



## Press Release: All India Bar Exam Conducted Across India

In furtherance of its Vision statement 2010-12, the Bar Council of India announced the successful conduct of the first All India Bar Examination (“AIBE”) held on March 6, 2011.

The AIBE was announced by the BCI on June 2, 2010 as an examination to test skills and basic knowledge critical for a new entrant to the practice of law. The AIBE is intended to check for eligibility, rather than expertise. Any law student graduating in Academic Year 2009-10 onwards was required to appear for the AIBE (after enrolment as an advocate) in order to practice law in India.

This is the first time that a qualification examination for practicing law in India has been put in place and successfully conducted. The testing methodology of the AIBE was also unique as is one of the first mass scale “open book” format examinations conducted in India.

The Bar Council of India had partnered with Rainmaker, a leading education, products and services company focussed on the legal industry, to conceptualise and manage the All India Bar Examination.

More than 22,000 lawyers had enrolled for the AIBE and the AIBE was to be conducted on March 6, 2011 across 27 cities and 44 different test venues. Barring an incident in Chennai, the AIBE was conducted successfully in 26 cities across India. In Chennai, the AIBE had to be postponed after certain unsavoury elements resorted to protests and sporadic violence to destabilize the examination. Mr. Gopal Subramaniam, Chairman, Bar Council of India and Solicitor General of India, expressed his disapproval in the strongest terms at the conduct of certain lawyers in Chennai who interfered with the examination and caused damage, and intends to take strong action against them.

While there was initial opposition to the AIBE (the original date was December 5, 2010 and was postponed due to representations made by the State Bar Councils), lawyers across the country appeared *en masse* for the exam and the attendance for the first AIBE was as high as 96%.

The Chairman said “The AIBE is a historic landmark for the legal profession in India and I am extremely satisfied with the conduct of the same having personally visited exam centres, interacted with candidates and reviewed facilities etc. in New Delhi to keep myself apprised. Further, the AIBE was also accessible to all and catered to candidates with disabilities by providing scribes and other facilities. The high attendance for the AIBE also reflects the support and acceptance for the exam amongst lawyers across India. The situation in Chennai was unwarranted and has unfortunately caused anguish to those candidates who were keen to take the AIBE. I would like to assure all the



candidates in Chennai that the BCI will hold a separate AIBE for them on March 27, 2011.

We are aware that there are various issues with respect to the AIBE that need to be streamlined and we will utilise the learning of the first AIBE to build a robust system for the same moving forward. I would like to congratulate every lawyer who has written the AIBE and wish them all the very best for the way forward.”

The Chairman reflected upon the painstaking efforts that have gone in over the past year in order to make the AIBE a reality and particularly acknowledged the contribution of young lawyers and organisations in making the AIBE a success. He thanked the Hon’ble Prime Minister for his deep commitment to reforms and congratulated the Hon’ble Law Minister for his visionary leadership in making the AIBE the first step in the ten steps for legal reform envisioned over the next 6 months.

The Chairman also expressed tribute to the judges of the Supreme Court and senior advocates for providing support, encouragement and pioneering contribution for the AIBE. He also expressed his gratitude to all members of the Bar Council of India, and the Chairmen and members of the State Bar Councils for their support, and specifically thanked three former Chairmen of the BCI, Shri Gopakumaran Nair, Shri D.B. Subba Rao and Shri. Jagannath Patnaik.

The Chairman highlighted that “The successful AIBE will herald reforms in all constituents of the legal profession by introspection, mutual dialogue and shared goals of truth, rectitude and probity coupled with professional experience”.

The results of the first AIBE (excluding Chennai) are expected to be released around March 20, 2011 through the BCI website ([www.barcouncilofindia.org](http://www.barcouncilofindia.org)).

### **Notes for editors**

The Bar Council of India is the apex statutory body set up under the Advocates Act, 1961 to regulate and represent the Indian legal profession. Further details of the Bar Council of India are available on [www.barcouncilofindia.org](http://www.barcouncilofindia.org)

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