



HUMAN RIGHTS

Newsletter

A monthly publication of the National Human Rights Commission, India



Report: Foundation Day of NHRC, India

Consultation

- National Conference on the 'Human Rights of Prison Inmates'
 - National Conference on 'Tribal Arts and India's Conservation Ethos – Living Wisdom'
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HUMAN RIGHTS

Newsletter

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National Human Rights Commission

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► Children of NHRC employees painting their impressions on the theme of environment



► NHRC officers and staff taking the National Unity pledge on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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From the desk of the Secretary General & Chief Executive

Monthly Recap

October marks an important milestone in our collective endeavour to protect and promote human rights of every individual in the country. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India was established on 12th October 1993. The Commission celebrated its 32nd Foundation Day by organising a National Conference on the 'Human Rights of Prison Inmates' at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi on 16th October 2025. The occasion was graced by the former President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, as the Chief Guest, whose life and leadership – marked by humility, empathy and integrity continue to inspire millions. His belief in education as the greatest tool of empowerment resonates deeply.

Since its inception, the NHRC has sought to serve as the conscience-keeper of human rights in India, protecting the dignity of the most vulnerable segments of society, ensuring fairness and accountability. The Foundation Day celebration provides an opportunity to reaffirm our shared resolve to uphold justice, equality, liberty and dignity, which are the core values enshrined in the Constitution of India. The Commission has been addressing issues such as ending manual scavenging through the promotion of mechanised methods for handling hazardous substances, as well as matters related to mental health, beggary, the rights of older persons and LGBTQI concerns in collaboration with the States and Union Territories. 10th October is also World Mental Health Day for global mental health education, awareness and advocacy against social stigma. NHRC initiatives include a nationwide survey of mental health institutions, action-oriented conferences on youth suicides and discussions on preventing ragging.

NHRC, India's strength lies in moral authority, public trust and ethical leadership. The Commission actively takes *suo motu* cognizance of human rights violations and works to build empathy and accountability within governance systems through training of All India Services officers at the cutting-edge level. The Commission also engages with the youth through moot courts, internships and outreach in universities, nurturing a new generation of rights-conscious citizens besides promoting dialogue at global forums and building South-South co-operation by engaging with the NHRIs of the Global South.

In nearly 32 years till 30th September 2025, the Commission has handled more than 23.5 lakh cases including about three thousand cases of *suo motu* cognizance. It has recommended monetary relief to the victims of human rights violations or their kin of more than Rs 263 crore in 8,924 cases. Last year alone from October 2024 to September 2025 the Commission handled more than 73 thousand complaints including 108 *suo motu* cases. During this period, the Commission conducted 63 spot enquiries; disposed of more than 38 thousand cases and recommended about Rs 9 crore as monetary relief in 210 cases. Inside pages of this edition of the Newsletter carry a detailed report.

Organising a day-long National Conference on the 'Rights of Prison Inmates' to mark the Foundation Day highlights the Commission's endeavour to mainstream dialogue and drive meaningful actions for improving the human rights situation of prison inmates. Worldwide overcrowding of prisons is a concern. Each country will have to find its own solutions to address the problem in tune with its laws and rules. But the fundamental point common for all to follow is that a prisoner, like any other individual, is also entitled to basic human rights. Denial of such rights can never be part of his/ her punishment under law. Prisons should not be seen merely as spaces of punishment, but as institutions for rehabilitation, learning and reformation. A detailed report on the deliberations held in the conference may hopefully make for an engaging read.

Besides the reports on these two important events, this Newsletter carries all the other regular features to give an understanding of the varied dimensions of ongoing works in the country to advance the cause of human rights. As we look ahead, we envision an NHRC that is more youth-engaged, pushing everyone towards upholding dignity of most vulnerable people, digitally empowered and a moral compass for governance and development. However, protection of human rights is not the duty of institutions alone; it is a shared moral responsibility of all including government, civil society and citizens to ensure that no one is left behind and everyone lives with dignity.



[Bharat Lal]

Secretary General &
Chief Executive Officer

Report

Foundation Day of NHRC, India



► Former Presidents of India and Chief Guest, Shri Ram Nath Kovind flanked by NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian, Members, Justice (Dr) B.R. Sarangi, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, DG (I), Shri Anand Swaroop and Registrar (Law), Shri Joginder Singh

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India, organised a function and a national conference on the 'Human Rights of Prison Inmates' to commemorate its 32nd Foundation Day at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi on 16th October 2025. The Commission was set up on 12th October in 1993. The Former President

of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

Addressing the distinguished gathering, Shri Kovind said that long before the modern articulation of human rights, Indian sages and scriptures spoke of the duty to uphold dharma, act with compassion and ensure justice. This

enduring ethical foundation continues to guide us even today. It reminds us that protection of human rights is not only a legal obligation but also a spiritual and moral imperative, which is integral to the Indian way of life.

Shri Kovind said that India has built a robust and comprehensive framework of human rights. The NHRC, India, since its inception, has evolved into one of the most respected human rights institutions in the world. Commemorating its 32nd Foundation Day is more than just an institutional milestone. It is an occasion to reaffirm our collective commitment to timeless values of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity enshrined in our Constitution. He said that through its investigations, advisories, interventions and advocacy, the Commission has given voice to the voiceless and brought human rights concerns into the heart of governance. It has reaffirmed India's civilisational ethos that the true measure of a society



► Former President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind addressing the Foundation Day function



► A section of dignitaries attending the function

lies in how it treats its most vulnerable member.

The Former President said that while celebrating progress made over the past three decades, we must also recognise the emerging and complex challenges of our times in an age of unprecedented technological, environmental and societal transformation. The human rights of workers such as drivers, sanitation workers, construction labourers and countless migrant workers in informal sectors are being impacted the most. Those who keep our cities and streets running, endure too often unsafe working conditions, irregular incomes and the absence of social protection, risking their human rights frequently. Their labour sustains our growth. Therefore, their welfare and dignity should serve as a measure of our success. Economic progress must always walk hand in hand with human dignity.

Shri Kovind also raised concerns on climate change-related challenges impacting human rights due to migration and displacement of people. He said that every person, regardless of his status, deserves identity, security and access to essential services. He said that mental health in today's context also deserves recognition as a human right and lauded NHRC's advisories in this regard.

The Former President said that human rights of prison inmates are a subject of profound importance. It is the sacred duty of prison authorities to ensure that every inmate is treated with basic courtesies owed to all human beings. He expressed happiness that the NHRC was organising a National Conference on 'Human Rights of Prison Inmates' to promote gender sensitive and child-friendly practices within prisons. He said that prisons should not be merely places of confinement but spaces of reform, rehabilitation and hope. He urged all stakeholders, especially the prison officers, to build an enabling environment where every inmate is given the

opportunity to re-integrate into society as a responsible citizen.

Shri Kovind also lauded the efforts of the successive governments in India over the years to improve the lives of all citizens, especially those at the bottom of the pyramid, by providing access to sanitation, electricity, healthcare, education and housing as fundamental elements of human rights. He also commended the repealing of archaic laws and the simplification of procedures for ease of living. He said that landmark enactments such as the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 and the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 further demonstrate our nation's unwavering commitment to protecting and promoting the rights of every individual.

The Former President said that our Constitution reminds us that rights come with duties. Freedom must be exercised in harmony with the common good. In the same spirit, safeguarding human rights is not just the responsibility of the NHRC, it is a collective responsibility. He said that on the Foundation Day of the Commission, let us reaffirm our commitment to building a more humane, just and inclusive India, which truly reflects the spirit of *Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah* (may all be happy and prosperous). He urged that



► A packed audience listening to the speech of the Former President of India



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian addressing the gathering

everybody in society should strive to ensure that justice, equality and compassion are not merely ideals but lived realities of all citizens.

Earlier, the NHRC Chairperson, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian gave an insight into the Commission's work in the past 32 years and said that the Commission has handled more than 23 lakh cases including about 2,900 cases of *suo motu* cognizance. It has recommended monetary relief of more than Rs 263 crore in about eight thousand cases to the victims of human rights violations or their kin. These cases include around 73 thousand complaints and more than 100 *suo motu* registered during the last year from October 2024 to September 2025. During this period, the Commission conducted 63 spot enquiries; disposed of more than 38 thousand cases and recommended more than Rs 9 crore as monetary relief in about 200 cases to the victims of human rights violations. The NHRC has also collaborated with various institutions to conduct human rights awareness programmes.

Justice Ramasubramanian said that the NHRC, India has constituted 12 core advisory groups of experts, NGOs and senior government functionaries on various thematic issues related to human rights to help formulate

mechanisms to evaluate the schemes initiated by the Government and make recommendations for improvements. He highlighted the subjects of three core group meetings and four open house discussions besides the capacity building programmes for students, All India Services officers and the senior functionaries of the NHRIs of the Global South organised over the past year. Underscoring the takeaways of the interactions with the senior functionaries of NHRIs, he particularly mentioned the suggestion that came up for the formation of a forum of Global South NHRIs.

The NHRC Chairperson said that the Commission, with the able guidance of the Members and the effective assistance of the staff, has been striving to live up to the standards set by their illustrious predecessors and to fulfil the legitimate expectations of victims of human rights violations.

Before this, in his opening remarks, Shri Bharat Lal, NHRC Secretary General, while welcoming the Former President of India and other dignitaries, said that the Commission has sought to serve as the conscience keeper of human rights in our democracy through its various interventions for protecting human rights of all, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalised people in the country. He said that NHRC's core strength lies in its ethical and moral leadership. The biggest asset of the Commission is the respect it commands and the trust, people especially the vulnerable, have in its functioning. Of late, the NHRC has been focusing on capacity building and sensitisation through training of senior police and correctional officers, seminars on various issues to build empathy and accountability within governance systems. Citizens, even in the remotest villages, can now file complaints in any of the 22 languages and track their



► NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal delivering his opening remarks

status online through the Human Rights Commission Network (HRCnet), linked to over five lakh Common Service Centres, which is a true step towards inclusion and accessible justice.

Shri Lal said that NHRC, India's role has also expanded at the international

level. The Commission has played an active role in the Global Alliance of NHRIs, Asia Pacific Forum and Commonwealth Forum of NHRIs. In recent years, the Commission has been engaging with the NHRIs of the Global South on various dimensions of human rights. These initiatives reflect India's commitment and contribution to

strengthening human rights globally. On 15th October 2025, India was elected unopposed to the Human Rights Council for a 3-year term (2026 – 28) starting next year for the 7th time. This election reflects India's unwavering commitment to human rights and its global standing.

Consultation

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India, organises various consultations from time to time. These include conferences, open house discussions, national seminars and symposiums on various aspects of human rights with different stakeholders. The purpose is

to bring such issues of importance to the mainstream of national discourse, identify problems and find solutions to recommend to the government as a way forward. On 16th October 2025, the Commission organised one such important National Conference on the 'Human Rights of Prison Inmates' to

mark its 32nd Foundation Day. The purpose of the Conference was to learn about the problems being faced by the prison inmates and the suggestions to finalise recommendations, which could be sent to the Centre, State Governments and Union Territory Administrations.

National Conference on the 'Human Rights of Prison Inmates'

Chairing the Conference, NHRC Chairperson, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian said that as per the UN Office report on Drugs and Crime, the global prison population reached 11.5 million in 2022. Nearly a third of the global prison population is of pre-trial detainees with extensive costs to

the State, communities, families and individuals. Prisons are overcrowded in most of countries worldwide. The budget, resource and capacity constraints lead to unliveable conditions and poor prison health. Prisons reinforce existing inequalities with an over representation of marginalised

communities and insufficient attention to women, youth, persons with disabilities and other prisoners with special needs.

Quoting from the Prison Statistics India 2022 report released by the National Crime Records Bureau in December



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian chairing the National Conference on the 'Human Rights of Prison Inmates'



► Participants engrossed in panel discussions

2023, he said that in 2020, the occupancy rate of prisons in the country was higher by 118% than the actual capacity of 1306 prisons. It further rose to 131.4% of the actual capacity of 1330 prisons in 2022. The increase in the number of prisons did not help the situation.

Justice Ramasubramanian cited various laws concerning prisons in the colonial era and post-independence. He said that recent initiatives included 'Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act,' prepared by the Union Government in the year 2023, to holistically address all relevant issues relating to prison administration. It has been shared with all States and Union Territories to modify their respective Prison Acts accordingly.

The conference was divided into three technical sessions. Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian chaired the first session on 'Enhancing Quality of Life of Inmates: Ensuring Dignity, Well-Being and Human Rights Behind Bars.' The panellists included Shri Rakesh Kumar Pandey, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Shri Valay Singh, Co-founder and Lead, India Justice Report, Prof (Dr) Vartika Nanda, Indian Prison Reformer, Media Educator and Commentator and Ms Maitreyi Misra, Director of Mitigation and Mental Health and Criminal Justice, Square Circle Clinic. It was emphasised during discussions that solutions to the

problems need to have the right combination of creative and practical approaches besides implementing the Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act. The need for collaborative attention from all stakeholders towards prisoners' mental health was also stressed.

The second session on 'Female Inmates and their Children: Strengthening Institutional Framework for Gender-Sensitive Prison Reforms' was chaired by Smt. Meeran Chadha Borwankar, Former DG, BPR&D and Core Group Member, NHRC. She highlighted the issues of hygiene, mental health and access to skill development. She questioned the trend of relocating prisons away from cities, which further isolates inmates from their families. The panellists were Smt. Tripti Gurha,

Chairperson, NCPCR, Dr K.P. Singh (IPS), Former DGP, Haryana, Professor Vijay Raghavan, NHRC Core Group Member and Project Director, Prayas and Ms Monika Dhawan, Director, India Vision Foundation. The points emphasised included concerns over the lack of reliable data on children up to 6 years of age living with their mothers in prisons, the need for a National Policy on Custodial Women, improved medical and mental health care, menstrual hygiene and unavoidable arrests besides giving interim bail to pregnant and lactating women with greater dignity in post-release rehabilitation.

The third session was chaired by Justice Shri Rajeev Shakdher, former Chief Justice of Himachal Pradesh High Court on 'Undertrials Inmate: Tackling Judicial Delays, Strengthening Legal Aid and Promoting Alternatives to Incarceration.' He emphasised that prioritising merit in judicial appointments and processes could serve as an effective solution to mitigate delays. Since 2017, the case clearance rate in courts has consistently been 100% or above, indicating steady performance, but there are persistent backlogs due to old pending criminal cases. The panellists included Shri Manoj Yadava, Former DG (I), NHRC, Shri Niraj Verma, Secretary (Justice), Ministry of Law and Justice, Dr Rakesh Kumar, National Executive Director, SPYM. The issues



► Smt. Meeran Chadha Borwankar, Former DG, BPR&D, flanked by the panellists, chairing the second session



► Justice Shri Rajeev Shakti, former Chief Justice of Himachal Pradesh High Court, flanked by the panellists, chairing the third session

highlighted during discussions included frequent granting of adjournments as a leading cause of judicial delays, financial barriers to accessing justice, plea bargaining in expediting case disposals at an earlier stage, alarming rise in substance abuse, subpar quality among advocates, etc.

During the discussions, a lot of valuable suggestions came up on rehabilitation of prisoners, de-congestion of jails, encouraging correctional services, improving mental health of prisoners, issues related to women prisoners and their children and de-addiction. NHRC Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal said that the suggestions in the Conference will help the Commission firm up its recommendations. He said that the Commission organises Conferences

with the objective of mainstreaming discourse on various issues to find solutions for overall improvements in human rights situation of different segments in society.

In his concluding remarks, Justice Ramasubramanian said that the Commission will now work on an advisory to the Central and State governments for prison reforms and also evolve a mechanism to monitor progress.

The NHRC, India Member Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, DG (I), Shri Anand Swaroop, Registrar (Law), Shri Joginder Singh, Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar, Chairperson and Members of State Human Rights Commissions and other Commissions, judges of High Courts, senior government officers, academia, NGOs, human rights defenders, researchers, senior prison officers, among others, participated in the Conference.



► NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal delivering his remarks in the concluding session

National Conference on 'Tribal Arts and India's Conservation Ethos – Living Wisdom'

India's 5,000-year-old civilisation embodies unity in diversity with tribal communities sustaining age-old ecological wisdom through their deep, harmonious relationship with nature protecting life and habitat. Recognising this, the NHRC, India continues to protect tribal rights and values efforts of civil society and other organisations

to preserve cultural diversity, emphasising that India's sustainable future depends on integrating traditional knowledge with modern practices.

A National Conference on 'Tribal Arts and India's Conservation Ethos: Living Wisdom' was organised as a Dialogue

on Heritage, Culture and Conservation at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi on 10th October 2025, which saw active participation of NHRC Chairperson, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian and Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal. It was organised by the Sankala Foundation, a non-profit organisation, in partnership with the Indira Gandhi



► Union Minister of Culture and Tourism and Chief Guest, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat flanked by NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian and Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal and other dignitaries



► Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister of Culture and Tourism inaugurating the National Conference

Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Ministry of Culture and Confederation of Indian Industries. The Conference divided into two thematic sessions brought together policymakers,

scholars, artists and community leaders to explore how this living wisdom can guide contemporary urban planning, environmental policy and sustainable development.

Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister of Culture and Tourism inaugurated the Conference. He highlighted the profound connection between India's tribal traditions and nature, describing it as a civilisational understanding of nature as a living sacred presence. He emphasised that for tribal communities, conservation is not merely policy but a deeply embedded value, evident in their daily practices, rituals and artistic expressions.

Shri Shekhawat pointed to traditional water systems, forest knowledge and seasonal cultural practices as valuable models offering enduring lessons for contemporary ecological challenges. He also noted the global recognition of India's indigenous artistic traditions, marking the presentation of tribal art at the Venice Biennale 2026 as a significant milestone. He stressed building ecosystems to ensure fair markets, documentation, cultural exchange and recognition for these knowledge keepers.

Delivering the keynote address, Shri Bharat Lal emphasised that tribal communities embody a harmonious relationship with nature and their art reflects this reverence. He highlighted the need to preserve this heritage while building markets for tribal creativity. Outlining three priorities, learning



► Distinguished participants listening to the deliberations during the Conference



► NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal delivering the keynote address

from tribal conservation practices, recognising forests as climate and urban assets and strengthening tribal livelihoods, he stressed that protecting forests begins with protecting the people who sustain them. He affirmed that tribal wisdom continues to serve as a guiding framework for sustainable

development and moral responsibility in public life.

The first session on 'Tribal Communities – Conservation Ethos' was chaired by Shri Rajiv Kumar, former Chief Election Commissioner. He highlighted the deep moral and cultural roots of

tribal conservation, viewing nature as a sacred, inseparable force. He emphasised that this worldview, guided by interdependence rather than domination, provides an ethical alternative to modern models of extractive development. Quoting the NITI Aayog's Tribal Development Report 2022, he said that industrialisation, deforestation and displacement threaten this balance. Advocating for a shift from rhetoric to recognition, he called for policies that integrate tribal knowledge with modern technology for sustainable conservation.

The panellists were Shri Pravir Krishna, former Secretary of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Advisor to the Bodo Territorial Council, Assam, Prof. Amitabh Pande, Director, Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS), Ministry of Culture and Dr S. P. Yadav, Director General of the International Big Cat Alliance and Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General, NHRC.

Shri Krishna stressed that community-centred measures, such as minimum support price for Minor Forest Produce, literacy initiatives and women's cooperatives, can strengthen both livelihoods and biodiversity. He emphasised that real conservation succeeds when communities have ownership, trust and participation.

Prof. Pande emphasised that tribal traditions act as a “living archive” of ecological wisdom, embedding sustainable practices in rituals, art and spirituality. He cautioned that modern pressures threaten these systems and urged policymakers to recognise tribal art as a vital philosophy of coexistence rather than mere aesthetics.

Dr Yadav stressed that India's biodiversity thrives on tribal practices of restraint, sacred groves and species taboos. He urged embedding these principles into initiatives like Mission LiFE and promoting tribal art in global markets. He said that aligning ecology,



► Former Chief Election Commissioner, Shri Rajiv Kumar, flanked by the panellists, chairing the first session



► A section of attendees



► The second session chaired by Former Secretary, Culture and Textiles, Shri Raghvendra Singh, flanked by the panellists, in progress

economy and culture can turn sustainability from a slogan into a lived practical reality.

Shri Bharat Lal stressed that environmental protection begins with justice for the communities that have long safeguarded ecosystems, calling for participatory governance that empowers Gram Sabhas. Citing the UNDP's Indigenous Knowledge Systems Report (2021), he emphasised integrating tribal knowledge into policy and highlighted Eklavya Model Residential Schools as spaces that build modern skills while preserving cultural heritage, noting that protecting forests starts with protecting their people.

The second session on 'Tribal Arts and Culture – Way Forward' was chaired by Shri Raghvendra Singh, former Secretary, Ministry of Culture and Textiles. He said that tribal communities are integral to India's cultural fabric, noting that the very idea of a "tribe" was a colonial construct in the 1901 Census. Urging a move beyond such narratives, he highlighted long-standing social and cultural interconnections from ancient epics to everyday exchanges. He called for a more nuanced appreciation of the richness and resilience of tribal heritage.

The other panellists included Shri Periasamy Kumaran, current Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, Shri Sushil Kumar Awasthi, current Director

General Forest and Special secretary Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Dr Alka Pande, Art and Cultural Historian.

Shri Kumaran highlighted culture as a dynamic pillar of India's diplomacy, especially in its engagement with the Global South, noting that cultural heritage, art and spirituality have long conveyed India's values and the ethos of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* to the world. He stressed that cultural diplomacy humanises global relations, fosters trust among equal partners and positions India as a source of shared wisdom, where every cultural exchange strengthens peace and collective humanity.

Shri Awasthi emphasised that tribal heritage is a living part of India's

identity and that recognising communities' deep ties with nature is essential. He highlighted economic vulnerability, cultural erosion and weak intellectual property protection as key challenges, urging a shift toward viewing tribal culture as a source of opportunity, resilience and national strength.

Dr Pande highlighted how India's tribal and cultural traditions reflected in mythology, archaeology and practices like Bagh Natya and symbols such as the Pashupati Seal have long portrayed the tiger and forest as emblems of sustainable coexistence. She cautioned, however, that this revered relationship is eroding as habitat loss intensifies human–animal conflict.

Addressing the valedictory session, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian, Chairperson, NHRC, India reflected on India's immense diversity and its ability to hold this diversity together within a shared ethical and constitutional framework. He described values such as diversity, respect and coexistence as living principles essential for an equitable society. He observed that India's ecological balance has been sustained not just by laws but by the lived ethics of communities that view nature as an extension of themselves, urging that forests, rivers and mountains be revered rather than exploited.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian addressing the valedictory session of the Conference



► Former Presidents of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind interacting with the Tribal artist after inaugurating the exhibition 'Silent Conversation: From Margins to the Centre'

Justice Ramasubramanian cautioned that legislation alone cannot replace the moral and cultural consciousness that connects humans to their environment and stressed the critical importance of

preserving intangible heritage like rituals, oral traditions and ecological knowledge to strengthen social and environmental stability. He underscored the need for development

sensitive to local identity and ecological balance, so progress does not lead to cultural erosion or environmental harm. He reaffirmed the shared commitment of the NHRC and the Sankala Foundation to recognising, preserving and promoting the ecological wisdom, cultural expression and well-being of India's tribal communities.

The Conference concluded with a shared commitment to recognising tribal communities as knowledge holders and partners in cultural and environmental stewardship. It reinforced that India's path to sustainable development must draw from its living traditions, ensuring that heritage, ecology and human dignity remain at the centre of national progress.

Besides the Conference, a four-day tribal art exhibition 'Silent Conversation: From Margins to the Centre,' was also organised at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi from 9th October 2025. Former President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated it. The



► A painting depicting various facets of life and tribal culture



► Paintings in the exhibition depicting close relationship between man, nature and wild life

exhibition aimed to spread awareness about the conservation ethos of tribal communities and other forest-dwellers residing in and around forests, particularly India's tiger reserves. The exhibition had a collection of 250 paintings

and crafts from across more than 30 tiger reserves of India for a diverse audience. These include art enthusiasts, conservationists, diplomats, policy makers, nature lovers and students. The exhibition was supported

by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), a statutory body under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA).

Important intervention

NHRC urges preventive measures to protect homeless and vulnerable people during winter

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India, acknowledges the disproportionate effects of climate change on the human rights of the most vulnerable sections of the populace. Reaffirming its commitment to protect the most vulnerable population from extreme weather events and the impending cold wave in the country, the Commission has urged 19 State Governments and 4 Union Territory Administrations to take pre-emptive steps and relief measures. These measures should be aimed at protecting the most vulnerable, especially the newborns, children, poor, elderly, homeless, destitute and beggars, who are at risk due to lack of shelter and resources. Urging sensitisation of concerned officials, the Commission has asked the States and UT Administrations to submit reports on the action taken to prevent untoward incidents during cold waves.

In its communication, the Commission highlighted the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reports titled 'Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India' between 2019 and 2023, which mentioned that a total of 3,639 people died from exposure to cold waves in various States and UTs. These were in Uttar Pradesh (797), Punjab (734), Bihar (589), Jharkhand (515), Haryana (320), Rajasthan (165), Madhya Pradesh (113), Himachal Pradesh (99), Uttarakhand (79), Gujarat (59), Maharashtra (50), Chhattisgarh (26), Sikkim (14), Odisha (10), Tripura (2), West Bengal (1), Arunachal Pradesh (1), Andhra Pradesh (1), Nagaland (1), Ladakh (58), Jammu and Kashmir (3), Delhi (1) and Chandigarh (1).

Therefore, besides calling upon them to adopt preventive measures to mitigate the impacts of cold waves, the Commis-



sion has also reiterated its call to the implementation of the guidelines of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in this regard. These include:

- Establishing treatment protocols;
- Setting up day and night shelters;
- Providing medical care and implementing standard treatment procedures for cold-related illnesses; and
- Ensuring consistent monitoring of the relief efforts and adopting a proactive approach to ensure their effectiveness.

Suo motu cognizance

The media reports have been a very useful instrument for the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to know about the incidents of human rights violations. Over the years, it has taken *suo motu* cognizance of many such issues and brought succour to the victims. During October 2025, the Commission took *suo motu* cognizance of 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:

Death of patients in the ICU fire

(Case No. 3237/20/14/2025)

On 6th October 2025, the media reported that eight patients died and three others were critically injured in a fire at the trauma centre ICU of the government-run Sawai Man Singh (SMS) Hospital in Jaipur, Rajasthan. Reportedly, the tragic incident at Jaipur's largest hospital has raised grim questions about the preparedness of administrative and health machinery. The Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police, Government of Rajasthan, calling for a detailed report on the matter. The report is expected to include the status of the compensation, if any, provided to the next of kin of the victims.

Torture in police custody

(Case No. 1221/6/21/2025)

On 7th October 2025, the media reported that a 17-year-old boy was tortured in police custody at Gandhigram Police Station in Rajkot district, Gujarat on 1st September 2025. Reportedly, the incident came to light on 6th October 2025 after a video of the torture surfaced on social media. An officer could be seen pulling hair from boy's scalp while other police personnel were laughing. The Commission has issued a notice to the Director General of Police, Gujarat, calling for a detailed report on the matter.

Explosion at a firecracker manufacturing unit

(Case No. 2173/1/31/2025)

On 8th October 2025, the media reported that seven workers died and four others were critically injured in an explosion inside a firecracker manufacturing unit at Komaripalem village in Ambedkar Konaseema district, Andhra Pradesh. Reportedly, the manufacturing unit's owner also died in the incident. The Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and Director General of Police, Andhra Pradesh, calling for a detailed report on the matter. The report is expected to include the status of the compensation, if any, provided to the next of kin of the victims.

Death due to alleged police brutality

(Case No. 3106/12/0/2025)

On 11th October 2025, the media reported that two men died due to police brutality in separate incidents in Madhya Pradesh. Reportedly, in the first incident, a 22-year-old final year B.Tech student of an engineering college died after he was assaulted by two constables while he was returning from a party in Bhopal district in the intervening night of 9th–10th October 2025. Reportedly, the victim and his friends had broken a bottle on the road, after which police approached them for questioning. While his two friends managed to flee, the victim was caught and allegedly beaten up. The CCTV footage circulating on social media shows a constable striking the youth with a baton.

In the other incident, a 45-year-old man allegedly died after he was caught and beaten up by police while searching for illicit liquor in Bamuria village, Ashoknagar district on 9th October 2025. His family reportedly claimed that after assaulting the man, the police personnel drowned him to death in a water-filled pit, whereas the police maintained that he fell into the pit while trying to escape. The Commission has issued a notice to the Director General of Police, Madhya Pradesh, calling for a detailed report on both matters. The report is expected to include the status of the investigation in with cases.

Death while cleaning an underground sewer

(Case No. 2962/12/38/2025)

The media reported that a sanitation worker died and two others were hospitalised in a critical condition after inhaling toxic gases while cleaning an underground sewer line in Satna district, Madhya Pradesh on 25th September 2025. Reportedly, the workers had fallen unconscious inside the sewer. Local residents pulled them out and rushed to a hospital.

The Commission has issued notices to the Commissioner, Municipal Corporation and the Superintendent of Police, Satna, Madhya Pradesh, calling for a detailed report on the

matter. The report is expected to include the status of the investigation and compensation, if any, paid to the next of kin of the deceased worker and to the injured.

Death of a student due to alleged beating by a teacher

(Case No. 1262/34/11/2025)

On 25th September 2025, the media reported that a 5-year-old student at a residential school in Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand succumbed to his injuries sustained in a severe beating by a teacher on 24th September 2025. Reportedly, the brother of the deceased child, who is also a student at the same school, disclosed that the teacher assaulted his brother when he refused to eat food. The Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary, Government of Jharkhand and the Superintendent of Police, Hazaribagh, seeking a detailed report on the matter.

Hot iron branding of three children by a faith healer

(Case No. 2961/12/23/2025)

On 25th September 2025, the media reported that three children suffering from pneumonia were branded with a hot iron rod by a faith healer in Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh. Reportedly, the condition of one of the children was serious. The doctors confirmed that the victim children were suffering from pneumonia and there were burn marks on their bodies. The Commission has issued notices to the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police, Jhabua, calling for a detailed report on the matter.

Death of a worker at IGI Airport, Delhi

(Case No. 4943/30/0/2025)

On 25th September 2025, the media reported that a worker died after falling from a height of 10 feet at IGI Airport in Delhi. He was hired by a contractor for construction work. Reportedly, attempts were made to remove the blood stains from the spot. The Commission has issued notices to the Chairman, Airports Authority of India and the Deputy Commissioner of Police, IGI Airport Unit, Delhi, calling for detailed reports on the matter. The status of the compensation, if any, paid to the next of kin of the deceased worker has also been sought.

Death of children due to electrocution

(Case No. 2963/12/22/2025)

On 25th September 2025, the media reported that two children, aged 8–10 years, died due to electrocution while playing inside a Durga Puja pandal in Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh. Reportedly, the incident happened a day before when the victim children came into contact with an iron pipe.

The electric wires were connected negligently by the organisers of the event. The Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary, Government of Madhya Pradesh and the Superintendent of Police, Jabalpur, calling for detailed reports on the matter.

Death of workers due to collapsing of a hoarding

(Case No. 1200/6/1/2025)

On 29th September 2025, the media reported that two workers died and one was critically injured after a hoarding collapsed from the roof of a seven-storey building in the Bopal area of Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Reportedly, on 27th September 2025, about 15 labourers were installing a hoarding nearly 80 feet above on a residential building when the incident happened. Of the ten workers who fell, two died and one was grievously injured. The seven others sustained minor injuries. The Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary, Government of Gujarat and the Commissioner of Police, Ahmedabad, calling for detailed reports on the matter.

Attacks on journalists

(Case No. 779/11/5/2025, 42/14/10/2025 & 50/23/4/2025)

The media reported about the attacks on three journalists at different places in Kerala and Manipur on 30th August 2025 and in Tripura on 21st September 2025. In all three cases, the Commission has issued notices to the Director Generals of Police of these States, calling for detailed reports on the matters. Reportedly, the journalist in Tripura was assaulted

by a group of miscreants with sticks and sharp weapons while he was attending a programme for clothes distribution organised by a political party in the Hezamara area of West Tripura. His motorcycle was also stolen.

The journalist in Manipur was attacked while covering a flower festival in Laii Village of Senapati District. He was shot twice with an air gun, causing severe injuries.

In Kerala, the journalist was assaulted by a group of people when he reached Mangattukavala near Thodupuzha, Idukki. He was returning from a wedding function. Reportedly, in all three cases, the victims were hospitalised for treatment and cases were registered.

Death of a differently abled RTI activist

(Case No. 1236/6/1/2025)

On 15th October 2025, the media reported that a differently abled RTI activist was found dead in a canal after his abduction by unidentified persons near his residence in the Tharad district, Gujarat on 12th October 2025. Reportedly, the victim's body was found in the canal on 14th October 2025.

According to the media report, the victim had filed complaints with the authorities about the local builders using forged beneficiary documents and their other irregularities in the slum redevelopment project under Public-Private Partnership scheme. The Commission has issued a notice to the Director General of Police, Gujarat, calling for a detailed report on the matter.

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 cases and gives directions and recommendations to the concerned authorities for relief to the victims. In October 2025, besides the cases taken up daily by the Member Benches, 15 cases

were heard by the Full Commission and 146 cases by Division Bench-II. Monetary relief of more than Rs 15 lakh was recommended for the victims or their next of kin (NoK) in three 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.	954/6/12/2019-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Gujarat
2.	3194/7/3/2022-PCD	Death in police custody	5.00	Govt. of Haryana
3.	4460/18/3/2022	Death due to negligence in police custody	5.00	Govt. of Odisha

Payment of relief to the victims

During October 2025, the Commission closed six cases, either on receipt of compliance reports and proof of payment from public authorities or by giving other observations/ directions. An amount of more than Rs

19.5 lakh was paid to the victims or their next of kin (NoK) on the recommendations 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.	515/34/20/2022	Custodial torture	1.50	Govt. of Jharkhand
2.	3895/18/2/2022	Custodial torture	2.00	Govt. of Odisha
3.	850/22/5/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Tamil Nadu
4.	4902/25/5/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of West Bengal
5.	17852/24/55/2024	Death due to electrocution	5.00	Govt. of Uttar Pradesh
6.	1692/34/6/2022	Suicide of a student after being humiliated by a teacher	1.00	Govt. of Jharkhand

Case studies

In many cases, the Commission, contrary to the claims of the concerned State authorities, found that human rights of the victims were violated due to their unlawful action, inaction or omission. Therefore, on a case-to-case basis, the Commission issued show cause notices to them to respond why monetary relief should not be recommended to be paid to the victims of human rights violations or their next of kin and action against the erring/ negligent officials. The merits of the states' approach to responding to its show cause notices prompted the Commission to recommend 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 such cases are as under:

Death by suicide of an under-trial prisoner

(Case No. 2754/7/1/2022-AD)

The matter pertained to the suicide of a 26-year-old under-trial prisoner in Central Jail, Ambala, Haryana in 2022. Based on the material received from the concerned authorities in response to its notices, the Commission found that the prisoner died by suicide in broad daylight by hanging himself from the iron bars in the bathroom of the jail, which indicated officials' negligence. Therefore, it was recommended that the Government of Haryana pay Rs 5 lakh as relief to the next of kin of the victim, which was paid. The Commission was also informed that departmental action was taken against the errant jail officials.

Death by Suicide by a convicted prisoner

(Case No. 850/22/5/2021-JCD)

The matter pertained to the suicide of a life-convicted prisoner in Central Prison, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu in 2021.

Based on the material on record received from the concerned authorities in response to NHRC's notices, the Commission found that the victim attempted suicide in the prison premises and died during treatment at Coimbatore Medical College Hospital, Coimbatore. The Commission observed that if the prison staff were alert, the suicide by the convict may have been averted. Therefore, it recommended that the Government of Tamil Nadu pay Rs 5 lakh as relief to the next of kin of the victim, which was paid.

Death due to torture

(Case No. 1185/20/27/2021-AD)

The matter pertained to the death of a 55-year-old man at Chauth Ka Barwada Police Station in Sawai Madhopur district, Rajasthan in 2021. Based on the material received from the concerned authorities in response to its notices, the Commission found that the victim was illegally detained in connection with a land dispute with his brother. He was subjected to third-degree torture, resulting in his death.

Therefore, the Commission recommended that the Government of Rajasthan pay Rs 7.5 lakh as relief to the next of kin of the victim, which was paid.

Death by Suicide in police custody

(Case No 8/19/2017-PCD)

The matter pertained to the death by suicide of a man in the custody of Sadar Tarantaran Police Station, Punjab in 2017. Based on the material received from the concerned authorities in response to its notices, the Commission found that the victim's death by suicide inside the police lock-up indicated negligence of prison staff. Therefore, the Commission recommended that the Government of Punjab pay Rs 3 lakh as relief to the next of kin of the victim.

Death in Police Custody

(Case No. 10779/24/38/2020-AD)

The matter pertained to the death of a man in the custody of Kotwali police in Jalaun, Uttar Pradesh in 2020. The victim's father alleged that the cause of death was police atrocity whereas police claimed that it was a case of suicide. Based on the material received from the concerned authorities in response to its notices, the allegation of torture did not sustain. However, the Commission observed that if the police personnel were alert, victim's suicide may have been averted. Therefore, it is recommended that the Government of Uttar Pradesh pay Rs 5 lakh as relief to the next of kin of the victim.

Spot enquiries

T

he National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India deputed its own team of investigation officers from time to time to conduct spot enquiries into cases of human rights violations. The following spot enquiries were conducted in October 2025:

Case No. 1395/13/19/2020-AD

From 6th - 10th October 2025, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation of harassment of a convicted prisoner by jail officials. He was found hanging in his cell in Central Prison, Nashik, Maharashtra, leaving behind a suicide note.

Case No. 2072/1/15/2025

From 13th -16th October 2025, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation of administrative inaction in removing blockage from a drainage which resulted in the flooding of R.S.R. Engineering College premises at Allimadugu Panchayath, Kadanuthala Village in Nellore, Andhra Pradesh.

Case No. 687/11/6/2025

From 13th -17th October 2025, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation of sexual assault of a 16-year-old minor boy by 14 individuals, including a Railway Police Force personnel, an Assistant Education Officer, a retired policeman and a political functionary over a period of more than two years in Kasaragod, Kerala.

Case No. 17678/24/72/2025

From 13th -17th October 2025, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation that a 12-year-old girl was kidnapped, forcibly converted and unlawfully married through Nikah by a cleric in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

Case No. 605/4/26/2025

From 27th - 31st October 2025, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation of gross irregularity and corrupt practices in Beur Jail, Patna, Bihar.

Case No. 831/20/19/2024-JCD

From 28th - 31st October 2025, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation regarding the death of a convict in judicial custody in Central Jail, Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

Case No. 21075/24/31/2025

From 27th -31st October 2025, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation about a man being shot in his left leg by police after arresting him in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh.

Case No. 299/11/14/2025-AD

From 27th - 31st October 2025, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation of death of a minor tribal boy at Kalpetta PS in Wayanad, Kerala. His body was found in the police station's toilet with his shirt used as a noose.

Case No. 18178/24/30/2025

From 29th - 31st October 2025, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation of gross negligence by the school principal, management and staff in not providing timely medical treatment to a student resulting in her death under suspicious circumstances at a hospital in NOIDA, Uttar Pradesh.

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 status of the implementation of the Commission's advisories, guidelines and recommendations by state governments and their concerned authorities. They also visit shelters, prisons and observation homes to raise

awareness among government officials and encourage them to take necessary actions to improve human rights conditions. In these visits, the importance of state authorities submitting timely reports is also highlighted to the officials, as it aids the Commission in the prompt resolution of human rights violation cases.

On 22nd October 2025, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Member, NHRC visited

Apollo University, Murukambattu, Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh and met the Vice-Chancellor, Principal, local DSP and Enquiry Officers in connection with the case of hidden CCTV cameras found in girls' wash-rooms. She gathered details from college authorities, noted irregularities in the probe and observed that the victim's statement was not recorded. She also interacted with students and the members of the Internal Complaints Committee.



► NHRC, India Member, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani at Government Girls Hostel, Dashahara Maidan, Ujjain Madhya Pradesh

On 30th October 2025, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani visited Government Girls Hostel, Dashahara Maidan and Utkrisht Kanya Shiksha Kendra in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh for a spot assessment of the facilities and human rights situation. She found the Government Girls Hostel's condition appalling without proper arrangements for food, health, security and appropriate staff, thereby impacting students. The responses from the staff and warden were unsatisfactory. She sensitised the District Education and Medical Officers and other officials. However, she found Utkrisht Kanya Shiksha Kendra in sound conditions. The health, hygiene, food and security arrangements were excellent, ensuring the protection of basic rights of students. She expressed the hope that this Kendra will serve as a model for other hostels of Tribal students. The Member also visited a One Stop Centre at Chimanganj in the city. She was satisfied with its overall functioning. All the records were accessible and maintained properly.



► Shri Desmond D'Costa, Chairperson, Goa SHRC and Shri Samir Kumar, NHRC Joint Secretary inspecting Modern Central Jail in Goa

On 29th October 2025, NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar, joined Shri Desmond D'Costa, Chairperson, Goa SHRC, in inspecting the Modern Central Jail, Goa to assess the facilities for inmates and the human rights situation.

Capacity Building

The National Human Rights Commission, 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 Short-Term Internship Programmes (OSTIs) are organised to ensure that students from remote areas join the programme without incurring any expenses for their travel and stay in Delhi.

Online Short-Term Internship

The National Human Rights Commission, India, concluded its 3rd Online Short-Term Internship Programme (OSTI) of 2025-2026 with 74 University-level students from 21 States and UTs completing it successfully. The OSTI

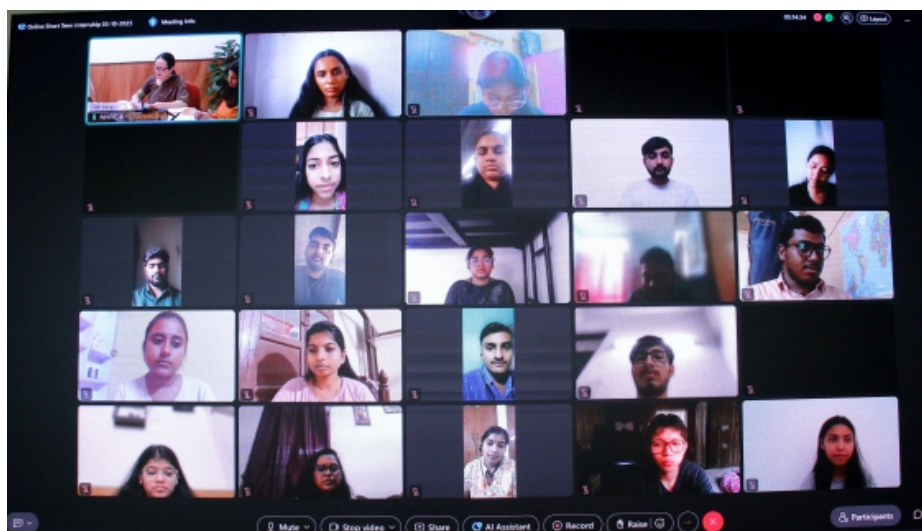
was inaugurated by Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General, on 22nd September 2025.

Addressing the valedictory session, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Member, NHRC congratulated the interns and commended their dedication for successfully completing the two-week enriching journey. Emphasising

NHRC's role as a guardian of justice and equality, she highlighted the Commission's work in areas such as women's rights, child protection, mental health, custodial justice and empowerment of marginalised communities.

Drawing attention to impactful sessions from experts in fields like psychology, forensic science, business and human rights, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani praised the breadth of learning offered during the internship. Citing inspiring examples, she urged interns to uphold constitutional principles in both personal and professional spheres to become active defenders of human dignity and use their knowledge for societal good. She impressed upon them the need to remain vigilant, to raise their voices against injustice and to help build a more inclusive society.

Smt. Saidingpuii Chhakchhuak, Joint Secretary, NHRC presented the internship report. Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary, NHRC and Lt. Col Virender Singh, Director, NHRC were present. Besides sessions on different aspects of human rights by the NHRC Members, senior officers, experts and civil society representatives, the interns were also taken for virtual tours to Tihar Jail, a Police Station and Asha Kiran Shelter Home in Delhi. They were given an understanding of how different government institutions function, the mechanisms to protect human rights, the realities on the ground and the necessary steps to protect the rights of vulnerable sections of society.



► NHRC, India Member, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani addressing the valedictory session of OSTI

Training Programmes

- On 4th October 2025, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian, Chairperson, NHRC, India addressed as Chief Guest the one-day training programme organised by the SASTRA, Deemed University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu with the Commission's support. He traced India's path from colonial lunacy laws to the Mental Health Care Act, 2017. He said that wealth or status cannot shield depression. Referring to the incidents of students' struggles and suicides, he called for resilience and

urged academia, policymakers and institutions to unite for a rights-based mental health framework. He said that protecting mental health is not just a legal duty but a shared moral responsibility. About 220 students participated.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian addressing the one-day training programme on 'Understanding Mental Health' at SASTRA, Deemed University in Chennai, Tamil Nadu



► A section of participants



► NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar addressing the training programme on human rights at the GIPARD



- On 7th October 2025, Police Training College, Banderdewa, Arunachal Pradesh organised a training programme for the police personnel in collaboration with the NHRC, India. Shri Hari Lal Chouhan, SSP in the Commission's Investigation Division inaugurated it virtually. He spoke about NHRC's role in promoting and protecting human rights. He emphasised the need for respecting human rights while policing amidst challenges on the ground.
- On 29th October 2025, the Goa Institute of Public Administration and Rural Development (GIPARD) organised a day-long training programme on human rights in collaboration with the NHRC, India in Goa. As the Guest of Honour, Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary, NHRC spoke about various aspects of human rights as well as the role of the Commission in promoting and protecting human rights. He highlighted some of the initiatives and activities of the Commission.

Collaborative Conferences

- On 30th October 2025, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Member, NHRC India addressed as Chief Guest the inaugural session of the two-day National Conference 'From Environment Protection to Climate Justice: Articulating the Right to be Free from Adverse Impacts of Climate Change in India.' It was organised by the West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata with the support of the NHRC, India. He highlighted the deep interconnection between human rights and environmental protection. He stressed the need for owning up to collective responsibility for a just and sustainable future.



► NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr) B.R. Sarangi addressing the National Conference



- On 31st October 2025, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Member, NHRC addressed as Chief Guest the inaugural session of one-day seminar on 'Breaking Barriers: Awareness and Advocacy for Disability Rights.' It was organised by the Muskan Foundation, Hazaribag, Jharkhand with the support of the NHRC, India. He emphasised the importance of an inclusive society wherein every individual, including a differently abled person, is valued and given equal opportunities.



► NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi addressing the seminar on 'Breaking Barriers: Awareness and Advocacy for Disability Rights' in Hazaribag, Jharkhand

Exposure visits

- On 6th October 2025, 39 students and three faculty members from the School of Legal Studies, RIMT University in Gobindgarh, Punjab visited NHRC, India. Senior officers briefed them about the various dimensions of the Commission's functioning towards promoting and protecting human rights.
- On 9th October 2025, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian, Chairperson, NHRC, India had an interactive session with the delegates from the H.B. Kapadia New High School, Ahmedabad during their 'Intern Nation Leadership Tour' 2025' under the banner of Chhatra Sansad.



NHRC in the International arena

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India continues to engage with various international programmes to foster 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 its functioning for promoting and protecting human rights. The NHRC Chairperson, Members and other senior officers also visit various international forums to share their thoughts on the Commission's achievements, interact with other NHRIs and discuss the challenges to human rights in the fast-evolving world.

In-person Meets

- From 14th - 16th October 2025, NHRC, India, Joint Secretary, Smt. Saidingpuii Chhakchhuak; SSP, Shri Hari Lal Chouhan and Deputy Registrar (Law), Shri Mukesh attended 'Regional Blended Learning Course on Monitoring Human Rights in



► NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Smt. Saidingpuii Chhakchhuak; SSP, Shri Hari Lal Chouhan and Deputy Registrar (Law), Shri Mukesh at the Workshop

Climate-Induced Mobility' jointly organised by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and the South Asian University in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

- From 28th - 30th October 2025, NHRC, India SSP, Smt. Ilakkiya Karunagaran and Deputy Registrar (Law), Shri Indrajeet Kumar attended a workshop on 'Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Action: Monitoring, Implementation and Good Practices' organised by the APF and OHCHR in Bangkok, Thailand.



► NHRC, India SSP, Smt. Ilakkiya Karunagaran and Deputy Registrar (Law), Shri Indrajeet Kumar at the Workshop

Online meetings

- On 1st October 2025, Ms. Varsha Apte, Consultant (Research) and Ms. Perna Tara, Junior Research Consultant, NHRC, India attended the CFNHRI webinar on 'Disinformation as a Threat to Human Rights.'
- On 8th October 2025, Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary and Ms. Perna Hasija, Junior Research Consultant, NHRC, India attended the 'GANHRI Working Group on Business and Human Rights Monthly Meeting.'

News from the State Human Rights Commissions

Given ever-expanding dimensions of human life and related challenges, promoting and protecting human rights always remains a work in progress. In India, democratically elected governments are committed to ensuring people's welfare and protecting their human rights with the help of executive machinery. Additionally, there are institutions such as the legislature and the judiciary. The country also has a vibrant media. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and State Human Rights Commissions (SHRCs) play important roles. Other National Commissions and their state counterparts also exist. These institutions work as watchdogs for rights and welfare measures. They focus on various segments of society. This column intends to highlight the exceptional activities of SHRCs undertaken to protect and promote human rights.

Haryana State Human Rights Commission

In October 2025, Haryana State Human Rights Commission (HSHRC) Chairperson, Justice Shri Lalit Batra and Members, Shri Kuldeep Jain and Shri Deep Bhatia visited Karnal District Jail to review the living conditions of inmates, interact with them and prison officers. The prisoners raised several concerns and particularly the problems in contacting their families. The Chairperson urged the jail authorities

to address their grievances. The HSHRC also asked the officers to look into the issues related to the age verification of inmates to ensure no minor was lodged there. The inmates were encouraged to acquire vocational skills and maintain good conduct.

Apart from this, the HSHRC Chairperson visited a Home for Aged and Destitute in Model Town, Rewari to interact with inmates and assess the status of health, food, cleanliness and other facilities. The officers were directed to get the building repaired, improve the park, ensure adequate

staff and security. The Chairperson also urged them to treat the elderly with dignity and instructed the Civil Surgeon to arrange for their weekly health check-ups, specialist visits, medicines and ambulance services. The HSHRC also visited Khushboo Welfare Society for Children with Multiple Disabilities, Gurugram and interacted with children and staff.

Besides, the Chairperson and Members presented the first copy of the HSHRC's Annual Report 2024–2025 to the State Governor, Prof. Ashim Kumar Ghosh. The Chairperson apprised him of the Commission's work since its reconstitution in November 2024, noting that 5,505 cases were processed and 4,548 disposed of during the year.



► Haryana SHRC visiting Karnal District Jail

The HSHRC took *suo motu* cognizance of two reported incidents involving the beating of a 2nd standard student by a bus driver of a Public School in Panipat and escaping of an under-trial prisoner from Ambala Central Jail and sought reports from the concerned authorities. The HSHRC also sought reports from the Director General of Police and the Director General of Health Services in a case of alleged custodial torture. The Superintendent of Police, Bhiwani was asked to submit a report on allegations of illegal detention and threats by a police officer posted at Sadar Police Station, Bhiwani.

News in brief

- On 6th October 2025, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Member, NHRC addressed a workshop on 'Internal Complaints Committees (ICC) – A Key to Safe Campuses' at Baba Saheb Ambedkar University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. She said that creating a safe and inclusive campus is a duty of any institution's administration. A strong ICC is the moral conscience of institutions, enabling dignity, confidence and equality. She said that many unfortunate incidents of sexual harassment and related issues can be averted if there are ICCs in educational institutions. However, despite a clear mandate under the POSH Act 2013 and UGC Regulations 2015, many institutions are yet to establish them. The Member said that ignoring statutory requirements of setting up of the ICCs amount to violation of fundamental rights under Articles 14, 15, 19 and 21.



- Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General and CEO, NHRC delivered the keynote address at the two-day 20-20 Investment Association Meet held in New Delhi on 9th-10th October 2025. Addressing 46 leading global investors who have collectively invested over 10 trillion USD worldwide, he spoke on the theme 'Driving Grassroots Social Impact.' He highlighted the need to focus on human-centric investment to create opportunities for youth and reduce inequalities to address emerging challenges. It is to be seen that development is not for the few. Human rights and environmental sustainability are the critical aspects of investment. The session also featured distinguished speakers including Dr. S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister, Shri Shaktikanta Das, former RBI Governor and Principal Secretary-II to the Prime Minister of India, Shri N. K. Singh, Chairman of the 15th Finance Commission and Prof. Raja Mohan, Distinguished Professor at O. P. Jindal Global University. The meet served as a platform to deliberate on fostering inclusive and equitable growth, sustainable development and responsible global investments.



- On 15th October 2025, Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary and Shri Raghwendra Singh, JRC, NHRC attended a meeting at Parliament House Complex. It was chaired by Smt. Aparajita Sarangi, Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha). The meeting focused on taking inputs to prepare responses about the challenges related to migration, terrorism and transnational crime for the participation of the Indian Parliamentary delegation in the 151st Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) session in Geneva.
- On 17th October, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Member, NHRC delivered the keynote address on 'Social Condition: The Next Frontier of Access to Human Rights Justice' at Siksha 'O' Anusandhan University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The event was part of the University's silver jubilee. She said that despite technical and economic progress, barriers like poverty, caste bias and gender inequality sometimes still hinder justice. Many under-trial prisoners suffer due to lack of legal aid or awareness and languish in jails. She emphasised NHRC's advocacy for the cause of marginalised groups. She urged students to imbibe the spirit of Articles 14–32 of the Constitution of India and evolve as defenders of human rights. India's ancient scriptures, like the Vedas and Upanishads, champion the cause of dignity and justice. She said that legal literacy and social awareness must be enhanced to enrich youth's outlook.



- On 19th October 2025, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Member, NHRC addressed a function as Chief Guest, organised to mark the 106th Birth Anniversary of renowned playwright Late Ramachandra Mishra in Cuttack, Odisha.
- On 22nd October 2025, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Member, NHRC addressed as Chief Guest at the State Level Dhanwantri Jayanti Celebration and a National Seminar on Ayurveda in Bhubaneswar, Odisha

- On 24th October 2025, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian, Chairperson, NHRC along with the Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal called on the Hon'ble Vice-President of India, Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan at the Vice-President's Enclave. They apprised him about the Commission's continued efforts to protect and promote human rights of all, including the marginalised and most vulnerable sections of society.



- On 24th October 2025, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Member, NHRC as Chief Guest addressed the National Level Workshop on 'Viksit Bharat, UN and Human Rights'. It was organised by the World Human Rights Protection Organisation in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
- On 25th October 2025, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Member, NHRC delivered a talk on 'Family Values and the Evolution of Human Society' at Gudipadu village, Kadapa district, Andhra Pradesh. Around 200 women, teachers and government officials attended the programme.



- On 26th October 2025, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Member, NHRC participated in a discussion titled 'Women's Rights are Human Rights' organised by the Pragna Bharati Women Cell at Narayanguda, Hyderabad, Telangana. She said that every human being is entitled to basic rights, including the right to life, liberty, equality and dignity, providing for their health, education and equal opportunities. The Member stated that women inherently possess equal rights and recognising and upholding these rights is key to advancing their empowerment. When women exercise their freedom and opportunities to express themselves and utilise their skills, they strengthen their families and contribute significantly to the nation's progress.



- On 26th October 2025, the Commission organised a painting competition on 'Environment' in three categories up to XII standard for the children of its employees. The first category was of children upto III standard; the second category had children from IV to VII standard and third category comprised of children from VIII to XII standard. A total 62 children participated in the competition. Smt. Yasmin Ahmad, Presenting Officer, NHRC was the Chief Guest.



- On 31st October 2025, NHRC DG (I), Shri Anand Swaroop administered the 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas' pledge to the officers and staff of the Commission. The day marked the 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the first Home Minister of Independent India.



- On 31st October 2025, Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General, NHRC delivered the keynote address on 'Youth Entrepreneurship and Start-up Governance' as Chief Guest of the 6th Leadership Summit 2025. It was organised by the BML Munjal University, Gurugram, Haryana. He stressed that India's start-up journey must safeguard workers' dignity and human rights with fair wages, labour rights and essential support for all. Innovative ideas need to be encouraged. These are the seeds for values-driven start-ups to create new jobs to boost the economy. He said that a 3-pillar governance structure to incubate innovative ideas in universities, enabling public infrastructure and private investment is vital for thriving start-ups. The synergy will empower youth to bring big ideas to life and build a resilient entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Shri Lal said that true entrepreneurial success must be rooted in ethics and human rights. Start-ups should ensure fair wages, strong labour rights, safe workplaces and a commitment to societal impact. Profit with values and ethics must lead innovation. He urged students to seize the opportunities to build start-ups with a global outlook and local realities. True leadership requires ventures driven by societal purpose, fairness and integrity.



Forthcoming events

From
10th November, 2025

The Commission will begin its 4th Online Short-Term Internship programme for the year 2025-26.

10th December, 2025

The NHRC, India will organise a function and a National Conference on 'Ensuring Everyday Essentials: Public Services and Dignity to All' to celebrate Human Rights Day in New Delhi. President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu will grace the occasion as Chief Guest.

From
19th December, 2025

The Commission will begin its 4-week in-person Winter Internship Programme for University-level students at its premises in New Delhi.

Complaints in October 2025

Number of fresh complaints received	5,881
Number of cases disposed of including old cases	2,782
Number of cases under consideration of the Commission	42,550

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