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HUMAN RIGHTS

Newsletter

A monthly publication of the National Human Rights Commission, India



Consultation

Core group meeting on Disability

Report

Meeting of Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors

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Volume 33 | Number 2 | February 2026

National Human Rights Commission, India

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► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian, flanked by Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal and senior officers with the students of in-person 4-week Winter Internship Programme of the Commission

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► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian presenting an award to the winner of the children's painting competition in the first category of students upto III standard

Monthly Recap

From the desk of the Secretary General & Chief Executive

The National Human Rights Commission believes in forging partnerships and working with governments in centre and states, civil society, academia, human rights defenders and communities, particularly most vulnerable groups. Protection of human rights today demands continuous vigilance, empathy, collaboration for preventive action and courage to look beyond silos. The month's engagements underline NHRC, India's role as both a constitutional guardian and a moral compass working steadily from policy rooms to the last mile.

A significant consultation organised during the month was the NHRC's core group on disability certificate re-verification. While preventing misuse of disability benefits is necessary, the Commission cautioned against blanket and retrospective reassessments that undermine legal safeguards and job security of persons with disabilities (PwDs). Emphasising targeted scrutiny over mass verification, the discussions highlighted gaps in implementation of the RPwD Act 2016, including poor access to medical boards and procedural opacity. The call for UDID-based digital verification, accommodation-centric assessments and clear appeal mechanisms reflect a rights-based approach. Governance must protect systems without eroding trust or dignity of genuine PwDs. A report on this consultation has been carried in this edition of the Newsletter.

The Commission also organised a meeting of its newly appointed 33 Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors of the NHRC. These functionaries occupy a uniquely critical space in India's human rights institutional framework. Through field visits, thematic enquiries and direct engagement with affected individuals and the concerned authorities on the ground, their reports help the Commission translate constitutional promises into lived realities for the most vulnerable and marginalised. Therefore, Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors are, in a way, the Commission's conscience keepers. They identify systemic gaps, administrative inaction and evidence-based emerging patterns of rights violations. Their observations serve as useful inputs to the Commission for policy recommendations, advisories and *suo motu* cognizance.

Equally important has been NHRC's review of the implementation of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act and the Mental Healthcare Act. Besides, outcomes from *suo motu* interventions and the expansion of outreach through multiple access points including the NHRC Mobile App, demonstrate how technology and governance can combine to deliver measurable impact. Strengthening outreach, accountability

and compassion remain central to the NHRC interventions for giving recommendations to the centre, states and union territory administrations to ensure that no one is left behind.

These efforts are rooted in India's civilisational ethos. India is a 5,000-year-old civilisation founded on justice, equality, liberty, empathy and compassion. Post-independence, India has built a robust constitutional and institutional framework for the protection of human rights. Legislature, judiciary and executive work together to uphold dignity and justice under the watchful eyes of the fourth pillar of our democracy, i.e. a vibrant media. Our collective responsibility is to continue setting a global example worthy of emulation.

The human rights lens was further expanded at the Public Health Transformation Summit 2026, where I delivered the keynote address on the transition from One Health to Planetary Health. Health is still viewed too narrowly. It is shaped by many factors such as climate stability, environmental integrity, water security, food systems, urban design and working conditions. These all encompass the Commission's mandate for promoting and protecting human rights in various manifestations.

Pandemics, heatwaves, air pollution, antimicrobial resistance and water stress are also not isolated crises; they are systemic signals of imbalance between human choices and planetary limits. India too is facing air quality crisis especially during winters in many of its cities. These challenges constitute public health emergencies that disproportionately affect poor, women, children, informal workers, tribal communities and elderly. These significantly impact health, productivity resulting in drain of human capital, which ultimately hampers the economic development of the nation.

While initiatives such as the *National One Health Mission*, *National Clean Air Programme*, *Heat Action Plans*, *Jal Jeevan Mission*, *Swachh Bharat Mission*, *Namami Gange*, *Amrit Sarovar* and climate action frameworks mark significant progress, the moment calls for a broader paradigm. Planetary health asks a fundamental question: what planetary conditions are essential for sustained human well-being? From a rights perspective, the right to health, being integral to the right to life, is inseparable from clean air, safe water, adequate housing, dignified work and a liveable ecosystem. In fact, there can be no sustainable health without a sustainable planet.

The NHRC, India through its various national, international and regional engagements, has been highlighting these challenges to find a way forward. These engagements also

demonstrate the Commission's approach of pairing institutional learning with international dialogue to advance inclusive and effective governance. In this context, the interaction with senior Sri Lankan civil servants during their exposure visit to the Commission in January reflected India's commitment to democratic collaboration in the Global South. Further, participation in the Asia Pacific Forum's blended learning programme in Kuala Lumpur highlighted the importance of strengthening gender strategies within National Human Rights Institutions through practical peer-based learning.

Investing in the future custodians of human values remains central to NHRC, India's mission. The Winter Internship Programme (25th December 2025 – 9th January 2026) concluded with 80 bright students who exemplified discipline, curiosity and commitment. Beyond academic rigour, the programme fostered unlearning stereotypes, challenging biases and inherited assumptions. As these interns return to their institutions, they carry not only knowledge but responsibility to stand against injustice, uphold dignity and lead as human rights defenders. Institutions matter, but the future of human rights ultimately rests with committed individuals.

Behind every civil society movement and campaigns, there is an individual driving force taking the lead. A case study in this

context is the work of Navjyoti India Foundation, which celebrated its 38th anniversary of citizen-led action, evolving from a small initiative to a nationally respected institution. Its holistic work in education, skill development, women's empowerment, de-addiction, community health and community police partnerships shows that development without dignity is incomplete and dignity without opportunity is unsustainable.

Taken together, the Commission's engagements in January 2026 remind us that human rights are not abstract ideals. They are lived experiences of everyday life shaped by governance, environment, education and collective conscience. Advancing dignity, justice and well-being demands that institutions and individuals work together with empathy to foster a human rights culture in society. I am hopeful that the reports and regular columns focusing on diverse activities of the Commission will make for engaging reading of this edition of the Newsletter.



[Bharat Lal]

Secretary General &
Chief Executive Officer

Consultation

Core group meeting on Disability

On 27th January 2026, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India organised a core group meeting on 'Human rights violations emerging from re-verification and re-assessment of certificates of government employees with disabilities' in New Delhi. The hybrid meeting was chaired by NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian. Members, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi and Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani; Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal; Core Group members; special invitees; other senior officers; government representatives and domain experts attended the meeting.

Justice Ramasubramanian said that understandably Centre's 15th October



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian, flanked by Members, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani; Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal; senior officers and experts in the core group meeting on disability in New Delhi

2025 revised advisory and SOP for handling disability verification in government jobs/ education is meant for applying prospectively only for the new applicants and not retrospectively to reassess all existing beneficiaries. He observed that applying the SOP retrospectively for all of them may have legal implications. Therefore, instead of mass verification, the scrutiny should be limited to cases where there is a specific suspicion.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian emphasises revised advisory and SOP for handling disability verification in government jobs/ education is meant for applying prospectively only



► NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi stresses upon children born with disabilities receive proper medical care and accurate certification

He said that there are strong laws to protect the rights of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), but there are gaps in implementation. There may be instances wherein some deserving persons with disabilities do not get the benefits of welfare schemes. It may also not be denied that there could be instances of misuse of beneficiary legislation. Justice Ramasubramanian said that at times, approaching authorities is challenging and only well-connected or educated families can access the system effectively. He urged the participants to suggest measures to protect the rights of PwDs and ensure their dignity by addressing systemic gaps in the legal framework and the implementation thereof.

NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi said that children born with disabilities must receive proper medical care and accurate certification to ensure access to legal benefits. Expressing concern over incorrect or fake disability certificates, he noted that under-assessment often deprives individuals of entitlements. He called for stricter verification by medical boards. Justice Sarangi also emphasised the need for rehabilitation and livelihood support to PwDs through the Social Justice Department. He urged adopting a coordinated, compassionate approach to ensure that persons with disabilities live with dignity. He emphasised the importance of streamlining the process of issuing disability certificates.

NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani said that disability is not something that should be repeatedly proven. Repeated re-verification of PwDs is causing anxiety, fear and insecurity, particularly about job continuity. She highlighted poor access to medical boards and said that repeated checks should not apply to irreversible disabilities. She called for functional, accommodation-based assessments, doorstep verification and



► NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani emphasises disability should not require to be repeatedly proven

services, time-bound procedures, disability rights training for officials, online accessibility and dedicated grievance cells.

Before this, setting the agenda of the meeting, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal said that PwDs must be treated with respect and dignity, while ensuring safeguards against misuse of legal provisions. He stressed strict implementation of the Centre's October 2025 SOP, which covers digital verification of disability certificates, assessment of disability type, percentage and functional suitability as well as an appellate mechanism. However, he noted that reassessment of disability can be intrusive and people feel that their dignity is compromised. He said that although the 2016 Act increased reservations from 3% to 4%, its misuse by some people by adopting fraudulent means resulted in genuine persons with disabilities facing hardships. He expressed the hope that through collective deliberations and active participation of government officials and experts, recommendations and suggestions would emerge to address this issue.

Earlier, NHRC, India Joint Secretary,

Smt. Saidingpuii Chhakchhuak gave an overview of the three technical sessions of the meeting. These were 'Harmonising administrative oversight with the RPwD Act, 2016', 'Ensuring dignity and non-discrimination in verification processes' and 'Strengthening digital verification through the UDID framework.'

Shri Rajeev Sharma, Joint Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, MoSJE, highlighted concerns regarding the conduct of disability assessments in campaign mode. He acknowledged reports from departments, media and society regarding fraudulent disability certificates. On the issue of reassessment, he clarified that the primary intent of the Department was to ensure due diligence at the stage of admission to higher educational institutions and recruitment to government jobs. He referred to Section 91 of the RPwD Act, 2016, which prescribes penalties for fraudulent claims, including imprisonment and fines. He stated that the Department's intent was high-resolution scrutiny of disability certification at the entry stage. However, he acknowledged that fraud could sometimes re-surface later, citing instances where individuals were

detected long after induction into service. He clarified that action taken in such cases was legally justified under the Act.

Dr. S. Govindaraj, Commissioner of Persons with Disabilities, said that verification mechanisms must remain targeted and proportional to ensure that genuine persons with disabilities are not unnecessarily inconvenienced. He said that the existing guidelines emphasised validation rather than mass reassessment.

The participants included senior NHRC officers, Smt. Anupama Nilekar Chandra, DG (I); Shri Joginder Singh, Registrar (Law); Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary; Dr. Purva Mittal, Assistant Professor, University of Delhi and NHRC's Special Monitor (Women and Disability Issues); Prof. (Dr.) Amita Dhanda, Dr. Satendra Singh, Director-Professor of Physiology, University College of Medical Sciences and GTB Hospital; Dr. Vaibhav Bhandari, Founder, Swavlamban Foundation; Shri Muralidharan Vishwanath, General Secretary, National Platform for Rights of the Disabled; Shri Rajive Raturi, Consultant, Shri Arman Ali, Executive Director, National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP); Shri Akhil S. Paul, Director, Sense International (India); Shri Nipun Malhotra, Co-Founder, Nipman Foundation, among others.

Some of the other suggestions that emanated from the discussions were as follows:

- Prohibit blanket or mass medical reassessment of all government employees with disabilities;
- Adopt UDID-based digital verification as the default mechanism, with medical reassessment only as an exception, based on clearly defined and evidence-based suspicion;
- Incorporate safeguards in any verification exercise, including written reasons, opportunity to



► NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal says PwDs must be treated with respect and dignity while ensuring safeguards against misuse of legal provisions



► Commissioner of Persons with Disabilities, Dr. S. Govindaraj says genuine persons with disabilities not to be inconvenienced during verification process



► The meeting in progress

respond, time-bound decisions and a clear right to appeal along with protection from adverse action from the employer during the process;

- Adopt dignity-centred protocols during verification, including providing reasonable accommodation, improved accessibility, digital options and exemptions from redundant testing for permanent and irreversible disabilities;
- Strengthen accountability mechanisms to ensure deviations from SOP intent and statutory safeguards are documented, reviewed and corrected in a time-bound manner; and
- Eliminate the need to re-issue certificates to the employees living with irreversible disabilities.

The Commission will further deliberate upon the suggestions and inputs from different stakeholders to finalise its recommendations to the government for ensuring the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.

Report

Meeting of Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has appointed 33 Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors for a period of three years. They include eminent people from diverse areas of expertise, including former senior civil servants and law enforcement officers, representatives of civil society, academia, diverse gender identities and the differently-abled community, among others.

A meeting was organised to give them an idea of the Commission's multidimensional activities in promoting and protecting human rights and orienta-



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian, flanked by Members, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani; Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal; DG(I) Smt. Anupama Nilekar Chandra; Registrar (Law), Shri Joginder Singh; Joint Secretaries, Shri Samir Kumar and Smt. Saidingpui Chhakchhuak in the meeting of Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors at IHC, New Delhi



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian says even aiding a single household would fulfil the purpose of the appointments of Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors



► NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani says Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors carry authority and a profound ethical responsibility

tion for their role at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi on 22nd January 2026.

Chairing the meeting, Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian said that their appointments followed strict standards and a transparent short listing process based on credentials, field expertise and alignment with

areas of interest. This approach ensured that domain experts were matched to relevant thematic areas, strengthening the quality of monitoring, reporting and advisory functions. He commended their dedication to serving societal interests over self-interest and emphasised the importance of their roles in reaching out to society and

ensuring benefits of development reach common citizens.

Justice Ramasubramanian reaffirmed the Commission's commitment to integrity, transparency and public service in its institutional processes. He urged Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors to work as the Commission's foot soldiers and focus on small incremental improvements, noting that even aiding a single household would fulfil the purpose of their appointments.

Before this, NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani said that the appointment as Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors of the NHRC carries not only authority but also a profound ethical responsibility. She said that, based on field-level observations, several persistent concerns continue to demand attention. These include overcrowding of prisons, medical negligence, lack of gender and child sensitivity, delayed grievance redressal and a lack of follow-up mechanisms, among others. Therefore, reports must go beyond documentation and evolve into instruments of accountability. She said that effective monitoring should lead to corrective action, institutional reform and measurable improvement in conditions of vulnerable population.

Earlier in his opening remarks, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal



► NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal says Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors must act as 'conscience keepers' by identifying wrongdoing or inaction





► NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar giving a presentation on Commission's activities

highlighted the importance of NHRC advisories, *suo motu* cognizance and interventions which help in preventing cases of human rights violations and raise public awareness. He spoke about the concept of Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors and their role in protecting and promoting human rights of especially the most vulnerable people. He said that they must act as 'conscience keepers' by identifying wrongdoing or inaction. He requested them to popularise Commission's different outreach activities and modes of approaching it, including through the recently launched Mobile App.

He requested the Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors to plan collaborative work for the next six months, focusing on key human rights issues and related field visits. He said that field visit inputs will help the NHRC issue advisories and recommendations to the government for framing policies.

NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar gave a detailed presentation on the human rights framework, organisational structure, complaint management system, advisories, core groups, guidelines and functioning of the Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors, among others.

Drawing upon their experiences, the Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors also shared their thoughts on upholding human rights and dignity for



all. They also highlighted certain areas of concern.

Smt. Anupama Nilekar Chandra, Director General (Investigation), Shri Joginder Singh, Registrar (Law); Smt. Saidingpuii Chhakchhuak, Joint Secretary; Presenting Officers, Shri Gaurav Garg, DIG; Lt. Col. Virender Singh, Director; Shri Sanjay Kumar, Deputy Secretary; Deputy Registrars and other officers were present.

The newly appointed Special Rapporteurs are;

Shri Akhil Kumar Shukla; Ms. Shomita Biswas; Shri Upendra Baghel; Shri Mohammad Jamshed; Shri Nityanand Srivastava; Smt. Sadhana Rout; Shri Subhash Chandra; Shri Santosh Kumar

Satapathy; Shri Praveen Sinha; Smt. Suchitra Sinha; Shri K. Padma Kumar; Shri Devendra Kumar Nim; Shri Ashit Mohan Prasad; Dr. Keshav Kumar and Shri Syed Ahmed Baba.

The newly appointed Special Monitors are:

Prof. Kanhaiya Tripathi; Shri Ajay Bhatnagar; Shri Dhananjay Tingal; Shri R. Hemanth Kumar; Shri D. S. Dhapola; Dr. Purva Mittal; Shri Balkrishnan Goel; Gopi Shankar Madurai; Shri Uma Kant; Dr. Sharon Menezes; Smt. Arti Ahuja; Shri V. B. Kumar; Dr. Poonam Malakondaiah; Shri Hari Nath Mishra; Dr. Pradeepa Kumar Nayak; Dr. Muktesh Chander; Dr. Vijay Kumar and Shri R. K. Srinivasan.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Member, Secretary General, DG(I), Registrar (Law), senior officers with newly appointed Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors

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, it has taken *suo motu* cognizance of many such issues and brought succour to the victims. During January 2026, the Commission took *suo motu* cognizance of 05 cases of alleged human rights violations reported by the media and issued notices to the concerned authorities to send action taken reports. Summaries of these cases are as follows:

Deaths due to contaminated water

(Case No. 7/12/2026)

On 31st December 2025, the media reported that at least seven people died and more than 40 others fell ill after consuming contaminated water in the Bhagirathpura area of Indore district, Madhya Pradesh. Reportedly, the residents had been complaining about contaminated water supply for several days, but no action was taken by the authorities. Therefore, the Commission has issued a notice to the Chief Secretary, Government of Madhya Pradesh, calling for a detailed report on the matter.

According to the media report, the main pipeline which supplies drinking water to the area passes beneath a public toilet. Reportedly, due to a leakage in this line, sewage water got mixed with the drinking water. Besides, several water distribution lines were also found broken in the area due to which contaminated water was reaching the households.

Surge in typhoid patients due to consumption of contaminated drinking water

(Case No. 41/6/10/2026)

On 4th January 2026, the media reported a significant surge in the number of patients afflicted by typhoid in Gandhinagar, Gujarat allegedly due to consumption of contaminated drinking water. Reportedly, the State Health Department confirmed a total of 70 active cases of typhoid concentrated in a particular area of the city. The surge in typhoid patients has exposed serious flaws in the newly laid water supply system. Seven points of leaks have been identified in the water pipeline network, causing sewage to mix with the drinking water.

Therefore, the Commission has issued a notice to the Chief Secretary, Government of Gujarat, calling for a detailed report on the matter. The report is expected to include the present health status of out-door and in-door typhoid patients and the steps taken or proposed to ensure such incidents do not recur.

According to the media report, the doctors confirmed that this was a water-borne outbreak and they were working to

ensure early detection and prompt medical treatment for the patients on priority. Reportedly, a 30-bed Paediatric ward was opened in the Gandhinagar Civil Hospital to handle the increasing number of typhoid patients who were mostly children. The patients were approaching the hospital with high fever and gastrointestinal symptoms.

Bonded labour ordeal for months

(Case No. 710/24/30/2026-BL)

On 12th January 2026, the media reported that a 15-year-old boy from Kishanganj district in Bihar had been exploited as a bonded labourer for several months after he was unable to re-board a train at Bahadurgarh Railway Station in Haryana to join his father. Reportedly, the boy had stepped off the train to fetch water at the railway station but could not board it again due to the rush. Thereafter, he endured bonded labour for eight months before eventually managing to return home with his left elbow severed.

According to the media report, after missing the train, the boy stayed at the railway station for two days, after which a man, under the pretext of providing him with a job, took him to the Greater Noida area in Gautam Budh Nagar district of Uttar Pradesh. There, he was made to work from early morning until night. His chores included grazing cattle and cutting fodder. He was subjected to frequent physical abuse by his employer. The victim reportedly made an unsuccessful attempt to escape from the bondage but was caught and beaten. The report revealed that his left hand was severed at the elbow while operating a fodder-cutting machine. He was subsequently abandoned on the road by his employer without any medical assistance.

Reportedly, an unknown person took him to a hospital in Nuh district of Haryana, from where he ran away out of fear of being caught again by his employer. He walked barefoot for more than three kilometres until two government teachers noticed him, after which the matter was reported to the Government Railway Police (GRP), Bahadurgarh, Haryana. The boy returned home in August 2025.

The news report also revealed that a Bonded Labour Release Certificate was not issued by the authorities under the

Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers, 2021. This is a mandatory document required to access rehabilitation measures and compensation for the victim.

Therefore, the Commission issued notices to the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police, Haryana, as well as the Commissioner of Police, Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh and the District Magistrate, Kishanganj, Bihar, calling for action-taken reports on the matter. The Commission also directed the authorities to inform whether any compensation had been paid and whether a Disability Certificate had been issued to enable the victim to avail benefits under the Persons with Disabilities (PwD) Act, 2016.

Abduction and rape

(Case No. 790/24/43/2026)

On 10th January 2026, the media reported the abduction and rape of a 14-year-old girl in Kanpur district of Uttar Pradesh on 5th January 2026. Reportedly, one of the accused is a Sub-Inspector of the Uttar Pradesh Police. The Commission has observed that the contents of the news report, if true, raise a serious issue of human rights violations. Therefore, it has issued a notice to the Director General of Police, Uttar Pradesh, calling for a detailed report on the matter. According to the media report, the victim was abducted near her house on 5th January 2026. She was taken to a place near the railway line where she was subjected to gang rape by two persons.

Reportedly, the family members took the victim to the Bhimsen Police outpost for registration of an FIR, but they were turned away. After this, the family went to the Sachendi

police station, where an FIR was registered against the unknown car occupants for abduction and rape.

Protest for burial space

(Case No. 273/20/0/2026)

On 30th January 2026, the media reported that people of Kalbelia community staged a protest by placing a dead body on the road, demanding a designated place for the burial of their kins in the Barmer district of Rajasthan on 29th December 2025. Reportedly, Kalbelias follow the Nath tradition under which their dead kins are buried and not cremated. But unlike designated cremation grounds or graveyards for other communities, no burial grounds have been allocated for the Kalbelia community by the administration.

The Commission has observed that the contents of the news report, if true, raise a serious issue of human rights violation. Therefore, it has issued a notice to the Chief Secretary, Government of Rajasthan, calling for a detailed report on the matter.

The Commission is of the view that it is the duty of the state to uphold dignity and protect the rights of the dead. Earlier in May 2021, the Commission had issued an advisory to all states and union territories on upholding dignity and protecting the rights of the dead.

According to the media report, the grieving Kalbelia families are generally forced to bury their dead on private lands due to lack of designated burial sites. Hence, they face resistance, abuse and many times even eviction.

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 January 2026, besides the number of cases taken up daily by the Member Benches, 36 cases were heard by the Full Commission and 150 cases by Division Bench-II. An amount of Rs 102.5 lakh was recommended for the victims or their next of kin (NoK) in 18 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 NHRC, India website by logging the case number given in the table below:

S. No.	Case Number	Nature of complaint	Amount (Rs in lakh)	Authority
1.	595/18/10/2023	Death due to medical negligence	2.00	Govt. of Odisha
2.	151/20/12/2018	Death in police firing	7.50	Govt. of Rajasthan
3.	2073/24/68/2021	Death due to police motivated incident	5.00	Govt. of Uttar Pradesh

S. No.	Case Number	Nature of complaint	Amount (Rs in lakh)	Authority
4.	490/1/5/2023-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Andhra Pradesh
5.	2954/18/10/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Odisha
6.	173/9/7/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	UT Administration of Jammu & Kashmir
7.	204/18/12/2024-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Odisha
8.	2284/36/26/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	4.00	Govt. of Telangana
9.	14/23/2019-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Tripura
10.	17199/24/48/2020-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Uttar Pradesh
11.	106/3/26/2022-PCD	Death in police custody	5.00	Govt. of Assam
12.	153/3/11/2022-PCD	Death in police custody	10.00	Govt. of Assam
13.	87/4/15/2023-PCD	Death in police custody	5.00	Govt. of Bihar
14.	4933/25/16/2022-PCD	Death in police custody	5.00	Govt. of West Bengal
15.	5/25/2/2023-PCD	Death in police custody	5.00	Govt. of West Bengal
16.	3531/4/6/2021-AD	Death in police custody	5.00	Govt. of Bihar
17.	2895/12/14/2020-AD	Death in police custody	5.00	Govt. of Madhya Pradesh
18.	355/34/24/2020-PF	Death in police firing	5.00	Govt. of Jharkhand

Payment of relief to the victims

During January 2026, the Commission closed 16 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 93.5 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 NHRC, India website by logging the case number given in the table below:

S. No.	Case Number	Nature of complaint	Amount (Rs in lakh)	Authority
1.	4101/4/23/2023-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Bihar
2.	573/7/6/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Haryana
3.	697/34/16/2023-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Jharkhand
4.	107/19/15/2024-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Punjab
5.	366/20/24/2023-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Rajasthan
6.	367/36/2/2024-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Telangana
7.	86/36/2/2024-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Telangana
8.	11266/24/64/2024-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Uttar Pradesh
9.	6917/24/47/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Uttar Pradesh
10.	9164/24/64/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Uttar Pradesh
11.	766/4/30/2022-AD	Death in police custody	10.00	Govt. of Bihar

S. No.	Case Number	Nature of complaint	Amount (Rs in lakh)	Authority
12.	618/33/14/2022-AD	Death in police custody	7.50	Govt. of Chhattisgarh
13.	962/34/11/2023-AD	Death in police custody	10.00	Govt. of Jharkhand
14.	2957/18/14/2020-AD	Death in police custody	5.00	Govt. of Odisha
15.	34472/24/22/2021-AD	Death in police custody	10.00	Govt. of Uttar Pradesh
16.	127/9/22/2022-ED	Death in police encounter	10.00	Govt. of Punjab

Case studies

In many cases, the Commission found that contrary to the claims of the state authorities, 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 notices to them to show cause why monetary relief should not be recommended to be paid to these victims or their next of kin (NoK) and why action should not be taken against the erring/ negligent officials. The merits of the states' approach to responding to 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 recommendations by the respective state authorities. Summaries of such cases are as under:

Non-issuance of birth certificate

(Case No. 514/30/4/2024)

The matter pertained to the alleged delay in registration of complainant's daughter's birth in 2021 in Delhi. Based on the material received from the concerned authorities in response to its notices, the Commission found that the delay occurred due to late submission of birth information by Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital, Rohini. The delay was compounded by disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic when it functioned as a dedicated COVID facility. Further delays arose as registration beyond one year required a birth order from an SDM, leading to procedural lapses and jurisdictional confusion involving three SDMs from Kanjhawala, Nangloi and Rohini.

The Commission's concerted communication with the authorities ensured that eventually SDM Kanjhawala issued the birth order on 24th April 2024 after which the birth certificate was issued. The Commission held that the concerned hospital authorities, as well as the SDM, Kanjhawala were negligent, causing delay in issuance of the birth certificate violating fundamental rights of the complainant for which the state government was vicariously liable. Therefore, it recommended that the Delhi government pay Rs 25,000 as relief to the complainant, which was paid.

Death in police custody

(Case No. 2597/18/3/2021-JCD)

The matter pertained to the death of a 31-year-old man in custody of Cuttack Police in Odisha in 2021. Based on the material received from the concerned authorities in response

to its notices, the Commission found that the victim jumped from a police vehicle, sustained grievous injuries and subsequently died during medical treatment. The inquest proceedings and post-mortem report revealed multiple injuries consistent with a fall from height. The cause of death was opined to be cardio-respiratory failure resulting from fat embolism syndrome consequent upon the injuries sustained. The Commission observed that the victim was under the control and custody of police at the relevant time and the police personnel failed to ensure his safety, which amounted to a lapse. Therefore, the Commission held that the state was vicariously liable for the negligence of its employees and recommended that the Government of Odisha pay Rs 5 lakh as relief to the next of kin of the deceased, which was paid.

Death of convict prisoner

(Case No. 1854/7/18/2019-AD)

The matter pertained to the death of a 43-year-old convict prisoner at Sirsa District Jail, Haryana in 2019. Based on the material received from the concerned authorities in response to its notices, the Commission found that the victim was admitted to the jail on 25th September 2015, but his health screening was conducted almost four years later on 30th July 2019. The victim was a drug addict and a COPD patient suffering from acute respiratory problems. However, no adequate treatment was provided during the last four years or after his admission to the hospital. The medical records were silent on any relevant treatment given. The injuries on his body and congestion in all organs indicated negligence in care and treatment. The Commission held that the wellness and

security of prisoners are the responsibilities of jail authorities. Therefore, the state was vicariously liable for any omission or commission on their part. Accordingly, it recommended that the government of Haryana pay Rs 5 lakh as relief to the NoK of the victim, which was paid. It was also informed that departmental action was taken against the errant officials of the Jail.

Suicide in judicial custody

(Case No. 3370/4/26/2018-JCD)

The matter pertained to the suicide of a prisoner in custody of Adarsh Central Jail, Beur in Patna, Bihar in 2018. Based on the material received from the concerned authorities in response to its notices, the Commission found that the victim had mental illness. He was not provided with special care or shifted to a Mental Health Care Home despite deterioration of his condition. He committed suicide by hanging himself inside the jail premises during daytime. The Commission held that as the prisoner was under the custody and control of the

jail authorities, the state was vicariously responsible for the negligence of its prison staff. Therefore, it recommended that the Government of Bihar pay Rs 3 lakh as relief to the NoK, which was paid.

Death due to suicide

(Case no. 5/25/2/2023-PCD)

The matter pertained to the suicide of a man in the custody of Mejia police station in Bankura District, West Bengal in 2023. Based on the material received from the concerned authorities in response to its notices, the Commission found that the victim was kept in illegal detention for more than 48 hours and committed suicide while in police custody. The Commission held that it was the responsibility of the police officials to ensure proper care and protection of the victim. Apparently, there was negligence on the part of the sentry posted at the police station. Therefore, the Commission recommended that the state government pay Rs 5 lakh as relief to the NoK, which was paid.

Spot enquiries



he National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India deputes its own team of Investigation Officers from time to time to conduct spot enquiries into cases of human rights violations.

Case No. 3717/12/38/2025

From 29th December 2025 to 2nd January 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation that Thalassemia-affected children were given HIV-infected blood in Satna, Madhya Pradesh. The complainant urged immediate independent investigation and strict action against the responsible parties.

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 human rights situation and status of implementation of 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 to encourage them to take neces-

sary actions to improve human rights conditions. During these visits, the importance of state authorities submitting timely reports is also highlighted to the officials, as it aids the Commission in promptly resolving human rights violation cases.

On 8th January 2026, NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani visited Government Adivasi Balak Ashram School in Chandanagar in Indore, Madhya Pradesh. Though she found the infrastructure satisfying, the

children's daily lives lacked care, dignity, joy and protection. She also noted the lack of supervision in the hostel. The Member also visited a shelter home for beggars in Indore. The shelter functions like confinement instead of being a place of protection and rehabilitation. She also found poor hygiene, lack of ventilation, serious health issues among inmates and uncaring management.

On 9th January 2026, she visited Adivasi Boys' College Hostel in Saver Road,



► NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani visiting an old age home in Ernakulam, Kerala

Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh and interacted with the students and noted their

grievances. She emphasised the urgent need for strengthening safety, security

and monitoring mechanisms for accountable administration in all social welfare hostels in the country for holistic development of students living there.

On 16th January 2026, the Member visited an old age home in Ernakulam, Kerala. She found the food and infrastructure satisfactory. She observed that beyond basic facilities, the elderly residents received little kindness, emotional care and companionship. They were also unaware of the government welfare schemes meant for them. She also visited the Government Boys Observation Home and noted that despite the JJ Act's emphasis on reformative and child-friendly care, children were being kept in isolation. They lacked adequate mental health support, hygiene and socialisation.

Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has designated 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, write reports for the Commission that detail their observations and suggestions for future action. Additionally, the Commission has appointed Special Monitors tasked with overseeing specific thematic human rights issues and reporting their findings to the Commission.

Special Rapporteurs

- From 12th to 14th January 2026, Shri Ashit Mohan Prasad visited Mangaluru Sub Jail, Karnataka to assess human rights situation. He also held meetings with the district officials.
- From 28th - 31st January 2026, Smt. Suchitra Sinha visited East Singhbhum, Seraikela Kharsawan, Ranchi and Jamshedpur in the state of Jharkhand in connection with the alleged incidents of witch hunting.

Special Monitors

From 27th to 31st January 2026, Shri Balkrishan Goel visited Observation Homes, Places of Safety, Anganwadi Centres, District Jails, District Hospitals, Community Health Centres, Primary Health Centres and Old Age Homes in Solan and Sirmaur districts of Himachal Pradesh to assess human rights situation. He also held review meetings with the District Magistrates and other concerned district-level officers to assess the implementation of child rights and welfare measures for elderly



► NHRC, India Special Monitor, Shri Balkrishan Goel visiting an Anganwadi centre in Sirmaur district, Himachal Pradesh

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 including moot courts to expand its outreach and human rights sensitisation especially for university-level students. Internships are conducted in-person as well as online. The Online Short Term Internship (OSTI) Programmes are organised to ensure that students from remote areas join them without incurring any expenses for their travel and stay in Delhi. The two month-long in-person Winter and Summer Internships are also organised.

Winter Internship Programme

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India organised its four-week in-person Winter Internship Programme (WIP) from 15th December 2025 to 9th January, 2026 in New Delhi. 80 university-level students completed the programme successfully. They were selected from over 1,485 applications received from different universities across the country.

Addressing the valedictory function, NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian said that the programme aims to broaden interns' thinking and encourage introspection to add worth to their lives as human beings. It also aims to ignite curiosity and inspire a search for learning to find a purpose in life. There must be a competition between the person you are today and the person you were yesterday.

Emphasising that learning is possible from everything, Justice Ramasubramanian said that happiness in life depends on doing things that one likes to do constructively with complete focus. He urged the interns to spread the knowledge they acquired during the internship and become the ambassadors of human rights.

He said that interns come from various parts of the country. Thus, the internship provides an opportunity to learn from one another and improve their understanding about our country. Drawing the teachings from Ramayana, he said that there is no greater heaven than one's mother and motherland and people must start loving their country.

Congratulating the interns, NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi said that seeds of understanding human beings and human rights had been sowed through this internship. They had the opportunity to learn



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian says the internship programme aims to broaden interns' thinking and encourage introspection to add worth to their lives as human beings



► NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi says the interns had the opportunity to learn from some of the best minds



► The officers and the interns attending the valedictory function



- NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal says opportunities like internship with the NHRC deepen students' understanding of life, dignity, respect and civility



- NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Smt. Saidingpuii Chhakchhuak presenting the internship report

from some of the best minds, who shared their knowledge and perspectives about human rights mechanisms. He expressed the hope that they would contribute meaningfully for the betterment of society.

Earlier, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal said that learning is as important as unlearning certain biases and prejudices to evolve as good human beings. Opportunities like internship with the NHRC deepen students' understanding of life, dignity, respect and civility. At the end of

the day, it is the values one carries that make all the difference. He urged the interns to become responsible citizens who have knowledge, skills, values and purpose in life. The Secretary General said that this internship will motivate interns to act as defenders of human rights. They should stand up against injustices to make society a better place to live in.

NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Smt. Saidingpuii Chhakchhuak presented the internship report. She highlighted the achievements of the programme and also announced the winners of the book review, group research project presentation and declamation competitions. She commended the commitment, dedication and active participation of the interns throughout the programme. She also urged them to internalise the idea of justice, dignity and equality for all.

NHRC, India senior officers including Shri Joginder Singh, Registrar (Law) and Shri Gaurav Garg, Deputy Inspector General (Investigation), among others, were present. Director, Lt. Col. Virender Singh delivered the vote of thanks.

The internship programme featured sessions by eminent speakers, including the NHRC Chairperson, Members and senior officers, serving and former senior officers from various commissions and ministries, representatives of civil society organisations and other experts. The interns also had field visits to Tihar Jail, police station and SHEOWS NGO to gain a first-hand understanding of real-world challenges and practical aspects of human rights advocacy.

Training programmes

The following are the training programmes addressed by the Chairperson, Members, Secretary General and senior officers of the NHRC, India. These were organised by different institutions with the support of the Commission.

- On 14th January 2026, the Department of Politics and International Relations, Providence Women's College in Calicut, Kerala organised a training programme on human rights, which was attended by 100 students.



- On 15th January 2026, Basti Area Development Council (NGO) in Balasore, Odisha organised a day-long training programme on 'Women Rights'. About 100 people attended this programme



- On 17th January 2026, a two-day training programme for prison officials was organised by the Indian Law Institute. NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar addressed a session on the role of the Commission in strengthening prison reforms.



- On 21st January 2026, NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani addressed as Chief Guest a seminar on 'Advancing Right to Food Security and Nutrition in India: Human Rights Perspective' organised by the Department of Law, School of Legal Studies, Babasaheb Bhimrao

Ambedkar University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. About 200 students attended.



- On 30th January 2026, the North Cap University, Gurugram Haryana organised a 2-day training programme on 'Reimagining Child Rights in India: Assessing the Impact of New Criminal Laws'. NHRC PO, Smt. Vijay Lakshmi Vihan was the Chief Guest.



- On 31st January 2026, NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi addressed as Chief Guest the International Conference on 'Inclusive Higher Education as a Human Rights: Addressing Gender, Age and Intersectional Inequalities in Indian Universities' organised by the NLU Odisha, Cuttack.

Exposure visits

To promote human rights awareness among college-level students and their faculties, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India invites them to visit the Commission to understand human rights protection mechanism and its functioning in accordance with the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993. They are briefed by senior officers. Following exposure visits were facilitated in December 2025:

- A batch of 18 students and 2 faculty members from Department of Law, Vishwakarma University, Pune, Maharashtra visited NHRC.



- A batch of 47 students and 2 faculty members from Dr. RML Hospital, New Delhi visited NHRC.



- A group of 40 students from Kirori Mal College, University of Delhi, visited NHRC.



- A batch of 21 students and 3 faculty members from Maharaj Sayaji Rao University of Baroda in Vadodara, Gujarat visited NHRC.



- A batch of 60 students and 2 faculty members from CPJ College of Higher Studies and School of Law, Narela, Delhi visited NHRC.



- A batch of 25 students and 2 faculty members from SRM Institute of Science and Technology in Chennai, Tamil Nadu visited NHRC.



- A batch of 32 students and 2 faculty members from Oriental College of Law Sanpada, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra visited NHRC.



Moot court

- A 3-day moot court competition was organised by the National Law Institute University, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, with the support of NHRC from 9th January 2026. Shri Joginder Singh, Registrar (Law), NHRC addressed the valedictory session.



New joining



Smt. Anupama Nilekar Chandra joined the NHRC, India as Director General (Investigation) on 16th January 2026. A 1994-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of Bihar cadre, she was serving as Special Director General, Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) prior to her joining the Commission. She has handled various important assignments in different capacities as a senior police officer in her cadre state and centre. She has wide-ranging experience in handling communally sensitive situations, left-wing extremism, organised crime and policing along the Indo-Nepal border during her postings in the state. At the centre, she looked after police research, training reforms, creation of the Modus Operandi Bureau and Training Needs Analysis for prison officers and staff at BPR&D. She was a member of the Supreme Court Committee on Prison Reforms (2020–2022), which submitted its recommendations on 27th December 2022.

She was actively involved in drafting the Model Prison and Correctional Services Act, 2023 and 50 prison training manuals as well as initiating training on the use of space technology in policing with ADRIN, Department of Space. She played an important role in enrolling out-of-school children in primary schools under the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* in collaboration with the Department of Education and UNICEF. She holds a Ph.D. in Law on 'De-construction of crime and criminality of victims of drug abuse under the NDPS Act, 1988.' The officer has also done 64th NDC course from National Defence College, New Delhi.

NHRC in the International arena

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India continues to engage with various international programmes to foster the 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 Commission's 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.

Visit of Sri Lankan senior civil services officers

On 28th January 2026, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India hosted 40 senior civil servants from Sri Lanka on their exposure visit to the Commission. Their visit to the Commission was part of the 14th Capacity Building Programme organised by the National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG), an apex level governance and public policy institution of Government of India, under the International Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

Addressing the civil servants, the NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian said that in every democratic setup, the legislature, judiciary and executive are the three important pillars for good governance and strengthen-



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian says in every democratic setup, the legislature, judiciary and executive are the three important pillars for good governance and strengthening country's growth

ing the country's growth. He said that India and Sri Lanka share many similarities, including a common law system inherited from British rule and courts that function in similar ways. Laws and governance are also often shaped by economic and geopolitical factors, which determine what happens in a country.

Justice Ramasubramanian said that the civil services officers also play an important role in shaping the laws and the systems of governance in a democratic country by acting as a pivot between the legislature and the judiciary. For this, they need to be alert to the external and internal factors that may impact their country's interests. He said that it is the responsibility of civil servants to ensure that the resources of the country reach the common man without discrimination to avoid unrest. Going by some recent past incidents in several countries, he said that the civil servants need to be alert to the social media triggers to act in time to take effective pre-emptive actions to save their country from possible turmoil.

Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General, NHRC, addressing the officers on the theme 'Institutional Framework for Promotion and Protection of Human



► Visiting senior civil servants from Sri Lanka



► NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal emphasises capacity-building must focus on learning, reflection and internalisation of institutional values



► Dr. A. P. Singh, Associate Professor and in-charge Administration, NCGG stresses the exposure to civil servants of various countries supports bilateral cooperation

Rights in India,' highlighted country's civilisational values of empathy, compassion and non-violence as the ethical base of governance. He noted that India's pluralistic traditions, freedom fighters and social reformers shaped a human rights discourse centred around the most vulnerable. Referring to the Constitutional framework, the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 and the judiciary, he emphasised that dignity and improved quality of life are integral to good governance. Warning that corruption and weak governance can erode institutions and social stability, he said that strong institutions, transparency and accountability directly improve citizens' quality of life and ease of living.

Shri Lal stressed that capacity-building must focus on learning, reflection and internalisation of institutional values. Referring to India's governance experience in last few decades and cooperation with Sri Lanka, he underlined shared democratic values and India's continued support. He explained NHRC, India's role in international human rights mechanisms, monitoring violations and issuing advisories, citing the high volume of complaints received. Emphasising the Global South solidarity, justice delivery and institutional credibility, he highlighted India's global contributions to human rights, women's leadership and reforms such as e-marketplace procurement. He said that independent institutions including the judiciary, human rights bodies and anti-corruption agencies have a significant role in ensuring democratic stability.

Dr. A. P. Singh, Associate Professor and in-charge Administration, NCGG also addressed the visiting Sri Lankan civil servants. He said that NCGG has been training senior civil servants of various countries with the aim to share India's governance experiences and best practices so that they can learn, adapt and possibly replicate successful approaches in their own countries. This also helps strengthen bilateral cooperation and administrative ties between India and partner countries.

Earlier, Smt. Saidingpuii Chhakchhuak, Joint Secretary, NHRC welcomed the Sri Lankan delegation and other dignitaries present.

APF Blended Learning Programme

From 19th - 21st January 2026, NHRC, India Presenting Officer, Smt. Vijay Lakshmi Vihan attended a Blended Learning Programme for the NHRI officers on 'Developing an NHRI Gender Strategy' in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The programme was organised by the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF). This programme combined online learning modules with an in-person workshop and idea exchange for participants. They were given an understanding of developing a toolkit. Additionally, the participants also discussed issues related to welfare and rehabilitation of the members of the transgender community.



► NHRC, India Presenting Officer, Smt. Vijaya Lakshmi Vihan addressing the Blended Learning Programme for the NHRI officers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Online engagements

- On 21st January 2026, Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary and Ms. Prerna Hasija, JRC, NHRC attended the online monthly call of the GANHRI Working Group on Business and Human Rights.
- On 28th January 2026, Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary, Ms. Varsha Apte, Consultant (Research) and Ms. Prerna Tara, JRC, NHRC attended a bilateral online meeting with the National Human Rights Institution (Defensoría del Pueblo de Paraguay) of Paraguay.

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 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 in protecting and promoting human rights in the country. Other national commissions are assisted by state-level commissions at the regional level. 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.

Karnataka State Human Rights Commission

The Karnataka State Human Rights Commission (KSHRC) took *suo motu* cognizance in a case of alleged honour killing in Dharwad District of the state. On 6th January 2026, Acting Chairperson, Dr. T. Sham Bhatt and Member, Shri S. K. Vantigodi visited Inam Veerapur village of Hubballi taluk and met the affected families and assessed the situation. The Acting Chairperson said that the Commis-



► KSHRC Acting Chairperson, Dr. T. Sham Bhatt and Member, Shri S. K. Vantigodi inspecting Hindalaga Central Prison, Belagavi

sion has taken a serious view of the incident and would recommend that the state government take strict action against those responsible. He urged officials to take measures to prevent recurrence of such incidents through human rights awareness programmes in coordination with the district administration, Zila Panchayat, Police Department and Department of Social Welfare. They should hold peace meetings in villages to prevent misinformation and build trust by providing moral



► KSHRC conducting full bench sittings in Belagavi

support, legal assistance and necessary relief to the victims of human rights violations.

On 7th January 2026, the KSHRC conducted full bench sittings in Belagavi District. The Commission heard the complainants in the presence of the Deputy Commissioner, CEO, Zila Panchayat and Superintendent of Police and other officers connected to the cases of human rights violations. The KSHRC also had an interactive session with the district-level officers and people from various sections of society on different aspects of human rights for their sensitisation.

Later, the Commission made surprise visits to government and government-funded facilities in both districts to assess human rights situation. These included prisons, Government girls' and boys' hostels, Police stations, Government Hospitals and other institutions. The Acting Chairperson and Member also interacted with the public and various community groups.

Telangana State Human Rights Commission

The Telangana State Human Rights Commission (TSHRC) undertook several significant interventions in January 2026 to strengthen protection and promotion of human rights. The Commission took *suo motu* cognizance of three incidents. These included a case of closure of government hostels for blind students at Dar-ul-shifa and Malakpet, Hyderabad affecting about 120 visually impaired students; death of a sanitation worker at Yousufguda dumping yard due to alleged negligence and unsafe working conditions and stray dog attack on a four-and-a-half-year-old girl at Khairatabad.

The TSHRC recommended Rs 8 lakh as relief in a case of medical negligence

resulting in the death of a woman patient due to delayed diagnosis of her disease. It also recommended that the state government give a job to the victim's husband.

Madhya Pradesh State Human Rights Commission

The Madhya Pradesh State Human Rights Commission (MPSHRC) concluded its one-month in-person Winter Internship Programme at its premises in Paryavas Bhawan, Bhopal on 30th January 2026. 33 law students completed it. Acting Chairperson, Dr. Awadhesh Pratap Singh urged them to imbibe the knowledge gained about human rights during various sessions in the internship. He said that human rights are a lifelong commitment. If human rights are violated, they should strive to protect them by taking all possible legal recourse. Such endeavours will make a positive contribution to building a better and stronger society thereby aiding the progress of our country.



► MPSHRC Acting Chairperson, Dr. Awadhesh Pratap Singh and other senior officers with the interns

News in brief

- On 1st January 2026, NHRC, India joined the global fraternity in celebrating New Year. Wishing everyone well at a gathering in the Commission, Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian said that having a good family and health along with the divine grace will help people reach greater heights. Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi and Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal also addressed the gathering and inspired the officers and staff to contribute



meaningfully to make other's life better as being part of the NHRC. The NHRC employees' children who won the painting competition organised by the Commission in 3 categories and scored above 90% marks in their board exams were also presented the awards motivating them on the 1st day of the New Year to further excel in life.



- On 5th January 2026, NHRC Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressed as Chief Guest a function marking 38 years of Navjyoti India Foundation at Chinmaya Mission, New Delhi. He highlighted the foundation's inspiring journey from a citizen-led initiative to a nationally respected institution. He said that from education and skill development to women's empowerment, de-addiction, community health and community police partnerships, Navjyoti's holistic engagement under the dynamic leadership of Dr. Kiran Bedi has restored dignity, discipline and hope at the grassroots level. Shri Lal emphasised that true leadership is not about position but purpose. Navjyoti is proof that building institutions for change makes transformation inevitable. He urged the gathering to inspire and mobilise people to contribute to transformative work that improves lives, particularly of the marginalised segments in society.



- From 5th to 16th January 2026, Major Vishnu S.P., Under Secretary (GA) and Shri Raghwendra Singh, JRC, NHRC participated in the 11th Comprehensive Course on Disaster Risk Reduction organised by the National Institute of

Disaster Management (NIDM) at its Rohini Campus, New Delhi. The training programme featured interactive lectures by eminent professionals working in the field of disaster management, including Ms. Rita Missal, Member, NDMA and Shri Safi Hasan Rizvi, Advisor, NDMA. The participants actively engaged in both theoretical sessions and field exercises, such as Hazard Analysis, Search and Rescue Operations demonstrations, CPR and First Aid techniques, Psycho-Social Assessment techniques and Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA). Through the programme, they gained practical and theoretical insights into the Disaster Risk Reduction framework of India. Upon successful completion of the training programme, they were awarded certificates by Shri Mahup Vyas, Executive Director, NIDM, Rohini.



- On 12th January 2026, NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi addressed as Chief Guest a seminar on 'Indian Constitution and Protection of Human Rights' organised by the Centurion University of Technology and Management in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.



- On 12th January, 2026, NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani delivered keynote address on National Youth Day of the Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekanand at College Auditorium, Shyama Prasad Mukherji College for Women, University of Delhi. She spoke about the teachings of Swami Vivekananda who firmly believed that no country can rise unless its women are educated, empowered and confident. She praised the vision of great thinkers like Swami Vivekananda, who believed deeply in the potential of youth especially young women. She said that in today's competitive and challenging world, the message of Swami Vivekananda is more relevant and that everybody should believe in themselves.

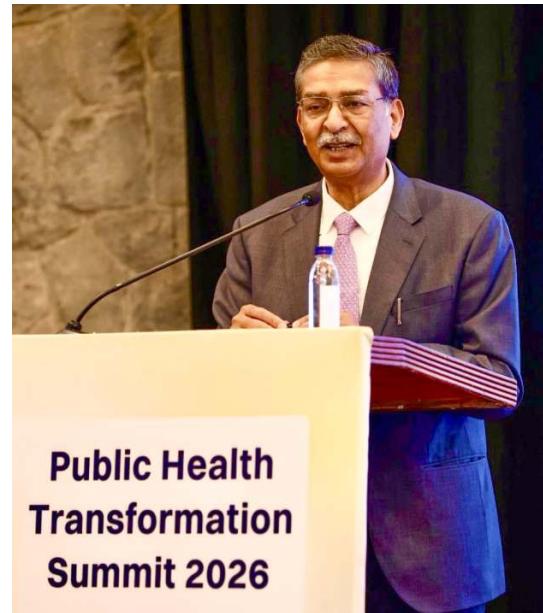


- On 14th January 2026, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressed a National Conference on 'Eco-restoration of Aravalli Landscape: Strengthening the Aravalli Green Wall' at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.



- On 16th January 2026, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal delivered the keynote address on 'From One Health to Planetary Health' in the Public Health Transformation Summit 2026 at IIC, New Delhi. A timely call to rethink public health holistically. Shri Lal emphasised that public health needs to be looked into holistically. The

Right to Life inherently includes the Right to Health and the Right to a clean and safe Environment, which are basic human rights in today's world. He said that healthcare cannot be limited to treatment alone in a country of 1.4 billion people. Preventive healthcare and care for the planet must be central to India's public health strategy. He highlighted the ongoing work in this field. The Summit, attended by over 200 participants and eminent experts, highlighted the critical linkages between public health, environmental sustainability and human rights, with the keynote setting the tone for a rich panel discussion.



- On 26th January 2026, NHRC, India joined the nation in observing the 77th Republic Day of the nation. NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal unfurled the National Flag at Manav Adhikar Bhavan, New Delhi and addressed the employees and CISF personnel. He said that the day reminds us of the immense contributions and sacrifices of earlier generations who gifted us this Republic. It is our collective duty to further strengthen it by steadfastly upholding its core values of equality, justice, liberty and fraternity and by reaffirming our unwavering commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights and dignity for all.



- On 29th January 2026, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressed the 77th Annual Conference of the Indian Psychiatry Society on the interface between Science and Public Policy at Main Plenary Hall, Yashobhoomi, Dwarka, New Delhi. The discussions focused on 'Unshackling Psychiatry for Society's Mental Health.'



- On 29th January, 2026 NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressed the participants of 6th D&ISA Fellowship on the theme 'Human Rights' not just legal frameworks but a reflection of the Nation's Core Values' at Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service at Old JNU Campus Baba Gang Nath Marg, New Delhi.



- On 30th January 2026, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal delivered a lecture on 'Human Rights in Every-day Life' at IC Centre for Governance, New Delhi.



Forthcoming events

**From 2nd - 13th
February 2026 and
9th - 20th March 2026**

NHRC, India will organise its two Online Short Term Internship (OSTI) programmes for university-level students.

20th February 2026

NHRC, India will organise a gender sensitisation programme on 'From Awareness to Action: Gender Sensitisation under POSH' for its employees at its premises. The aim is to help staff in unlearning the biases that deeply influence how they perceive and treat people and foster a more respectful, equitable workplace for all genders.

24th February 2026

NHRC, India will organise an open house discussion on 'Rethinking Beggary: Bridging Gaps between Policy, Practice and Dignity' at its premises.

25th February 2026

NHRC, India will organise an open house discussion in hybrid mode on 'Measures to curb spurious medicine in India' at its premises.

25th February 2026

NHRC, India will organise an in-house training programme on Cyber Security for its officers and staff.

**From 23rd to 29th
March 2026**

NHRC, India will organise the 5th Capacity Building Programme (CBP) for the senior functionaries of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) of various countries of the Global South in New Delhi. The CBP is held under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) framework in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India. In the earlier 4 programmes, 132 participants from NHRIs of 27 countries participated. The programme aims to foster collaboration among NHRIs, share experiences and best practices to address pressing human rights challenges across the Global South.

Complaints in January 2026

Number of fresh complaints received	5,037
Number of cases disposed of including old cases	4,380
Number of cases under consideration of the Commission	45,360

Human rights and NHRC in news



National Human Rights Commission

Important telephone numbers of the NHRC for filing complaints

Toll Free No.: 14433 (Facilitation Centers) • Fax No.: 011-2465 1332

For Filing online complaints: www.nhrc.nic.in, hrnet.nic.in, Common Service Centres

Email: complaint.nhrc@nic.in (For complaints), cr.nhrc@nic.in (For general queries/ correspondence)

Focal point for Human Rights Defenders

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