

News

Shocking: Supreme Court seeks answer from UP Bar Council over ₹2,500 charge for “interview” before enrolling lawyers



The Court sought an explanation after being told the State Bar Council devised interviews to bypass the Court's 2024 decision that capped enrolment fees for lawyers at ₹750.

The Supreme Court recently voiced surprise after being told that the Bar Council of Uttar Pradesh was charging ₹2,500 from law graduates for appearing in “oral interviews” before enrolling them as lawyers [Priyadarshini Saha vs. Pinaki Ranjan Banerjee].

A Bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and PB Varale said the allegation, if true, was “very shocking” since the Court had already ruled last year that no State Bar Council can charge beyond the statutory fee prescribed under Section 24(1)(f) of the Advocates Act, 1961.

“The learned counsel acting for the petitioner has brought something very shocking to our notice. According to the petitioner, the Bar Council of Uttar Pradesh has evolved a unique method to overcome the directions issued by this Court in the main Judgment rendered in the case of “Gaurav Kumar vs. Union of India & Ors.” (Writ Petition(Civil) No.352/2023 decided on 30-7-2024) by conducting oral interviews of the candidates seeking enrollment. For the purpose of presenting in the oral interviews, they are charging ₹2500 from each candidate,” the Court said.

The issue came up during the hearing of a petition made by advocate Priyadarshini Saha, who informed the Court that the Uttar Pradesh Bar Council had devised a “unique method” to circumvent the Supreme Court’s July 2024 judgment in Gaurav Kumar v Union of India.

In that case, the Court had decided that enrolment fees could not exceed ₹750 for general category candidates and ₹125 for Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe candidates.

The Bench was told that to overcome those limits, the Uttar Pradesh Bar Council had started holding oral interviews for candidates seeking enrolment, demanding ₹2,500 for each applicant under this new head. The Court stated that such a practice, if confirmed, would clearly go against its earlier directions.

Explaining the nature of the complaint, Justice Pardiwala noted that the allegations suggested an attempt to bypass the spirit of the 2024 decision.

The Court said it wanted a clear explanation from the State Bar Council of Uttar Pradesh and ordered it to file an affidavit before the next hearing.

“In the meantime, we direct the Bar Council of India to look into this matter and take up the issue with the Bar Council of UP,” the Bench ordered.

The Court also asked the Bar Council of India led by Chairman Manan Kumar Mishra to examine and report back on the next date.

The case will now be heard again on January 7, 2026.

This latest development comes from the continuing fallout of the Gaurav Kumar decision, in which the Supreme Court had ruled that Bar Councils cannot demand any fee beyond what is allowed under the Advocates Act. The Court had said only the statutory enrolment fee and stamp tax could be collected at the time of registration, warning that “miscellaneous” or “optional” fees were unconstitutional.

In August 2025, the Court had already reiterated that order in another case, cautioning the Karnataka Bar Council against collecting “**optional**” sums ranging from ₹6,800 to ₹25,000 under different heads. The Bench had then said,

"There is nothing like choice. No State Bar Council or Bar Council of India shall take any fees of any amount as optional."