay, instant relief, success formula, special court connection, secret legal trick or any similar expression which suggests certainty of outcome, special influence, shortcut justice or personalised advice to unknown viewers.

Where an enrolled Advocate chooses to disseminate legal awareness or legal education content online, and holds himself or herself out as an Advocate, the Advocate should disclose his or her full name, concerned State Bar Council, enrolment number or other verifiable professional identifier, broad area of practice where relevant, and years of standing only where stated accurately. Such disclosure shall not be used as an advertisement, solicitation, claim of superiority or guarantee of professional competence, but only as a measure of transparency and accountability.

Any person who is **not** enrolled as an Advocate shall not describe himself or herself as an Advocate, counsel, practising lawyer, legal practitioner or any equivalent expression, and shall not create an impression of being authorised to practise law or to give personalised legal advice. Law students, interns and researchers may participate in legal literacy and academic discussion, but must clearly avoid holding themselves out as Advocates or as persons competent to provide professional legal services.

This clarification is further supported by Rule 37, which provides that an Advocate shall not permit professional services or his or her name to be used in aid of, or to make possible, the unauthorised practice of law by any law agency. An Advocate, chamber, law firm or content channel should therefore not lend professional name, robe, chamber identity, enrolment particulars or digital platform to unqualified legal advice, ghost legal influencers, fake legal agencies or persons holding out as authorised legal practitioners.

4. The Indian legal profession is sui generis and not comparable to ordinary business

In Bar of Indian Lawyers through its President Jasbir Singh Malik v. D.K. Gandhi P.S. National Institute of Communicable Diseases & Anr., Civil Appeal No. 2646 of 2009, order dated 07.11.2024, the Supreme Court reiterated that the legal profession is sui generis, i.e., unique in nature, and cannot be compared with any other profession.
The Supreme Court observed:
"...the legal profession is sui generis, that is it is unique in nature and cannot be compared with any other profession."

The Court further held:
"...the service hired or availed of an advocate is a service under a contract of personal service..."

The Court concluded:
"...the legal profession is not covered by the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act."

This judgment reinforces the special and unique character of the legal profession and the corresponding requirement of higher discipline, restraint and ethical responsibility.

5. Practice of law includes litigation as well as non-litigation work

In Bar Council of India v. A.K. Balaji, (2018) 5 SCC 379; AIR 2018 SC 1382, the Supreme Court authoritatively held that the practice of law is not confined only to appearance in Court, but includes non-litigation work also.

The Court held:
"Ethics of the legal profession apply not only when an advocate appears before the Court. The same also apply to regulate practice outside the Court. Adhering to such Ethics is integral to the administration of justice. The professional standards laid down from time to time are required to be followed. Thus, we uphold the view that practice of law includes litigation as well as non litigation."

The Court further held:

"We have already held that practicing of law includes not only appearance in courts but also giving of opinion, drafting of instruments, participation in conferences involving legal discussion. These are parts of non-litigation practice which is part of practice of law."

This is directly relevant to social media misuse relating not only to Court appearances but also to chambers, legal opinions, drafting, internships, client meetings, professional discussions, and office work. Ethics apply to the entire professional sphere and not merely to oral arguments inside Court.

The same judgment also records the distinction between Indian professional ethics and certain foreign regulatory systems. It records the submission that Rule 36 of the BCI Rules prohibits direct or indirect advertising and solicitation, while certain jurisdictions such as the USA and UK permit broader publicity subject to their own regulatory frameworks.

Accordingly, practices prevalent in other jurisdictions cannot be imported into India in disregard of the Advocates Act, 1961 and the Bar Council of India Rules.

6. Live-streaming is for transparency, not mockery, distortion or scandalisation

In Swapnil Tripathi v. Supreme Court of India, (2018) 10 SCC 639; AIR 2018 SC 4806, the Supreme Court approved live-streaming of proceedings in a regulated and phased manner to promote open justice and access to justice. However, the Court also clearly emphasised that live-streaming must be subject to safeguards.

The Court observed:
"...just as the dignity and majesty of the Court is inviolable, the issues regarding

privacy rights of the litigants or witnesses... are matters which need to be identified and a proper regulatory framework must be provided..."

The Court further recorded safeguards proposed by the learned Attorney General, including:
"Use of the footage would be restricted for the purpose of news, current affairs and educational purposes and should not be used for commercial, promotion, light entertainment, satirical programs or advertising."

The Court also recorded:
"Without prior written authorization of the Supreme Court of India, live streaming or the webcast of the proceedings from the Supreme Court should not be reproduced, transmitted, uploaded, posted, modified, published or republished to the public."

Further:
"Any unauthorized usage of the live streaming and/or webcasts will be punishable as an offence under the Indian Copyright Act, 1957 and the Information Technology Act, 2000 and any other provisions of the law in force. The law of contempt should apply to such proceedings."

Therefore, live-streaming of proceedings cannot be treated as a licence to clip, edit, sensationalise, monetise, mock, distort or circulate fragments of proceedings with disparaging captions, music, thumbnails, memes or commentary. Live-streaming exists for transparency and public education, not for scandalisation, ridicule or digital entertainment.

7. Court control over proceedings and conduct in Court

In Ex-Capt. Harish Uppal v. Union of India, (2003) 2 SCC 45; AIR 2003 SC 739, the Supreme Court explained the distinction between the general right to practise law and the right to appear and conduct proceedings inside Court. The Court held that conduct in Court is a matter concerning the Court and that Courts retain supervisory and controlling power over such conduct.

The Court observed:
"Conduct in Court is a matter concerning the Court and hence the Bar Council cannot claim that what should happen inside the Court could also be regulated by them in exercise of their disciplinary powers."

The Court further held:
"The right to practice, no doubt, is the genus of which the right to appear and conduct cases in the Court may be a specie. But the right to appear and conduct cases in the Court is a matter on which the Court must and does have major supervisory and controlling power."

The Court also observed:
"Courts of law are structured in such a design as to evoke respect and reverence to the majesty of law and justice. The machinery for dispensation of justice according to law is operated by the Court. Proceedings inside the Courts are always expected to be held in a dignified and orderly manner."

This principle applies with equal force to conduct which is physically

committed inside Court and to digital conduct which has the effect of undermining Court dignity, distorting proceedings or impairing public confidence in Courts.

8. Dignity and orderly functioning of Courts

In R. Muthukrishnan v. Registrar General, High Court of Judicature at Madras, (2019) 16 SCC 407; AIR 2019 SC 849, the Supreme Court reiterated that Court proceedings must be dignified and orderly.

The Court observed:
"Proceedings inside the courts are always expected to be held in a dignified and orderly manner."

The Court further observed:
"The very sight of an advocate, who was found guilty of contempt of court... would erode the dignity of the court and even corrode the majesty of it besides impairing the confidence of the public in the efficacy of the institution of the courts."

The underlying principle is that public confidence in the justice delivery system is fragile and must be protected. Content which ridicules, mocks, trivialises or sensationalises Court proceedings is inconsistent with this constitutional and professional obligation.

9. Bar Associations are part of the machinery for administration of justice

In Supreme Court Bar Association & Ors. v. B.D. Kaushik, (2011) 13 SCC 774, the Supreme Court described the special character of Court-annexed Bar Associations.

The Court observed:
"Court annexed Bar Associations function as part of the machinery for administration of justice. As is said often, the Bench and Bar are like two wheels of a chariot and one cannot function without the other."

The Court further observed that such associations are responsible for proper conduct of members in Court and for ensuring proper assistance to the Court.

Therefore, Bar Associations are requested to play a proactive, educative and corrective role in preventing misuse of Court premises, live-streamed proceedings and professional spaces for reels, sensational clips, indirect publicity or content inconsistent with dignity.

10. Confidentiality, privilege and internship ethics

The concern is particularly serious in relation to internships. Many law students and interns appear to be posting videos, photographs and captions relating to chamber work, case files, court visits, client conferences, drafting, briefing, research and litigation strategy.

In In Re: Summoning Advocates who give legal opinion or represent parties during investigation of cases and related issues, Suo Motu Writ Petition (Criminal) No. 2 of 2025, judgment dated 31.10.2025; 2025 INSC 1275, the Supreme Court emphasised the importance of privileged communications between Advocate and client under Section 132 of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023.

The Court observed:
"Section 132 obligates absolute confidentiality on the part of the Advocate by reason of the privilege conferred on the communications with the client..."

The Court further observed:
"An Advocate cannot be coerced into revealing any information with respect to the client he represents or the cause he is engaged to prosecute or defend, which would be in violation of Section 132."

The Court also held:
"Section 132 is a privilege conferred on the client, obliging an Advocate not to disclose any professional communications, made in confidence..."

If even investigating agencies must respect professional privilege and confidentiality, it follows with greater force that interns, juniors, associates, clerks, staff and social media handlers cannot casually disclose, record, dramatise or publish chamber discussions, client details, case strategy, pleadings, drafts, research or internal professional work.

The same conclusion independently flows from Rule 17, which prohibits breach of the obligations imposed by Section 126 of the Indian Evidence Act, and from Rule 24, which provides that an Advocate shall not do anything whereby he or she abuses or takes advantage of the confidence reposed by the client. The reference to the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 in this circular is therefore an updated statutory reference, while the professional foundation continues to arise from the existing Standards of Professional Conduct and Etiquette.

11. Professional discipline protects the public, the Courts and the profession

In V.C. Rangadurai v. D. Gopalan, (1979) 1 SCC 308; AIR 1979 SC 281, Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer emphasised the public purpose of the legal profession.

The Court observed:

"When the Constitution under Art. 19 enables professional expertise to enjoy a privilege and the Advocates Act confers a monopoly, the goal is not assured income but commitment to the people..."

The judgment further explains that disciplinary proceedings are not merely

punitive but are intended to protect the public, Courts and the legal profession.

The Court observed:
"The purpose of disciplinary proceedings is not punitive but to inquire, for the protection of the public, the courts and the legal profession, into fitness of the subject to continue in the capacity of an advocate."

The Bar Council of India therefore reminds all members of the profession that restraint, dignity, confidentiality and ethical discipline are not external burdens. They are part of the very foundation of the privilege to practise law.

12. Positive use of social media is not prohibited

The Bar Council of India clarifies that this circular is not intended to discourage:

i. responsible legal awareness;
ii. academic discussion of judgments;
iii. accurate legal reporting;
iv. public legal education;
v. constitutional literacy;
vi. neutral case-law updates;
vii. academic lectures, articles or seminars;
viii. responsible use of official Court information;
ix. respectful discussion of legal principles arising from judgments and orders.
x. **short-form legal education, including reels, shorts, brief videos, carousels, posts, threads, podcast clips or similar condensed digital formats, provided such content is accurate, contextual, non-soliciting, non-confidential, non-sensational, and does not convert complex legal questions into misleading outcome assurances**

However, the line is crossed when content becomes

i. promotional;
ii. sensational;
iii. misleading;
iv. mocking;
v. defamatory;
vi. scandalising;
vii. contemptuous;
viii. commercially exploitative;
ix. violative of confidentiality;
x. violative of Court rules, live-streaming rules or video-conferencing rules;
xi. inconsistent with the dignity of the profession.
xii. unsupported by statutory provisions, rules, notifications, circulars or judicial precedents where the content purports to explain a specific legal right, remedy, procedure, offence, limitation period, bail

standard, matrimonial remedy, consumer remedy, property remedy or other legal consequence;

xiii. based upon fabricated judgments, fake citations, unverified screenshots, misleading excerpts, AI generated or otherwise non-existent case law, anonymous rumours or distorted summaries of Court proceedings.

13. Approved legal awareness and stakeholder inclusive adoption

The Council is of the view that a purely prohibitory circular may not be sufficient. The appropriate institutional response is to combine restraint with positive legal literacy. State Bar Councils, Bar Associations, law colleges, chambers, law firms and legal aid bodies are therefore encouraged to produce or promote approved public legal awareness content on access to justice, legal aid, mediation, constitutional values, consumer rights, cyber safety, women and child protection, senior citizen rights, responsible litigation and professional ethics.

Such content should be accurate, non promotional, non sensational, non soliciting, respectful to Courts and institutions, and should avoid giving outcome guarantees, personalised legal advice to unknown viewers, or exaggerated representations of professional standing.

Where feasible, educational content dealing with a specific legal provision, judgment, Court order, limitation period, bail provision, matrimonial remedy, consumer remedy, criminal offence, cyber complaint or statutory process should indicate that it is general information, should identify the relevant statutory provision, rule, circular or judicial precedent relied upon, and should carry a clear disclaimer that viewers must seek independent professional advice on their own facts.

Short-form formats, including reels, shorts, carousels, live sessions and podcasts, should not present incomplete, selective or dramatic statements as complete legal advice. Where the format does not permit adequate nuance, the creator should avoid advising on disputed facts, pending matters, limitation issues, evidentiary consequences or strategy, and should instead direct viewers to competent legal consultation or official sources.

Through this Circular, the Bar Council of India initiates a stakeholder inclusive exercise for adoption and implementation of principles on social media conduct for the legal profession. State Bar Councils, Bar Associations, Senior Advocates, Advocates, law firms, chambers, Centres of Legal Education and legal aid institutions are requested to sign, adopt, circulate and implement the standard declaration annexed hereto, so that the circular becomes a living professional standard and is treated as part of institutional discipline rather than remaining a paper direction

The final formats annexed to this circular should be used, with necessary institutional particulars, by State Bar Councils, Bar Associations, Centres of Legal Education, chambers, law firms, internship coordinators and other concerned stakeholders, as applicable.

14. Advocates are advised to refrain from the following conduct

All Advocates are advised and called upon to refrain from:

i. making reels, videos, photographs or promotional content inside Court premises, courtrooms, corridors, Bar rooms, chambers or judicial buildings in a manner inconsistent with dignity and decorum; using bands, gowns or robes for public display, reels, posts, promotional photographs or social media performance in a manner inconsistent with Rule 5 and Rule 7 of Section I, Chapter II, Part VI, which require prescribed dress in Court and prohibit wearing bands or gown in public places except on ceremonial occasions and at such places as the Bar Council of India or the Court may prescribe;

ii. recording physical, virtual or hybrid Court proceedings, unless they are subject to applicable court rules, and in the absence of court rules, with written approval of the Court/ Registrar General, and are as per the guidelines of this circular

iii. clipping, editing or circulating live-streamed proceedings with captions, music, commentary, thumbnails or voiceovers which ridicule, mock, distort, sensationalise or scandalise the conduct of Judges, counsel, litigants or witnesses;

iv. using Court buildings, Court names, Court signage, robes, bands, briefs, cause lists, files, client documents or chamber settings as props for personal publicity or social media branding;

v. publishing content that amounts to direct or indirect advertising, solicitation, client-attraction, projection of special influence, or commercial self-promotion;

vi. disclosing confidential information relating to clients, cases, chambers, colleagues, seniors, court strategy, settlement discussions, opinions, pleadings, drafts or privileged communications;

vii. permitting interns, juniors, associates, clerks, staff or social media handlers to publish content from chambers, offices or Court premises which the Advocate himself/herself is not permitted to publish;

viii. commenting on pending matters in a manner that may prejudice proceedings, influence public perception, embarrass parties or counsel, or lower the dignity of the Court;

ix. using anonymous, pseudonymous or proxy accounts to do indirectly what professional ethics prohibits directly.

x. creating, uploading, forwarding, reposting, circulating, monetising or using AI generated images, deepfake videos, voice cloned audio, face swapped visuals, synthetic avatars, manipulated screenshots or other synthetic content depicting or purporting to depict any Judge, Court,

Tribunal, counsel, litigant, witness, victim, client, Court officer, Court proceeding, chamber discussion or professional interaction;

xi. using the robe, band, Court corridors, Court premises, cause lists, briefs, chamber files, client documents, senior chambers, law firm spaces, internship access or the identity of being a lawyer as a prop for glamourised, sensational, suggestive, misleading, mocking, commercial or follower seeking social media content;

xii. publishing dressing, lifestyle, fashion, relationship, luxury or personality based videos in a manner which deliberately links such content with the status of being an Advocate, officer of the Court, intern in a chamber, law student in Court, or participant in Court proceedings, where the effect is to trivialise the profession, solicit attention through professional identity, imply special access to Courts or clients, or lower the dignity of the Bar.

xiii. publishing or circulating fake judgments, fabricated citations, altered orders, manipulated cause lists, fictitious hearing narratives, false claims of appearance, false claims of success, fabricated client testimonials or edited material which creates a misleading impression of professional achievement, Court outcome or legal position;

xiv. using clickbait, fear based marketing or outcome guarantees, including expressions such as guaranteed bail, divorce in a few days, sure acquittal, assured stay, instant relief or similar claims which mislead the public or commodify legal remedies;

xv. purchasing fake followers, fake engagement, fabricated reviews, fabricated testimonials, bot driven amplification or paid undisclosed promotion to create a false impression of professional credibility, public trust, success rate or standing at the Bar;

xvi. failing to disclose, where material, the use of AI tools to generate or substantially modify images, videos, voiceovers, posters, avatars, captions, legal summaries or other content relating to Courts, Judges, Advocates, litigants, clients, proceedings or legal rights;

xvii. creating content which states or implies that the creator was personally present in Court, personally argued a matter, personally obtained a relief, or personally handled a client matter when such representation is false, exaggerated, AI generated or otherwise misleading;

xviii. disclosing case numbers, bail orders, orders in sensitive matters, pleadings, medical papers, identity documents, photographs, contact details, chat records, settlement communications or other client or litigant material in a manner which compromises confidentiality, privacy, privilege, safety, dignity or the administration of justice.

15. **Freedom of expression and professional linkage**

The Council clarifies that it does not seek to police ordinary personal life, dress, private expression or lawful personal social media use of any Advocate, student or intern. The concern arises when personal content is deliberately linked to professional identity, Court access, robes, Court premises, chamber work, client work, case material, judicial proceedings or the status of being a lawyer, and is used for sensationalisation, solicitation, indirect advertisement, commercial branding, ridicule or lowering of professional dignity.

The test shall therefore be contextual and reasonable. The object is not to suppress expression, but to prevent misuse of the legal profession, Court spaces, professional access and confidential legal work as social media content or personal branding material.

16. Law students and interns must be sensitised

Law students are future members of the Bar. Internship is meant for learning discipline, humility, research, drafting, observation, court craft, professional ethics and responsibility. It is not meant for social media display, self-promotion or dramatisation of Court life. A further undertaking shall be obtained before any student is permitted or recommended to commence internship with any Court, Judge, Tribunal, Advocate, Senior Advocate, Law Officer, law firm, chamber, statutory body, public authority, corporate legal department, legal aid body or other legal institution.

All Centres of Legal Education shall, in addition, obtain a separate standardised written undertaking from every student at the time of admission to LL.B., LL.M., Ph.D., certificate, diploma and every other law related course. Such undertaking shall not be buried within the general admission form and shall be executed as a standalone document in the format annexed, or in a substantially similar format approved by the institution consistent with this circular.

All Centres of Legal Education are requested to immediately sensitise their students and interns that they must not:

i. make reels or videos inside Court premises, chambers or law offices unless they are subject to applicable court rules, and in the absence of court rules, with written approval of the Court/ Registrar General and are as per the guidelines of this circular;

ii. record hearings, virtual proceedings, client conferences, chamber discussions or professional interactions;

iii. disclose names of clients, case details, pleadings, briefs, chamber strategy, research assignments or confidential work;

iv. publish "day in Court", "day in chamber", "internship reveal", "case file", "courtroom drama", "lawyer life" or similar content which trivialises Court work or professional confidentiality;

v. use internship under an Advocate, Judge, Tribunal, Law Officer, Senior Advocate, law firm or public authority for social media

projection;

vi. post photographs or videos in robes, corridors, Court buildings or chambers in a manner contrary to professional decorum.

All law colleges, universities and Centres of Legal Education are requested to include a short orientation module on:

The sensitisation shall also make students aware that legal literacy is not a substitute for professional practice. Students may explain legal concepts in an academic or educational manner, but they shall not solicit clients, accept money for legal advice, create an impression of professional authority, promise legal outcomes, claim Court access, or provide personalised legal remedies to members of the public.

"Digital Ethics, Court Decorum, Confidentiality and Professional Responsibility during Internships."

They are also requested to obtain a written undertaking from students before internships that they shall not record, publish or circulate content relating to Court proceedings, Court premises, chambers, client work or confidential professional matters.

Centres of Legal Education shall maintain a register or digital record of such undertakings and may be called upon by the Bar Council of India or the concerned State Bar Council to produce the same during inspection, affiliation, extension of approval, complaint verification or any other lawful regulatory exercise.

The undertaking shall expressly prohibit recording of chamber discussions, Court proceedings, virtual hearings, client conferences, internal meetings, judicial data, cause lists, pleadings, drafts, research assignments, case strategy, client names, file photographs, Court corridor videos, lawyer life reels and any AI generated, deepfake, voice cloned or synthetic content depicting Courts, Judges, counsel, litigants, witnesses, victims, clients or Court proceedings.

17. Duties of seniors, chambers, law offices and Bar Associations

Senior Advocates, Advocates-on-Record, chamber seniors, law firms, law offices, Bar Associations and internship coordinators are requested to guide students and juniors with affection and firmness.

Many students may act out of ignorance, imitation or youthful excitement. The first response should be preventive, educative and corrective.

However, where the conduct is deliberate, repeated, commercial, scandalous, defamatory, contemptuous, confidential, or in breach of Court rules, the matter may require reporting to the concerned Court, Bar Council, institution or authority.

All chambers and law offices are advised to frame internal protocols stating that interns, associates, clerks and staff shall not record, photograph, publish or circulate any material relating to Court work, client work, chamber work or proceedings, unless applicable court rules permit the same, and in the absence of court rules, with written permission of court/registry and which shall be subject to guidelines as per this circular and shall be further subject to professional ethics

Senior Advocates, law firms and chambers are further advised to brief interns and juniors on the first day of internship or engagement regarding no recording, no reels, no disclosure, no posting of case files, no use of chamber or Court access for personal branding, and no AI/synthetic depiction of any real person or proceeding.

Such monitoring should be educative and proportionate. It should not become a mechanism of personal rivalry, moral policing or censorship of lawful criticism. The focus shall remain on Court dignity, confidentiality, privacy, professional ethics, prevention of solicitation, AI/deepfake misuse and misuse of professional identity.

State Bar Councils, Bar Associations, chambers, law firms and Centres of Legal Education are requested to designate a Social Media Ethics Nodal Officer or small monitoring group, as may be feasible, to receive complaints, preserve links and screenshots, counsel first time violators, seek voluntary deletion where appropriate, and refer serious or repeated violations to the competent authority.

18. Standalone sworn affidavit at the stage of enrolment and guidelines for existing Advocates

Every candidate seeking enrolment as an Advocate may be required, as part of the enrolment record and orientation process, to execute a separate sworn affidavit acknowledging the standards of professional conduct relating to social media, digital platforms, confidentiality, Court dignity, data privacy and AI/synthetic content. This requirement is declaratory, educative and evidentiary. It shall not create any additional substantive disqualification or embargo upon enrolment beyond the Advocates Act, 1961 and the rules validly framed thereunder.

The affidavit shall be a standalone document and shall not be reduced to a small clause in a general form. The purpose is to ensure conscious acknowledgement by every entrant to the profession that digital misconduct may amount to professional misconduct or other actionable wrong in appropriate cases.

For Advocates already in practice, State Bar Councils and Bar Associations are requested to circulate this circular as a binding professional guideline and to encourage members to sign the stakeholder adoption declaration annexed hereto. The absence of a previously executed affidavit shall not prevent consideration of misconduct where the conduct is otherwise contrary to the Advocates Act, 1961, the Bar Council of India Rules, Court

rules, this circular or any applicable law.

State Bar Councils may, subject to feasibility and applicable rules, link future compliance acknowledgement with enrolment, issuance of certificate of enrolment or Sanad, transfer, change of address, welfare or identity card updation, certificate of practice related processes, renewal or verification exercises and other regulatory interactions. Such compliance acknowledgement may be obtained as a separate affidavit or digital undertaking and shall be used primarily for awareness, prevention and accountability, not as a mechanical ground to deny any statutory right without due process.

For avoidance of doubt, this circular does not add any new ground for refusal of enrolment, deferment of enrolment, suspension of enrolment processing or denial of Sanad beyond what is permitted by the Advocates Act, 1961 and the rules validly framed thereunder. A mere complaint, unverified screenshot, anonymous allegation or social media dispute shall not by itself be treated as a ground to deny or delay enrolment. Any issue concerning impersonation, forged credentials, fake judgments, breach of confidentiality or other misconduct shall be dealt with only under existing law, after verification and fair opportunity, and only by the competent authority.

19. Consequences of violation

The Bar Council of India hopes that this circular will be received in the right spirit as an appeal to conscience, discipline and institutional responsibility. At the same time, all concerned must be aware that violations may invite appropriate consequences, depending upon the facts, including

i. disciplinary proceedings under the Advocates Act, 1961;

ii. reference to the concerned State Bar Council or Bar Council of India;

iii. reporting to the concerned Court/Registry where Court premises, Court proceedings or live-streamed proceedings have been misused;

iv. action under applicable Supreme Court Rules, High Court Rules, video-conferencing rules, live-streaming rules, security protocols or administrative directions;

v. proceedings for contempt where the content scandalises or tends to lower the authority of a Court or interferes with the administration of justice;

vi. civil or criminal action where the content is defamatory, malicious, unauthorised, confidential, privacy-invasive or misleading;

vii. withdrawal of internship or reporting of the student to the concerned Centre of Legal Education;

viii. such other corrective or disciplinary action as may be legally

permissible.

ix. requirement of deletion, correction, clarification, apology or undertaking, wherever such corrective measure is considered appropriate and legally permissible;

x. communication to the concerned intermediary or platform for removal, disabling of access, preservation of evidence or other action in accordance with the Information Technology Act, 2000 and the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, as amended from time to time;

xi. communication to the concerned Centre of Legal Education, chamber, law firm, Bar Association or internship coordinator where the violation is committed by a student, intern, associate, clerk, staff member or social media handler.

xii. where the person concerned is a law student or candidate for enrolment, placement of the matter before the concerned Centre of Legal Education, internship authority or Enrolment Committee for counselling, warning, explanation, verification of facts or such legally permissible action as the facts may warrant;

xiii. where the person concerned is not an Advocate but is falsely holding out as one, communication to the concerned platform, institution or authority for correction, disclaimer, removal of misleading credentials or other lawful action.

20. Request to State Bar Councils, Bar Associations and Centres of Legal Education

All State Bar Councils are requested to circulate this circular to all Advocates on their rolls and to all recognised Bar Associations within their jurisdiction.

All Bar Associations are requested to display this circular on their notice boards, websites and official communication groups, and to counsel members to refrain from such conduct.

All State Bar Councils and Bar Associations are further requested to adopt the stakeholder declaration annexed hereto, to circulate the model affidavit and undertakings, and to create a simple mechanism for receiving complaints concerning reels, AI generated or synthetic content, deepfake videos, voice cloned audio, misuse of Court premises, misuse of robes or professional identity, breach of confidentiality and improper digital solicitation.

State Bar Councils are also requested to encourage Advocates who regularly publish legal awareness content to voluntarily use verifiable professional particulars, including name, State Bar Council and enrolment number, in a dignified and non-promotional manner, so that members of the public can

distinguish enrolled Advocates from unqualified persons, impersonators and purely commercial legal influencers.

As and when a national digital registry, unique identification framework or enrolment linked verification mechanism is operationalised by the Bar Council of India or State Bar Councils, the Council may consider a suitable system of verified professional identifiers, badges, QR codes, or intimation mechanisms for Advocates disseminating legal content online. Such mechanism shall be designed to promote public trust and accountability, not to create an unreasonable barrier to responsible legal education or bona fide academic discussion.

All Centres of Legal Education are requested to:

i. circulate this circular to all students;
ii. include it in internship guidelines;
iii. conduct sensitisation sessions on professional ethics and digital conduct;
iv. make students aware that violation of Court decorum or professional confidentiality during internships may affect their future professional standing;
v. obtain internship undertakings as stated above;
vi. instruct faculty coordinators and internship cells to issue corresponding advisories to all students before sending them for internships.
vii. obtain a standalone undertaking from every student at the time of admission to LL.B., LL.M., Ph.D., certificate, diploma and other law related courses;
viii. obtain a separate internship undertaking before commencement of every internship;
ix. designate a Social Media Ethics Nodal Officer or monitoring group for student sensitisation and first level reporting;
x. maintain records of undertakings and sensitisation sessions for production before the Bar Council of India during inspection or regulatory review;
xi. report repeated or serious misuse of legal influencer activity by students, including impersonation of Advocates, paid legal advice, fake judgments, breach of internship confidentiality or misleading public claims, to the concerned University, State Bar Council or Bar Council of India, after preserving basic material and giving the student an opportunity to explain wherever institutionally required.

21. Digital Ethics Committees and State level portal mechanism

Every State Bar Council shall, within such time as may be fixed by the Bar Council of India, designate a Digital Ethics Committee or Digital Ethics Nodal Group. The Committee may consist, as far as feasible, of members of the State Bar Council, one or more senior members of the Bar, a representative connected with the ethics or disciplinary mechanism, and technical or legal education support persons. The Committee shall receive complaints, preserve prima facie material, call for explanations where

necessary, counsel first time or minor violators, seek voluntary deletion, correction or disclaimer where appropriate, and place serious or repeated matters before the competent authority under the Advocates Act, 1961 and the Bar Council of India Rules.

Each State Bar Council shall endeavour to open a simple online portal, dedicated email address or complaint window for receiving complaints relating to misuse of Court premises, robes, professional identity, client material, AI generated content, deepfakes, fake judgments, impersonation, misleading legal advice, live streamed Court clips and other digital misconduct. The portal shall require the complainant to provide the URL, handle, screenshot, screen recording where available, date and time, nature of grievance, and a declaration that the complaint is bona fide and that the material has not been fabricated, misleadingly edited or obtained through unlawful access.

The Digital Ethics Committee may exercise limited suo motu verification powers only where offending content is publicly available or otherwise lawfully brought to notice, and where it relates to Courts or Judges, involves impersonation of an Advocate, misuses professional identity, circulates fake judgments, discloses confidential material, uses AI or deepfake manipulation, or appears to threaten public confidence in the administration of justice. Such suo motu verification shall not authorise surveillance, access to private devices, fishing inquiries or moral policing. Any adverse action shall remain subject to fair process, proportionality and opportunity of explanation wherever required.

The Committee shall maintain a brief digital register of complaints, preliminary verification, action taken, voluntary deletion or correction, platform escalation, referral to Court or Registry, referral to the Disciplinary Committee or closure. State Bar Councils may submit periodic summary reports to the Bar Council of India, without unnecessarily publishing personal data or confidential case material.

22. Graded classification of breaches and proportionate response

For practical implementation, breaches may be classified into minor, serious and aggravated categories. Minor breaches may include first time careless posts, unapproved but non confidential photographs, incomplete disclaimers, or non malicious misuse of professional setting without client material, Court scandalisation, solicitation or commercial exploitation. Serious breaches may include repeated misuse, indirect solicitation, misleading legal claims, misuse of Court clips, disclosure of case details, impersonation, paid promotion, or commercial exploitation of professional identity. Aggravated breaches may include fake judgments, fabricated orders, deepfakes, voice cloning, confidential client material, privacy invasion, threats, scandalising content, bot driven amplification, paid misinformation or repeated defiance after warning.

The response may correspondingly include counselling, warning, direction for deletion, correction or disclaimer, apology, undertaking, reporting to the institution, reference to the State Bar Council, communication to the

concerned Court or Registry, platform escalation, disciplinary proceedings or other legally permissible action. Major disciplinary consequences should ordinarily be reserved for wilful, repeated, commercial, confidential, contemptuous, fraudulent, privacy invasive, AI or deepfake based, or aggravated misconduct, and shall be considered only in accordance with the Advocates Act, 1961, the Bar Council of India Rules and principles of natural justice.

23. BCI Digital Ethics Nodal Cell and platform liaison mechanism

The Bar Council of India may constitute a BCI Digital Ethics Nodal Cell comprising nominated members, officers, Advocates, technology aware volunteers, law teachers and law student volunteers under appropriate supervision. The Nodal Cell may coordinate with State Bar Councils, Bar Associations, Centres of Legal Education, chambers and social media platforms for monitoring trends, receiving escalations, preserving evidence, preparing advisories, maintaining standard formats, conducting training and facilitating lawful platform requests.

The BCI may engage with major social media and digital platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, X, WhatsApp and other intermediaries, for creation of verified institutional escalation channels. A verified legal request issued by BCI, a State Bar Council, a Court, a Registry or an authorised institutional nodal officer should enable quicker review of content involving Courts, Judges, Advocates, litigants, misuse of professional identity, fake judgments, deepfakes, confidential material, privacy invasion or misleading legal advice.

The objective of such liaison shall not be censorship of lawful criticism, academic discussion or accurate legal reporting. The objective shall be quicker preservation, review, correction, labelling, disabling of access, takedown, restriction of monetisation or other lawful action in respect of content that is fraudulent, impersonating, confidential, privacy invasive, contemptuous, AI manipulated, misleading or professionally unethical.

24. Bar Associations and Centres of Legal Education to adopt institutional undertakings

Every recognised Bar Association may be requested to pass a resolution adopting this circular and Annexure C, circulate the same to members, display it on notice boards and digital groups, and nominate a local ethics contact for coordination with the State Bar Council. Such adoption shall make the circular a living professional standard at the level where misuse is most likely to occur.

Every Centre of Legal Education shall obtain the student undertaking at admission and before every internship, include digital ethics in orientation and internship rules, preserve records, and make compliance part of internship recommendation, placement, moot court travel, clinic work, legal aid work and any institutional representation involving Courts, chambers, legal offices or public legal education. The undertaking shall not be treated

as a mere formality and shall be explained to students in simple language before execution.

Compliance by Bar Associations and Centres of Legal Education shall remain institutional, educative and regulatory. It shall not be used for personal rivalry, viewpoint based censorship, suppression of lawful criticism or disproportionate action against students or young members of the Bar.

25. Content circulated through WhatsApp, private groups, stories or status

The Council notes that several offending videos may not be uploaded publicly and may circulate through WhatsApp, private groups, closed channels, stories or temporary status features. Where such content is lawfully brought to notice, the concerned institution should preserve screenshots, screen recordings, sender details where lawfully available, date and time, group details where relevant, and any accompanying message, without encouraging unlawful surveillance, hacking, breach of privacy or access to private devices.

Private or closed circulation shall not by itself immunise misconduct if the content concerns Courts, Judges, client material, confidential professional work, fake judgments, impersonation, deepfakes, threats, scandalising material or misuse of professional identity. At the same time, action based on private circulation must be handled with greater caution, verification and fairness, and must avoid fishing inquiries, compelled disclosure of private chats unrelated to the complaint, personal rivalry or disproportionate moral policing.

26. Promotion and recognition of ethical legal content

Alongside prohibition and enforcement, the Bar Council of India may encourage responsible public legal education. State Bar Councils, Bar Associations and Centres of Legal Education may identify, promote or recognise Advocates, law teachers, law students, legal aid clinics and institutions producing accurate, non promotional, non soliciting, non sensational and socially useful legal awareness content. Recognition may be in the form of certificates, approved publication, ethics badges, institutional showcases, legal aid credits, student volunteer credits or public legal awareness collaborations.

Such recognition shall also remain consistent with Rule 36. It shall not permit personal branding, paid promotion, comparative superiority, testimonials, guaranteed outcomes, paid legal referrals or any display which would indirectly solicit work. Recognition may be institutional, issue based and legal literacy oriented, and should not become a substitute for the prohibited advertisement of individual Advocates.

Such recognition shall not be treated as endorsement of any Advocate for client solicitation. It shall be limited to ethical legal literacy, constitutional awareness, access to justice, legal aid, cyber safety, women and child protection, senior citizen rights, mediation, consumer awareness and other

public interest themes.

27. Shape of public circular and additional matters for Council consideration

For clarity and to avoid any misunderstanding in public communication, the present circular may be issued publicly at this stage as a regulatory and implementation oriented professional circular under the existing Advocates Act, 1961, the existing Bar Council of India Rules, Court rules, live streaming rules and other applicable law. It may contain the main circular, the operative implementation directions, and Annexures A to F, namely the enrolment awareness affidavit, student undertaking, stakeholder declaration, platform request format, approved public legal awareness content format, and disclosure or disclaimer format for legal awareness content creators.

The public circular shall expressly state that it does not by itself amend the Bar Council of India Rules, does not create a new independent category of professional misconduct beyond the Advocates Act, 1961 and the Bar Council of India Rules as presently in force, does not create any new ground for refusal, deferment or denial of enrolment, and does not interfere with the administrative control of Courts over Court premises, Court recordings, live streaming or Court proceedings. It shall operate immediately as a professional advisory, compliance direction, sensitisation measure and implementation mechanism to the extent permissible under the existing statutory and regulatory framework.

For removal of doubt, any reference to enrolment linked compliance, renewal linked compliance, Certificate of Practice, periodic verification or filing of declarations shall be understood only as an administrative and educative method of obtaining awareness and affirmation of existing professional duties. It shall not be read as creating any additional disqualification, bar to enrolment, bar to Sanad, bar to renewal or bar to Certificate of Practice unless such consequence is expressly provided by the Advocates Act, 1961 or by validly notified Rules made thereunder.

The draft Rules Chapter contained in Annexure G, and the operational formats contained in Annexures H, I and J, may be placed separately before the General Council of the Bar Council of India as additional agenda material for consideration, approval in principle, modification, consultation, publication, notification and incorporation in the Bar Council of India Rules in accordance with the Advocates Act, 1961. Until such approval and notification, Annexure G shall remain a draft Rules proposal and Annexures H to J shall remain model implementation formats for institutional use, unless separately adopted by the Bar Council of India or the concerned State Bar Council.

If the Council approves the proposed Rules Chapter, Annexures A to J may be converted into Schedules to the Rules Chapter with appropriate renumbering, so that the circular, affidavits, undertakings, stakeholder declaration, platform protocol, complaint format, graded breach matrix and

recognition framework are co related with the existing Rules and derive authority from the Advocates Act, 1961 and Part VI, Chapter II of the Bar Council of India Rules. The rule making route shall be used only for professional conduct, ethics, dignity, confidentiality, solicitation, platform cooperation and implementation procedure, and not for creating any extra statutory enrolment disqualification.

28. Institutional appeal

The Bar Council of India appeals to every member of the Bar to remember that the profession has survived not because of publicity, but because of trust; not because of spectacle, but because of learning; not because of self-promotion, but because of restraint, service, courage and ethical discipline.

The Bar Council of India calls upon all Advocates, law students, interns, chambers, law offices, law firms, Bar Associations and Centres of Legal Education to collectively protect the dignity of the Court, the independence of the Bar and the faith of the common citizen in the justice delivery system.

This circular is not merely a warning. It is also a request, a request to preserve what generations of great lawyers built with learning, sacrifice, discipline, courage, humility and restraint.

The Bar Council of India expects full cooperation from all concerned.

Srimanto Sen

Srimanto Sen
Principal Secretary
Bar Council of India

Encl.

1. **Annexure A - Final standalone sworn affidavit at the stage of enrolment.**
2. **Annexure B - Final undertaking for students at admission and before internship.**
3. **Annexure C - Final stakeholder declaration for State Bar Councils, Bar Associations, law firms, chambers and Centres of Legal Education.**
4. **Annexure D - Final circular and request format for social media intermediaries and platforms.**
5. **Annexure E - Final format for approved public legal awareness content.**
6. **Annexure F - Final disclosure and disclaimer format for legal awareness content creators.**

ANNEXURE A

FINAL STANDALONE SWORN AFFIDAVIT AT THE STAGE OF ENROLMENT

Derivation note. This affidavit records awareness of duties already traceable to the Preamble to Chapter II, Part VI, Rules 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 17, 24, 36 and 37 of the Bar Council of India Rules. It is declaratory, educative and evidentiary. It shall not by itself operate as an additional ground to refuse, defer or deny enrolment, Sanad or licence to practise beyond the Advocates Act, 1961 and validly notified Rules.

Who shall fill this annexure

Every candidate seeking enrolment as an Advocate with the concerned State Bar Council.

Stage at which this annexure shall be executed

At the time of the enrolment process, as a standalone declaration for record, awareness and future professional responsibility, without creating any additional substantive eligibility condition beyond the Advocates Act, 1961 and the rules validly framed thereunder.

I, _____, son/daughter/spouse of _____, aged about _____ years, resident of _____, presently seeking enrolment as an Advocate with the Bar Council of _____, do hereby solemnly affirm and state as follows:

1. That I have read and understood the Bar Council of India Circular/Circular regarding maintenance of dignity, restraint and professional ethics in the use of social media by Advocates, law students and interns, including the provisions relating to reels, short videos, Court premises, Court proceedings, chambers, judicial hearings, live-streamed proceedings, professional work, AI generated content, deepfake videos, voice cloned audio and synthetic digital content.

2. That I undertake to maintain dignity, restraint, confidentiality and professional responsibility in all digital and social media conduct connected with Courts, Judges, counsel, litigants, witnesses, victims, clients, chambers, Court proceedings, professional work and the legal profession.

3. That I shall not create, upload, publish, circulate, forward, repost, monetise or use any reel, short video, edited clip, meme, dramatic presentation, promotional post, AI generated image, deepfake video, voice cloned audio, face swapped visual, synthetic avatar, manipulated screenshot or synthetic content depicting or purporting to depict any Judge, Court, Tribunal, counsel, litigant, witness, victim, client, Court officer, Court proceeding, chamber discussion or professional interaction in a false, misleading, mocking, sensational, scandalising, defamatory, privacy invasive, confidential or professionally improper manner.

4. That I shall not record, photograph, publish or circulate any Court proceeding, virtual hearing, client conference, chamber discussion, case file, cause list, pleading, draft, research note, case strategy, settlement discussion, mediation material or professional communication except

where expressly permitted by law, Court rules and professional ethics.

5. That I shall not use robes, bands, Court premises, Court corridors, chamber settings, senior chambers, law firm spaces, client files, Court signage or the identity of being an Advocate for indirect advertising, solicitation, sensationalisation, glamourisation, follower seeking, personal branding or content inconsistent with the dignity of the profession.

6. That I understand that ordinary personal freedom of expression is not prohibited, but that such freedom cannot be used to lower the dignity of Courts, breach confidentiality, misuse professional identity, solicit work, invade privacy, mislead the public or prejudice the administration of justice.

7. That I understand that breach of this undertaking may be considered in accordance with the Advocates Act, 1961, the Bar Council of India Rules, Court rules, applicable law and principles of natural justice.

Verification

Verified at _____ on this _____ day of _____, 20____ that the contents of this affidavit are true and correct to my knowledge and belief and nothing material has been concealed therefrom.

Deponent

ANNEXURE B

FINAL UNDERTAKING FOR LAW STUDENTS AT ADMISSION AND BEFORE INTERNSHIP

Derivation note. This undertaking is framed for legal education, internship discipline and professional training. It draws from the same professional standards which students must learn before entering the Bar, particularly dignity towards Courts, confidentiality, non solicitation, proper use of robes and professional identity, and avoidance of unauthorised practice of law.

Who shall fill this annexure

Every student enrolled in LL.B., LL.M., Ph.D., certificate, diploma or any other law related course.

Stage at which this annexure shall be executed

Separately at the time of admission and again before commencement of every internship or institutional placement.

I, _____, student of _____, enrolled in _____ course, hereby undertake as follows:

1. That I have read and understood the Bar Council of India circular on social media conduct, Court decorum, confidentiality, internship ethics, AI generated content, deepfakes, voice cloned audio and synthetic content.

2. That I shall not make reels, videos, photographs, posts, stories, vlogs, live streams or similar content inside Court premises, Court corridors, Court rooms, Bar rooms, chambers, law offices, law firms, legal aid offices or any internship location without express written permission and subject to Court rules and professional ethics.

3. That I shall not record, photograph, publish or circulate hearings, virtual proceedings, chamber discussions, client conferences, case files, pleadings, briefs, drafts, legal opinions, research assignments, settlement discussions, mediation discussions, cause lists, judicial data, client details, witness details, victim details or any sensitive professional material.

4. That I shall not create or circulate lawyer life reels, day in Court videos, day in chamber videos, internship reveal posts, case file content, courtroom drama content, AI generated images, deepfake videos, voice cloned audio, synthetic clips or manipulated content depicting Courts, Judges, counsel, litigants, witnesses, victims, clients or Court proceedings.

5. That I shall not use internship access, chamber access, Court visits, robes, Court signage, senior chambers, law firm spaces, files or

professional identity for self-promotion, follower seeking, glamourisation, indirect solicitation or content inconsistent with the dignity of the profession.

6. That I shall comply with all directions of the Court, Centre of Legal Education, internship coordinator, chamber, law firm, Advocate, Senior Advocate, Law Officer, Tribunal, public authority or institution where I am placed.

7. That I understand that breach of this undertaking may result in withdrawal of internship, reporting to the Centre of Legal Education, reporting to the Bar Council or any other action permissible in law and institutional rules.

Signature of student

Name

Course and year

Date

Countersignature of Faculty/Internship Coordinator where required

ANNEXURE C

STAKEHOLDER DECLARATION FOR ADOPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA CONDUCT PRINCIPLES

Derivation note. This declaration is an institutional adoption of existing professional duties under Chapter II, Part VI of the Bar Council of India Rules. It is intended to assist education, reporting, counselling and proportionate referral, and not to create a parallel disciplinary forum outside the Advocates Act, 1961.

Who shall fill this annexure

The authorised representative of the concerned State Bar Council, Bar Association, law firm, chamber, Centre of Legal Education, legal aid body or legal institution.

Stage at which this annexure shall be executed

At the time of adoption and circulation of this circular and whenever called for by the Bar Council of India, State Bar Council or competent authority.

We, _____, being a State Bar Council/Bar Association/law firm/chamber/Centre of Legal Education/legal institution, hereby adopt the social media conduct principles issued by the Bar Council of India and undertake to promote responsible digital conduct in the legal profession.

We shall circulate the circular, conduct orientation or sensitisation sessions, discourage misuse of Court premises, robes, chambers, client material and professional identity, and encourage approved public legal awareness content which is accurate, dignified, non-promotional and non-sensational.

We shall designate a Social Media Ethics Nodal Officer or monitoring group, as feasible, to receive concerns, preserve basic evidence, counsel first time violators, request voluntary deletion where appropriate, and refer serious or repeated violations to the competent authority.

We shall not use this declaration as a tool for personal rivalry, censorship of lawful criticism or moral policing. The focus shall remain on Court dignity, confidentiality, privacy, prevention of solicitation, prevention of AI/deepfake misuse and preservation of professional ethics.

Signature and seal

Name and designation

Date

ANNEXURE D

FINAL CIRCULAR AND REQUEST FORMAT FOR SOCIAL MEDIA INTERMEDIARIES AND PLATFORMS

Derivation note. This format is only a request and escalation template for lawful platform review. It does not confer adjudicatory power on any intermediary. Any professional consequence against an Advocate shall remain subject to the Advocates Act, 1961, the Bar Council of India Rules and principles of natural justice.

Who shall fill this annexure

The authorised signatory, Nodal Officer or designated officer of the concerned Court, Bar Council, Bar Association, Centre of Legal Education, chamber, law firm, legal aid body, affected institution or affected person making a lawful request.

Stage at which this annexure shall be executed

At the time of seeking platform action, after preserving the URL, handle, screenshots and basic particulars of the offending content.

To,

The Grievance Officer/Nodal Officer/Authorised Officer
Name of intermediary/platform

Sub: Request for action in relation to offending content concerning Courts, Judges, counsel, litigants, Court proceedings or the legal profession

Sir/Ma'am,

It is brought to your notice that the following content hosted or circulated on your platform appears to concern Courts, Judges, counsel, litigants, witnesses, victims, clients, Court proceedings, chamber work or confidential legal material and may be false, misleading, AI generated, deepfake, voice cloned, synthetic, privacy invasive, defamatory, contemptuous, confidential or inconsistent with professional ethics:

URL/handle/link

Date and time noticed
Brief description of offending content

Nature of concern, including AI generated/deepfake/voice cloned/synthetic/misleading/confidential/privacy invasive/solicitation/Court dignity issue

You are requested to examine the matter and take appropriate action in accordance with the Information Technology Act, 2000, the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules,

2021, as amended from time to time, your platform policies and applicable law. You are also requested to preserve relevant records, metadata and logs to the extent permissible in law, in case the matter is required for lawful proceedings.

This request is without prejudice to the rights and remedies of the affected person, Court, Bar Council, Bar Association or any competent authority.

Yours sincerely,

Authorised signatory

ANNEXURE E
FINAL FORMAT FOR APPROVED PUBLIC LEGAL AWARENESS CONTENT

Derivation note. This format permits ethical legal literacy while keeping the content within Rule 36, Rule 37 and the duties of dignity, confidentiality and fair conduct. Approval of awareness content shall not be treated as endorsement of the professional superiority of any individual Advocate.

Who shall fill this annexure

The institution, Bar Association, Centre of Legal Education, chamber, law firm, legal aid body or other authorised body preparing or approving public legal awareness content.

Stage at which this annexure shall be executed

Before publication, upload, circulation or dissemination of the approved legal awareness content, with the script, source material and approval record to be preserved.

1. Topic of proposed content

2. Name of institution/Bar Association/Centre of Legal Education/chamber/law firm/legal aid body preparing the content

3. Purpose of content, namely legal literacy, public legal awareness, constitutional literacy, procedural awareness, legal aid, mediation awareness, cyber safety or responsible legal education

4. Confirmation that the content is non promotional, non soliciting, non sensational, accurate, respectful to Courts and institutions and does not disclose confidential or personal data without lawful basis

5. Confirmation that no real Judge, Court proceeding, litigant, witness, victim, client, case file, chamber discussion or privileged communication is depicted without lawful authority

6. Confirmation that any illustrative AI generated or synthetic content is clearly labelled as illustrative, fictional or AI generated and does not impersonate any real person or real proceeding

7. Name and designation of approving authority

8. Date of approval

9. Platform where proposed to be uploaded or circulated

10. Record of script, visuals and approval to be preserved by the institution

ANNEXURE F
FINAL DISCLOSURE AND DISCLAIMER FORMAT FOR LEGAL AWARENESS CONTENT CREATORS

Derivation note. This disclosure is aligned with the existing Rule 36 Schedule permitting limited identification particulars. It is meant for transparency and accountability, not advertisement, solicitation, comparison, testimonial use or guarantee of results.

Who shall fill this annexure

The legal awareness content creator, including an enrolled Advocate, law teacher, law student, intern, researcher, Bar Association, Centre of Legal Education, law firm, chamber, legal aid body or other legal institution, as applicable.

Stage at which this annexure shall be executed
Before uploading or circulating legal awareness content. The disclosure or disclaimer should be reflected in the caption, description, profile, website, video, poster or accompanying material wherever feasible.

1. Name of creator or institution.

2. Status of creator, namely enrolled Advocate, law teacher, law student, intern, researcher, Bar Association, Centre of Legal Education, law firm, chamber, legal aid body or other institution.

3. For enrolled Advocates, concerned State Bar Council, enrolment number or other verifiable professional identifier, broad area of practice where relevant, and years of standing only if stated accurately.

4. For law students, interns and researchers, clear statement that the creator is not holding himself or herself out as an Advocate or as a person authorised to practise law.

5. Disclaimer that the content is for general legal awareness or academic discussion only and is not legal advice for any individual case.

6. Disclaimer that legal outcomes depend on facts, documents, applicable law, forum, evidence, limitation, procedure and judicial discretion, and that no outcome is guaranteed.

7. Reference, wherever feasible, to the relevant statutory provision, rule, notification, circular, judgment or official source relied upon.

8. Statement that no confidential client information, case papers, case numbers, privileged communication, sensitive personal data, identity documents or material from a pending matter is being disclosed without lawful authority.

9. Disclosure where AI tools have been used to generate or substantially modify images, videos, voiceovers, posters, summaries, avatars, captions or illustrative legal content.

10. Confirmation that any illustrative Court scene, client story, legal dialogue, image or audio visual material is fictional or anonymised and does not

impersonate any real Judge, Court, Advocate, litigant, witness, victim, client or proceeding.

11. Confirmation that the content does not contain clickbait guarantees, fabricated testimonials, fake engagement, false claims of appearance, false claims of success, fake judgments, manipulated orders or any material inconsistent with the dignity of the legal profession.

12. Record of script, source material, AI disclosure, approval and upload link to be preserved by the creator or institution for reasonable verification if a lawful complaint is received.