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HUMAN RIGHTS

Newsletter

A monthly publication of the National Human Rights Commission, India



NHRC, India's milestones from April, 2024 to March, 2025

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National Human Rights Commission

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The Newsletter is also available on the Commission's website www.nhrc.nic.in. NGOs and other organisations are welcome to reproduce material of the Newsletter and disseminate it widely acknowledging the NHRC, India.

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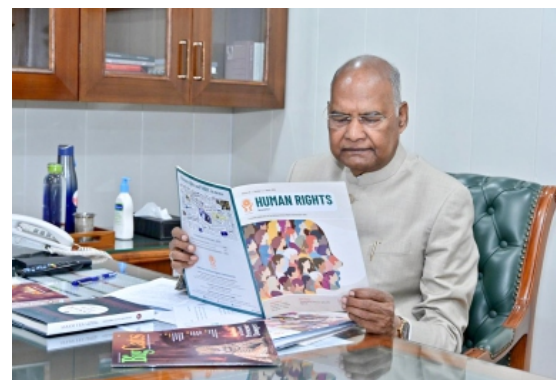
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Monthly Recap

From the desk of the Secretary General & Chief Executive

On 22nd April, 2025, the world was left reeling after a heinous terrorist attack in the Pahalgam region of Jammu & Kashmir, where 26 innocent tourists were brutally killed after being identified by their faith. This barbaric act stands yet another grim reminder of how terrorism continues to stain humanity. Our deepest condolences go out to the families who have suffered the irreparable loss of their loved ones. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India, has strongly condemned the attack and urged decisive action, demanding accountability, swift justice for the perpetrators, and comprehensive support for the victims' families. This edition carries the public statement issued by the Commission in this regard.

A few days before this incident, another major human catastrophe broke out in the Murshidabad district of West Bengal, wherein riots were reported, causing loss of life and property and exodus of people to the adjoining Malda district. The Commission deputed a team of its senior functionaries for an on-spot enquiry into the matter. A brief report on the intervention has been carried in this edition.

The NHRC, India remains committed to safeguarding human dignity and rights. With this spirit, it has also sent letters to the Chief Secretaries of 11 States, which are more prone to heat waves, urging them to take proactive measures to mitigate its impact, particularly on vulnerable people such as the homeless. This call to action reflects the Commission's broader commitment to protecting lives and upholding the rights of the marginalised.

NHRC, India, remains actively engaged in global human rights discourse, contributing to international platforms to advocate for dignity, equity, and sustainable development. On 23rd April, 2025, at the World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Spring Meeting, I represented India in the session titled 'Empowering Cities: The Vital Role of Sub-national Financing in Delivering Urban Infrastructure & Jobs.'

There, I shared India's progress and innovative governance strategies aimed at ensuring dignity and enhancing the quality of life for all citizens. A brief report on this important event has been included in this edition of the Newsletter.

April also brought global focus on key observances: World Health Day on 7th April and Earth Day on 22nd April, 2025. Both days serve as powerful reminders of the intersection between human rights, health, and environmental sustainability. They underscore the importance of collective global action in ensuring dignity, well-being, and a secure future for all.

This issue also includes detailed reports on the visits and key engagements of NHRC, India Members throughout the month, providing a comprehensive view of the Commission's continued advocacy and action.

Finally, this edition features a special retrospective segment on NHRC, India's milestones from April 2024 to March, 2025. It highlights the Commission's efforts over the past year—from consultations and seminars to addressing individual complaints—all aimed at promoting and protecting human rights across the country. These initiatives aim at reflecting and reviewing in retrospect on the Commission's work to shape up its future strategies as part of its steadfast resolve to build a more just and equitable society wherein human rights of all are protected.

We hope you find this edition informative, thought-provoking and a testament to NHRC, India's ongoing mission to protect and promote human rights in every sphere.



[Bharat Lal]

Secretary General &
Chief Executive Officer

Important interventions

NHRC statement condemns the Pahalgam terrorist attack

(Case No. 77/9/1/2025)

“The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India is deeply disturbed by the news of the killing of 28 people by the terrorists after identifying their faith in Pahalgam area of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir on 22nd April, 2025.

The Commission condemns the dastardly attack on the unarmed and unsuspecting innocent civilians who were on a holiday to the valley. The incident has shaken the conscience of every right-thinking human being as a serious issue of violation of human rights of the innocent victims and their families.

It has been said time and again at various forums that terrorism is one of the biggest causes of human rights violations in the world. The time has come to act against those aiding, abetting, supporting and advancing terrorism and to hold them accountable for this menace. Otherwise, it may result in shrinking of democratic space, intimidation, reprisals, harmony among communities and grave violation of various human rights, including right to life, liberty, equality, fraternity, and livelihood.

It is expected that the State will take all the necessary steps to fix accountability; bring the perpetrators to justice and provide succour to the families of the victims in all possible manner.”

Murshidabad riots: NHRC deposes team for spot enquiry

(Case No. 541/25/13/2025)

On 15th April, 2025, the National

Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India registered a case after taking cognizance of complaints about an incident of arson, looting and displacement of Hindu community people and that a father and son duo was allegedly murdered by some goons during the protest against the Waqf Amendment Bill, 2025 in Murshidabad, West Bengal on 11th April, 2025. Allegedly, one more person died, and the men and women of the Hindu community and their properties were attacked, but no proper action was taken by the police of Murshidabad district, which led to their mass exodus to the adjoining Malda district.

In the meantime, the Commission received another complaint dated 15th April, 2025, seeking its intervention in the matter. Allegedly, the Law Enforcement Agencies either appeared to be indifferent or complicit in the acts of violence carried out by the perpetrators. Further, the complaint mentioned that the Calcutta High Court, while considering a petition on the subject, has ordered deployment of the Central Armed Forces in the affected areas, observing that the situation was “Grave and Volatile”. The Commission vide proceeding dated 17th April, 2025, clubbed both the cases.

It noted that the allegations in the complaints and the observations of the Calcutta High Court indicated a serious violation of human rights. Therefore, it thought it appropriate to depute a team of its senior officers, including the DG (I), Registrar (Law) and a woman SSP, to visit the refugee camp in Malda to ascertain the facts relating to the incidents and submit a report. On 18th April, 2025, the spot

investigation team of the NHRC submitted an Interim Report, and on its basis, the Commission decided that a Member should visit the place. Therefore, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Member, NHRC, joined the Commission's investigation team on 19th April, 2025.

Further, the NHRC, India received an email dated 23rd April, 2025 from the West Bengal State Human Rights Commission stating that it has nominated its Registrar (Law) in the Committee of three officers in compliance of the Order of the Calcutta High Court in W.P.A (P) No. 153 of 2025 wherein in Para 21, it directed as under:

“Considering the aforesaid factual matrix in the case in hand and with a view to resolve the issue relating to identification, rehabilitation and lodging of FIRs and the wellbeing of the displaced persons till they are rehabilitated, we deem it appropriate to constitute a Committee consisting of three officers who shall monitor and coordinate the situation. The Committee shall consist of an official from the National Human Rights Commission, the West Bengal Human Rights Commission and Member Secretary of State Legal Service Authority.”

Therefore, as ordered by the Calcutta High Court, the NHRC, India like the West Bengal SHRC, also nominated a judicial officer i.e. its Registrar (Law) as one of the three members of the Committee, which went for the spot enquiry in the riot-affected areas on 27th and 28th April, 2025 to ascertain the status of rehabilitation of displaced people of Murshidabad District.

Heat waves: 11 States asked for preventive measures

Given the heat waves during summer, particularly in the northern, central and western parts of the country, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has asked the 11 heatwave prone states to take immediate pre-emptive measures to protect the vulnerable people especially economically weaker sections, outdoor workers, the elderly, children, and the homeless, who are at risk due to the lack of adequate shelter and resources. Highlighting NCRB data about the reported deaths of 3,798 persons between 2018 to 2022 due to heat and sun strokes, the Commission has emphasized the urgent need for integrated and inclusive measures.

The Commission in a letter to the Chief Secretaries of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan, has called for provisioning of shelters, supply of relief materials, amendment of working hours and availability of standard procedures for treating heat-related illnesses.

In its communication to the States, the Commission has reiterated the guidelines of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to mitigate the impacts of heat waves, which include:

- Establishing and implementing standard procedures for treating heat-related illnesses and treatment protocols;

- Activate public spaces such as schools, Anganwadi centres, and community halls with adequate ventilation, fans, drinking water, and basic medical supplies;
- Supply fans, cool roof materials, and ORS sachets to families in informal settlements and labour colonies; and
- Amend working hours, provide shaded rest zones, hydration support, and encourage the use of protective clothing.

These states have been asked to submit action taken reports to protect the lives of those vulnerable to heat waves as per existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) or guidelines issued by the NDMA to states to mitigate the impact of heat waves.

Suo motu cognizance

The media reports have been a very useful instrument for the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India, to know about the incidents of human rights violations. Over the years, the Commission has taken *suo motu* cognizance of many such issues and brought succour to the victims of human rights violations. During April, 2025, the Commission took suo motu cognizance in 09 cases of alleged human rights violations reported by the media and issued notices to the concerned authorities for reports. Summaries of some of these cases are as follows:

Detention of a journalist covering a protest

(Case No. 55/3/24/2025)

On 25th March, 2025, the media reported that in Guwahati a journalist of a digital news portal was called at Panbazar Police Station and detained after a dharna in front of the Assam Cooperative Apex Bank Ltd, which he had gone to cover. Reportedly, the journalist had questioned the Managing Director of the bank on the alleged financial irregularities, though no reason was cited for his detention. The Commission has issued a notice to the

Director General of Police, Government of Assam, calling for a detailed report in the matter.

Difficulties faced by the prisoners in various jails

(Case No. 367/90/0/2025)

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has taken *suo motu* cognizance of the various difficulties being faced by the prisoners, including the women inmates and their children, in the jails across the country. These include overcrowding, a lack of basic amenities and healthcare facilities in

jails. The issues have been brought to its notice by its Special Monitors and Rapporteurs, through their reports after visiting various jails across the country, as well as the complaints.

Some of the other concerns raised include the violation of the rights to dignity and safety of the women prisoners, increased violence against them causing mental distress, unhygienic conditions without adequate toilet, sanitary napkins, clean drinking water facilities, poor quality food resulting in malnourishment, particularly in the pregnant women and

lactating mothers, lack of educational opportunities to the children of women prisoners living in jails with them, non-implementation of their welfare programmes including legal aid, vocational training and rehabilitation.

Therefore, the Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretaries of all the States and Union Territories to submit a report on the following:

- i.) The number of women prisoners lodged in Jails in their State,
- ii.) The number of women prisoners whose babies are lodged in Jails on account of the mothers being incarcerated;

- iii.) The number of women prisoners, who are convicted prisoners and those who are under trial prisoners;
- iv.) The number of women under trial prisoners who are languishing for more than a year in Jail;
- v.) The number of male under-trial prisoners and those who are languishing in Jail for more than a year.

Death of the arrested rape and murder accused in encounter

(Case No. 238/10/10/2025)

On 14th April, 2025, the media reported about the abduction, rape and murder

of a minor girl and the death of the arrested accused in a police encounter in Hubballi, Karnataka. Reportedly, he was nabbed by the police within hours of the incident and was being taken for questioning when he tried to attack them, resulting in gunshot injuries to him, causing his death. The Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police, Government of Karnataka, calling for a detailed report in the matter. The report is expected to include the post-mortem examination and the Magisterial Enquiry Reports of both the deceased.

Recommendations for relief

One of the primary responsibilities of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India is to address cases of human rights violations, listen to the grievances of victims, and recommend appropriate relief in such instances. It regularly takes up various such cases and gives directions and recommenda-

tions to the concerned authorities for relief to the victims. In April, 2025, besides the number of cases taken up daily by the Member Benches, 22 cases were heard by the Full Commission and 20 cases by the Bench-I. Monetary relief of more than Rs 50.2 lakh was recommended to the victims or their next of kin (NoK) in the 09 cases,

wherein it was found that public servants had either violated human rights or been negligent in protecting them. The specific details of these cases can be downloaded from the NHRC website by logging the case number given in the table below:

S. No.	Case Number	Nature of complaint	Amount (Rs in lakh)	Authority
1.	1089/7/7/2023-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Haryana
2.	1401/34/6/2023-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	3.00	Jharkhand
3.	14/23/8/2019-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Tripura
4.	839/25/5/2020-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	West Bengal
5.	11155/24/48/2020	Custodial torture	5.00	Uttar Pradesh
6.	1975/7/5/2024	Harassment of prisoner	15.0	Haryana
7.	919/18/5/2024	Death due to electrocution	5.10	Odisha
8.	2203/12/0/2020	Abuse of Power	7.00	Madhya Pradesh
9.	920/18/18/2024	Abuse of Power	0.10	Odisha

Payment of relief to the victims

During April, 2025, the Commission closed 09 cases, either on receipt of the compliance reports and proof of payment from the

public authorities or by giving other observations/ directions. An amount of Rs 35.1 lakh was paid to the victims or their next of kin (NoK) on the recommen-

datations of the Commission. The specific details of these cases can be downloaded from the NHRC website by logging the case number given in the table below:

S. No.	Case Number	Nature of complaint	Amount (Rs in lakh)	Authority
1.	1530/7/5/2018-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	2.00	Haryana
2.	1163/34/3/2019-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Jharkhand
3.	295/11/10/2020-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Kerala
4.	1120/20/1/2023-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Rajasthan
5.	1561/20/21/2021-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Rajasthan
6.	10939/24/18/2023-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Uttar Pradesh
7.	4254/24/31/2019-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Uttar Pradesh
8.	1577/4/39/2023	Abuse of power	0.10	Bihar
9.	21/18/7/2024	Starvation death	3.00	Odisha

Case studies

In many cases, the Commission, contrary to the claims of the concerned State authorities, found that the human rights of the victims were violated due to their unlawful action, inaction, or omission. Therefore, the Commission, under the Protection of Human Rights Act, not only recommended punitive action against erring officials on a case-to-case basis but also recommended monetary relief to the victims of human rights violations or their next of kin. The Commission also received reports of compliance with its recommendations by the respective state authorities. Summaries of some of these cases are as under:

Medical negligence

(Case no. 2684/4/24/2022)

The matter pertained to the death of a 45-year-old woman in 2022 due to the alleged medical negligence post her surgery for removing stones in the gall bladder at VIMS Hospital, run by the Government of Bihar in Nalanda district. Based on the material on record, received from the concerned authorities in response to its notices, the Commission found that there was

negligence by the hospital authorities, causing an unusual delay of 32 days in the histopathological reporting, which diagnosed that she was suffering from adenocarcinoma. Though the disease is fatal but due to the delay in informing the patient and her family about this, they could not go for timely follow-up visits to the concerned doctors post her surgery. It observed that the State owes the vicarious responsibility for the failure of its employees in the hospital in providing

information to the victim about her exact medical condition, which ultimately led to her death. Therefore, it recommended that the Government of Bihar pay Rs 3.5 lakh as relief to the next of kin (NoK) of the victim, which was paid.

Sexual assault of a minor girl

(Case No. 2469/20/11/2023)

The matter pertained to the reported sexual assault of a minor girl by a Sub-

Inspector of Police in an area under Dausa district, Rajasthan in 2023. Based on the material on record, received from the concerned authorities in response to its notices, the Commission found that the accused police personnel lured the minor to his room in Lalsot area under the district on 10th November, 2023, and sexually assaulted her. Therefore, it held that the Government of Rajasthan was vicariously responsible for the criminal actions of its employee and recommended that it pay Rs 2.5 lakh as relief to the NoK, which was complied with. The erring police officer was dismissed from service during a departmental enquiry, and a charge sheet was filed against him in court.

Assault and illegal detention

(Case No. 2156/25/11/2023-WC)

The matter pertained to a complaint that two women, suspected of pickpocketing, were manhandled, stripped in public, and assaulted by some unknown persons in Malda, West Bengal in 2023. However, the police allegedly detained the victim women instead of taking action against the perpetrators who assaulted them. The victims were kept under illegal

detention. The Commission sought reports from the State authorities. Based on the material on record, received from the concerned authorities, the Commission found that the incident was a gross violation of the human rights of the victim women. Therefore, it recommended that the Government of West Bengal pay Rs 3 lakh each as relief to the victims, which was paid. It was also informed that after the departmental inquiry, disciplinary action against four police officers, including the Inspector In-Charge of Bamongola Police Station, was initiated, and they were also transferred to other places.

Suicide of an under-trial prisoner

(Case No. 3872/18/25/2022-JCD)

The matter pertained to the suicide of a 26-year-old under-trial prisoner by hanging himself on a lemon tree situated on the back side of the ward with the help of a towel at the District Sub Jail- Jharsuguda, Odisha in 2022. Based on the material on record, received from the concerned authorities in response to its notices, the Commission found that the prisoner committed suicide in broad daylight,

which showed negligence on the part of the jail authorities in keeping a vigil. Therefore, it held that the Government of Odisha is liable for the negligence of its employees and recommended that it pay Rs 5 lakh as relief to the NoK of the victim, which was paid.

Custodial death

(Case No. 517/11/5/2020-AD)

The matter pertained to the death of a 24-year-old under-trial prisoner due to suicide at Idukki District Jail, Kerala in 2020. Based on the material on record, received from the concerned authorities in response to its notices, the Commission found that the deceased was in the custody of the state. Therefore, it was the responsibility of the state to protect his life. Hence, holding it vicariously liable for the negligence of its jail staff, the Commission recommended that the Government of Kerala pay Rs 4.5 lakh as relief to the NoK of the victim, which was paid. The state also informed that the concerned officer was suspended from the service for his negligence, and two others were transferred to the Central Prison, Viyyur, after a departmental enquiry.

Field visits

The Chairperson, Members and senior officers of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India visit various places in the country from time to time to assess the human rights situation and the status of the implementation of the Commission's advisories, guidelines and recommendations by the respective state governments and their concerned

authorities. They also visit shelter homes, prisons, observation homes, etc. and sensitise the government functionaries to make necessary efforts towards ameliorating the cause of human rights. Submission of timely reports by the state authorities to help the Commission in the early disposal of cases of human rights violations is also emphasized.

Visits by Members of the NHRC

On 3rd and 4th April, 2025, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Member, NHRC, India visited the Regional Mental Hospital and Yerwada Central Jail in Pune, Maharashtra to assess the human rights situation and various facilities available to the inmates. He also interacted with the inmates and their staff at both places.



► NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi interacting with the inmates of the Regional Mental Hospital in Pune, Maharashtra

On 4th April, 2025, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, NHRC, India Member, visited the Priyadarshini Old Age Home and Swadhar Shelter Home in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. She found that the Old Age Home housed 18 elderly persons living in a miserable condition. The Home lacked access to proper food, medication and care facilities. About the Swadhar Shelter Home, she also noted that it was a cramped facility that housed 14 girls, though the records falsely claimed meals for 40 people. They lived in isolation without any opportunity to go outside.

Later, from 7th-10th April, 2025, she visited several places in Tamil Nadu to ascertain the human rights situation. These included the dormitory for males and females, kitchen, common area and bathrooms of Lady Doak College, Shakti Vidiyal Child Care Reception Home and Rajaji Home for the Aged, Child Welfare Committee in Madurai, Tamil Nadu State Human Rights Commission,

and UG Men's Hostel at Government Kilpauk Medical College, and the Kilpauk Police Station in Chennai.

During the inspection of the Lady Doak College Hostel, she found that it lacked hygiene. There was no proper accounting of stock in the mess. The dormitories had no proper beds, and electric appliances were non-functional, raising serious concerns about the students' living conditions and safety. Her observations resulted in a quick action by the authorities to clean up and improve the overall living conditions, prompting the students to send the photos expressing gratitude.

At Rajaji Home for the Aged, she found that only physically fit elderly persons, who could walk and manage their routines, were being admitted there. She noted that the facility provided nutritious meals and engaging activities. She also suggested measures for improvement. In the Shakti Vidiyal Child Care Reception Home, she suggested measures for improvement. She also visited the Child Welfare Committee and found that the milk was missing from the menu.



► NHRC, India Member, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani inspecting the Shakti Vidiyal Child Care Reception Home in Madurai, Tamil Nadu



► NHRC, India Member, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani inspecting the Swadhar Shelter Home in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh

During her interaction with the Chairperson, Members, Registrar (Law), and SSPs of the Tamil Nadu State Human Rights Commission, she discussed various aspects of human rights institution's functioning.

While visiting the UG Men's Hostel at Government Kilpauk Medical College in Chennai, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani found that the premises was unhygienic with a foul smell emanating from the surroundings; the rooms housed more students than the capacity. She also found that the mess in charge and staff were giving inconsistent information about the food and other facilities.

She noted that the Kilpauk police station lacked sufficient staff. She also observed that police refused to register a complaint about an assault on a woman belonging to the SC community but registered a counter-complaint against her. The Member advised the victim woman to submit her complaint to the NHRC and the police authorities to take appropriate action on such complaints of atrocity against women.

On 18th April, 2025, NHRC, India Member, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani visited the Priyadarshini Hostel for Tribal and Scheduled Castes children, Hyderabad, Telangana. The inspection highlighted the plight of children who were not provided proper food items and the unhygienic and poor sanitary conditions of the Hostel.

Visits by Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has designated 15 Special Rapporteurs to monitor human rights conditions across various regions of the country. They conduct visits to shelter homes, prisons, observation homes, and similar institutions, compiling reports for the Commission that detail their observations and suggestions for future action. Additionally, the Commission has appointed 21 Special Monitors tasked with overseeing specific thematic human rights issues and reporting their findings to the Commission. Throughout April, 2025, both Special Rapporteurs and Monitors conducted visits to numerous locations.

Special Rapporteurs

- From 3rd-9th April, 2025, Smt Suchitra Sinha visited a Shelter Home, One Stop Centres, SC/ ST Residential School and a Community Health Centre in Khunti, Jharkhand to assess the status of various facilities.
- From 15th- 22nd April, 2025, Shri Akhil Kumar Shukla visited Central Jail, Imphal in Manipur, Modern Psychiatry Hospital in Narsingarh, Children Home, Blind Home, a drug de-addiction centre in Agartala and other such institutions in Tripura to assess the human rights situation.



► NHRC, India Special Rapporteur, Shri Akhil Shukla interacting with female prisoners of Central Jail, Sajiwa, Imphal, Manipur

- From 20th- 25th April, 2025, Shri Mahesh Singla visited various adoption centres and other facilities under the Delhi Government to assess the human rights situation.



► NHRC, India Special Rapporteur, Shri Mahesh Singla inspecting the Children of the World centre, Dwarka, New

- From 20th-26th April, 2025, Shri Umesh Kumar Sharma visited jails and the government healthcare institutions at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels in Bhopal, Raisen and Narmadapuram in Madhya Pradesh to assess the status of the facilities.
- From 22nd-27th April, 2025, Shri Umesh Kumar visited the Anganwadi Centres in Kamakhya and Pragjyotishnagar in Kamrup Metropolitan District, Assam to assess the human rights situation and the beneficiaries of the Anganwadi.

Special Monitors

- From 1st-6th April, 2025, Shri Veerendra Singh Rawat inspected various police training institutions to study issues related to training aspects, create awareness of human rights with reference to compensation scheme, health and condition of workers, SC/ ST offences, sexual offences at workplace, etc. in Vashi and Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- From 7th-12th April, 2025, Dr Sadhana Rout visited Maharashtra to meet vulnerable groups and various stakeholders in the cities of Mumbai and Nagpur to understand and examine the issues faced by women across different occupations, sectors and backgrounds.
- From 15th-17th April, 2025, Shri Yogesh Dube visited Deoghar district, Jharkhand to assess the human rights situation and collect data with reference to Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) under the Jharkhand Inclusive Education Programme.
- From 20th-22nd April, 2025, Shri Sanjay Agarwal visited Rajkiya Teachers' Training College, Deogarh, Jharkhand, to assess the various facilities and human rights situation.



► NHRC, India Special Monitor, Shri Sanjay Agarwal at Rajkiya Teachers' Training College, Deogarh, Jharkhand

- From 21st - 24th April, 2025, Shri Rakesh Asthana visited the rehabilitation camps of ex- insurgents at Diphu and Udalgiri in Assam to take stock of the human rights situation.
- From 22nd- 26th April, 2025, Shri Prem Singh Bisht visited Public Sector Units prone to human rights violations pertaining to business activities in Karnataka. He also undertook field visits to oversee ways of promoting human rights in business and industrial set up in Bengaluru and around in Karnataka.
- From 28th-30th April, 2025, Dr. Pradeepta Kumar Nayak met State Leprosy Officer (SLO), District officials of the Health and Leprosy programme, Social Welfare, Mental Health and other Departments, Hospitals, Community Health Centres, Primary Health Centres, General Communities and Leprosy Colonies to understand the problems related to the persons affected with Leprosy and facilities being provided to them in the Districts of Ranchi, Khunti, Seraikela Kharsawan and East Singhbhum in Jharkhand.

Capacity Building

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India is mandated to protect and promote human rights and build awareness about the same. For this purpose, it has been conducting internship programmes, collaborative training and various other activities to expand its outreach and human rights sensitisation. Internships are conducted in person as well as online. The online internships are organized to ensure that students from remote areas can join without any expenses for their travel and stay in Delhi. In addition, the Commission also organises a tailored human rights training programme for the officers of various services as its mission to uphold and safeguard human rights across all institutions, ensuring that the rights and dignity of every individual are protected.

Students' exposure visits

To promote human rights awareness among college-level students and their faculty, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India invites them to visit the Commission to understand human rights, their protection mechanism, and its functioning for this purpose in line with the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993. During April, 2025, 192 students and faculty members from seven colleges and universities visited the Commission. They were briefed by senior officers about the functioning of the Law and Investigation Divisions and the Complaints Management System. The visits were as follows:

- On 3rd April, 2025, students and faculty of the Ramaiah Institute of Legal Studies, Bengaluru, Karnataka, visited the NHRC, India. Chairperson, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian addressed them. He emphasized the importance of compassion in legal profession and outlined the qualities that define a good judge. The interaction was followed by a Q&A.
- On 4th April, 2025, a batch of 28 students and 2 faculty members from Dr. D. Y. Patil Law College, Pimpri, Pune, Maharashtra, came for a half-day orientation on human rights.
- On 7th April, 2025, 17 students and 2 faculty members from Mohammad Abdul Bari Institute of Juridical Science, Murshidabad, West Bengal, visited NHRC, India.
- On 9th April, 2025, 55 students and a faculty from the Campus Law Center, University of Delhi, visited NHRC, India.
- On 21st April, 2025, a batch of 10 students from Aurora University, Hyderabad, visited NHRC, India.
- On 22nd April, 2025, 30 students and a faculty member from the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi visited the NHRC, India.
- On 28th April, 2025, 15 students and a faculty member from Radha Govind University, Jharkhand, visited NHRC, India.



Ramaiah Institute of Legal Studies, Bengaluru, Karnataka



D. Y. Patil Law College, Pune, Maharashtra



Mohammad Abdul Bari Institute, Murshidabad, West Bengal



Campus Law Center, New Delhi



Department of Political Science, New Delhi



Radha Govind University, Jharkhand

NHRC in the International arena

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India, continues to engage with various international programmes to foster an exchange of ideas on various aspects of human rights. Several foreign institutional delegates visit the Commission and meet the Chairperson, Members and senior officers to understand the functioning of the Commission for the promotion and protection of human rights. The Commission's Chairperson, Members and other senior officers also visit various international forums to share their thoughts on the achievements of the Commission, interact with other NHRIs, and discuss the challenges to human rights in the fast-evolving world.

World Bank Group/ IMF Spring Meet in Washington DC

On 23rd April, 2025, Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India, delivered a talk at the World Bank Group (WBG) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Spring Meetings held in Washington DC during 21st - 26th April, 2025. As a key speaker in the high-level session titled 'Empowering Cities: The Vital Role of Sub-national Financing in Delivering Urban Infrastructure and Jobs,' Shri Lal offered an insightful overview of India's remarkable journey in urban development and the critical importance of sub-national governance and financing in fostering inclusive growth ensuring people's welfare and protection of their human rights. He highlighted India's resilient democratic framework, consistent high economic growth, and strong commitment to the rule of law, positioning the country as a model for other developing nations. Emphasizing the government's developmental focus, he underscored the role of purposeful leadership, good governance, and strategic technological adoption in delivering modern, inclusive, and resilient infrastructure that enhances the quality of life and upholds human dignity.

Drawing from India's urban transformation experience, Shri Lal referenced the successes of Gujarat post – 2001, particularly in cities like Ahmedabad and Surat, which have emerged as symbols of effective urban governance. These regional reforms have informed national-level flagship missions such as the Swachh Bharat Mission, which has significantly improved sanitation; the Jal Jeevan Mission, which has expanded household tap water access from 32 million (16.7%) to 156 million (80.5%) households within five years; AMRUT, which focuses on upgrading municipal infrastructure; and comprehensive programmes to ensure round-the-clock power supply and affordable housing. Shri Lal explained that the speed and scale of these programmes are supported by technological innovation, including the use of Internet of Things (IoT) devices, real-time monitoring, and data analytics. He highlighted the role of community especially by putting women at the centre stage in ensuring implementation and service delivery.

Shri Lal stressed the evolving role of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in India's infrastructure development narrative. He pointed out that several ULBs, including Ahmedabad, have accessed capital markets through municipal bonds, while commercial borrowing is increasingly being utilized for sectors such as water and sewage. He also



► NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal delivering a talk at the World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund Spring Meetings at Washington DC



► A section of attendees

emphasized the significance of India's Finance Commission, a constitutional body, which is formed every five years, and devolves funds to different level of governments including local self-governments, strengthening fiscal federalism. Efficient collection of service charges was identified as vital for the financial viability of urban civic services. In this context, he also spoke on the recently announced Urban Challenge Fund with an outlay of Rs.100 thousand crore (USD 12 billion), designed to support ULBs in mobilizing resources, preparing bankable projects, and attracting private investment. While still being operationalized, the fund holds promises for enabling long-term sustainability and self-reliance of municipal institutions.

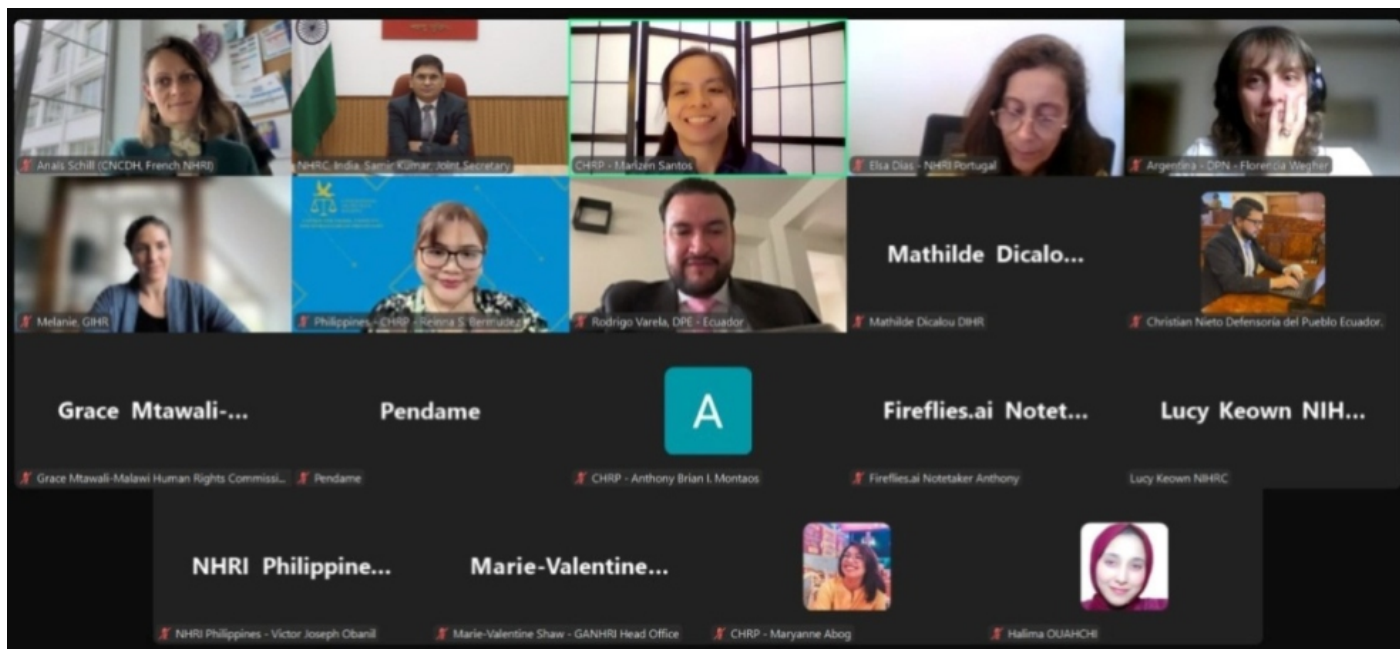
His address, enriched with data, ground-level insights, and policy innovations, resonated strongly with the audience comprising global development leaders, financial experts, private investors and senior officials from the World Bank and IFC. The remarkable expansion of the Jal Jeevan Mission, generated considerable interest, with many attendees viewing it as a scalable model for other countries. Shri Lal also stressed the vital role of digital governance,

transparent monitoring systems, and institutional reforms in delivering public services. He illustrated how these factors have created employment opportunities, improved public health outcomes, and contributed to India's sustained economic growth.

Beyond the speaking session, Shri Bharat Lal also had several high-level meetings, including with Shri Ajay Banga, President of the World Bank; Executive Director of India, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, Shri Parmeshwaran Iyer, and Shri V. M. Kwatra, Ambassador of India to the United States. In these engagements, he highlighted NHRC, India's commitment to protection and promotion of human rights and discussed socio-economic development, governance, reforms and digital transformation. These discussions reinforced India's global standing as a development partner focused on equity, sustainability, and innovation. His presence at the Spring Meetings helped project India's development story and opportunity for investment in infrastructure to a global audience, demonstrating how well-coordinated governance, robust financing mechanisms, and technological interventions can collectively transform living conditions of people and make cities engines of high economic growth.

Meeting of GANHRI Working Group on Business and Human Rights

On 23rd April, 2025, Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary, NHRC, India participated in the virtually convened meeting of the GANHRI Working Group (WG) on Business and Human Rights (BHR). Mr Marizen Santos, Division Chief, International Obligations Monitoring Human Rights Policy Linkages Offices, Commission on Human Rights (CHR) of the Philippines chaired it. Besides India, attending NHRIs included Argentina, Ecuador, Germany, Morocco, Malawi, Northern Ireland, Philippines, Portugal, France and Denmark. The agenda covered the election of the WG Vice-Chair, with Morocco NHRI elected unanimously. The group reviewed the 2025/ 2026 Strategic Plan, including the proposal submitted to the 14th UN Forum on BHR. It was also decided to have a discussion on migrant workers, gender equality and work in the subsequent meetings of the Working Group.



► NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar participating in the virtually convened meeting of the GANHRI Working Group on Business and Human Rights

New Joining

On 7th April, 2025, Shri Samir Kumar, a 1999 batch officer of Indian Railway Traffic Service (IRTS), joined the Commission as the Joint Secretary. He holds a postgraduate degree in History from Delhi University and an MBA from Durham University Business School, UK. He has over 25 years of experience in logistics, transportation, operations, and administration in various capacities. Before joining the Commission, he served as the Addl. Divisional Railway Manager of the Delhi Division, Chief Commercial Manager, Northern Railways and Director in the Ministry of Railways. He has also served on the governing council of the Centre for Transportation Research and Management (CTRAM) and is actively involved with several think tanks of the logistics sector such as CILT (Charter Institute of Logistics & Transportation) the Institute of Railway Transportation (IRT) and the Asian Institute of Transport Development (AITD).

He has undergone management training at leading business schools of the world INSEAD, Singapore, IIM, Lucknow, MDI, Gurugram and has also done leadership course from ICLIF, Kuala Lumpur.



News from State Human Rights Commissions

The promotion and protection of human rights is always a work in progress, given the ever-expanding dimensions of human life and related challenges. In India, besides the democratically elected governments constitutionally committed to ensuring the welfare of the people by protecting their basic human rights, there are institutions of legislature, judiciary, a vibrant media, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and State Human Rights Commissions (SHRCs), as well as the other National Commissions and their state counterparts working as watchdogs of rights and issues of various segments of society. This column intends to highlight the exceptional activities of the SHRCs undertaken to protect and promote human rights.

Haryana State Human Rights Commission

During March, 2025, the Haryana State Human Rights Commission (HSHRC), Chairperson Justice Lalit Batra, inspected the Tau Devi Lal Old Age Home for the destitute women (Snehadham), Gurugram. Presently, it houses 18 inmates. He found that 11 inmates possess Aadhaar cards and none have Aayushman Cards or family identity cards. Besides, none were issued Disability Certificates or old age pension, although all residents suffer from chronic ailments. Instructions were given to the concerned officials to ensure the early issuance of these documents. A civil hospital doctor visits every month. However, it was recommended that the specialist doctor should visit every week for better



► HSHRC Chairperson, Justice Lalit Batra interacting with the inmates of the Tau Devi Lal Old Age Home for the destitute women (Snehadham), Gurugram

healthcare. The inmates appeared content, and the staff was found caring.

Punjab State & Chandigarh (UT) Human Rights Commission

On 24th April, 40 students from Rayat Bahra University, Law Department, Mohali, visited the Punjab State & Chandigarh (U.T) Human Rights Commission for an insightful one-day session. The visit aimed to provide students with practical exposure to the functioning of the Commission. During the session, the students were briefed on the role and responsibilities of the Commission, including its procedures for addressing human rights violations.

This visit offered a valuable opportunity for the students to engage with the Commission and understand its critical work in safeguarding human rights across the State.



► Visiting students of the Law Department, Rayat Bahra University, Mohali

West Bengal State Human Rights Commission

On 9th April, 2025, a delegation of the West Bengal State Human Rights Commission (WBSHRC), led by Chairperson, Justice Jyotirmay Bhattacharya and comprising Member, Justice Madhumati Mitra, and Registrar, Shri Saugata Chakraborty, visited Rajganj Rural Hospital in Jalpaiguri District. The Commission found the hospital well-equipped, offering both indoor and outdoor services, with 35 functional beds and air-conditioned wards. Patients were provided with uniforms, enhancing hygiene and patient care.



► WBSHRC officers inspecting the Rajganj Rural Hospital in Jalpaiguri District

All treatments, including allopathic, homoeopathic, and Ayurvedic, are free, along with medicines and diagnostic tests.

The Commission commended the school health check-ups conducted by the hospital regularly. It found that with proper medicine management, internet access, CCTV surveillance, and ambulance services, the hospital is a role model for rural healthcare.

Karnataka State Human Rights Commission

On 4th April, 2025, the Karnataka State Human Rights Commission (KSHRC) conducted open hearings of various cases of human rights violations at Ramanagara District. It heard 72 cases and also received 18 new cases. Besides, the officers visited Hubballi to conduct a spot enquiry into a case which they had registered on *suo motu* basis about the death of a man in a police encounter on 28th March, 2025.



► KSHRC conducting a spot enquiry into a case of police encounter

The Commission had an interactive session with the District Level Officers, including the Deputy Commissioner, Superintendent of Police, Chief Executive Officer, and Zilla Panchayat. About 300 district-level officers of various departments participated in the interactive session.

The KSHRC also visited the District Jail, Central Bus-stand, Government-run pre- and post-matric Girls and Boys Hostels and other Government establishments. The team interacted with the inmates of the jail and hostels. The KSHRC disposed of 306 cases of human rights violations during April, 2025.

Madhya Pradesh State Human Rights Commission

During April, 2025, the Madhya Pradesh State Human Rights Commission (MPSHRC) took *suo motu* cognizance of 05 incidents of human rights violations and recommended Rs 38 lakh 20 thousand as relief to the Next of Kin of the victims. Besides this, in three other matters, its intervention ensured that the electricity connection and meter was restored to a hostel for tribal students, a family got an Ayushman Card, and a person got disability certificate to get a concession in train tickets.

News in brief

- On 1st April, 2025, NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi addressed as Chief Guest, the Odisha Diwas organized by the Odisha Nagarika Samaj, Bhubneshwar, Odisha.
- From 3rd-4th April, 2025, NHRC, India DG (I) Shri R Prasad Meena visited Manipur, Assam and held discussions with the senior officers of the State Government as well as with the officers of the State Human Rights Commission.
- On 4th April, 2025, NHRC, India Member, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani inaugurated the shelter home 'Stree Adhikar' at Gurajada Kalakshetram, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. She said that globalisation, cultural shifts, and family disintegration-like issues are also impacting women financially and emotionally. The NHRC, India continues to address the concerns of women's rights issues to build awareness. She said that the Commission also conducts surprise inspections of shelter homes to ensure better facilities. The event was attended by the Visakhapatnam Police Commissioner, entrepreneurs and representatives from the Women & Child Welfare Department.

- On 6th April, 2025, NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi addressed as the Chief Guest the Golden Jubilee of Gokarnika Sahitya Samaj and released its Odia literary journal at Jaraka, Bhubaneswar, Odisha.



- On 7th April, 2025, NHRC, India Member, Shri Priyank Kanoongo attended Ashoka Astami Mela at Chengal Bengal Temple in Guwahati, West Bengal.
- On 8th April, 2025, NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, addressed as the Chief Guest the Right to Education Conclave organized by the Odisha Abibhabak Mahasangh in collaboration with the Human Rights Front Odisha Rte forum BIKALP in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

- From 8th-9th April, 2025, NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi addressed as Chief Guest the two days workshop organized by Beti Bachao Abhijan at Bhubneshwar in Odisha.
- On 11th April, 2025, NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian addressed the Graduation Day Ceremony at Ramakrishan Vivekanand College, Chennai, Tamil Nadu. He highlighted India's ancient tradition of upholding human rights. He emphasized that these rights are deeply ingrained in Indian culture, citing the Tamil poet Thiruvalluvar.



- On 12th April, 2025, NHRC, India Member, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani addressed the two-day conference on women's issues 'Mahila Samanvayam', organized by the Drishti Stree Prabodhan Adhyayan Kendra at the Mahalakshmi Temple, Goa. The Member spoke about NHRC, India's functioning, collaborations and activities. Chief Minister of Goa, Shri Pramod

Pandurang Sawant and Chairperson, NCW, Smt Vijaya Rahatkar, were also present.

- On 12th April, 2024, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal delivered a talk virtually at a National Seminar on Human Rights in India organized by the Princeton Foundation.
- On 13th April, 2025, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressed Vridha Sewa Samman function organized by SHEOWS and honoured people contributing to improving the lives of older persons particularly those abandoned. In his address, he commended their exemplary work and called upon youth to get involved in this endeavour. He pointed out that number of persons in 60 years and more, which is now 10% of our population, will increase to 20% in 2047. Shri Lal said that there is a need to develop more robust infrastructure for their care and enabling them to contribute meaningfully. They are depository of our age-old values and wisdom, which must be passed on to younger generations.



- On 14th and 15th April, 2025, NHRC, India Member, Shri Priyank Kanoongo attended the Ambedkar Jayanti Celebrations at Vidisha and Lambakheda in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.



- On 15th April, 2025, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal delivered a lecture as part of the INSA-NCGG Leadership Development in Science and Technology (LEADS)- April 2025 Programme organized at India National Science Academy (INSA), New Delhi. He also delivered the valedictory address.
- On 17th April, 2025, NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi delivered the 17th Dr Ambedkar Memorial lecture on 'Re - imagining Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision for a Viksit Bharat: Perspectives on inclusion, innovation and sustainability.' It was organized by the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi.
- On 18th April, 2025, NHRC, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal took a session on the theme 'Human Values and Good Governance' as part of the Mid-Career Training Programme for the In-service IFS officers at IIFM, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. During the session, he emphasized the intrinsic link between ethical governance and the protection of human rights, highlighting the role of public servants in upholding constitutional values, fostering inclusive development, and ensuring accountability and transparency in administration. He also underscored the importance of integrating human dignity, compassion, and ecological responsibility into everyday governance practices to build a more equitable and sustainable society.
- On 19th April, 2025, NHRC, India Member, Shri Priyank Kanoongo delivered a lecture on 'Human

Rights' organized by the Aayudh Research Foundation on the occasion of the 135th Birth Anniversary of Baba Saheb Ambedkar in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

- On 22nd April, 2025, NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian delivered Nani Palkhivala Memorial lecture on 'Science, Technology and Human Rights' organized by School of Law, Sastra University in Trichy, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu. He said that the role of science and technology in shaping emerging fourth-generation human rights is an area that demands focused attention from legal professionals.

He identified somatic rights and digital rights as the two primary categories within fourth-generation rights that are being influenced by advancements in science and technology. By referencing cases from the Federal Court of the USA and the Queen's Court in the UK, he distinguished between the pursuit of truth in science and the pursuit of justice in human rights law. Emphasizing the need to strike a balance between the two, he discussed how scientific advancements are impacting the administration of criminal justice, how they are giving rise to new rights, and how they can simultaneously pose threats to existing rights. He also pointed out that long standing rights and traditional values could be affected in the process.

He urged young law students to engage with these issues thoughtfully and with a nuanced perspective, cautioning that, unlike in science where errors can often be corrected, a wrong decision at the final stage of justice leaves no room for correction.



- On 26th April, 2025, NHRC, India Member Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi addressed as the Chief Guest a seminar on 'Human Rights Activism and Role of Legal Fraternity' organized by the Ganjam Bar Association, Berhampur, Odisha.
- On 27th April, 2025, NHRC, India Member, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani chaired the roundtable conference 'Advancing infant and young child feeding for global health' at the World Health Summit Regional Meeting- 2025, organized by the UNICEF, Sushena Foundation, and Rishihood University at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. She said that the NHRC, India has held nutrition as a fundamental human right. Its advisories highlight the multi-dimensional



causes of malnutrition, addressing the influence of social protection, food systems, and access to health in the broader economic and political context. The Member also said that the Commission's focus on implementing the Integrated Child Development Scheme, Poshan Abhiyaan, and the Right to food as enforceable rights adds strength and clarity to the shared agenda.

She endorsed the participant's view that breastfeeding must no longer be viewed as a personal decision; it must be recognized, respected, and promoted as a public health responsibility. Experts, doctors from various medical universities & officials from the Ministry of Health also participated.

- On 29th April, 2025, NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, visited Bhubneshwar, Odisha to attend Golden Jubilee Year Celebration of OAB Bhubaneswar. The next day he attended the 44th State Level Bhakata Kabi Jayadev Jayanti at Sriram Chandra Bhawan, Cuttack, Odisha.
- On 30th April, 2025, NHRC, India Member, Shri Priyank Kanoongo visited Chapra, Saran district in Bihar to attend "Rashtra Jyoti Samman" organized to honour the unsung Karmayogis engaged in nation-building and promoting awareness about constitutional and human rights among grassroots communities.

Forthcoming events

5th June, 2025

The Commission will organize two-week Online Short-Term Internship for undergraduate and postgraduate-level students.

16th June, 2025

The Commission will begin its Summer Internship Programme for postgraduate-level students at its premises in New Delhi.

Complaints in April, 2025

Number of fresh complaints received	4,829
Number of cases disposed of including old cases	3,207
Number of cases under consideration of the Commission	12,325

NHRC, India's milestones from April, 2024 to March, 2025

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India, established on 12th October, 1993 under the Protection of Human Rights Act, has been a steadfast guardian of human rights for over three decades. As the country's premier human rights body, the NHRC, India has played a vital role in safeguarding the rights and dignity of all segments of society.

Through swift enquiries, resolution of human rights violations, and proactive initiatives, the Commission works tirelessly to uphold justice. Its efforts extend beyond borders—organising national conferences, engaging with international forums, and fostering global dialogue to exchange ideas and share best practices for a more humane world.

Thus, with a legacy rooted in justice, compassion, and action, the NHRC, India continued to serve as a beacon of hope and a voice for the voiceless during the period under review from 1st April, 2024 to 31st March, 2025. The Commission pursued a dynamic and impactful agenda—marked by swift interventions, complaint redressal with relief to victims, on-ground investigations, policy advisories, officer sensitization, and deep engagement with Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), State Commissions, and the media. With every initiative, NHRC reaffirms its unwavering commitment to human rights—ensuring dignity, justice, and accountability for all.

New Chairperson and Members take their charge

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India, welcomed new Chairperson and Members this year. Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian, former Judge of the Supreme Court of India, assumed charge as Chairperson on 30th December, 2024. He was joined by Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, former Chief Justice of the Jharkhand High Court, as Member on the same day, and Shri Priyank Kanoongo, former Chairperson of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), who took



► Justice V. Ramasubramanian addressing the gathering after receiving his Presidential warrant of appointment as NHRC, India Chairperson from the Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal



► Dignitaries on the dais on the occasion



► Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi and Shri Priyank Kanoongo receiving their Presidential warrants of appointment as NHRC, India Members from Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal



office as a Member on 21st December 2024. Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General and CEO of the NHRC, India presented them with their Presidential warrants of appointment.

These appointments followed the completion of the tenure of the previous Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra, and Members Shri Rajiv Jain on 1st June, 2024, and Dr. Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay on 24th April, 2024. In the interim, NHRC Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani served as the Acting Chairperson.

Addressing complaints of human rights violations

The Commission registered a total of **58,753** cases, including **99** cases initiated *suo motu* based on media reports, 1,987 of deaths in judicial custody, 140 of deaths in police custody and 120 cases of deaths in police encounter. The top ten categories of human rights complaints due to the action, omission and inaction by various public authorities were in the matters of trouble by anti-social elements (7,318), failure in taking lawful action (4,192), abuse of power (3,102), land dispute (2,987), deaths in judicial custody (1,987), inaction by the public authorities (1,628), matrimonial disputes (1,620), family disputes (1,598), intimidation/ threatening / extortion by anti-social elements and land grabbing (1,364).

A total of **55,821** cases were disposed of, including carry-forward cases from the previous year. Monetary relief amounting to **Rs 13.45 crore** was recommended to the victims or their next of kin in **332** cases. Spot investigations were conducted in **23** cases, and analysis was carried out in **1,480** cases of deaths in judicial custody and **236** cases of deaths in police custody, **185** cases of deaths in encounter. Besides, **202** cases were those in which the Commission, through its investigation team found the facts in the wake of various allegations.

Among its many impactful actions during the year, the NHRC, India made several notable interventions in cases of serious human rights violations across the country. These included addressing the ongoing violence and rights abuses in Sandeshkhali, West Bengal, and exposing anti-labour practices at a multinational company's warehouse in Manesar, Haryana. The Commission also took a strong stand against the inhumane custom of Nata Pratha, intervened in a

shocking case of sexual abuse of a minor girl in Kerala, and responded to allegations of workplace discrimination by Foxconn—a key manufacturer of Apple devices—for reportedly excluding married women from employment at its Sriperumbudur plant in Tamil Nadu, among others.

Through timely notices and active engagement with the concerned authorities, the NHRC, India pushed for accountability and justice. In several cases, victims came forward to express their heartfelt gratitude for the Commission's swift and decisive action—affirming the NHRC's role as a vigilant and compassionate defender of human rights.

National Conferences: Dialogue for Change

Throughout the year, the NHRC, India hosted a series of five national conferences to spotlight pressing human rights issues and spark meaningful dialogue. These forums served as powerful platforms to bring together senior government officials, national and state commissions, legal experts, academics, civil society voices, and the NHRC's own Special Monitors and Rapporteurs.

The aim was to evaluate existing laws, bridge implementation gaps, and craft actionable solutions to safeguard human rights across the country.

Key themes addressed:

- **Women's Safety in Workplaces and Public Spaces**

The symposium emphasized on the need for a holistic approach to ensure women's safety. The symposium highlighted the importance of strengthening existing laws, conducting safety and social audits, and implementing gender sensitization programs to address the issue effectively.

- **Combating Human Trafficking in the Digital Age**

The conference highlighted the use of the internet, social media, and other online tools in facilitating trafficking crimes and explored preventive measures involving technology, law enforcement, and community participation. Key recommendations included amending the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (ITPA) to include cyber trafficking and establishing linkages between ITPA and the IT Act.

- **Mental well-being: Navigating Stress from Classroom to Workplace**

The conference covered three areas namely 'stress among children and adolescents,' 'mental health challenges in institutions of higher learning' and 'stress and burnout at workplace.' It aimed to explore the psychological impacts of stress at various stages of life, from education to employment to propose recommendations to promote mental well-being across different sectors.



► NHRC, India Acting Chairperson, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani addressing the National conference on 'Combating Human Trafficking in the Digital Age'

- **Rights of Older Persons**

The discussion had three technical sessions of the conference including addressing the issue of 'ageing of the aged,' 'analyzing the gendered face of ageing and how to tackle the same' and 'evaluating the healthcare scenario'.

- **Conference with SHRCs, Special Rapporteurs & Monitors to strengthen human rights efforts**

The conference aimed to enhance collaboration between the NHRC, its Special Rapporteurs/ Special Monitors, and the SHRCs to promote and protect human rights across India. The discussions focused on complaint management, follow-up actions on NHRC advisories, sharing best practices, capacity building for SHRCs, and visits and reports of Special Rapporteurs and Monitors. It also discussed suggestions from SHRCs for more effective collaboration with the NHRC in promoting human rights.

By uniting diverse perspectives, these conferences helped pave the way for stronger policies, better protection, and a more inclusive human rights landscape.



► NHRC, India Acting Chairperson, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani chairing the conference with SHRCs, Special Rapporteurs & Monitors in the presence of Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal and other senior officers

Besides, the Commission also organized the meeting of all the Ex-officio Members of the NHRC comprising the Chairpersons of the seven National Commissions on 19th April, 2024 chaired by the NHRC, India Chairperson to discuss the issue of ensuring the protection of the rights of the vulnerable and marginalised sections and share best practices and annual action plans in this regard. The meeting also underscored the inclusivity and plurality in the human rights mechanism in India.

Collaborative programmes

The Commission also collaborated with different organisations for seminars and activities that focused on various facets of human rights to create awareness and sensitisation. Some of the important collaborative programmes were: 'National Conference on the 'Universal Access to Healthcare: Digital Solutions'', day-long seminar on 'Ageing in India: Actionable Solutions- Drawing insights from Global, Regional, and National Best Practices' in collaboration with the Sankala Foundation.



► Dr V. K. Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog chairing the first session on the health and nutrition needs of the elderly in the seminar on 'Ageing in India: Actionable Solutions'



► Shri Amit Yadav, Secretary, Union Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment chairing the second session on economic security, social inclusion, and quality of life in the seminar on 'Ageing in India: Actionable Solutions'

The Commission supported a two-day Global Digital Health Summit 2024 in Mumbai. It was organized by the Indian Association of Private Psychiatry and the Institute of Human Behaviour & Allied Sciences. The Summit brought together national and international experts on one platform to deliberate on the future of healthcare through digital innovations. Besides the digital health mechanisms, it also focussed on mental health and human rights.



► Union Minister for External Affairs, Dr. S. Jaishankar inaugurating the exhibition

Further, it also supported an art exhibition 'Silent conversation: From margins to the centre', organized by the Sankala Foundation and the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), in collaboration with the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA). This initiative celebrated the deep connection between tribal communities, their cultural expressions, and the natural world they influence reflecting their eco-friendly lifestyle.

After this exhibition, 15 tribal artists among them were selected for the 9-day 'Artists-in-Residency' programme at Rashtrapati Bhavan. Hon'ble President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, who showed keen interest in these artworks, interacted with artists, and honoured them.



► President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu and NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal interacting with a tribal artist from Mizoram



► The President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu with the tribal artists and senior officers

Core groups

The NHRC, India has constituted several core groups on various thematic issues related to human rights and holds discussions with the domain experts, academicians and senior government functionaries representing concerned ministries. During the year under review, i.e. 2024-25, the Commission organized 9 core group meetings to discuss and understand the challenges facing human rights to firm up its recommendations to the government for improvements on the following subjects:

Criminal justice system reforms

The focus was on finding ways to address the delay in forensic reports, areas of improvement in the prosecution system, burking of offences, and simplification of language used in organs of the criminal justice system.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra chairing the meeting on the criminal justice system reforms in the presence of Member, Shri Rajiv Jain and senior officers

Health and mental health

The four technical sessions focused on the issuance of bonds in medical colleges, the issues related to disbursement of stipend to doctors, the rights of the patients and the rights of the doctors.

Bonded labour

Discussions were on impediments in the abolition of bonded labour, and the gaps in the rescue, relief and rehabilitation of the victims, among whom the women and children are frequent targets.



► NHRC, India Acting Chairperson, Vijaya Bharathi Sayani chairing the meeting in the presence of Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal and senior officers

Business and human rights

The discussions focussed on 'Safeguarding Dignity: Human rights due diligence across supply chains', understanding and identifying gaps and challenges in existing systems and emerging good practices to find a way forward.

Human Rights Defenders and NGOs

The discussion aimed to identify the roles, responsibilities and challenges of Human Rights Defenders in India.

Environment, climate change and human rights

The recommendations emanated from the deliberations made a case for collection of data on climate change at the district level to understand its dimensions and collaboration with local communities to develop expertise with sustainable solutions to mitigate its impact.

Human rights of children in conflict with law

The discussions suggested that it is necessary to first constitute a working group of experts to check and authenticate the available data with various agencies related to the children in conflict with the law, particularly their age and numbers and not essentially their identities for understanding the problems and redressal. For this, coordination and consultation with the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) and different High Courts was emphasized.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V Ramasubramanian chairing the core group on Human rights in conflict with law in the presence of Member, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani and senior officers

Disabilities

The three technical sessions focused on 'defining and classifying progressive disabilities', 'legal & policy framework for addressing disabilities' and 'promoting inclusive & equitable support services.'

Securing the rights of Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) to work with dignity

The three technical sessions deliberated upon were 'the evolving nature of challenges faced by ASHA', 'role of the government in protecting and promoting the rights of ASHAs', and 'Way forward: ensuring the right to work with dignity for ASHAs.'

Open house discussions

Besides these core group meetings, the Commission also organized 10 open house discussions with different stakeholders on various issues of human rights during the financial year, which were as under:

Enhancing access to legal aid for victims

The discussions focused on the challenges faced by accused individuals, victims, and their families in obtaining legal assistance at police stations; victim compensation in India and the impact of the legal definition of "victim" on these schemes and exploring the central role of NGOs and academic institutions in ensuring equal access to justice for victims.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra chairing the meeting in the presence of Members, Shri Rajiv Jain and Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal and other senior officers

Tribal Education in India: Problems, Policies and Perspective

The discussions focused on the persistent barriers to educational access for tribal communities, such as geographical isolation, language differences, and socio-economic issues.

Preventing Beggary and Rehabilitation of Individuals Engaged in Beggary

The meeting aimed to discuss the initiatives and welfare programmes implemented by both the Centre and State Governments, socio-economic disparities in the country, societal neglect, and rehabilitation of individuals engaged in begging, among others.

Human rights of children of sex workers and marginalised communities

The focus was on addressing the rights and challenges faced by children of sex workers, such as social stigma, limited access to education and healthcare, and increased vulnerability to exploitation; the rights of children from marginalized communities, emphasizing their unique needs and obstacles in accessing services and exploring the strategies and collaborative efforts among stakeholders like policymakers, NGOs, and civil society organisations to improve the protection and promotion of such children's rights.

Sports and Human Rights

The three technical sessions of the open house included 'rehabilitation of sportspersons after incidents of abuse,' 'mental health of sportspersons in India' and 'institutional frameworks required to safeguard interests of sportspersons.'

Rights of gig workers

The meeting aimed to address the gig workers' challenges, including their legal ambiguity, long working hours, gender disparity, financial instability, deprivation of health, mental health, safety and security from risks, physical exhaustion etc.

Ensuring privacy and human rights in the digital era

The meeting extensively discussed the intensity of the problem that arises due to misuse of data and data breaches. Gaps in the draft data protection rules, data usage and privacy concerns, corporate digital responsibility, consumer rights and policy simplification and several key provisions of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 were also discussed.

Rights of Manual Scavengers

The meeting aimed to discuss on the need to completely ban manual scavenging and ensure the dignity and well-

being of those involved. The three technical sessions were: 'addressing the issue of deaths in septic and were tanks in India,' 'the need for a complete ban on manual scavenging,' and 'rehabilitation measures for manual scavengers: a path towards dignity and empowerment and the way forward.'



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V Ramasubramanian chairing the meeting on the Rights of Manual Scavengers in the presence of Members, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal and senior officers

Rights of fishermen

The meeting aimed to discuss the importance of protecting the rights and welfare of fishermen, their concerns, including advocating for safe working conditions, fair compensation, and access to essential services. The three technical issued included, human rights violations of India's fishing communities, fishing rights and environmental issues and social security measures and welfare schemes for fishermen.

Derogatory practices towards women in India: Challenges and the way forward

The meeting aimed to focus the challenges faced by women including the gender discrimination and inequality, violence against women, strengthening of laws, education, gender discrimination, etc.

The suggestions, emanated from the deliberations during national seminars, core group meetings and open house discussions, were further given a thought over by the Commission to finalise its recommendations to the Centre and State governments. It received compliance reports from some States while others are being followed up.

Research

As per its mandate under the PHR Act, the NHRC, India continued to promote research studies on various aspects of human rights for building awareness and solutions to problems. It provided more impetus to this activity in 2024-2025. 15 research studies on various human rights issues were received completed and about 15 studies are ongoing.

Completed studies included:

1. Promotion of human rights in the Local Self Governance: Evidence from Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.
2. How effective are Gram Panchayats and Participatory Local Governance in safeguarding human rights of Forest and Tribal Communities (FTCs): A study of select Gram Panchayats in remote and extremist affected areas of Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh.
3. Achievements Gap or Opportunity Gap (O-Gap): A socio-legal study of access to Equal Educational Opportunities (EEO), accessibility of Equal Learning Opportunities (ELO) and Learning Poverty (LP) in the educational spaces of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Schools for tribal girls of Gadchiroli, Warangal, Adilabad, Srikakulam, Bastar and Kondegaon District.
4. An empirical study on working of Ashram Schools (boys and girls residential) with special reference to tribal areas located on inter-state border areas of central India (Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh).
5. Prevalence of malnutrition and associated factors among children aged 3-5 years attending ICDS Anganwadis: a study of Northern India (Delhi, Jharkhand, Bihar and U.P.).
6. Education for refugee learners in India: visualizing policy-oriented innovation and technological approach for increasing access.
7. Domestic workers in South India and North-East: A situational analysis from dignity and rights perspective.
8. Refugees' access to education, healthcare and livelihood.
9. Local Self Governance and promotion of rights of STs & SCs: A comparative study of Malkangiri District in Odisha and Gumla District in Jharkhand.

10. Prevalence of girl labour in the Indian textile industry: A study on the textile & garment clusters in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.
11. Research study on missing children.
12. Role of Child Care Institutions and rehabilitation of children in CCIs.
13. A study on the status, functioning and effectiveness of Swadhar Grehs and Ujjawala Homes for women and adolescent girls.
14. Substance abuse and mental health issues among the LGBT community in India: A study of inter-relationship between mental health disorders and stress, coping, perceived social support, occupation and religiosity.
15. Women's falling participation in labour force in India: A ground level investigation into factors and obstacles.

The ongoing and newly commissioned NHRC research studies include:

1. Skilling for enhancing access to labour market and employment among women with disabilities, particularly migrant households'
2. Access to employment by persons with disabilities: Status, identification of barriers and associated factors
3. Compensating victims of crime: A pan India study of victim compensation schemes & their effectiveness
4. Children in the shadows: unveiling dimensions of organized begging in Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata
5. A study of the socio-legal aspects of the adoption process in India with special reference to Delhi-NCR
6. A study on socially responsible supply chains for the protection of human rights
7. Commercialisation of non-timber forest product: Determinants and supply chain in India
8. Pandemic, human rights and the future of livelihood: An empirical evidence from Indian economy
9. Analysis of trends and patterns of deaths in prison & in police custody: An analytical study of such deaths in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh & Delhi
10. Custodial death: trends and patterns in Jharkhand, Bihar & West Bengal

11. A study to understand the reasons for the rising number of cases among children in conflict with law and undertrials in observation homes and under trial/ convicts under the NDPS Act lodged/ languishing in CCI/ observation homes and prisons and exploring the existing legislative policy and schematic response in sample states i.e., Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh
12. Social barriers that children of women engaged on intergenerational prostitution face in access to education
13. Caring about the rights of healers: Analysing human rights violations related to frontline doctors in India
14. Reintegration and rehabilitation of acid attack victims
15. Human trafficking: An evaluation study of functioning of AHTSUs optimal design of questionnaire survey on awareness of clinical trials among different stakeholders

Advisories

NHRC, India continued to address the concerns of vulnerable segments of society through its well-studied and pointed advisories for protection of their rights. This year, it added two more to its 25 advisories issued in the recent past. These two new advisories, sent to the centre, states and union territories for implementation, were as follows;

- Advisory on the protection of human rights of widows
- Advisory for the protection and rehabilitation of impoverished, uneducated children, women, and differently-abled individuals engaged in begging

Field visits

In addition to research, the NHRC conducts field visits to assess the human rights situation and the implementation status of its advisories, guidelines, and recommendations by state governments and relevant authorities. The Chairperson/ Acting Chairperson, Members, and senior officers visited various locations such as shelter homes, prisons, observation homes, hostels, schools, etc., to sensitise government functionaries and urge efforts toward improving human rights conditions in the country.



► NHRC, India Acting Chairperson, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani inspecting a school

During the year, the Acting Chairperson, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani made approximately 15 visits to various establishments and government-run facilities that included Medical College, ST Girls and Boys hostels, Tribal hostels, Schools, Government General Hospital, NGO, besides meeting with the District and State officials.



► NHRC, India Acting Chairperson, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani and Joint Secretary, Smt Anita Sinha interacting with the inmates of a Garima Greh in Maharashtra

The NHRC, India Member, Shri Priyank Kanoongo inspected shelter homes for women and children at Urdu Park, Jama Masjid and Motor Market in Delhi. He also visited Jhuggi Basti situated at Okhla, Delhi and Bhopal,



► NHRC, India Member, Shri Priyank Kanoongo inspecting a shelter home near Jama Masjid, Delhi

Vidisha and Raisen districts of Madhya Pradesh to spread human rights awareness and interact with the local communities/ people as well as civil society organisations to encourage their efforts.

Besides, the Commission has been concerned with the issue of discrimination faced by transgender persons and has been making recommendations from time to time to the government to ameliorate the cause of their human rights. The Members and senior officers completed visit to 12 Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) called Garima Greh shelters for them in nine states under the Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood & Enterprise (SMILE) scheme established by the Union Government.

The NHRC, India has designated 15 Special Rapporteurs to monitor human rights conditions across various regions of the country. They conducted various visits to shelter homes, prisons, observation homes, and similar institutions, compiling reports for the Commission that detail their observations and suggestions for future action. Additionally, the Commission has appointed 21 Special Monitors tasked with overseeing specific thematic human rights issues and reporting their findings to the Commission.

Capacity Building

The Commission has been conducting internship programmes, collaborative training and various other activities to expand its outreach and human rights sensitization. Internships are conducted in person as well as in online mode. It also organises a tailored human rights training programme for the officers of various services as its mission of upholding and safeguarding human rights across all institutions, ensuring that the rights and dignity of every individual is protected.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian addressing the valedictory session of Winter Internship-2024

During the year under review, the Commission organized five successful moot court competitions on various human rights-based case themes in different parts of the country with prestigious law universities across India. Outreach of human rights advocacy was extended beyond law schools, with over 45 collaborative training programmes including conferences and seminars conducted in universities, NGOs, civil society organisations and ATIs, PTIs and JTIs with financial assistance of Rs. 51.05 lakh benefitting 3,200 participants. In addition to these, there were 48 half-day visits of various university student delegations including their faculty members totalling 2,229 to understand human rights and the management of complaints related to their violations by the Commission.

Besides, 06 online short-term internships of 02 weeks each, summer and winter internship programmes of four weeks each were also conducted, in which more than 554 university-level students from different parts of the country participated. The interns were exposed to various aspects of human rights in different sessions by the NHRC Members, senior officers and subject experts. They were also taken on virtual as well as physical field visits to prisons, police stations, NGOs, etc. to understand their functioning.



► NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Shri D.K. Nim delivering the inaugural address at the NHRC-RGSOIP Kharagpur Moot Court Competition

In addition to internship programmes, the NHRC had over 48 half-day visits of more than 2,229 students and faculty members from various colleges and universities across the country for brief orientations on human rights and insights into the Commission's structure and functioning.

Training of trainer's programme for IAS/ IPS/ IFS officers

Another important initiative of the Commission was the Training of Trainer's Programme. During the said time frame, the NHRC, India started as a new initiative the training programmes in collaboration with national academies of All India Services to sensitise IAS, IPS & IFS officers, officers of state police, central armed police forces and prisons and build their capacity to protect and promote human rights as they work on the ground. Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, senior officers, government functionaries, subject experts at national and international level shared their experiences with the officers during their training on various aspects of human rights including, national and international treaties, covenants, and related laws to help them in carrying out their official responsibilities with sensitivity.

Besides this, the Commission also organized Capacity-Building training for the Arunachal Pradesh State Human Rights Commission at its premises.

Foundation Day

Apart from these activities for promoting and protecting human rights of all, the Commission also commemorated two important days-to mark its Founda-



► The Vice President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar addressing the NHRC, India Foundation Day



► A section of participants

tion Day and Human Rights Day. The Commission organized a day-long National Conference on the 'Rights of Older Persons' to mark its 31st Foundation Day at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi on 18th October, 2024 instead of on 12th October as it coincided with a festival. The Vice President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The Vice President said that Bharat is way ahead of other nations when it comes to preservation of human rights, particularly of minorities, marginalized and vulnerable sections of society. He also highlighted Bharat's extraordinary role as a civilizational custodian of human rights while expressing concern over the global silence on human rights violations in other parts of the world.

The day-long national conference on the 'Rights of Older Persons' on the occasion reflected the Commission's steadfast resolve to protect the rights of the elderly has taken several steps including forming a core group and issuing guidelines in this regard. Various prominent government functionaries, key ministry officers and experts addressed the conference on the three technical sessions of the conference including; 'Addressing the issue of 'Ageing of the Aged,' 'Analyzing the gendered face of ageing and how to tackle the same' and 'Evaluating the healthcare scenario evoked, various thoughts on the gaps between the policies, their implementation, new challenges and the way forward.

Human Rights Day

Similarly, the day-long National Conference on 'Mental Well-being: Navigating Stress from Classroom to Workplace' marked the Human Rights Day celebrations at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on 10th December, 2024. It aimed at exploring the psychological



► The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu addressing the gathering

impacts of stress at various stages of life—from education to employment to propose recommendations to promote mental well-being across different sectors. The conference brought together experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to discuss the relationship between mental health, stress, and well-being. The three sessions of the national conference focused on: 'Stress among children and adolescents,' 'Mental health challenges in institutions of higher learning' and 'Stress and burnout at workplace.'

Earlier, addressing the gathering, the President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu said that the celebration of Human Rights Day provides an opportunity to reflect on the ideals enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and reaffirm our collective resolve to contribute to building a world where justice and human dignity are the bedrock of society. She commended the NHRC, India and SHRCs in addressing rights violations, raising awareness and recommending policy changes to uphold the rights of the marginalized. She also emphasized the need to ponder over the dimensions of Artificial Intelligence solving many problems and creating several new ones too. She called for formulating policies and measures preserving older persons' dignity and well-being.

International arena

The NHRC, India's international engagements during 2024–2025 underscore its leadership in global human rights advocacy. The Commission's strong representation at GANHRI and APF, Capacity-Building initiatives for the Global South, and high-level strategic dialogues position it as a vital actor in shaping inclusive and rights-based governance both domestically and globally. With its commitment to the ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam—the world is one family—the NHRC, India continues to advance its mission of promoting justice, equality, and dignity for all through collaboration, innovation, and shared learning.

Participation in global forums

- **GANHRI and APF Engagements:** From 5th to 9th May, 2024, the Chairperson, Justice Arun Mishra and Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal took part in several major events organized by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) and the Asia Pacific Forum (APF).

On 5th May, 2024, Justice Mishra and Shri Lal participated in the Governance Committee meeting of the Asia Pacific Forum (APF) of NHRIs, which reviewed its Mid-term Report, Annual Operational Plan & Budget (2024-25), and APF policies. Subsequently, on 6th May, 2024, they joined the Regional Meeting of the APF, to build strategies to bolster NHRIs in the region to uphold and safeguard human rights in their respective nations. Shri Bharat Lal, in his capacity as Chairperson of the Finance Committee of the GANHRI, presented the financial report during the General Assembly in Geneva on 7th May, 2024. The Assembly adopted the financial and audit report, approved the budget for 2024, and outlined strategies for fundraising.

On 8th May, 2024, Justice Mishra and Shri Lal participated in the GANHRI 2024 Annual Conference at Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 'Business and Human Rights: The Role and Experiences of NHRIs'. Addressing a session on 'Business and Human Rights Regulations - Towards a Smart Mix', Justice Mishra highlighted India's endeavours to harmonize business activities with human rights principles. He stressed the



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Arun Mishra and Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal participating in the Governance Committee meeting of the Asia Pacific Forum (APF) of NHRIs in Geneva

necessity of a balanced approach, encompassing both voluntary and mandatory measures at national and international levels, to address the impacts of business activities on human rights. Furthermore, Justice Mishra underscored NHRC, India's initiatives, including the formation of a core group on business and human rights and the issuance of various advisories, on different segments of society and vocations, aimed at achieving a harmonious balance between development imperatives and human rights for sustainable development.

- **OEWG on Ageing at the UN, New York:** From 20th – 24th May, 2024, NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani and Joint Secretary, Smt. Anita Sinha participated in the 14th Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, highlighting India's initiatives on elder health care, public participation, and welfare schemes.
- **Human Rights Council Statements:** On 21st and 27th June, 2024, NHRC, India submitted video statements during the 56th Session of the Human Rights Council, focusing on internally displaced persons and trafficking, reflecting the Commission's commitment to vulnerable groups.
- **APF Annual General Meeting, Bangkok:** On 25th September, 2024, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal accompanied by the Joint Secretary, Shri Devendra Kumar Nim represented the NHRC, India at the 29th Annual General Meeting of the Asia Pacific Forum (APF) of the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in Bangkok, Thailand. The foundational role of the NHRC, India in the APF was reiterated besides engaging in strategic governance discussions. Shri Lal also delivered a talk on 'Human Rights Defenders and Civic Space in India' where he presented India's approach to defending civic space and protecting human rights defenders.
- **GANHRI Bureau meeting in Doha, Qatar:** On 27th November, 2024, the NHRC, India Acting Chairperson, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani and Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal attended the GANHRI Bureau meeting in Doha, Qatar. As Chair of the Bureau's Finance Committee, Shri Bharat Lal presented its report. The report included the financial progress in 2024

and the Budget proposal for 2025. He also proposed enhancing and diversifying fundraising. The 16-member Governing Bureau adopted and approved the report.

- **High-level meetings at the Global Forums of NHRIs in Geneva:** In March, 2025, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian, Chairperson, NHRC, India, accompanied by Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, led the Commission's delegation to a series of high-level meetings at the Palais des Nations, United Nations Headquarters in Geneva. These included the annual meetings of the Asia Pacific Forum (APF) of NHRIs, meeting of the Bureau and the General Assembly of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), the Commonwealth Forum of NHRIs (CFNHRI), and other important engagements.

Regional collaboration - APF

On 10th March, 2025, Justice V. Ramasubramanian and Shri Bharat Lal participated in the Asia Pacific Forum's regional network meeting. A key outcome of the meeting was the election of the Philippines' NHRI as the Asia-Pacific region's alternate representative on the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA), underscoring the importance of regional cooperation in strengthening human rights institutions.

GANHRI Bureau

The NHRC delegation also took part in the GANHRI Bureau meeting, comprising 16 members with participation from UNDP and UNHRC as special members. Shri Bharat Lal, in his capacity as Chairperson of GANHRI's Finance Committee, presented the

Committee's financial report. Justice Ramasubramanian, a Bureau member, was also present, reaffirming NHRC, India's active leadership role within the global human rights community. The Finance Committee—comprising NHRIs from the UK, Malawi, El Salvador, and India—reviewed key financial matters including budgetary allocations, expenditure, project funding, and audit outcomes.

GANHRI General Assembly

The General Assembly of the GANHRI convened on 11th March, 2025, focused on key organizational matters such as the adoption of the draft agenda, review of previous decisions, election of new leadership, and approval of financial statements. Shri Bharat Lal presented the Finance Committee's comprehensive report, detailing budget forecasts, fund mobilization, fee waivers, and audit findings. The report was unanimously adopted by the Assembly. In the General Assembly, a leadership was also elected: Ms Amina Bouayach, Chairperson of Morocco's National Human Rights Council, was appointed Chairperson of GANHRI, while Mr Alyson Kilpatrick, Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, was named Secretary.

GANHRI Annual Conference on Gender Equality

On 12th March, 2025, the NHRC India delegation attended GANHRI's annual conference focused on 'Human Rights of Women and Girls: Promoting Gender Equality – The Role of NHRIs.' The event served as a platform to exchange innovative strategies and discuss actionable approaches to dismantling legal and societal barriers to women's and girls' rights. The Indian delegation contributed actively.

Commonwealth Forum of NHRIs (CFNHRI)

On 13th March, 2025, the NHRC delegation also participated in the Annual General Meeting of the CFNHRI. Discussions centered on member updates regarding the implementation of the 2024 Apia Declaration, Commonwealth Secretariat (COMSEC) support for CFNHRI (2024- 2026), and the strategic roadmap for the forum's future activities.

Seminar on Human Rights in India: Course and Discourse

Justice Ramasubramanian delivered an insightful lecture titled “Human Rights in India: Course and Discourse” at an event organized while UN Human Rights Council session was ongoing in Geneva. The address, delivered to a full house, highlighted India's democratic ethos, its complex social fabric, and the institutional mechanisms—such as NHRC and State Commissions—that safeguard human rights. The session, moderated by Ambassador Arindam Bagchi, Permanent Representative of India to the UN in Geneva, included a vibrant Q&A session and was attended by dignitaries from NHRIs, diplomatic missions, NGOs, civil society organizations, and the United Nations.



► NHRC, India Chairperson Justice V Ramasubramanian addressing a seminar on 'Human Rights: Course and Discourse' flanked by Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal and India's PR to UN organizations, Ambassador, Arindam Bagchi to a packed audience

High-level bilateral meetings

- The NHRC delegation also engaged in several key bilateral meetings during their visit: · With Mr Volker Türk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: The delegation, accompanied by Ambassador Arindam Bagchi, discussed global human rights developments and India's ongoing efforts and priorities.
- With Ms Heba Hagrass, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: The meeting focused on the challenges and strategies for advancing the rights of persons with disabilities, both in India and globally.
- The Indian delegation had meetings with several NHRIs and exchanged best practices as well as shared NHRC, India's work with a larger audience. The delegation also interacted with other experts and civil society organizations present there. Detailed discussion with India's Permanent Representative to UN organizations Ambassador Arindam Bagchi, Deputy PR Ambassador Priyanka Chauhan, and other senior Indian diplomats based at Geneva

Interaction with the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA)

On 18 March, 2025, the NHRC, India delegation held an in-depth dialogue with the Sub-Committee on Accreditation regarding the Commission's ongoing accreditation process. Led by Justice V Ramasubramanian and Shri Bharat Lal, the discussion reflected NHRC's commitment to meeting the highest international standards in promoting and protecting human rights. Through its sustained engage-

ment with global human rights platforms, NHRC, India reaffirms its commitment to upholding the values of dignity, equality, and justice—at home and abroad. The Commission's active participation in international dialogues reinforces India's voice in shaping inclusive, collaborative, and rights-based global governance.

58 Session of UNHRC at Geneva

During the 58 Regular Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva from 24th February to 4th April, 2025, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India through its Members and Secretary General made three pre-recorded video statements in the interactive sessions with the Special Rapporteurs on Environment, Rights of persons with disabilities and Human Rights Defenders. They gave a brief insight into the proactive approach of the NHRC, India and the work being done on these matters in the country.

On 14th March, 2025, NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi in a statement on Environment said that the Constitution of India provides the fundamental rights to life, which include a clean and healthy environment.

On 10th March, 2025, NHRC, India Member, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani in a statement on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities said that India's commitment to disability rights is strongly reflected in its progressive legislation, particularly the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016, which champions inclusion across various spheres. This Act, aligned with the UNCPRD, provides a robust framework for disability inclusion.

On 6th March, 2025, Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General, NHRC, India said that India recognizes the critical role played by the Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in the protection and promotion of human rights. He highlighted Mahatma Gandhi as the foremost champion of civil and political rights to follow as a role model for the people working as HRDs.

Strategic international outreach

Roundtable at the Council of Foreign relations, New York: On 15th July, 2024, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal spoke at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) Roundtable at New York, USA on "India's Approach to Human Rights". He spoke about deep-rooted ethos of empathy and compassion engrained in Indian society since ancient times which remained embedded alongside various social and political reforms over the centuries.

Aspen Security Forum, Aspen USA: On and 17th July, 2024, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal spoke on 'India: Challenges and opportunities' at the Aspen Security Forum, Colorado, USA in the presence of Ambassador Robert Blackwill, Henry A. Kissinger Senior Fellow for US Foreign Policy at CFR & Daniel Twining, President, International Republican Institute. He spoke on India's development model, democratic ethos, and international peace contributions and said that today India offers opportunities for development, prosperity and good governance. India assists other countries including the Global South in times of need, given its value system of empathy and compassion. Indian governance mantra is that 'no one is left out.'



► NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal speaking at Aspen Security Forum, Aspen, USA

Participation in Global Conferences: From 3rd to 4th September, 2024, NHRC, India Acting Chairperson, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani visited Kathmandu to attend the inaugural function of the 3-day international conference organized by NHRC, Nepal on 'Gender inclusion in NHRIs' wherein the Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. K.P. Sharma Oli was the Chief Guest. She also participated in a panel discussion on 'Integrating Gender Perspective in Policy and Legislative Review by NHRIs' as part of this conference. Emphasizing how NHRIs can look into gender equality and inclusive policy issues, she highlighted that NHRC, India has always strived to make suggestions for such matters and draft Bills to protect women's rights. These include, among others, the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act, 2013, the Protection from Domestic Violence Bill and the Surrogacy Bill.

World Bank & Commonwealth Engagements: In October, 2024, NHRC, India contributed to the World Bank and Commonwealth Bridge Programmes in London through a series of insightful lectures and Q&A session in interaction with the World Bank staff and young professionals as well as World Woman Foundation.

Human Rights and Rule of Law in South Asia: On 9th October, 2024, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal delivered a lecture on 'Human Rights and Rule of Law in South Asia' at Marlborough House, London, as part of the Commonwealth Bridge Programme for World Bank staff and professionals. He spoke at length about the rich history, unique culture and diversity in the 8 South Asian countries, while also highlighting the challenges to human rights and the rule of law, such as poverty and illiteracy, pollution and environmental degradation, gender inequality, exploitation of child labour, corruption and political instability.

Development Challenges in South Asia: Issues and Solutions: On 10th October, 2024 Shri Bharat Lal delivered the keynote address on 'Development Challenges in South Asia: Issues and Solutions' at the Commonwealth Bridge Programme for World Bank staff and professionals. He urged the World Bank and multilateral institutions to expedite project approvals, conduct thorough impact assessments, and align policies with national goals. He criticized delays in critical projects.

Safeguarding Human Rights and Driving Progress in India and Beyond: On 14th October, 2024 Shri Lal spoke on 'Safeguarding Human Rights and Driving Progress in India and Beyond', at the World Woman Foundation at the House of Lords, UK Parliament, in partnership with the BBC. In the discussion, which was attended by HRH Princess Beatrice, Baroness Sandy Verma, and influential women leaders from around the world, he highlighted India's development journey which has now progressed from promoting women's empowerment to fostering women-led development. He cited government initiatives such as PM Awas Yojana, PM Ujjwala Yojana, Jan Dhan Accounts, and the Jal Jeevan Mission, which have been instrumental in propelling women's workforce participation from around 18% in 2014 to over 27% today. He also highlighted the role of the National Human Rights Commission, which strives to promote safe, secure, and respectful workplaces for young women.

World Woman Davos Agenda: The Secretary General, NHRC, India, had the honour of delivering keynote address at the World Woman Davos Agenda 2025, held on 22nd -23rd January, 2025 in Davos, Switzerland. As the headline speaker for the session titled 'India's Equality Moonshot,' the Secretary General highlighted India's progressive journey toward ensuring equality, dignity, and empowerment for all citizens, particularly women. The session served as a platform to showcase India's achievements in promoting human rights, gender equality, and socio-economic inclusion on both national and global scales.

High-level policy dialogue at Geneva: On 26th March, 2025, Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General delivered a keynote address at the high-level policy dialogue on 'Fostering Collabo-

rative Efforts to Protect Receding Glaciers' in Geneva organised by the India Water Foundation. Shri Lal emphasised that water availability is not just a necessity but a fundamental human right. Ensuring water security is directly linked to national security, as scarcity hinders socio-economic development, disrupts livelihoods and exacerbates geopolitical tensions.

Capacity-Building of NHRIs of Global South

Second ITEC Executive Capacity Building Programme – November, 2024

From 11th – 16th November 2024, NHRC, India hosted its second six-day Executive Capacity-Building Programme under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) framework in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs. The programme welcomed 33 participants from eight countries including Jordan, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

The programme featured 19 technical sessions led by domain experts on topics such as digital security, socio-economic rights, international human rights law, NHRC's complaint redressal system, and collaboration with civil society. Participants also experienced Indian art and culture through curated field visits.

NHRC Acting Chairperson, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani and Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressed the inaugural session. The Foreign Secretary of India, Shri Vikram Misri delivered the valedictory, emphasizing the Indian Constitution's alignment with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Participants called the programme an “eye-opener” and a valuable step toward South-South solidarity.

Third ITEC Executive Capacity Building Programme – March 2025

Between 3rd–8th March, 2025, NHRC, India organized its third Executive Capacity-Building Programme under the ITEC banner, with participation from 35 senior functionaries of NHRIs from 11 countries: Madagascar, Uganda, Timor Leste, DR Congo, Togo, Mali, Nigeria, Egypt, Tanzania, Burundi, and Turkmenistan.



► The inaugural session of the NHRC ITEC Executive Capacity- Building Programme in progress

The sessions, conducted by high-level dignitaries including NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian, senior officers, and former Ambassadors, focused on a broad range of topics such as healthcare, democracy, cyber security, legal evolution, and NHRC's partnerships. Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal emphasized the importance of collaboration within the Global South and offered NHRC, India's complaint redressal system for partner NHRIs.

The programme also included cultural immersion visits and concluded with inspiring remarks about global human rights cooperation. Participants were encouraged to share best practices, and NHRC expressed its commitment to future collaborations and possible MoUs for deeper engagement.

Bilateral engagements and delegation visits

Throughout the year, NHRC India received delegations from the EU, France, Italy, the UK, Netherlands, Germany, Finland, Denmark, and several academic institutions and think tanks. These interactions enabled a constructive exchange of ideas and further enhanced NHRC, India's global partnerships. The Commission also engaged with the World Bank, UNHCR, and numerous national human rights institutions.

Publications & library

From April, 2024 to March, 2025, the Commission produced three publications. These included- Annual Hindi and English Journals, carrying scholarly articles on human rights issues by the experts, and a compendium titled 'Advisories issued by the NHRC to protect human rights' in the



country. Most of its more than hundred publications are available on the website. The NHRC library is equipped with two online databases i.e. SCC and Manupatra, which is integrated with E-Granthalaya of NIC being a member of DELNET for resource sharing among libraries.

Media interface

The Commission proactively engaged in spreading awareness about various aspects of human rights through its interventions and activities. In addition to wide circulation of its enriched monthly Newsletter in English and Hindi, about 146 press releases and over 2,500 significant posts and reposts on the X handle of the Commission were issued during the year. There were more than 5,000 news clippings from various newspapers and magazines about NHRC interventions and activities.

Awards

The Commission organizes various competitions and rewards the participants to encourage their involvement in human rights sensitisation efforts.

NHRC debate competition for Central Armed Police Forces

The Commission has been organizing debate competition on various contemporary themes for Central Armed Police Forces for their human rights sensitization. The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) lifted the overall best team rolling trophy winning the final round of the 29th Annual debate competition in which 16 participants debated for and against the motion in Hindi and English. The topic of the debate competition in Hindi and English was 'Custodial death is not acceptable in any situation.'

Online human rights photography competition 2024

The NHRC, India also invited entries of still photographs on six dedicated themes on human rights in collaboration with MyGov portal. A total of 642 valid entries were received including 471 on MyGov and 171 on its website. One photograph was chosen for third prize of Rs. 5,000/- and 5 for the consolation prize of Rs. 2,000/-.

NHRC Short Film Awards 2024

The NHRC's Human Rights Short Film Awards Scheme of 2015 has evolved as its one of the flagship programmes gaining popularity as a citizen-centric initiative to promote human rights awareness and sensitivity. For the tenth edition of this competition in 2024, a record number of whopping 303 entries were received within the stipulated time, in different Indian languages from various parts of the country. Out of which, 243 entries were in the fray for the awards during a three-tier rigorous jury process. The documentary film 'Doodh Ganga-Valley's Dying Lifeline' by Er. Abdul Rashid Bhat from Jammu & Kashmir was chosen for the first prize of Rs. 2 lakh. 'Fight for Rights' by Kadarappa Raju from Andhra Pradesh was selected for the second prize of Rs. 1.5 lakh. 'GOD' by Shri R. Ravichandran from Tamil Nadu received the third prize of Rs. 1 lakh.

Additionally, four films were awarded a 'Certificate of Special Mention,' each receiving Rs 50,000. These included: 'Aksharabhyasam' by Shri Haneesh Undramatla, 'Vilayilla Pattathari (An inexpensive graduate)' by Shri R. Selvam from Tamil Nadu, 'Life of Seetha' by Shri Madaka Venkata Satyanarayana from Andhra Pradesh and 'Be a Human' by Shri Lotla Naveen from Andhra Pradesh. The Commission organized an awards distribution function to felicitate the winners. The winning films were uploaded on the Commission's website for wider circulation for human rights awareness and sensitisation.

The Commission has been organising several programmes for its employees. These included, gender sensitization programmes, slogan writing, painting competition for the children of the staff, Hindi Pakwada, Krav Maga self-defence training for women employees, among others. Overall, NHRC, India's new initiatives and diversified activities during the year from 1st April, 2024- 31st March, 2025 kept the momentum with its commitment to safeguarding and promoting human rights across India. These included a combination of monitoring, advocacy, legal interventions, and collaboration with various stakeholders.

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