

Health for all: Reclaiming the soul of indian healthcare



RICHARD
HAY

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Even more alarming is the unholy nexus between hospitals and insurance companies, which often results in inflated claims, denial of genuine treatments, and the ruthless exploitation of helpless patients. The poor and middle class suffer the most, stripped of dignity at their most vulnerable moments. Equally dangerous is the widespread circulation of spurious, substandard, and unnecessary medicines, prescribed not for healing but for profit. This amounts to nothing less than a silent public health crime. Regulatory bodies such as the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals (NABH), the National Medical Commission, and State Medical Councils appear to have reduced themselves to mere licensing authorities, frequently turning a blind eye to grave ethical violations. Accreditation has become more procedural than principled, more bureaucratic than moral. It is deeply troubling that the Government of India, along with institutions such as the NABH, Central Consumer Protection Department (CCPD), Indian Medical Council, and the Indian Medical Association, has failed to exercise effective moral and regulatory authority.

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Human Rights Commission (NHRC), State Human Rights Commissions (SHRCs), and allied bodies have, in many cases, failed to act decisively. Their silence in the face of blatant injustice amounts to institutional abdication.

The State cannot remain a mute spectator while citizens are reduced to victims within systems meant to protect them. Healthcare is not a commodity; it is a moral obligation and a constitutional responsibility. India urgently needs stringent laws, uncompromising enforcement, and exemplary punishment for those who betray medical ethics. The nation must reclaim the soul of its healthcare system. The time has come to bridge the

widening chasm between corporate interests and clinical care. This demands a fundamental shift in how healthcare is governed, centred on three imperatives: legislative accountability, transparent supervision, and decisive state action.

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The Pioneer
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Professor Richard Hay is a former
Member of Parliament



Indore tragedy, a national shame

It is a macabre irony that Indore, long hailed as India's cleanest city and a role model for urban sanitation, is in the grip of a serious public health emergency following an outbreak of waterborne bacterial disease that has left at least ten people dead. The sewage-contaminated drinking water was the culprit for the diarrhoea outbreak. Leakage in the main drinking water supply pipeline has exposed thousands of residents in the Bhagirathpura area to a public health hazard. The crisis has exposed serious lapses in water supply monitoring and civic accountability. The first signs of trouble emerged last month when residents noticed an unusual foul smell, bitter taste and visible discoloration in the municipal drinking water supplied to the locality. Despite repeated complaints to civic authorities, no immediate corrective action was taken. Soon after consuming the contaminated water, large numbers of people began experiencing vomiting, diarrhoea, dehydration and high fever, triggering panic and a rush to nearby hospitals. This is clearly the outcome of administrative negligence, and the Madhya Pradesh government should not shy away from taking strict action against officials at all levels. The sorry state of affairs has compelled the National Human Rights Commission and the State High Court to intervene. The troubling truth is that the authorities tasked with protecting the health of citizens swung into action only after lives were lost. The Indore deaths have sparked an uproar and put the BJP government on the defensive. The 'double-engine' governments in Delhi and MP have woefully failed on this front.

The malaise of water contamination, however, is not confined to Indore; it's a nationwide phenomenon. The disease outbreaks due to waterborne bacteria have been reported from several cities, including Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Kochi and Bhopal, in the past two years. They are a grim reminder that a piped supply is not an assurance against contamination. Formation of inquiry committees, announcement of

compensation and suspension of junior officials have become all-too-familiar exercises in damage control. Water supply in a large number of cities continues to rely on pipelines laid in colonial times or in the immediate years after Independence. Indore's water supply network, for instance, is 120 years old. Despite lofty claims about urban infrastructure development, water contamination still remains a major public health concern in India. The World Health Organization (WHO) highlights that ingestion of unsafe water can lead to diseases such as bacterial gastroenteritis, cholera, typhoid, and dysentery, which are significant contributors to illness and death in vulnerable populations. The Supreme Court has repeatedly asserted that the right to a healthy environment is part of the fundamental right to life under Article 21. The Indore tragedy illustrates how municipal inertia stymies attempts to modernise infrastructure even in India's cleanest city. Cleanliness rankings, smart city labels, and governance slogans cannot mask systemic neglect.

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Source:

<https://www.deccanherald.com/amp/story/opinion/editorial/apathy-to-blamefor-indore-tragedy-3851506>

Apathy to blame for Indore tragedy

Impure drinking water has claimed at least 11 lives in 'India's cleanest city'

DHNS | Last Updated 05 January 2026, 01:33 IST

At least 11 people have lost their lives after drinking piped water supplied by the municipal corporation in Indore, ironically touted as India's cleanest city. The toll is placed unofficially at 14. The city faced a health emergency when more than 2,000 people fell ill and over 200 were hospitalised, with 32 of them being treated in the ICU. The contamination was caused by a breach in the water pipeline. It led to drinking water coming into contact with dirty water from a sewage line. The residents had been complaining of a foul smell emanating from the taps for some weeks, but neither the officials nor the municipal councillor took the complaints seriously. Timely investigation and action would have averted the tragedy. The callousness of the authorities was also seen in the words of state minister and local MLA Kailash Vijayvargiya who snapped at a reporter who asked him a question about accountability.

The tragedy was clearly a result of administrative negligence. The many agencies and departments concerned are blaming one another for it. The National Human Rights Commission and the Madhya Pradesh High Court have raised questions about the tragedy. A committee has been appointed to investigate the matter. Formation of committees, visits of leaders, announcement of compensation, and suspension of officials are routine measures taken after every such tragedy. It is clear that there were lapses and those who had to ensure that the pipes were intact and the supply was clean failed in their duty. It is not the first case of water contamination in Madhya Pradesh in recent times. In November, many students on the Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) campus in Bhopal fell ill after drinking contaminated water. It led to vandalism and violence on the campus.

The fact that water contamination affected a city declared the cleanest in the country eight consecutive times shows that any place is vulnerable to it. Programmes such as the Swachh Bharat Mission and the Jal Jeevan Mission have not been able to ensure supply of clean drinking water to all people. Cases of water contamination and break-out of water-borne diseases are reported at regular intervals from many parts of the country. About 70% of the surface water in the country is reportedly contaminated. According to the Central Ground Water Board's 2024 report, over 30% of the samples it collected from distribution stations had higher than permissible levels of contamination. It is the responsibility of the state to ensure supply of clean water, a basic requirement of public health.

Source: <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/rights-groups-seek-action-after-death-of-19-year-old-dalit-student-in-himachal-pradesh-college/>

Rights groups seek action after death of 19-year-old Dalit student in Himachal Pradesh college

Maktoob Staff

January 4, 2026

Modified : January 4, 2026

Dalit rights organisations on Friday demanded the arrest of three senior students and a college professor, and accountability from authorities, following the death of a 19-year-old Dalit female student who they allege was subjected to sustained ragging, sexual harassment and psychological abuse at a government college in Himachal Pradesh.

Dalit Adivasi Shakti Adhikar Manch (DASAM) and its women's collective, Mahila Kaamkaji Manch (MKM), said the student of Government Degree College, Dharamshala, died after enduring months of harassment that was ignored by the college administration and state authorities.

In a statement issued on Friday, the groups described the case as a "grave instance of caste- and gender-based institutional violence" and said her suffering was overlooked until it culminated in her death.

According to a complaint filed by the girl's father and a first information report (FIR) registered by police, the girl, who belonged to a Scheduled Caste community, was allegedly subjected to ragging, intimidation, humiliation and physical assault on campus. The FIR names three senior students — Harshita, Aakriti and Komolika — for their alleged role in the abuse.

The complaint also names Professor Ashok Kumar, a faculty member at the college, accusing him of sexually inappropriate behaviour and harassment. The allegations include abuse of academic authority and conduct of a sexual nature, the organisations said.

DASAM said the alleged actions attract provisions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, including sections relating to caste-based insult, intimidation and sexual harassment of Dalit women.

The FIR also includes offences under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, such as sexual harassment, causing hurt and criminal intimidation, which the groups say must be read alongside provisions of the SC/ST Act that mandate enhanced punishment for crimes committed with knowledge of a victim's caste identity.

The organisations said the girl had been hospitalised repeatedly and showed signs of severe psychological distress before her death, pointing to what they described as a complete failure of the institution to provide counselling or protection. They said this amounted to a violation of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, and of the constitutional right to life with dignity.

Holding the college administration responsible, DASAM said provisions of the SC/ST Act that penalise neglect of duty by public servants should be invoked against officials who failed to act on complaints or warning signs. The group also said the girl's family was entitled to protection, relief and compensation under the law.

The alleged ragging also falls under the Himachal Pradesh Educational Institutions (Prohibition of Ragging) Act, 2009, while the accusations against the professor invoke the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, the statement said.

The organisations demanded the immediate arrest of all accused, noting that anticipatory bail is barred under the SC/ST Act. They also called for the resignation of the college principal and the state's education minister, the termination of the accused professor, and the expulsion of the three students.

In addition, they sought independent inquiries by the National Human Rights Commission and the National

Commission for Women, a time-bound judicial probe into institutional responsibility, and compensation and rehabilitation for the girl's family.

Incidents of violence against Dalit women in educational institutions deter others from pursuing higher education and deepen social exclusion, the groups said, calling the case a systemic failure rather than an isolated tragedy.

Source: <https://muslimmirror.com/dalit-rights-groups-demand-justice-in-dharamshala-students-death/>

Dalit rights groups demand justice in Dharamshala student's death

By Muslim Mirror Desk

January 4, 2026

Dalit rights organisations, including Dalit Adivasi Shakti Adhikar Manch (DASAM) and its women's collective Mahila Kaamkaji Manch (MKM), have strongly condemned the death of a 19-year-old Scheduled Caste female student at Government Degree College, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh.

They allege she endured prolonged ragging, sexual harassment, physical assault, and psychological abuse, describing it as a severe case of caste- and gender-based institutional violence ignored by college and state authorities.

The student's father filed a complaint, leading to an FIR naming three senior students—Harshita, Aakriti, and Komolika—for ragging, intimidation, and humiliation, and Professor Ashok Kumar for sexual misconduct and abuse of authority.

The groups assert these acts violate the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, alongside provisions under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for sexual harassment, hurt, and intimidation. They also cite breaches of the Himachal Pradesh Educational Institutions (Prohibition of Ragging) Act, 2009, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013, and the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, due to the institution's failure to provide protection or counselling despite her repeated hospitalisations and distress.

DASAM holds the college administration accountable for neglect of duty under the SC/ST Act and demands immediate arrests of the accused (noting anticipatory bail is barred), termination of the professor, expulsion of the students, resignations of the principal and education minister, and family protection with compensation. Calling for independent probes by the National Human Rights Commission and National Commission for Women, plus a judicial inquiry, the organisations warn that such violence deters Dalit women from higher education, reflecting systemic exclusion rather than an isolated incident. — With Agencies Inputs

Source: <https://organiser.org/2026/01/04/333526/bharat/leh-buddhist-monk-lodges-complaint-regarding-abduction-of-minor-girl-nhrc-issues-notice-to-civil-administration/>

Leh: Buddhist monk lodges complaint regarding abduction of minor girl; NHRC issues notice to civil administration

A Muslim youth from Kargil has been taken into custody by the police for allegedly abducting a minor Buddhist tribal girl from Khaltsee in Leh district in the last week of December. In this regard, a complaint has been lodged in the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and it has issued notices to the Leh administration

Sant Kumar Sharma Jan 4, 2026, 10:30 pm IST in Bharat, Ladakh

Leh: The NHRC has issued a notice to the Leh civil administration and its police authorities over charges that a minor Ladakhi girl belonging to a tribal Buddhist community who had gone missing from her home late December, was subsequently “found in Srinagar with a Muslim boy”, according to the proceedings of the case. Presently, the girl is under the supervision of a Child Welfare Committee (CWC) and is suffering from “mental trauma”, the proceedings dated January 2 said.

The complainant in this case pertaining to Leh is Sagar Shakyaputra Bhante, from Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, it said. Bhante is a public figure and Chairman at The Buddhabhoomi Dhammadoot Sangha, his profile on Facebook says. “The complainant alleged that on December 26, a minor Khalatse Ladakhi girl belonging to a tribal Buddhist community went missing from her home. The complainant further alleged that her family immediately lodged a missing complaint with the PS Khalatse, FIR No.39/2025 dated 28.12.2025, u/s 137(2) BNS and under the POCSO Act. During the police investigation, the said girl was found in Srinagar with a Muslim boy”, it said.

“Presently, the girl is under the supervision of CWC and she is now in mental trauma”, the NHRC proceedings said.

“Presently, the girl is under the supervision of CWC, and she is now in mental trauma”, the NHRC note says. The complainant had sought the intervention of the commission and requested an “impartial investigation into the role of other individuals involved in the crime, justice for the victim girl and her family, protection, counselling with medical, psychological and legal assistance.

Complainant’s accusation

“Due to social pressure at the local level, this sensitive case is not receiving the seriousness it warrants. A detailed action-taken report should be sought from the police and the administration, in accordance with the law”, it said. The allegations made in the complaint prima facie seem to be violations of the human rights of the victim, the rights panel said. A bench of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), presided by its member Priyank Kanoongo, has taken cognisance under section 12 of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.

“The Registry is directed to issue a notice to the DC (Deputy Commissioner), Leh and the SSP/DIG, Leh, Ladakh, with directions to get the allegations made in the complaint inquired into and to submit an action taken report within seven days for perusal of the

JTN statement

Earlier, on December 30, former Leh MP JT Namgyal had said: I was deeply disturbed by today’s media briefing of the SSP Leh regarding the registration of an FIR under the POCSO Act in a case involving the kidnapping of a minor girl from Leh district by a man from Kargil District. Crimes against children as well as women are extremely serious and a matter of grave concern for all of us. I strongly condemn this incident and appreciate the Ladakh Police for their prompt and decisive action.

Such repeated incidents raise urgent and troubling questions about our social fabric. Despite awareness and laws,

why are we still witnessing crimes against women & minors and why have we not been able to put a complete stop to them? This calls for deep introspection and collective action. I appeal to all concerned authorities, as well as religious and social organisations, to take moral responsibility and actively work towards educating and sensitising our communities. Only through shared accountability, awareness and vigilance can we prevent such heinous crimes. Child safety must always come first and protecting our children is a responsibility we all share. It bears mention here that the SSP of Leh had given details regarding the abduction of the young tribal girl from Leh by a man from Kargil and sought to play down the communal angle. In briefing to the media, he had stressed that it was an individual case and giving it a communal colour was not the correct thing to do. He had also said that disclosing the identity of the minor girl was punishable under law. The police officer had also warned that irresponsible comments on social media and rumour mongering were also punishable and cautioned people to desist from this.

Source: <https://www.thestatesman.com/bengal/nhrc-sets-4-week-deadline-to-w-burdwan-dm-police-on-silicosis-report-1503535255.html>

NHRC sets 4-week deadline to W Burdwan DM, police on silicosis report

DEBAJYOTI CHAKRABORTY | Kolkata | January 4, 2026 8:02 am

The NHRC has made it clear that if the ATR is not submitted within four weeks, it will be compelled to exercise its powers under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. A copy of the reminder has also been sent to the state Chief Secretary, Nandini Chakravorty, underscoring the seriousness of the matter.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has taken cognisance of the silicosis issue in the Dendua region of Salanpur block and has issued reminders to the District Magistrate (DM) of West Burdwan, S Ponnambalam, and the Commissioner of Police (CP) of the Asansol-Durgapur Police Commissionerate (ADPC), Sunil Kumar Choudhary, seeking an action taken report (ATR) against polluting industries operating in the area.

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Silicosis is reportedly spreading rapidly in the Salanpur block of the Asansol Sadar sub-division in West Burdwan district. It has been alleged that neither the police nor the administration took adequate action earlier. Local social worker Amarendra Mahato had approached the NHRC, alleging that silicosis patients were being incorrectly treated as tuberculosis cases under the DOTS programme and that factory managements should be held responsible for the victims.

Earlier, on 28 October, 2024, the NHRC had written to the West Burdwan DM and the ADPC Commissioner seeking a report within eight weeks following a complaint by a local teacher, Amarnath Mahato. The complaint alleged that stone and silica crushing units in the area were causing the spread of silicosis and that several labourers had already died.

Subsequently, on 17 November, 2024, a general diary (GD) entry (No. 513) was registered at Salanpur police station, directing verification of industrial units located in the Dendua area. The District Industries Centre and the West Bengal Pollution Control Board were asked to conduct physical verification of the factories, and the information was shared with local residents.

The NHRC had also sought the deployment of a technical expert team to measure silicon metalloid emissions from the factories, citing serious environmental and public health concerns. However, as the expert team's report is still awaited, the Commission has issued fresh reminders, granting a final four-week deadline for submission of the ATR.

The NHRC has warned that failure to submit the required investigation and pollution reports within this period will invite legal action under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.

In 2025, two residents of Salanpur block reportedly died due to silicosis, while several labourers have been diagnosed with the disease by the Medical Board constituted by the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH), West Burdwan, and Asansol District Hospital following health screenings.

No official response has so far been received from either the West Burdwan District Magistrate or the Commissioner of Police, ADPC, on the issue.

Source: <https://thewire.in/rights/why-nhrCs-global-downgrade-demands-urgent-reform>

Why NHRC's Global Downgrade Demands Urgent Reform

Grace Anu and Edgar Kaiser

8 hours ago

5 min read

India's human rights watchdog faces a credibility reckoning after its downgrade by a global accreditation body that raised questions over its independence from political interference and other concerns.

The year 2025 was a turbulent one for the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), which proclaims to stand tall in its human rights interventions and was once considered a shelter in the storm for Indians. The recent decision by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) to downgrade the status of the apex human rights body of the world's largest democracy, however, is a sobering story.

Since its inception in 1993, the NHRC has had chairpersons of four thematic commissions as its deemed members. In 2019, this was expanded to include three more thematic national commissions. To make its services more accessible to citizens, every state has a human rights commission and, in addition, thematic commissions meant for women, children, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, among others. In all, there are 169 such institutions, making India the country with the largest number of national and state human rights institutions.

Accreditation by GANHRI

National human rights institutions around the world are accredited by GANHRI, which ensures their compliance with the Paris Principles. These principles set out the minimum parameters for national human rights institutions, emphasising their broad mandate and functions and their pluralism, independence and effectiveness.

As part of this alliance since 1997, the NHRC was subjected to GANHRI evaluation in 2016, 2023 and 2024, in which its 'A' status was deferred thrice by a sub-committee on accreditation, or the SCA. The GANHRI sub-committee recommended actions for the NHRC to consider. These included emphasising plurality of gender, ethnicity and representation of religious minorities within the NHRC. It also recommended a transparent appointment process and independent and effective functioning.

The recommendations highlighted the need to effectively intervene in several human rights violations and the lack of civil society engagement by the NHRC. They also raised concerns that only police officers were investigating abuses by their colleagues, which was seen to greatly jeopardise independence and accountability. These recommendations were the result of reports by civil society organisations at the regional, national and international level that communicated the NHRC's non-compliance with the Paris Principles.

NHRC downgraded after inaction

While laudable for its large network and broad mandate, the NHRC's conduct in some of the gravest instances of abuse has been deeply concerning. In 2015, the commission intervened – on the same day as the incident, April 15, 2015 – in the fake encounter killing of 20 Tamil labourers by the Red Sanders Special Task Force in the Seshachalam Forest Range of the erstwhile undivided state of Andhra Pradesh.

The NHRC intervened swiftly, conducted rapid investigations and passed effective interim orders, but thereafter failed to ensure their implementation. Even after ten years, it has been unable to vacate the Andhra Pradesh High Court's stay of its order dated May 29, 2015.

Another chilling incident was that of police excesses in 2018 against demonstrators protesting Vedanta's copper smelting unit in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu. Infamously called the Sterlite shooting, it led to 16 deaths and left hundreds critically injured. The NHRC did not hold the police accountable. Instead, it closed the case, citing the

Tamil Nadu government's compensation and the appointment of a commission of inquiry. It thus left the victims in the dark, despite eight UN Special Procedures voicing their condemnation of the killings since May 30, 2018. The NHRC's silence on the arrest of student activists Umar Khalid, Sharjil Imam and Gulfisha Fatima and of human rights defender Khurram Parvez also rang out on the international stage, in addition to its lack of proper action in the infamous arrests of some of the world's renowned intellectuals in the name of being 'anti-nationals' in the Bhima Koregaon case.

Some, like Jesuit priest Father Stan Swamy, died during the ordeal of imprisonment, while Professor G.N. Saibaba died soon after being allowed release on bail, after undergoing long imprisonment despite serious health concerns. Many accused are still lodged in prisons without trial, denied bail for over five years for the 'crime' of being socially conscious towards the abuse of power and wealth. The NHRC did not intervene in any of these matters on its own.

It is in this context that, after three deferrals of its accreditation in 2016, 2023 and 2024, the NHRC was downgraded in April 2025 at the 45th session of the GANHRI Accreditation Sub-Committee. The NHRC challenged this, but the downgrade was upheld by the GANHRI bureau comprising 16 countries on December 4, 2025. In earlier years, the NHRC had made notable interventions, such as in cases related to the Gujarat violence in 2002 when Justice J.S. Verma was the chairperson. It insisted that India ratify the UN Convention Against Torture in 1997 when Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah was the chairperson.

The present chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian, a former judge of the Madras High Court, has passed judgements with a victim-centric approach in cases concerning individual rights. However, he has been in the position only since December 2024. Hence, the onus of the downgrade falls not just on him, but more so on his predecessors, including Justice H.L. Dattu and Justice Arun Mishra, who left behind a consistent failure to implement the SCA recommendations.

A call to reform

What would change look like for the NHRC, once regarded as a beacon of hope for the country? The commission ought to focus on improving its engagement with those who are critical of its downfall but passionate about its revival. Civil society organisations such as the People's Union for Civil Liberties, the People's Union for Democratic Rights and many others working on the ground, echoing people's voices, ought to be heard and collaborated with to make human rights a reality.

Criticisms of the NHRC stem from a desire for it to stand true to its founding principles – they are not an outright rejection. Although the downgrading of NHRC, India's sole representative on GANHRI, sends a wave of hurt, it also calls for reflection and for working out strategies of action with all stakeholders.

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This article went live on January fourth, two thousand twenty six, at forty-five minutes past ten in the morning.

Source: <https://www.vibesofindia.com/sewage-in-the-taps-mocks-gujarats-smart-city-hype/>

Sewage in the Taps Mocks Gujarat's Smart-City Hype

Team VoI | Updated: January 4, 2026 20:15

If a "Smart City" can't keep human waste out of a child's glass of water, it isn't progress—it's a death trap.

The BJP's glossy "Gujarat Model" has hit a lethal dead end in the state's own capital. While the ruling party spends millions branding Gandhinagar as a high-tech "Viksit Bharat" hub, the city's pediatric wards are overflowing with children poisoned by the government's own infrastructure.

A massive typhoid outbreak has exposed a sickening truth: in the rush to cut ribbons on a ₹257-crore water project, the administration effectively plumbed the city's drinking lines into its sewers.

This isn't just an accident; it's a criminal display of administrative rot. Investigations confirm that engineering teams, operating under the BJP-led Municipal Corporation, laid new drinking water pipes directly alongside—and often touching—rotting sewer lines. When high-pressure water was introduced, the system didn't bring "24×7 progress"; it sucked in raw human waste and delivered it to the dinner tables of Sectors 24 to 28. With over 104 patients now hospitalized, the government's response has been a masterclass in optics over action: Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Deputy CM Harsh Sanghavi have made their "emergency calls," yet the only solution offered to the public is a primitive order to boil water and swallow chlorine.

This Gujarat crisis is a carbon copy of the horror currently unfolding in Indore, India's cleanest city which is another "award-winning" BJP stronghold. In the Bhagirathpura area in Indore, a public toilet at a police outpost was built directly over a main drinking water pipeline without a septic tank. For weeks, residents begged officials to investigate the foul-smelling sludge coming from their taps. They were ignored so that the city could maintain its PR-friendly status as India's "cleanest."

The result was an avoidable bloodbath. While the official death toll is kept at four, local residents claim at least 15 people have died and over 2800 people taken sick by a cocktail of E. coli and cholera-causing bacteria. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has stepped in, but the damage is done. Whether in Madhya Pradesh or Gujarat, the BJP's "Smart City" playbook follows a grim pattern: prioritize multi-crore tenders and "clean city" awards until the morgues start to fill up.

Meanwhile, Gujarat Congress has slammed the BJP and its' Smart City claims.

"As we enter 2026, "The gap between the BJP's digital slogans and its physical failures is widening into a chasm.

The party's obsession with "smart" metrics has clearly come at the expense of basic human dignity. In Gandhinagar, the 63 surveillance teams conducting door-to-door surveys are merely a band-aid on a gaping wound caused by a government that forgot that development starts with a pipe that doesn't leak sewage", Gujarat Congress president Amit Chavda has said. Rajyasabha MP Shaktisinh Gohil has slammed the BJP for its "hollow obsession with optics," pointing out that while the government holds global summits at GIFT City, it cannot provide safe water to a five-year-old in Sector 24. Amit Chavda has accused the administration of "criminal corruption," alleging that the technical failure—where drinking water pipes were laid directly through sewer zones—is the direct result of sub-standard work by favored contractors. The Congress has demanded the immediate arrest of the municipal engineers and a high-level judicial probe into the ₹257-crore tender.

Source: <https://www.livehindustan.com/uttar-pradesh/bijnor/story-elderly-man-appeals-to-national-human-rights-commission-for-delayed-pension-justice-201767553382381.html>

पेंशन की अंतहीन प्रतीक्षा में 77 वर्षीय बुजुर्ग, सवाल के घेरे में ईपीएफओ

Jan 05, 2026 12:33 am IST Newswrap हिन्दुस्तान , बिजनौर
संक्षेप:

Bijnor News - 77 वर्षीय गोविंदराम ने राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग को पत्र भेजकर पेंशन रोकने और मानसिक उत्पीड़न के खिलाफ शिकायत की है। वह उत्तर प्रदेश राज्य चीनी निगम से सेवानिवृत्त हैं और ईपीएफओ कार्यालय पर गंभीर आरोप लगाए हैं। उन्होंने बताया कि उनकी पेंशन के लिए आवश्यक दस्तावेज जमा करने के बावजूद वर्षों से पेंशन रोक दी गई है।

77 वर्षीय गरीब, असहाय एवं वृद्ध गोविंदराम की पीड़ा अब राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग तक पहुंच गई है। कर्मचारी भविष्य निधि संगठन (ईपीएफओ) के क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय पर गंभीर आरोप लगाते हुए गोविंदराम ने आयोग के अध्यक्ष को पत्र भेजकर न्याय की गुहार लगाई है। पत्र में अधिकारियों पर मानसिक उत्पीड़न, डराने-धमकाने और वर्षों से पेंशन रोकने जैसे गंभीर आरोप लगाए गए हैं। स्थानीय नगीना रोड शुगर मिल के सामने रहने वाले गोविंदराम उत्तर प्रदेश राज्य चीनी निगम, बिजनौर से सेवानिवृत्त कर्मचारी हैं। उन्होंने बताया कि उन्होंने ईपीएस-95 के अंतर्गत मासिक पेंशन के लिए सभी औपचारिकताएं पूरी करते हुए फॉर्म-10डी के साथ जन्मतिथि से संबंधित दस्तावेज और सत्यापित प्रमाण पत्र करीब पौने दो साल पहले जमा किए।

इसके बावजूद चार माह तक भी पेंशन जारी न होने पर आरटीआई के तहत यह जानकारी भी मांगी, कि कितने समय में पेंशन जारी करने का प्रावधान है। पत्र के अनुसार, ईपीएफओ कार्यालय के अधिकारियों द्वारा मांगी गई सूचना देने के बजाय बार-बार यह कहा गया कि कार्यालय रिकॉर्ड में जन्मतिथि दर्ज नहीं है, जबकि स्वयं उसी कार्यालय द्वारा जारी पुराने अभिलेखों एवं फॉर्म-9 में जन्मतिथि स्पष्ट रूप से अंकित है। आरोप है कि तथ्यों के विपरीत जवाब देकर मामले को दबाने का प्रयास किया गया और कार्यालय के कुछ अधिकारी उनसे बार-बार 'गलती निकालने' और 'फाइल अटकाने' की भाषा में बात करते रहे, जिससे उन्हें गहरी मानसिक पीड़ा पहुंची। न्यूनतम आय पर जीवन यापन कर रहे इस वृद्ध के लिए पेंशन ही जीवन का एकमात्र सहारा है, लेकिन वही पेंशन उसके लिए संघर्ष और अपमान का कारण बन गई। पत्र में यह भी कहा गया है कि ईपीएफओ कार्यालय में गरीब, वृद्ध और असहाय पेंशनधारकों के साथ ऐसा व्यवहार आम हो गया है। छोटी-छोटी तकनीकी आपत्तियों और कथित त्रुटियों के नाम पर वर्षों तक पेंशन रोकी जाती है, जिससे बुजुर्ग आर्थिक व मानसिक रूप से टूट जाते हैं। गोविंदराम ने राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग से मांग की है कि उनके मामले की निष्पक्ष जांच कराई जाए, दोषी अधिकारियों पर कार्रवाई हो और उन्हें शीघ्र न्यायोचित पेंशन दिलाई जाए।