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SPECIAL EDITION



HUMAN RIGHTS

Newsletter

A monthly publication of the National Human Rights Commission, India

Consultation

Open House Discussion on 'Access to Social Media by Children'

Raisina Dialogue 2026

NHRCs in Turbulent Times

NHRC, India's Activities Recap

(April 2025 to March 2026)



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National Human Rights Commission

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► Visiting Norwegian delegation

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► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian with the visiting students of S. Thangapazham Law College, Tenkasi, Tamil Nadu

Monthly Recap

From the desk of the Secretary General & Chief Executive

As we present this Special Edition of the April 2026 Newsletter, it is an opportune moment to reflect on the evolving human rights landscape through the work of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India. In a rapidly changing socio-economic and technological context, the focus is on ensuring the effective realisation of rights through responsive, citizen-centric institutional action.

Over the past month, at the core of the Commission's mandate remained its complaint redressal function, which continues to be a critical instrument for ensuring accountability. During March 2026, the wide range of interventions, including sixteen *suo motu* cognizance of reported violations and recommendations for relief, reflect a proactive and responsive institutional approach. The emphasis on case studies and spot enquiries further strengthens systemic accountability by identifying gaps and prompting corrective action by authorities. The 2,672 complaints received during this period highlight both the persistence of human rights concerns and the growing trust of citizens in institutional mechanisms. Each complaint represents not only a grievance but also an opportunity to improve governance systems, strengthen safeguards and promote transparency. In this way, the redressal process becomes an important pathway for reform and institutional learning.

Another important dimension of the Commission's work is its focus on emerging areas of concern. The Open House Discussion on 'Access to Social Media by Children' is a notable example of this forward-looking approach. In an increasingly digital world, children face new opportunities as well as complex risks. Addressing these requires a careful balance between safeguarding rights and enabling access. By facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue, the Commission is actively contributing to informed and future-ready policymaking.

The month also marked important occasions such as International Women's Day and World Water Day,

which served as reminders of the need to advance gender equality and ensure sustainable access to natural resources. In this context, discussions around water, gender and community participation highlighted the interlinkages between environmental sustainability, social equity and the right to live with dignity. These themes resonate strongly with the Commission's broader emphasis on inclusive development and rights-based governance.

Indeed, access to water remains fundamental to dignity, equality and inclusive development closely linked with sanitation and gender justice. While significant progress has been made, sustainable and climate-resilient outcomes will require community-led governance, data driven systems and integrated approaches to water management. Hopefully, an article based on the excerpts of my keynote address, included in this edition, may provide an overview of the progress in this direction in India.

Field visits by Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors continued to provide valuable insights into ground realities across different regions. Their observations and interactions with communities contribute to more informed recommendations and strengthen the evidence-based approach of the Commission in addressing systemic issues.

Capacity building and awareness generation remain central to the Commission's strategy. Through internships, training programmes, academic collaborations and outreach initiatives, the National Human Rights Commission is nurturing a more informed and engaged citizenry. The active participation of youth in these initiatives reflects their growing role as stakeholders and contributors to the human rights discourse.

The strong response to the Commission's Short Film Competition further illustrates the power of creative engagement in raising awareness on critical issues. The selected films, addressing themes such as gender inequality, labour rights and challenges faced by

marginalised communities, underscore the diversity and immediacy of human rights concerns in contemporary India.

The Newsletter also highlights the work of State Human Rights Commissions, underscoring the importance of decentralised mechanisms in addressing region-specific challenges. Strengthened coordination between national and state institutions remains essential for a more cohesive and effective human rights framework across the country.

NHRC, India's engagement at the international level continues to complement its national efforts. Participation in global dialogues, exchange of best practices and collaboration with international partners reflect a commitment to shared learning and collective progress in advancing human rights.

A significant highlight of this month was the participation of NHRC leadership in the Raisina Dialogue 2026, organised by the Ministry of External Affairs in collaboration with the Observer Research Foundation. This prominent forum offered an important platform to deliberate on the future of human rights in a rapidly evolving geopolitical context marked by conflict, inequality and displacement. The discussions reinforced the importance of strengthening global human rights frameworks while ensuring that they remain responsive to ground realities.

One of the key takeaways from the dialogue was the need to amplify the voices of the Global South. Many of the most pressing human rights concerns, including climate vulnerability and socio-economic disparities, are experienced most acutely in developing countries. There is a growing recognition that global responses must be rooted in inclusivity, mutual respect and context-sensitive approaches. The Commission's

engagement in such platforms reflects India's commitment to shaping a more balanced and representative global human rights discourse.

The Newsletter also includes a dedicated section offering glimpses of the wide-ranging activities undertaken by the National Human Rights Commission from April 2025 to March 2026. These snapshots reflect a continuum of efforts - spanning interventions, consultations, outreach and awareness initiatives - demonstrating the Commission's sustained commitment to both protecting and promoting human rights across diverse contexts.

Looking ahead, the evolving nature of challenges, ranging from digital transformation and environmental concerns to changing labour dynamics, will require sustained engagement, innovation and inclusive policymaking. The NHRC, India will continue to play a pivotal role in shaping responses through dialogue, recommendations and institutional action.

Ultimately, the protection and promotion of human rights depend on a shared commitment across institutions and society. By fostering accountability, inclusion and respect for dignity and by aligning national efforts with constitutional values, it is possible to ensure that human rights are not only upheld but meaningfully realised for all.

As readers engage with this edition, it is hoped that the diverse range of reports and insights will offer both an informative and thought-provoking experience. It is intended not only to inform but also to encourage reflection, dialogue and greater awareness of the shared responsibility in advancing human rights.



[Bharat Lal]
Secretary General &
Chief Executive Officer

Consultation

Access to Social Media by Children

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has constituted several core groups on various thematic issues related to human rights to hold discussions with domain experts, academicians and senior government functionaries representing concerned ministries. Besides the core group meetings, the Commission also organises Open House Discussions with different stakeholders on various issues of human rights. The Commission organised one such Open House Discussion on 'Access to Social Media by Children' on 16th March 2026.

NHRC Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian chaired the meet which was attended by Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi; Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal; Secretary MeitY, Shri S. Krishnan; Director General (Investigation), Smt. Anupama Nilekar Chandra; Registrar (Law), Shri Joginder Singh; Joint Secretaries, Shri Samir Kumar, Smt. Saindingpuii Chhakchhuak; along with senior government functionaries from the Union and state governments, statutory bodies, members of academia, domain experts, UN organisations and representatives of

civil society organisations.

The discussion was organised in the backdrop of concerns regarding children's excessive use of social media and the inadequacy of child protection safeguards against harmful content growing among parents, educators and policymakers in India and worldwide. Globally, increasing concerns about children's safety online have led several countries to introduce or consider bringing age-based restrictions and stronger accountability measures for social media platforms, as seen in recent legal developments in Australia. Keeping in mind the well-being and the rights of children, the NHRC, India reached out to stakeholders to deliberate on a key question: Can similar age-based restrictions protect children online without excluding them from the benefits of social media?

In this context, the NHRC, India Chairperson, posed three questions to the participants. First, whether children's access to social media needs to be banned or only regulated up to a certain age. Second, who should do it, whether the State Legislature or the Parliament? Third,

a threshold to what extent social media access to children can be curtailed. He said that India, by far, has been a country with best possible laws in the world but implementation has also been a matter of concern. Therefore, the country must look for enforceable and practical solutions to the problem. The law should also be uniform throughout the country to ensure effective implementation.

He further said that while discussions focus on digital devotion, digital hygiene and digital addiction, there are no discussions about digital discipline. He urged the experts to suggest ways to make enforcement more effective.

During the discussion, NHRC Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi said that it may be best to regulate access rather than ban social media. He said that given the technology-driven world we live in, we may not deprive our children of the benefits of technology. He emphasised the need for a uniform central law to ensure equal digital opportunities and protection for children across all geographical and socio-economic backgrounds.

Earlier, in his opening remarks, NHRC Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal gave an overview of the three technical sessions of the discussions i.e. i.) Understanding the positive and negative impacts of social media on children; ii.) Assessing the Indian regulatory framework; and iii.) 'Evaluating age-based restrictions/ban on access to social media for children. He said that there are both advantages and disadvantages of social media. India has a sizeable number of children using smartphones with access to social media. He quoted the Annual Status of Education Report 2024 which states that in the 14-16 age group, 76% children use smartphones to access



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian says, the country must look for enforceable and practical solutions to the problem of excessive use of social media by children

social media while 57% use them for educational purposes. He noted that social media is also being misused for cyberbullying, data privacy-related exploitations, sexual abuse of children and cyber frauds. He, therefore, called for a 'balanced approach' in dealing with the issue of children's access to social media and requested the experts to deliberate on the theme from a holistic perspective. He also spoke about privacy as well as children's overall health, especially mental health in the digital era.

Shri Lal highlighted the NHRC's advisory for Protection of the Rights of Children against Production, Distribution and Consumption of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) in 2023, which he said, has received a good response from the Union and state governments. The advisory focused on strengthening legal, institutional, technological and victim-support mechanisms to curb the production, circulation and consumption of CSAM online.

Shri S. Krishnan, Secretary, MeitY gave an overview of the work being done by the Ministry and further stated that the government has been trying to ensure that the digital space is more regulated as it understands the social concerns and the sense of urgency in addressing them. In February 2026, the Ministry mandated labelling of synthetically generated content and restricted social media posts which violate laws. In this regard, he noted the need to strike the right balance in content regulation. He also called for understanding digital access as public infrastructure.

Smt. Aishwarya Dongre, Deputy Director, I4C, MHA raised concerns about the increasing availability of inappropriate content in the form of animation. She explained how proactive work is undertaken to locate and combat Child Sexual Abuse Material. She called for empowering children to become responsible citizens in a digital age. Dr. Muktesh Chander, Special Monitor, NHRC suggested regulat-

ing internet gateways to ensure better control and monitoring.

Dr. Sanjeev Sharma, Member-Secretary, NCPCR said that apart from legislation, an awareness drive is required for sensitising children and parents on the advantages and disadvantages of social media. Dr. Sneha, KAS, Director, Integrated Child Protection Directorate, Department of WCD, Karnataka said that the state government is finalising guidelines on children's access to social media. Shri Kabir K. Shirgaonkar, Director, Department of Information Technology, Electronics and Communication, Goa and Shri Syed Mohsin Ali, Deputy Director, Child Protection Development Unit, Department of WCD, Delhi said that their respective state governments are considering regulation in this regard.

Dr. Laxmi Vijay Kumar, Sneha Foundation said that a temporary ban could provide time to develop protection, given the brain's plasticity until the age of 16. Ms.



► The Open House Discussion on 'Access to Social Media by Children' in progress

Zaffrin Chowdhury, Chief of Communication, Advocacy and Partnerships, UNICEF endorsed restrictions on social media after due stakeholder consultations, including children. Ms. Sharmila Ray, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF highlighted the need to address behavioural issues. Ms. Swagata Raha, Head, Restorative Practices, Enfold India said that evidence-based approach will be necessary before adopting regulations for children's access to social media. She also pointed out how social media serves as an equaliser, breaking societal barriers.

Shri Rakesh Senger, Executive Director, Kailash Satyarthi Foundation emphasised that the primary responsibility for child safety should lie with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and social media platforms through stricter regulation and real-time monitoring. Dr. Manoj Sharma, Professor of Clinical Psychology, NIMHANS (SHUT Clinic) emphasised that while digital access is now integral to youth lifestyles, a holistic approach focusing on behavioural "preparedness" and lifestyle modification may be more effective than bans. Smt. Anuradha Joshi, Principal of the Sardar Patel Vidyalaya said that social media use is neither good nor bad; it depends on how one uses it. She said that devices promote loneliness; therefore, safety measures on mobile phones are essential.

Shri Sourabh Ghosh, Senior Manager, Research and Knowledge Exchange, CRY suggested continuous awareness and capacity building for children, teachers and parents. Dr. Karnika Seth, Cyber Lawyer and Public Policy Expert said that children, as citizens of India, also have rights; therefore,

she backed the regulated use of social media instead of an outright ban.

Ms. Hasina Kharbhih, Founder and Chairperson, Impulse NGO Network, Meghalaya asserted that strengthening regulations and updating legal frameworks would be a more practical and effective solution. Dr. Amit Sen, Director, Children First said that regulations should be centralised but should have adequate scope to accommodate local, cultural and societal contexts as India is a very large and diverse country.

In the multi-stakeholder discussion, concerns were also expressed over children losing empathy and emotional control. It was noted that online mode of communication adopted by schools during COVID - 19 disruptions may need to be revisited. The need to raise parental awareness and encourage digital discipline was highlighted as measures to dissuade children from excessive use of social media. The need for more transparent data sharing by technology companies to accurately assess social media impact on children was raised. Emphasis was also placed on the importance of encouraging children to connect with the real world.

Some of the suggestions emanated from the discussion included:

- Define what constitutes social media;
- Adopt evidence-based, cohesive approach before going either for banning or regulating;
- Assess social media advantages and disadvantages thoroughly as an equaliser between rural and urban population;

- Desist from a top-down approach;
- Ensure children's rights are not undermined;
- Have an overarching central policy on social media for children, with the states working for its implementation;
- Fix accountability of internet service providers, social media platforms and other technology companies;
- Ban social media for children below 13 years and regulate above 14 years;
- Regulate with responsibility;
- Promote digital literacy in schools;
- Provide training to law enforcement agencies;
- Exercise of due diligence by App Stores while uploading various apps;
- Implement safety measures on social media by default;
- Address concerns related to bots;
- Track VPN accounts; and
- Ensure sustained efforts to bring about behavioural change.

The Commission will further deliberate upon various suggestions from different stakeholders before finalising its recommendations.

Raisina Dialogue 2026

NHRCs in Turbulent Times

The Raisina Dialogue is India's premier conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics held annually in New Delhi since 2016. Organised by the Observer Research Foundation in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs, this three-day event convenes global leaders, policymakers, academics, industry experts and journalists to discuss critical international issues. The 11th edition of the three-day Raisina Dialogue was inaugurated by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi and the President of Finland Dr. Alexander Stubb delivered the keynote address as the Chief Guest, in New Delhi on 5th March 2026. Around 2,700 participants from 110 countries joined the Dialogue in-person and the proceedings were viewed by millions across the world on various digital platforms.

On 7th March 2026, a session on the theme 'NHRCs in Turbulent Times,' was held with NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian and Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal as speakers, centering on the shifting global human rights landscape amid conflict, geopolitical fragmentation and emerging South-South dynamics. The session was moderated by Dr. Shri

Harsh V. Pant, Vice President, Observer Research Foundation.

Setting the tone, Shri Harsh V. Pant framed the discussion within a rapidly transforming world order, noting that 'the fracturing of the multilateral system and the prioritisation of national interests and hard power' have increasingly pushed human rights concerns to the margins. He highlighted the paradox of a time when global norms are under strain, asking what role institutions like the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India can realistically play when "the external is becoming internal" and jurisdictional boundaries constrain action.

Responding to this, Justice V. Ramasubramanian highlighted a statistic that 'as of 2024, 78 countries were involved in conflicts, resulting in 122 million people displaced and an economic impact of nearly 20 trillion dollars.' He drew a critical distinction between International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law, emphasising that while the former is universal and constant, the latter governs conduct during armed conflict. In this context, he clarified the limits of national institutions, observ-

ing that 'deciding whether a country should go to war remains a sovereign function,' thereby restricting the role of national human rights bodies. However, he stressed their relevance in ensuring compliance with humanitarian norms during conflicts, particularly in protecting civilians and the wounded.

Building on this, Shri Bharat Lal underscored the structural limitations of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), noting that they were conceived as 'inward-looking bodies under the Paris Principles,' whereas contemporary crises- ranging from wars to climate disruptions- are transnational in nature. He remarked that 'most of these problems are created outside countries, while NHRIs are not equipped to handle issues beyond their jurisdiction.' Despite these constraints, he highlighted ongoing efforts toward collaboration, citing instances of cross-border cooperation and emphasising the importance of Global South engagement. According to him, 'working together is not an option but a necessity, with NHRIs needing to act as 'conscience keepers of society.'

Elaborating further on India's role, Shri Lal highlighted a key initiative of the NHRC, India in capacity building of NHRIs from the Global South. He noted that the Commission in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs, has taken an initiative in bringing together human rights institutions from various countries onto a common platform in India. Through structured capacity building programmes, training sessions and experience-sharing dialogues, these initiatives aim to strengthen institutional capabilities, enhance responsiveness to emerging challenges and foster peer learning. He emphasised that such engagements, now in their multiple editions, focus not only on sharing India's best practices but also on learning from partner countries,



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian and Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal participating in a session on 'NHRCs in Turbulent Times' in the Raisina Dialogue 2026

thereby building a collaborative and resilient network of NHRIs, equipped to address complex, cross-border human rights concerns.

The discussion also turned to the weakening of post-World War II order. Shri Pant pointed to the irony of established powers now contributing to the very disruptions they once sought to prevent, raising questions about capacity building and the need to amplify Global South voices. Justice Ramasubramanian responded with a reflective note on historical cycles, observing that “perpetrators become victims and victims become perpetrators,” and suggesting that the first half of the 21st century may mirror the turbulence of the early 20th century. He argued for a recalibration of global human rights frameworks, even suggesting that the Paris Principles offer only a “cosmetic outlook” and require substantial overhaul. Importantly, he stressed the need for collective action, stating that “no single international organisation can shoulder the burden alone.”

Further elaborating on practical pathways, Shri Lal reiterated the moral responsibility of powerful nations in maintaining global peace and highlighted the role of NHRIs as moral forces. He argued that ‘democracy can survive only

when there is a sense of accountability and moral restraint.’ He detailed India’s efforts in fostering dialogue among the Global South institutions through capacity building initiatives and experience-sharing platforms, aimed at strengthening institutional responses to emerging challenges.

In his concluding remarks, Justice Ramasubramanian offered a philosophical reflection, invoking the Indian ethos of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (the world is one family), while questioning its practical application. He observed that ‘preachers do not practice and practitioners do not preach,’ urging a convergence of values and action. Envisioning an ideal society, he remarked that it would be one ‘where there is no need for police, courts or even human rights institutions,’ emphasising that the ultimate responsibility for upholding human rights lies with individuals and society at large.

The dialogue thus underscored a central theme: while institutional mechanisms face growing constraints in a fragmented world, the path forward lies in collaboration, sustained capacity building, moral responsibility and a renewed commitment to the foundational values of human rights.

Article

World Water Day Special

Water Security, Human Dignity and Gender Equality

Bharat Lal,

Secretary General, NHRC, India

(Based on the excerpts from his speech delivered at the one-day workshop on ‘Water and Gender’ at Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi on 22nd March 2026, marking World Water Day)



World Water Day is not merely a symbolic observance. It is a powerful reminder that water security lies at the very foundation of human dignity, public health and sustainable development. Access to clean water is not a privilege. It is a basic human right and an essential condition for a life of dignity. Any serious conversation about development must begin with a simple but

profound truth. True progress remains incomplete until every household, regardless of geography or socio-economic status, has access to safe and reliable drinking water.

This vision aligns with a broader developmental framework that seeks to ensure universal access to essential services. These include safe sanitation, affordable housing, electricity, clean cooking fuel, healthcare and connectivity. Together, these elements define not just economic growth

but also the ease of living that underpins a just and equitable society. Water, in this context, is not an isolated issue. It is the thread that connects health, education, gender equality and economic productivity.

Globally, the urgency of this issue is undeniable. The commitment under Sustainable Development Goal 6, which aims to ensure universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation, remains far from fulfilled. The statistics are sobering. As of 2024, 2.2 billion people still lacked access to safe drinking water. About 3.4 billion people were without safely-managed sanitation and 1.7 billion did not even have basic hygiene services at home. Even at the current pace of progress, by 2030, an estimated 1.6 billion people will still lack access to safe drinking water, while 2.8 billion will remain without adequate sanitation.

The crisis is further compounded by growing water scarcity. Over the past decade, renewable water availability per person has declined by 7%. By 2030, global water demand is expected to exceed supply by nearly 40%. This will have severe economic implications. Countries could face an

average decline of 8% in gross domestic product by 2050 due to water-related risks. Rural areas are particularly vulnerable. As recently as 2024, 40% of rural populations still lacked safe drinking water and 29% did not have access to basic hygiene.

India's situation also reflects these global concerns, although it has its own unique challenges. Per capita water availability is projected to decline to 1,367 cubic metres by 2030 and further to about 1,200 cubic metres by 2050. In major river basins such as the Ganga, Krishna and Cauvery, this figure has already fallen below 1,000 cubic metres. This indicates severe water stress for large sections of the population. These figures are not just environmental indicators. They are warnings of a broader human development challenge.

The water crisis is also deeply linked with gender inequality. While inadequate access to water affects entire communities globally, women and girls bear a disproportionate burden. Across 53 countries, women and girls spend nearly 250 million hours every day collecting water. This is more than three times the effort contributed by men and boys. In 63% of households which are without water access on the premises, women and girls are responsible for fetching water. In comparison, men undertake this task in only 25% of such households.

In India, the situation is equally concerning. In about 25% of rural households that depend on water sources located away from the home; women and girls spend more than 50 minutes every day collecting water. This represents a significant loss of time and energy. That time could otherwise be spent on education, income generation or rest. Instead, it is consumed by a basic survival activity.

The consequences extend beyond physical effort. Lack of access to safe water and sanitation affects the dignity and safety of women. It exposes them to risks of harassment and violence. It also affects menstrual hygiene, which often forces girls to miss school. Therefore, the link between clean water and gender equality is clear. Without addressing water-related challenges, gender equality cannot be fully achieved.

Recognising this, India has made notable progress in improving rural water access through the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM). This initiative was launched with the goal of providing assured drinking water to every rural household. It aims to deliver water of prescribed quality on a regular and long-term basis. The results have been significant. In 2019, only 3.23 crore households or less than 17% households had access to tap water. Today, more than 15.83 crore households or about 82%, have functional tap water connections.

This progress has had a meaningful impact. Access to tap water has improved public health and increased school attendance, especially among girls. It has reduced the burden on women who previously had to spend hours collecting water. This has enhanced productivity, restored dignity and contributed to economic development in rural areas.

Given these achievements, the JJM has been extended until December 2028 with increased financial support. The next phase will focus not only on infrastructure but also on ensuring reliable service delivery and long-term sustainability. Strengthening local institutions and ensuring financial and environmental sustainability will be key priorities.

A major strength of this initiative has been its focus on decentralised governance and community participation. Village level institutions such as Gram Panchayats and Village Water and Sanitation Committees play a central role. More than 5.3 lakh such committees have been formed across 5.8 lakh villages. They have prepared over 5.2 lakh Village Action Plans. These plans outline water requirements, infrastructure design and financial arrangements.

Importantly, these committees ensure that at least half of their members are women. This recognises the unique challenges faced by women and empowers them to take leadership roles in water management. Evidence shows that water systems are more sustainable when women are actively involved in planning and decision-making.

This approach is already showing positive results. More than 24.8 lakh women have been trained in water quality monitoring and surveillance including testing at the village level. In Uttar Pradesh alone, 5.5 lakh women have received such training. In regions such as Bundelkhand, women-led groups are working to revive traditional water sources. These efforts have improved groundwater levels, supported livelihoods and strengthened community resilience.

Similarly, initiatives in states like Jharkhand demonstrate the effectiveness of women led approaches. Women engaged in water and sanitation programmes are leading awareness campaigns on hygiene and public health. Some have even moved into leadership roles in local governance. These examples show that when women are empowered, the benefits extend far beyond water management.

However, sustaining these gains will require continued investment in capacity building. Women need access to training in leadership, governance and technical skills. Community organisations and self-help groups can play an important role in supporting these efforts. There is also a need to promote awareness about water conservation and climate resilience.

Achieving universal access to clean water and sanitation is closely linked with the goal of gender equality. These two objectives cannot be pursued in isolation. A rights-based and inclusive approach is essential. Women must be actively involved in decision-making at all levels. Grassroots institutions must be strengthened to ensure effective implementation.

Water security is one of the most pressing challenges of our time. At the same time, it offers an opportunity to build a more equitable and sustainable future. India's experience shows that progress is possible when policies are inclusive, communities are empowered and women are placed at the centre of change.

Important intervention

NHRC action leads to rescue of six Indians in Thailand

(Case No. 32/99/4/2026)

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India's *suo motu* intervention has resulted in the Union Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) acting swiftly in getting rescued six Indian workers facing torture in captivity of their employer in Thailand since last six months. Four of them were repatriated to India the very next day of the NHRC communication to the MEA on 20th February 2026. They reached Kolkata by a flight booked by their employer from Bangkok. The MEA's Southern Division has informed that it is pursuing the matter of repatriation of the remaining two rescued workers with the Thai immigration authorities as they had overstayed their visa.

The Commission had taken *suo motu* cognizance of the matter based on a media report about a video on 17th February 2026 wherein the workers from the Kendrapara district of Odisha had recorded their plight. They were being held captive and subjected to physical as well as mental torture by their employer inside a factory in an area near Bangkok. They were forced to work for 12 hours a day in a plywood factory without any salary and proper food. Reportedly, their employer had also confiscated their passports.

The Commission on 20th February 2026 sought the comments of the MEA on whether they could render any assistance to their families. Following this, the MEA's Southern Division sent a request to the Thai authorities to rescue them and also contacted the owner of the company, who eventually released them.

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 March 2026, the Commission took *suo motu* cognizance in 16 cases of alleged human rights violations reported by the media and issued notices to the concerned authorities to send action taken reports. Summaries of some of these cases are as follows:

Botched cataract surgery

(Case No. 2499/24/34/2026)

On 20th February 2026, the media reported that after botched cataract surgery at a private hospital in the Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh, the infected eye of at least nine patients had to be removed even as nine others lost vision in one eye. Reportedly, the surgeries were conducted on 30 patients during an eye camp on 1st February 2026 at the private hospital. The Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary, Government of Uttar Pradesh and the Senior Superintendent of Police, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, calling for a detailed report on the matter. Reportedly, the patients started complaining of severe pain and discharge from the operated eye within 24 hours of the surgeries. A total of 18 patients developed infections, after which they were referred to hospitals in Delhi, Lucknow and Varanasi for treatment as their condition worsened.

Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh on 19th February 2026. Reportedly, the residents had complained to the local authorities regarding the uncovered drain, but no action was taken. The Commission has issued notices to the District Magistrate and the Senior Superintendent of Police, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, calling for a detailed report on the matter. The report is expected to include the status of compensation, if any, provided to the family of the victim boy. Reportedly, the boy was returning home after purchasing stationery items when his bicycle slipped into the open drain hidden in dense bushes at an under-construction site.

Death of a boy in an uncovered drain

(Case No. 2498/24/34/2026)

On 20th February 2026, the media reported that an 11-year-old boy died after falling into an uncovered drain in

Death of 18 workers in an illegal coal mine blast

(Case No. 411/13/17/2026)

On 2nd March 2026, the media reported that at least 18 workers died and 24 others were injured after an explosion at an explosives manufacturing unit at Raulgaon in the Katol taluka area of Nagpur, Maharashtra. Reportedly, the incident happened in the packing section of the factory at around 7.00 a.m. on 1st March 2026. Several victims suffered severe burn injuries ranging from 30 to 80% apart from serious

trauma. The Commission has issued notices to the Maharashtra Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police, calling for a detailed report on the matter. The report is expected to include the status of injured persons' health and investigation, as well as disbursement of compensation to the injured and to the next of kin (NoK) of the deceased. Reportedly, preliminary findings have suggested violation of the Explosives and Factories Acts' provisions. A case of culpable homicide has been registered against the factory management.

Deaths of sanitation workers in a sewer chamber

(Case No. 461/12/21/2026)

On 3rd March 2026, the media reported that two sanitation workers died in a sewer chamber in Indore, Madhya Pradesh on 2nd March 2026. They were the workers of Indore Municipal Corporation. The Commission has issued notices to the Indore Municipal Corporation and Police Commissioner, calling for a detailed report on the matter. The report is expected to include the status of the investigation as well as compensation, if any, paid to the next of kin of the victims. Reportedly, the victims entered the sewer chamber to retrieve a portion of a suction tanker pipe that had fallen during the de-watering process. But they became unconscious due to toxic gases. The victims were pulled out and rushed to a hospital, which declared them dead.

Hazardous gas leakage forcing hundreds' evacuation

(Case No. 412/13/37/2026)

On 3rd March 2026, the media reported that over 2,600 people, including 1,600 students, were evacuated from a 5 km radius of the Boisar MIDC area in the Palghar district of Maharashtra due to a massive leak of hazardous oleum gas (fuming sulfuric acid) at a chemical unit on 2nd March 2026. The Commission has observed that the contents of the news report, if true, raise a serious issue of violation of human rights. Therefore, it has issued a notice to the state Chief Secretary, calling for a detailed report on the matter. Reportedly, three persons complained of minor eye irritation due to the hazardous gas. The exact cause of the leakage was yet to be determined.

Death of a newborn due to medical negligence

(Case No. 195/34/18/2026)

On 9th March 2026, the media reported that the lack of proper medical care for the mother and her baby during pre and post-delivery led to the death of her newborn at Chakradharpur Sub-Divisional Hospital in the West Singhbhum district of Jharkhand. Reportedly, the father was forced to carry the infant's body in a cardboard box to the Bangrasai village after being denied an ambulance by the hospital on 7th March 2026. The Commission has issued notices to the Secretary, Department of Health,

Medical Education & Family Welfare, Ranchi and Deputy Commissioner, West Singhbhum, Jharkhand, calling for a detailed report on the matter. Reportedly, the hospital staff forced the family to remove the body of the deceased baby from the hospital and refused to provide any assistance.

Missing and untraced people

(Case No. 528/4/0/2026)

On 9th March 2026, the media reported that 12,000 to 14,000 missing person cases were registered every year in Bihar since 2013. Many were children and barely two-thirds among them recovered. Reportedly, the data of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) suggested that the maximum cases of human trafficking were registered in Odisha, Bihar, Telangana and Maharashtra. Odisha topped the list of maximum cases of minor boys' trafficking, followed by Bihar. Reportedly, in the trafficking of minor girls, Rajasthan registered the maximum cases. According to the media report, it is suspected that these children are forced into begging, child labour, prostitution and other illegal activities.

The Commission has observed that the contents of the news report, if true, raise a serious issue of human rights violations of the victims. It has also taken note of the reported concerns that despite various measures taken by states, the number of missing persons is increasing and that only a few of them are traced. Therefore, it has issued notices to the Chief Secretaries and Director Generals of Police of Bihar, Odisha, Telangana, Maharashtra and Rajasthan, calling for a detailed report on the matter. The report is expected to include the steps taken/ proposed to deal with the increasing number of missing persons, especially children. Further, the Commission has sought the latest statistical data from the NCRB on the status of missing persons in these states.

Deaths in wall collapse

(Case No. 340/7/5/2026)

On 10th March 2026, media reported that at least seven workers died and three others were injured when a wall collapsed at an under-construction site near the Bilaspur area of Gurugram, Haryana on 9th March 2026. Reportedly, around ten other workers were feared trapped under the debris. The incident occurred at the site where a sewage treatment plant for an upcoming residential project is being constructed. The Commission has issued notices to the state Chief Secretary and the Police Commissioner, Gurugram, calling for a detailed report on the matter. The report is expected to include the status of injured person's health and investigation as well as compensation, if any, provided to the next of kin of the deceased and the injured. Reportedly, the police as well as other agencies, including the civil defence teams, rescue workers, firefighters and personnel from the State Disaster Response Force were searching for the trapped workers under the debris.

Physical assault and abuse of a woman

(Case No. 688/30/8/2026-WC)

On 10th March 2026, the media reported that a woman from Manipur was physically assaulted when she objected to lewd and racial abuse by a group of boys in the Malviya Nagar area of South Delhi. Reportedly, the incident happened on 8th March 2026. The Commission has observed that the contents of the news report, if true, raise a serious issue of violation of the human rights of the victim. Therefore, it has issued a notice to the Delhi Police Commissioner, calling for a detailed report on the matter. Reportedly, the incident occurred when the victim was taking pictures with her friend at a park in the area.

School ceiling fan falls injuring students

(Case No. 529/20/4/2026)

On 16th March 2026, the media reported that two students at a government higher primary school in Barmer, Rajasthan were seriously injured when a ceiling fan in their class fell on them. Reportedly, the family members of the injured students and residents alleged that the incident occurred due to gross negligence of the school administration. The Commission has issued notices to the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police, Barmer, calling for a detailed report on the matter. It is expected to include the status of health of the injured students as well as action taken against the responsible persons. Reportedly, the accident happened when the hook holding the ceiling fan suddenly broke.

Death of dog bite victim due to medical negligence

(Case No. 377/7/19/2026)

On 17th March 2026, the media reported that a resident of Sonipat in Haryana, bitten by a stray dog, allegedly died due to medical negligence. Reportedly, the victim's family alleged that the non-availability of the anti-rabies vaccine and serum at the civil hospital forced them to rush him to a hospital in the bordering Narela in Delhi and thereafter from one hospital to another without proper treatment, resulting in his death. They also alleged that the Sonipat municipal corporation authorities had also failed to control the increasing number of stray dogs due to which a precious human life was lost. The Commission has issued notices to the Director, Directorate of General Health Services, Department of Health, Government of Haryana and the Commissioner, Sonipat Municipal Corporation, calling for a detailed report on the matter. It is expected to include the steps taken/ proposed by the authorities to ensure that such incidents do not recur and compensation, if any, paid to the NoK of the deceased.

Deaths of sanitation workers

(Case No. 120/33/14/2026)

On 19th March 2026, the media reported that three

sanitation workers died after inhaling toxic gases while cleaning a septic tank at a private hospital in the Raipur district of Chhattisgarh on 17th March 2026. Reportedly, the relatives of the victims alleged that neither the hospital management nor the private contractor provided them safety gear. The Commission has issued notices to the District Magistrate and the Senior Superintendent of Police, Raipur, calling for a detailed report on the matter. The report is also expected to include the status of the investigation.

Death due to fire outbreak

(Case No. 766/30/7/2026)

On 19th March 2026, the media reported that nine members of a family, including three children and a 70-year-old woman, died and three others sustained injuries in a fire that broke out in a four-story building in the Palam area of South-West Delhi on 18th March 2026. Reportedly, the fire brigade teams' hydraulic crane developed a technical snag resulting in a delayed rescue operation. Locals alleged that timely functioning of the equipment could have saved more lives. Therefore, the Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and the Commissioner of Police, Delhi, calling for a detailed report on the matter. It is expected to include the status of compensation disbursement to the aggrieved and the injured persons. Reportedly, the fire started at around 6.15 a.m. due to a short circuit. It started from a ground-floor shop and quickly spread to the residential floors above. The locals tried to rescue the trapped persons by breaking windows and walls of the house. A few got injured while they were reportedly trying to escape or rescue others.

Death due to consumption of adulterated milk

(Case No. 395/1/5/2026)

On 23rd March 2026, the media reported that in the Lalacheruvu, Chowdeshwarannagar and Swarupnagar areas of the East Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh, 16 people had died since mid-February due to consumption of adulterated milk. At least four persons with similar symptoms were reported to be undergoing medical treatment. Reportedly, the milk was adulterated with a toxic substance identified as ethylene glycol, which caused multi-organ failure. The suspected source of contamination has been traced to a Dairy located in the Narsapuram village which was supplying milk to more than 100 households in the area. Therefore, it has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and Director General of Police, calling for a detailed report on the matter. The report is expected to include the status of health and investigation as well as compensation, if any, paid to the next of kin of the deceased. Reportedly, the cases of people falling ill came to notice during mid-February 2026 when the residents began experiencing severe health complications such as abdominal pain, vomiting, anuria and acute renal dysfunction. Most of the victims were either elderly persons or young children.

Death due to ropeway accident

(Case No. 126/33/12/2026)

On 22nd March 2026, the media reported that a woman died and sixteen others were injured in a ropeway accident while returning from the Khallari Mata Temple in the Mahasamund district of Chhattisgarh. Reportedly, the rope wire suddenly broke and the trolley carrying the devotees fell. Therefore, it has issued notices to the Chief Secretary, Chhattisgarh and Superintendent of Police, Mahasamund district, calling for a detailed report on the matter. The report is expected to include the status of health of the injured as well as compensation, if any, paid to them and to the next of kin of the deceased. Reportedly, the woman died on the spot and the sixteen injured people were immediately rescued with the assistance of locals by the police and admitted to the Community Health Centre at Bagbahara. From here, eight critically injured persons were referred to Raipur for better treatment.

Deaths of 285 inmates in different jails

(Case No. 125/33/0/2026)

On 23rd March 2026, the media reported that a total of 285 inmates died in different jails of Chhattisgarh over the past four years, with the highest number of 90 deaths in 2022 and 66 during January 2025 to January 2026. Reportedly, the state government in the Assembly cited suicide and chronic ailments as the reasons behind the inmates' deaths. Reportedly, the prisons in the state are mostly overcrowded, which is leading to increased spread of infections and mental stress among the inmates. Most prisons are facing a shortage of doctors and psychiatrists to attend to the prisoners for medical treatment. Therefore, the Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Prisons, Chhattisgarh, calling for a detailed report on the matter. It is expected to include data regarding the alleged overcrowding in jails, vacant posts of doctors and the steps being taken by the state government to address the issue.

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 March 2026, an amount of Rs 56.25 lakh was recommended for the victims or their next of kin (NoK) in 15 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, 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.	878/1/5/2024-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Andhra Pradesh
2.	1640/4/8/2024-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Bihar
3.	1155/7/5/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Haryana
4.	1858/7/7/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Haryana
5.	216/7/6/2024-JCD	Death in judicial custody	0.75	Govt. of Haryana
6.	1801/34/16/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Jharkhand
7.	4152/13/30/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Maharashtra
8.	1548/18/17/2023-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Odisha
9.	826/18/9/2024-JCD	Death in judicial custody	3.00	Govt. of Odisha
10.	2990/22/13/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Tamil Nadu

S. No.	Case Number	Nature of complaint	Amount (Rs in lakh)	Authority
11.	963/22/15/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	3.00	Govt. of Tamil Nadu
12.	462/33/5/2025	Corporal punishment in schools/ other education institutions	0.05	Govt. of Chhattisgarh
13.	312/30/4/2025	Assault by police	0.05	Govt. of NCT of Delhi
14.	796/13/16/2023	Manual cleaning of hazardous waste	0.15	Govt. of Maharashtra
15.	10/20/14/2025	Wrongful detention and assault by police	0.25	Govt. of Rajasthan

Payment of relief to the victims

During March 2026, the Commission closed 09 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 44 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, India website by logging the case number given in the table

S. No.	Case Number	Nature of complaint	Amount (Rs in lakh)	Authority
1.	708/1/5/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Andhra Pradesh
2.	797/1/3/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Andhra Pradesh
3.	1678/4/26/2023-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Bihar
4.	557/4/26/2024-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Bihar
5.	268/30/5/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of NCT of Delhi
6.	2289/18/3/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	2.00	Govt. of Odisha
7.	2597/18/3/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Odisha
8.	839/25/5/2020-JCD	Death in judicial custody	10.00	Govt. of West Bengal
9.	2137/24/7/2024	Lack of proper medical facilities in the state	2.00	Govt. of Uttar Pradesh

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 NoK. The Commission also received reports of compliance with recommendations by the respective state authorities. Summaries of such cases are as under:

Death of an under-trial prisoner

(Case No. 839/25/5/2020-JCD)

The matter pertained to the death of an under-trial prisoner in Central Prison, Dum Dum, Kolkata, West Bengal in 2020. Based on the material received from the concerned authorities in response to its notices, the Commission noted that the victim was suffering from a psychiatric illness and was found hanging in his barrack. It observed that there was negligence on the part of the jail authorities in ensuring the safety and security of the inmate. Therefore, it held that the state was vicariously liable for the carelessness and negligence on the part of its officials and recommended that it pay Rs 5 lakh as relief to the next of kin of the victim, which was complied with.

Death of a newborn baby

(Case No. 2137/24/7/2024)

The matter pertained to the death of a newborn baby in a hospital in the

Badaun district of Uttar Pradesh due to medical negligence in 2024. Based on the material received from the concerned authorities in response to its notices, the Commission found that there was negligence in the treatment of the baby resulting in his death. Therefore, it recommended that the state government pay Rs 2 lakh to the NoK, which was paid.

Suicide by a prisoner

(Case No. 708/1/5/2021-JCD)

The matter pertained to the suicide of a prisoner in Central Prison, Rajamahendravaram, East Godavari, Andhra Pradesh in 2021. Based on the material received from the concerned authorities in response to its notices, the Commission found that the convict prisoner escaped from the semi-open prison and was found hanging at Malikarjuna Nagar near the jail quarters the next day. The Commission held that the jail authorities failed to discharge their duty to ensure the safety and protection of inmates in its custody. Therefore, it

recommended that the state government pay Rs 5 lakh as relief to the NoK of the victim, 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 police custody while undergoing medical treatment in Cuttack, Odisha in 2021. Based on the material received from the concerned authorities in response to its notices, the Commission found that the victim was arrested from his house in a crime case and sustained injuries while trying to escape from the vehicle. The Commission held that safety and security are prime responsibilities of the state when an arrestee is in its custody. In the instant case, the police officials failed to protect the man in their custody. Therefore, it recommended that the state government pay Rs 5 lakh as relief to the NoK, which was paid.

Spot enquiries

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

Case No. 17473/24/21/2025

From 9th to 13th March 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation that the complainant and his family were being given death threats by some anti-social elements to stop publishing his weekly newspaper in Deoria, Uttar Pradesh.

Case No. 4830/30/0/2025

From 9th to 13th March 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegations of death due to negligence by the Northern Railway Central Hospital in Delhi.

Case No.116/22/42/2025

From 9th to 13th March 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation that during Fengal Cyclone, authorities in the Villupuram district in Tamil Nadu released water without warning from the Sathanur Dam, damaging a house.

Case No. 603/18/9/2025-DH

From 9th-13th March 2026, a spot inquiry was conducted into the allegation regarding the death of a Class 2 girl student in an Ashram school in Mayurbhanj, Odisha.

Case No. 24535/24/57/2024

From 23rd to 25th March 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation about the expulsion of the complainant's daughters by their school after coming to know that their mother remained in judicial custody in the Tihar Jail, New Delhi.

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 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 to encourage them to take necessary 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.

Visit by NHRC, India Member

On 24th March 2026, NHRC Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani visited the SC Girls Hostel in Siddipet, Telangana to assess the human rights situation and various facilities. She noted that the facility with 108 girls was in an unhygienic condition. The building was without any fire safety measures and playground. The quality of food was also unsatisfactory and supervisory management did not discharge their duties properly, affecting their education. She urged the concerned authorities to take immediate action to improve the situation.

On 25th March 2026, she visited Sangareddy District, Telangana and met with the District Programme Officer (ICDS), CDPO, Tribal Welfare Officer, SC Welfare Officer, BC Welfare Officer, RDO, DSP and Joint Commissioner of the District. She discussed various problems being faced by the Anganwadi workers and shortages of essential supplies in SC/ ST/ BC hostels in the district. She also took stock of various welfare schemes and suggested remedial measures. She also visited Tara Degree College and interacted with the principal, faculty members and staff and discussed their problems related to infrastructure, healthcare and security.

Special Rapporteurs

- From 5th to 14th March 2026, Shri Upendra Singh Baghel visited Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh and held meetings with the Chief Secretary; Additional Chief Secretary and Principal Secretary, Medical Health & Family Welfare; Director General, Medical and Health; Additional Chief Secretary and Principal Secretary, Women and Child Development; Director, Women Welfare; Director, Child Welfare; Director General and Inspector General of Police (DG&IGP); Director General, Prison Administration and Reform Services. He also visited the Uttar Pradesh State Human Rights Commission.
- From 16th to 20th March 2026, Dr. Sadhana Rout visited Surat, Valsad, Dharampur and Dang districts of South Gujarat. She reviewed the implementation of welfare and tribal development



► NHRC, India Special Rapporteur, Dr. Sadhana Rout interacting with the workers of a textile mill at GIDC, Sachin in Surat, Gujarat

programmes. She covered industrial clusters in Surat and Vapi and tribal areas of Valsad and Dang, with interactions held with government officials, workers, Gram Sabhas and civil society organisations.

In industrial areas, labour welfare mechanisms, environmental compliance systems and CSR initiatives were assessed. It was observed that concerns regarding informal employment, housing and migrant worker documentation persist. In tribal regions, progress under the Forest Rights Act was noted alongside gaps in implementation, awareness and livelihood support. Key concerns included malnutrition, migration, education disruptions and limited livelihood opportunities. She highlighted the need for integrated, rights-based interventions to ensure inclusive development and strengthened service delivery.

- From 17th to 20th March 2026, Shri Nityanand Srivastava visited Udaipur and Sirohi districts in Rajasthan to assess the human rights situation and facilities at state-aided Old Age Homes operated by Tata Sansthan. He also visited Swayamsiddha Ashram operated by Anush Sansthan, Anganwadi centres, shelter homes for women, orphanages, prisons, facilities for persons with disabilities, transgender persons, mental health institutions and community institutions and hostels for Scheduled Tribe students.
- From 24th to 28th March 2026, Shri Sayeed Ahmed Baba visited Agartala, Tripura and held meetings with senior officers of the state government including the Chief Secretary and the Secretary (Home). The Special Rapporteur also undertook visits to Kendriya Sansodhanagar (Central Jail); Female Jail; Eklavya Model Residential School; an Ashram School for ST students; Government Medical College and Hospital and the Mental Health Hospital in the district.
- From 24th to 28th March 2026, Shri Mohammad Jamshed visited Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar, Maharashtra held meetings with the Divisional Commissioner, District Magistrate, Commissioner of Police and Superintendent of Police and Prison authorities. He also undertook visits to Central Jail, Harsul; Department of Psychiatry, Government Medical College; the District Probation and Observation Home and Matoshree Old Age Home in the district to assess the human rights situation.

Special Monitors

- From 11th to 13th March 2026 and 26th to 28th March 2026, Shri Devendra Singh Dhapola visited Jaipur, Dausa and Udaipur districts in Rajasthan to examine, monitor, evaluate and report on the implementation of advisories issued by the NHRC and the Government of India. He also held meetings with concerned state and district authorities, Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED)

officials and other stakeholders in addition to field visits to assess the human rights situation.

- From 12th to 14th March 2026, Dr. Poonam Malakondaiah visited Jodhpur in Rajasthan and visited Osian and Bhopalgarh blocks of the district and inspected Elementary Schools and Anganwadi centres besides interacting with students, parents and teachers. She also held meetings with the Education Officer, Child Development Project Officer, Sub-Divisional Magistrate and District Magistrate to review literacy levels, quality of education, sanitation facilities in schools, implementation of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme and early childhood education, nutrition and health services in Anganwadi centres.
- From 16th to 21st March 2026, Shri R. Hemanth Kumar visited Bhubaneswar, Nayagarh, Kandhamal, Boudh, Satkosia and Angul in Odisha to examine the functioning of Community Forest Rights (CFR) governance in the state to identify gaps in recognition and management of community rights in balance with the ecological integrity and institutional frameworks. During the visit, he also held meetings with the Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretaries (Panchayat Raj, Tribal Welfare, Forest and Environment) and the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Odisha Forest Department at Bhubaneswar. He also visited Community Forest Resource areas in Nayagarh, Kandhamal, Boudh, Satkosia and Angul. He held discussions with local communities, district-level officers, stakeholders and officers of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute at Bhubaneswar.



► NHRC, India Special Monitor, Shri R. Hemanth Kumar interacting with the officers at Schedule Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute in Bhubaneswar, Odisha

- From 17th to 22nd March 2026, Shri Umakant visited rural and suburban areas of Bangalore District in Karnataka and held meetings with the senior state and district-level officers to understand their perspectives on the status, challenges and implementation of constitutional provisions relating to Panchayati Raj and Local Self Government with a human rights perspective. He also interacted with Gram Sabha office

bearers and local residents, Village Panchayat, Block Panchayat and Zila Parishad representatives. He also held a debriefing session with senior district officials at Nagpur.

- From 18th to 21st March 2026, Shri Vidya Bhushan Kumar visited Patna, Hajipur and Muzaffarpur in Bihar and held meetings with the Chief Secretary, Secretary (Environment) and the Chairman, Pollution Control Board, along with other concerned officers dealing with air and water pollution, solid waste management and environmental governance. He also undertook field inspections and site visits in non-attainment cities to review the implementation of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) and other pollution control schemes, including solid waste disposal, Ganga River cleaning initiatives and industrial pollution control and air quality management with particular focus on the most vulnerable areas.
- From 20th to 25th March 2026, Prof. Kanhaiya Tripathi visited several schools, colleges, universities in Bhubaneswar, Puri and Koraput in Odisha to interact with the teachers, students and Gender Sensitisation Committees and examine the status of human rights education and gender equality. The institutions included Utkal University, Central Institute for Women in Agriculture, NIT Bhubaneswar, Regional Institute of Education, Central University of Odisha, Vikram Deb University, Government Women's College, Central Sanskrit University, Rama Devi Women's University, AIIMS Bhubaneswar and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Khurda.



▶ NHRC, India Special Monitor, Prof. Kanhaiya Tripathi at Annapurna Chhatrinivas Ladies Hostel, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

- From 23rd to 28th March 2026, Shri Dhananjay Tingal visited Patna, Kishanganj, Purnea, Katihar and Saharsa in Bihar and held meetings with the Principal Secretary (Bonded Labour Monitoring and Tracking System), Principal Secretary (Home), ADG (WCSO) and ADG (Law & Order). The purpose of the visit was to examine the implementation of prescribed systems and procedures, assess the measures taken by the state government agencies to address issues relating to bonded labour and child labour, review the status of victims in the districts and identify steps required for

effective prevention of bonded labour.

- From 23rd to 25th March 2026, Dr. Poonam Malakondaiah visited Dhenkanal and Khordha Districts in Odisha and inspected Elementary Schools and Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) in Dhenkanal and Khordha districts besides interacting with students, parents and teachers. She also held meetings with the Education Officer, Child Development Project Officer, Sub-Divisional Magistrate and District Magistrate to review literacy levels, quality of education, sanitation in schools, implementation of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme and early childhood education, nutrition and health services in Anganwadi centres.
- From 23rd to 28th March 2026, Dr. Pradeepta Kumar Nayak visited Chennai, Chengalpattu and Kanchipuram districts in Tamil Nadu and held meetings with State Health, Leprosy and Mental Health officials, District Collectors and district departmental heads and undertook field visits to hospitals, District Hospitals, Community Health Centres, Primary Health Centres, Urban Primary Health Centres, communities and leprosy colonies to review the implementation of health programmes, services for persons affected by leprosy and related disabilities, mental health services and the convergence of various government schemes and rehabilitation measures.
- From 23rd to 28th March 2026, Shri Subhash Chandra visited Raipur, Balodabazar and Korba Districts in Chhattisgarh and held meetings with the Chief Secretary and Director General of Police and senior officers of the Departments of Women and Child Development, Social Welfare, Tribal Welfare, Mines, Environment and Forests to review matters relating to the promotion and protection of human rights. He also assessed the functioning of institutions under these departments, issuance of identity cards to persons with disabilities, transgender persons and other vulnerable groups and issues relating to the health and welfare of mining-affected communities and works implemented through the District Mineral Foundation. He also held meetings with the district administration and concerned district officials and visited mining-affected areas and institutions such as Anganwadi centres, shelter homes for women, orphanages, facilities for persons with disabilities, transgender persons, elderly persons, persons with mental health issues, institutions related to Community Forest Rights and hostels/ institutions for Scheduled Tribe students, among others. He also met the Chairperson and Member of the State Human Rights Commission.
- From 25th to 28th March 2026, Shri S. K. Satapathy visited the Dhenkanal district in Odisha to assess the human rights situation at the district jail and other custodial institutions. He also interacted with non-governmental organisations, voluntary organisations and officials of the district administration.

- From 30th to 31st March 2026, Shri Balkrishan Goel visited Patna and Darbhanga in Bihar to undertake on-the-spot inspections of Observation Homes, places of safety, Specialised Adoption Agencies/ Child Care Institutions, Anganwadi centres, Central/ District Jails, District Hospitals, Community Health Centres, Primary Health Centres, Government Schools, PDS Distribution Points and Old Age Homes. He also held meetings with the District Magistrates and other concerned district-level officers.



► NHRC, India Special Monitor, Shri Balkrishan Goel visiting a hospital in Bihar

Capacity Building

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India is mandated to promote, protect and build awareness about human rights. For this purpose, it has been organising internship programmes, collaborative training and various other activities, including moot courts, to expand its outreach and human rights sensitisation of especially university-level students. Internships are conducted in-person as well as online. The two month-long in-person internships in winter and summer and six Online Short-Term Internship (OSTI) Programmes are organised at its premises in New Delhi. The OSTIs help students from remote areas join them without incurring any expenses for their travel and stay in Delhi.

Online Short-Term Internship

The second two-week Online Short-Term Internship (OSTI) Programme, this year was organised from 9th to 20th March 2026. 71 university - level students from diverse academic backgrounds successfully completed it. They were shortlisted out of 1,147 applicants from 17 states and UTs, including remote areas. Out of these selected students, 54 were girls and 17 were boys.

Inaugurating it, NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian expressed happiness over the increasing participation of girls in the NHRC internship



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian addressing the interns

programme. He said that greater education and awareness among women is essential for any society's prosperity, promoting equity, fairness, justice and social consciousness. He expressed the hope that the interns will make use of the knowledge about human rights not just to advance their careers but to enrich their character and outlook towards society.

Referring to a Global Peace Index by Sydney-based international think tank the Institute for Economics and Peace, he said that today 78 countries in the world are engaged in armed conflicts outside their borders in the name of peace and liberty. But the irony is that those who were talking about peace are now talking about war. Such conflicts have severe consequences for human civilisation and the global economy, displacing nearly 122 million people as refugees or internally displaced persons and causing an estimated loss of about 20 trillion dollars to the global economy. He emphasised that it is in this context that the true meaning and importance of human rights must be understood.

In his address, NHRC Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal said that the country belongs to its citizens and it is their collective responsibility to uphold the dignity of every individual and make it a better and more beautiful place. He emphasised that the idea of a 'Developed India' should be reflected in the everyday experiences people have at home, in schools, colleges, hostels, workplaces and public spaces. He said that interactions with eminent speakers will provide the interns a unique learning opportunity,

enabling them to engage directly with experienced practitioners in the field of human rights. He noted that the programme aims to nurture the interns as ambassadors of human rights. He also urged participants to use the two weeks to sensitise themselves so that they could recognise injustice wherever it occurs and identify discrimination, whether systemic or otherwise.

Later, on the conclusion of the internship Justice Ramasubramanian, in his valedictory address said that the internship programme aims to impart awareness about human rights and foster empathy towards the less privileged. Quoting Neil Armstrong's statement on stepping onto the moon on 20th July 1969, "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind," he said that if completing the NHRC internship feels the same to the interns, its purpose is fulfilled.

Referring to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that 'All human beings are born equal and free,' Justice Ramasubramanian said that it is more philosophical than a reality, as not all human beings are born in the same safe and secure facilities. Once the interns realise this, they will become more empathetic to fellow human beings. Being empathetic to people is key to becoming model citizens. He also quoted from Tamil poet-sage Thiruvalluvar's work Thirukkural: 'What is the point of a person being identified as learned unless he has tears in his eyes when he looks at others?' He said that true knowledge and learning are worthless if they do not lead to empathy for the suffering of others.

In his address on the occasion, NHRC Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal congratulated the interns on completing their internship with the Commission. He urged them to internalise what they learned to develop sensitivity and responsiveness and to evolve as model citizens aware of their rights and duties. Emphasising self-introspection and



► A section of interns

reflection on one's actions, he said that the responsibility to protect and promote human rights does not lie only with the government but with individuals as well. Protecting human rights- upholding the rights and dignity of every individual is a sacred and shared responsibility of every individual.

Shri Lal said that vulnerable people are often victims of their circumstances. He stressed that persons involved in beggary and persons with disabilities, among others, may need support to secure their rightful dues and live a meaningful life with dignity. Even a small gesture of helping them can go a long way in shaping one into a good human being. It's all about making our own life meaningful. He expressed hope that the interns would make efforts to spare time to assist such people to improve their lives and ensure dignity. Such small efforts can make a meaningful contribution to society. He also encouraged the interns to remain engaged with the NHRC through its website, Newsletters and social media posts and to continue learning, introspecting and reflecting on how to protect and promote human rights.

Before this, Smt. Saidingpuii Chhakchuak, Joint Secretary, NHRC

presented the internship report. She highlighted that the students were exposed to various aspects of human rights through interactive sessions with eminent speakers, including the Chairperson, Members, Secretary General, senior NHRC officers, officials from the Government of India, human rights defenders and members of civil society. She also announced the winners of competitions held during the programme, including the book review, group research project presentation and declamation competitions.

This online internship programme has been started to reach out to students who are unable to travel to New Delhi and can learn various dimensions of human rights from their native place. Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar was also present.

In the year 2025-26, six such online and two in-person (summer and winter) internship programmes have been organised by the NHRC, enabling these students to interact with eminent persons, domain experts, human rights defenders, academia, diplomats, jurists and senior officials, thus promoting and empowering youth on human rights.

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 11th March 2026, a one-day training programme on "Rights of Women" was organised by the Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Khalsa College, Sri Anandpur Sahib, Rupnagar, Punjab. About 110 students attended.
- On 24th March 2026, a one-day training programme on 'Human Rights in the Digital Age: Privacy, Surveillance and AI Ethics' was organised by the K.R. Mangalam University, Gurugram, Haryana.



- From 13th-14th March 2026, a two-day training programme on 'Exploring the Credentials and Human Rights Role of Police Personnel' was organised by the Nesamony Memorial Christian College, Tamil Nadu.
- On 23rd March 2026, the Kongu Engineering College, Erode, Tamil Nadu organised a training programme on human rights. The topics included women's and children's rights, rights of vulnerable groups and human rights institutions in India. About 100 participants attended.
- On 24th March 2026, a one-day training programme on 'Emerging Dimensions of Human Rights' was organised by the Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.



- On 24th March 2026, a one-day training programme on 'Ensuring free legal aid for the poor as a cornerstone for realising access to justice and protecting human rights' was organised by the Osmania University, Hyderabad, Telangana.



- On 25th March 2026, a one-day training programme on 'Women at Workplace: Emerging Issues and Challenges' was organised by the National University of Study and Research in Law, Ranchi, Jharkhand.



- On 27th March 2026, a one-day training programme on 'The Future of Human Rights: Trends and Transformations' was organised by the Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna (Garhwal) Central University, SRT Campus, Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand.
- On 27th March 2026, a training programme on 'Future of Human Rights: Trends and Transformations' was organised by the Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University in Garhwal, Uttarakhand.



- From 27th-28th March 2026, a two-day training programme on 'Human Rights for Police Personnel' was organised by the Sardar Patel University of Police, Security and Criminal Justice, Jodhpur, Rajasthan.
- On 27th March 2026, a training programme on human rights was organised by the Erode Sengunthar Engineering College, Erode, Tamil Nadu.

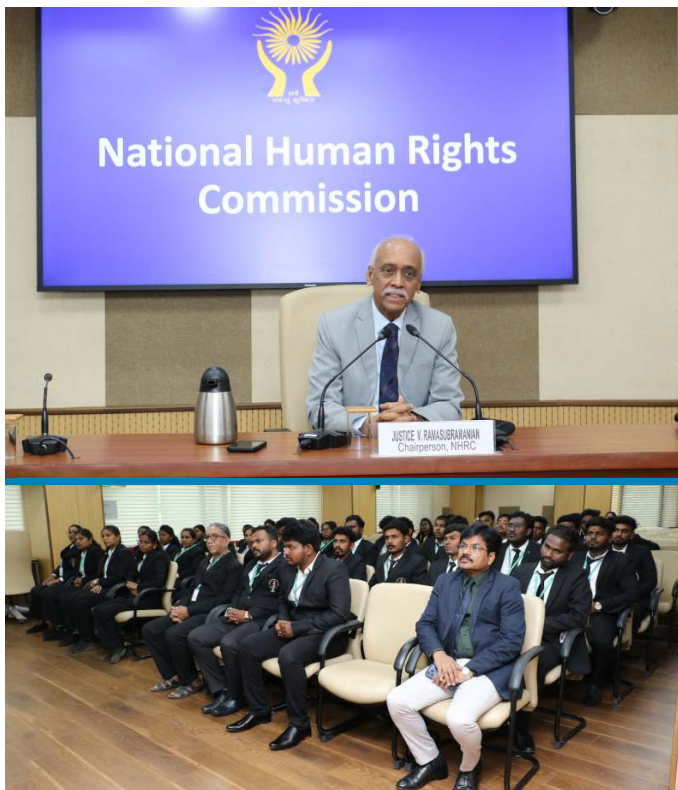


Exposure visits

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 have an exposure to the human rights protection mechanism and its functioning in accordance with the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. These students are briefed by senior officers. A total of 207 students and 9 faculties of the following institutions visited the Commission in March 2026:

- A batch of 48 students and 4 faculties from the S. Thangapazham Law College, Tenkasi, Tamil Nadu visited NHRC. Addressing them NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian said that without respecting human rights and values, no society can truly prosper. He underscored their responsibility as future legal professionals to uphold and promote fundamental values of empathy and compassion.

Justice Ramasubramanian encouraged students to introspect and recognise that knowledge need not always translate into a profession for monetary gain but can be meaningfully used at some point to serve a larger purpose in life. He said that if law students themselves require deeper understanding, the challenge is even greater for common citizens. He urged them to spread awareness towards fostering a culture of respect for human rights.



- A batch of 28 students and 5 faculty members from the School of Law, Governance and Public Policy, Goa University.



- A batch of 32 students and 3 faculty members from the Career Point University Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh.



- A batch of 30 students and 3 faculty members from the Bharatratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Law College, Thane, Maharashtra.



- A batch of 50 students and 3 faculty members from the VPMS TMC Law College, Thane, Maharashtra.



- A batch of 17 students and 2 faculties from the National Forensic Sciences University, Delhi.



- A batch of 70 students and 4 faculty members from the Akhilesh Das Gupta Law School, GGSIPU, Shastri Park, Delhi.



- A batch of 50 students and a faculty member from the Law Centre I, Faculty of Law, University of Delhi.



- A batch of 28 students and 3 faculties from the Amity University, Noida, Uttar Pradesh.



- A batch of 35 students and 3 faculty members from the Public Law College, Mumbai, Maharashtra.



- A batch of 20 students and 3 faculty members from the Hamdard Institute of Legal Studies & Research, Hamdard Nagar, Delhi.



- A batch of 40 students and 2 faculty members from the Bharati Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be University), Delhi.



Moot court

- From 12th - 14th March 2026, a three-day NHRC-Central University of South Bihar National Moot Court Competition was organised on issues relating to human rights and privacy in Gaya, Bihar.



- On 13th March 2026, NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani addressed as the Chief Guest the 3-day NHRC-Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies Moot Court Competition on the theme 'Human rights violations circumventing the scope of violence and custodial torture' in Pitampura, Delhi.



- From 12th-14th March 2026, a three-day '3rd Justice R. C. Lahoti Memorial Moot Court Competition' was organised by the Manav Rachna University Moot Court Competition in Faridabad, Haryana. Shri Anjanee Anuj, Presenting Officer, NHRC, India was the Guest of Honour in the valedictory function.



- On 14th March 2026, the three-day NHRC-Fairfield Institute of Management and Technology Moot Court Competition concluded in Kapashera, Delhi. Ms. Neeru Kamboj, PO, NHRC addressed as the Guest of Honour in the valedictory session.



- On 15th March 2026, the three-day NHRC-Dr. B. R. Ambedkar National Law University Moot Court Competition concluded in Sonipat, Haryana. Shri Joginder Singh, Registrar (Law), NHRC addressed the valedictory session.
- From 26th to 27th March 2026, the Himachal Pradesh National Law University, Shimla organised '6th HPNLU National Moot Court Competition 2025-2026' in collaboration with NHRC.



Other in-house trainings

- On 10th March 2026, NHRC, India organised a training programme on 'Cybersecurity Basics' for its staff. Col. Tarun Uppal, Director, I4C, MHA shared valuable insights on emerging cyber threats and measures for ensuring better cyber hygiene. The session covered a range of topics including phishing, ransomware, password theft, identifying cyber threats, safe email and internet practices and the risks associated with oversharing on social media among other important aspects of cybersecurity awareness. The programme aimed to enhance awareness among officials and promote safe and responsible use of digital platforms. About 100 officers attended.
- On 13th March 2026, NHRC, India organised a lecture cum demonstration on 'Handling Medical Emergency Situations.' The session was taken by a team of doctors from AIIMS, New Delhi led by Dr. Sushma Sagar, Professor and Head of Trauma Surgery & Critical Care at AIIMS. The session provided expert guidance to the Commission's employees and officials on managing critical medical emergencies. Key topics covered included essential emergency care protocols and immediate first aid techniques. The staff received practical instructions on the correct CPR procedure and life-saving responses. The programme aimed to equip them with the skills necessary to act effectively during the "golden hour" of a medical emergency.
- On 17th March 2026, NHRC, India organised a Gender Sensitisation Training Programme 'From Awareness to Action: Gender Sensitisation under POSH,' for the officers and staff of the Commission. The session was led by Smt. Suneeta Dhar, Member of NHRC's Core Group on Women. The programme aimed at helping participants unlearn deeply ingrained biases that influence perceptions and behaviour, unconsciously reinforcing stereotypes to promote a more respectful and equitable workplace environment for all genders.



Awards

NHRC announces winners of Short Film Competition 2025

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India announced the 7 winners of its '11th annual competition for short films on human rights' for the year 2025. The Full Commission Jury chose 'Rani' for the first prize, which also carries a cash prize of Rs 2 lakh. The film by Ms. Sarika Jain from Uttar Pradesh is a powerful depiction of how stereotypes fuel class divisions and inequality, portraying the struggles of women domestic workers and their human rights concerns through the transformative perspective of a young woman. The film is in Hindi with English subtitles.



► The Full Commission Jury chaired by Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian viewing the films to select the winners

'Meanwhile She..' by Shri Amal S. from Kerala was selected for the second prize, which carries a prize of Rs 1.5 lakh. The film raises the issue of a disproportionate burden carried by working women amidst challenges of gender stereotypes and domestic violence. The film is in Malayalam with English subtitles.

'The Delivery' by Shri Sai Shashank Tati from Tamil Nadu was selected for the third prize of Rs 1 lakh. The film highlights the struggles of gig workers, such as job insecurity, harsh working conditions and lack of social security, through the poignant story of a boy. The film is in Tamil with English subtitles.

The Commission also decided to give a cash award of Rs 50,000 each to the four short films selected for the 'Certificate of Special Mention'. These are:

i.) 'Malati' by Ms. Falguni Bhakta from West Bengal. The documentary film in Bengali with subtitles in English highlights the voluntary initiative of a tribal woman to educate children of her community and the impor-

ance of education;

ii.) 'Second Chance' by Shri Ravi Karnwal from Uttar Pradesh. Based on a prison in Uttarakhand, the documentary in Hindi with subtitles in English highlights the importance of prison reforms to help prisoners rebuild their lives through counselling and rehabilitation with appropriate skill development;

iii.) 'Dusk of Life' by Shri Damodar D. Pawar from Maharashtra. It is in Marathi with English subtitles. The documentary film highlights the challenges and resilience of a childless elderly tribal couple and their right to life and livelihood with dignity; and

iv.) 'Bhagyashree' by Shri Manoj Appaso Janwekar from Maharashtra. The film in Marathi with English subtitles highlights the issues faced by young widows in rural households and their right to life with dignity.

The Full Commission Jury was chaired by the NHRC Chairperson,

Justice V. Ramasubramanian comprising Members, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, Registrar (Law), Shri Joginder Singh, Joint Secretaries, Shri Samir Kumar and Smt. Saidingpuik Chhakchhuak.

The NHRC Short Film Award was instituted in 2015 with the aim to encourage citizens to raise concerns, awareness and creatively contribute towards the promotion and protection of human rights. In the 2025 competition, a total of 526 short films were received from various parts of the country in about 24 languages and dialects, including Hindi and English. Out of these, 438 entries fulfilling the terms and conditions were considered for the awards.

The films went through a three-round jury process. In the first stage, three panels of senior officers shortlisted 48 films. Thereafter, a second-round jury headed by Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Member, NHRC shortlisted 20 films. In the final round, the Full Commission Jury decided the seven winners. The award presentation ceremony will follow.

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.

Delegation visits

- On 4th March 2026, a delegation from Norway led by Mr. Andreas Motzfeldt Kravik, Deputy Foreign Minister visited NHRC, India and met Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal and Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar. The visiting delegation included Mr. Arvinn Gadgil, DCM and Minister Counsellor at the Embassy, Ms. Homma Latif, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Mariann Murvoll, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mr. Tormod Nordvik Nuland, Embassy Secretary. Both sides exchanged views on key human rights issues and explored avenues to further strengthen cooperation, dialogue and shared commitment to advancing human dignity.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian interacting with the Norwegian delegation

- On 24th March 2026, Dr. Aquino Vimal, Joint Secretary, UNES Division accompanied by Shri Muhammed Shabeer K., Under Secretary, UNES Division met NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal and Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar.

Online engagements

- On 5th March 2026, NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar attended the APF Senior Executive Officers Meeting.
- On 11th March 2026, NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar and Ms. Prerna Hasija, Junior Research Consultant attended the Monthly GANHRI Working Group on Business and Human Rights.

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 of a media report that 250 female students residing in the hostel of Kittur Rani Chennamma School in Shirahatti, Gadag district left for their homes in protest for not being provided proper food. On 12th March 2026, KSHRC Member, Shri S. K. Vantigodi also visited the spot and held a meeting with the officers of the Social Welfare Department. He instructed the concerned officials to follow the diet chart as prescribed.

From 25th to 26th March 2026, the Commission visited government institutions across Raichur district to assess the ground realities, engage with stakeholders and sensitise the government functionaries on maintaining accountability. The Commission also inspected District Prison, Government Hospital, Government hostels for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes, local police stations and other institutions. The KSHRC interacted with the concerned authorities and officials to understand the functioning and the challenges of these institutions.



► KSHRC Chairperson and Member at a meeting with district-level officers in Raichur

The interactive session brought together senior officials, including the Deputy Commissioner, Superintendent of Police and the Chief Executive Officer of the Zila Panchayat, along with over 100 officers from various departments. It reaffirmed the Commission's commitment to protecting

and promoting human rights, while sensitising officers to their crucial role in upholding citizens' rights. Emphasis was placed on making human rights protection a core responsibility of every public servant, encouraging a proactive, humane and responsive approach.

Haryana State Human Rights Commission

In March 2026, the Haryana State Human Rights Commission (HSHRC) took *suo motu* cognizance of reports that girl students at Government High School in Jagan village, Hisar district, were subjected to physically strenuous and humiliating punishment. The Commission observed that such conduct violates established child protection norms and statutory safeguards that guarantee the safety and dignity of students.

From 19th March to 26th March 2026, the HSHRC organised a human rights awareness camp during the Chaitra Navratri Mela at the Mata Mansa Devi Temple Complex in Panchkula, which received an excellent public response.

On 20th March 2026, the Commission visited the Vridh and Bal Upwan Ashram in Kaithal and found the facilities to be satisfactory. However, it noted that government grants had not been released to the Ashram for the past three years, forcing it to rely on charitable contributions and raising concerns about the sustainability of its welfare measures.



► HSHRC Chairperson at a National Conference on 'Indian Philosophy and Mission Olympics 2036'

The HSHRC also sought a report regarding alleged malpractice at the Meditrina Heart Centre, Civil Hospital, Faridabad, including claims of unqualified procedures, reuse of equipment and double billing under the Ayushman Bharat scheme. Among other key engagements, the Chairperson of the HSHRC participated in a review meeting on prison reforms at the Punjab and Haryana High Court, with discussions focusing on video conferencing, rehabilitation and inmate welfare. At the Haryana International Film Festival, the HSHRC highlighted the importance of incorporating human rights themes in cinema. Additionally, at a National Conference on 'Indian Philosophy and Mission Olympics 2036,' held at the Chaudhary Ranbir Singh University, emphasis was laid on the intersection of sports, ethics and human rights.

Telangana State Human Rights Commission

In March 2026, the Telangana State Human Rights Commission (TSHRC) took *suo motu* cognizance of four reported cases involving alleged human rights violations and called for the reports from concerned authorities. These included the reported neglect and abandonment of a 110-year-old senior citizen and freedom fighter by his sons in the Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri district; the harassment and neglect of an elderly woman in the Nalgonda District; the neglect of an elderly couple by their sons in the Khammam district; and a case involving a stray dog attack.

On 23rd March 2026, the Chairperson of the TSHRC, Dr. Justice Shameem Akther, visited Jannaram in the Mancherial district to interact with tribal communities in the Kawal forest, assess their human rights situation and review the safeguards being provided to them. He also visited a local hospital and a school.



► TSHRC Chairperson interacting with hospital staff in the Mancherial district

News in brief

- On 5th March 2026, NHRC, India Member Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi addressed as the Chief Guest, the Youth Leadership Conclave–2026 organised by the Bhagbanprakash Institute of Knowledge Action & Leadership Promotion (BIKALP) in Puri, Odisha. He highlighted the critical role of youth in promoting and safeguarding human rights. He emphasised the importance of ethical leadership, civic responsibility and adherence to constitutional values, noting that young people have the potential to drive inclusive growth and social transformation. He also underlined the need for greater awareness and sensitivity towards the rights of vulnerable sections of society and called for sustained engagement of youth in nation-building through informed and responsible participation.



- On 5th March 2026, NHRC, India organised an online interactive session with all Special Monitors and Special Rapporteurs. The session was addressed by Shri Rajiv Jain, Former Member, NHRC, who sensitised participants about the scope of their responsibilities and the expectations regarding visit reports for the effective discharge of their functions. He said that the reports of Special Monitors and Special Rapporteurs help the Commission in reaching out to the people and resolve their human rights- related grievances, ensuring public functionaries' accountability.
- On 6th March 2026, NHRC, India Director General (Investigation), Smt. Anupama Nilekar Chandra, chaired a virtual conference on human trafficking with senior police officials, including ADGPs, IGP's and DIGs from 12 states, along with representatives of the Railway Protection Force (RPF). She urged officers to analyse the reasons behind the low conviction rate in trafficking cases and emphasised the need for effective rescue and rehabilitation of trafficked women and children across India. The discussion also reviewed data shared by state nodal officers, provided clarifications and encouraged the sharing of best practices and case studies to prevent human trafficking.



- On 6th March 2026, NHRC, India SSP, Shri Hari Lal Chouhan delivered two lectures titled “Apprehension, Arrest and Detention in UN Peacekeeping Missions” and “Human Rights Due Diligence Policy” to Border Security Force personnel undergoing pre-induction training at the 95 Battalion BSF, Bhondsi, Haryana for deployment in the UN contingent to Congo. The lectures aimed to strengthen understanding of human rights standards in international peacekeeping missions.
- On 8th March 2026, NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani addressed around 4,000 women government employees in Bheemavaram, West Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh. In her address, she highlighted the work of the Commission and its mandate to protect and promote women's rights. She elaborated on the various interventions, activities and initiatives undertaken by the NHRC to enhance women's safety, dignity and empowerment. She emphasised the importance of institutional mechanisms and collective efforts in ensuring a secure and equitable environment for women in society.
- On 10th March 2026, NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar, along with Ms. Prerna Hasija, attended the Fifth Inter-Ministerial Workshop on Responsible Business Conduct and the Social Dimension of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Framework at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. The workshop was organised by the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, in partnership with the International Labour Organisation. It focused on mapping policies, progress and priorities for decent work in India. The social dimension of ESG focuses on how a company manages relationships with employees, suppliers, customers and communities. It covers human rights, labour standards, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), health and safety and community impact, aiming to ensure ethical operations and positive societal contributions.



- On 13th March 2026, NHRC Member Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi addressed, as the Chief Guest, the National Conference on Human Rights in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The one-day event was organised by the NGO Human Rights Front India in partnership with Hindalco Industries Ltd., bringing together policymakers, jurists, corporate leaders and civil society representatives to discuss rights-based development and ethical governance. Justice Sarangi's participation underscored the NHRC's commitment to advancing human rights awareness and fostering multi-sector collaboration to integrate human rights principles into public policy and corporate practice.



- From 13th to 15th March 2026, NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian visited Mysuru, Karnataka. He delivered a lecture at the JSS Law College, urging students to ensure that the practice of law serves the poor and marginalised. He emphasised the role of legal education in promoting social justice and human rights. He highlighted that legal training should prepare students not only for professional success but also for ethical responsibility and societal impact.

Justice Ramasubramanian also addressed a one-day zonal workshop for law college faculty coordinators and principals at the University of Mysore campus, Manasa Gangothi, stressing the importance of integrating human rights and social justice into legal curricula. He underlined that faculty play a key role in shaping the next generation of lawyers, who must be sensitive to human rights issues and committed to protecting the vulnerable. He encouraged interactive learning, practical exposure to human rights cases and collaboration between universities and the NHRC to strengthen human rights awareness in legal education.



- On 14th March 2026, NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani addressed a conference on the theme "Culture, Language and Women" at Sri Venkateswara College, University of Delhi. The conference focused on the role of culture and language in promoting human rights, gender equality and social harmony. She highlighted the role of Indian culture in safeguarding human rights, emphasising that traditional values and customs uphold human dignity and promote social harmony. She also underscored the vital link between the family unit and the preservation of cultural and ethical values.



- On 14th March 2026, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal delivered lectures at the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) and KIIT in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, engaging with tribal girl students and the academic community. He emphasised that India's civilisational ethos is rooted in empathy, compassion, dignity and respect. He said that these values also reflect in the country's constitutional principles for equality, justice, liberty and fraternity. He highlighted safeguards like Article 32 and the Fifth and Sixth Schedules for the protection and inclusion of tribal communities.



He further stressed that human rights must translate into an improved quality of life through efficient governance, accountable institutions and inclusive public services. In the context of globalisation, he noted the growing linkage between human rights and economic progress, including labour standards, environmental protection and climate responsibility. Emphasising the importance of strong institutions like the NHRC, he highlighted the need for accessible and responsive systems and expressed confidence in youth as future custodians of human rights. He urged students to understand their identity and civilisational roots, asserting that the integration of traditional wisdom with constitutional values is essential for building a just, compassionate and inclusive society.



- On 15th March 2026, NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani addressed a conference in Nagpur, Maharashtra on the theme 'The Role of Women NGOs in Viksit Bharat 2047,' attended by around 100 representatives from 32 NGOs. She emphasised that national progress depends on the active participation of women and highlighted their role in strengthening the economy through government initiatives and schemes.

Later, on the same day, she also addressed a one-day conference on 'Human Rights and Bhartiya Kutumba,' organised by the Mahila Ayyam of Vidarbha Prant, Bhartiya Vichar Manch (Pragnya Pravah), in Nagpur, Maharashtra. She highlighted the importance of Indian family values in protecting human rights.

- On 22nd March 2026, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal delivered the keynote address in the inaugural session of a one-day conference on the theme 'Water and Gender,' organised by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in collaboration with NITI Aayog on the occasion of World Water Day at Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi. Dr. Raj Bhushan Choudhary, Union Minister of State, Ministry of Jal Shakti was the Chief Guest. The session also featured H. E. Mr. Rasmus Abildgaard Kristensen, Ambassador of Denmark to India and Shri Paul Procee, Acting Country Director in the World Bank India Country Office. The conference saw participation from senior government officials, international organisations, civil society representatives and grassroots stakeholders, including women members of Village Water and Sanitation Committees. An article based on the excerpts of the speech of Shri Lal is carried in the previous pages.



- On 22nd March 2026, NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi addressed as the Chief Guest of the AIFTP Golden Jubilee Eastern Zonal Tax Conference organised by AIFTP-EZ at Paradeep, Odisha. Senior advocates, CAs, tax practitioners, academicians and other professionals attended.

- On 24th March 2026, NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani addressed as the Chief Guest a ceremony organised to observe the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram at Government Degree College, Siddipet district, Telangana. She said that during India's freedom struggle, movements like the Swadeshi, Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience and Quit India brought people together, united by the powerful mantra "Vande Mataram." She emphasised working towards the vision of *Viksit Bharat 2047* and the need to understand and safeguard Fundamental Rights, while highlighting the role of the NHRC, India in ensuring justice, dignity and equality. She urged youth to actively contribute to nation-building.



- On 27th March 2026, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressed as the Chief Guest the 'NCNEP – 2026 Conference,' organised by MMH College, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. Reflecting on the purpose of education to transform culture, behaviour and thinking of human beings, he said that education must go beyond degrees to nurture rational thought, inculcate scientific temper and build strong ethical foundations that shape both individuals and society.

Tracing the evolution of India's education policies (1968 and 1986 with amendment in 1992), culminating in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, he highlighted the long-standing commitment to building an egalitarian society rooted in equality, dignity and the universal and affordable access of quality education to all in the country. At its core, NEP 2020 calls for the pursuit of knowledge (*Gyan*), truth (*Satya*) and wisdom (*Vivek*), anchored in Indian values, civilisational ethos and inner strength.

Shri Lal stressed the need for the right attitude, continuous learning and pursuit of excellence. While NEP-2020 offers opportunities like multidisciplinary learning, flexibility and technology integration, he warned that challenges- digital divide, weak infrastructure, teacher readiness, regional disparities and inconsistent learning outcomes- must be addressed. He said that the policy's success depends not on its vision alone, but on effective implementation and measurable impact. Looking ahead, he said that transformation requires strategic planning, investment in teachers, strong institutions, inclusive access and purposeful use of technology. Collaboration and accountability will determine if intent translates into impact. He emphasised that education should prepare individuals for careers while empowering them to lead meaningful lives and contribute to society.



Forthcoming events

- On 7th April 2026, the NHRC, India will present the awards to the winners of the Short Film Competition-2025.
- From 1st to 25th June 2026, the NHRC, India will organise its month-long on-site Summer Internship Programme for university-level students at its premises.

Complaints in March 2026

Number of fresh complaints received	2,672
Number of cases disposed including old cases	4,875
Number of cases under consideration by the Commission	40,906

NHRC, India's Activities Recap (April 2025 to March 2026)

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India, established on 12th October 1993 under the Protection of Human Rights Act, has for over three decades stood as a committed guardian of human rights in the country. As India's apex human rights institution, it has consistently played a crucial role in protecting the rights and dignity of all sections of society.

Through timely inquiries, effective redressal of human rights violations and proactive interventions, the Commission has worked diligently to uphold justice. Its engagement extends beyond national boundaries through the organisation of conferences, participation in international forums and the promotion of global dialogue aimed at sharing best practices and advancing a more humane and just world.

Guided by its enduring commitment to justice, compassion and action, the NHRC, India, continues to serve as a beacon of hope and a voice for the voiceless. During the year, Shri Anand Swaroop and subsequently, Smt. Anupama Nilekar Chandra assumed charge as Director General (Investigation). The Commission was also strengthened by the appointment of Joint Secretaries, Shri Samir Kumar and Smt. Saindingpui Chhakchhuak, among other officers.

Throughout the year, the Commission advanced dynamic and impactful activities characterised by prompt interventions, effective complaint redressal providing relief to victims, on-the-spot enquiries, issuance of guidelines, sensitisation and capacity-building of officials and sustained engagement with NGOs, civil society organisations, State Human Rights Commissions, statutory members and the media. Through these efforts, the NHRC reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to upholding human dignity, ensuring justice and strengthening accountability across all sectors of society.

Foundation Day

In addition to its wide-ranging initiatives for the promotion and protection of human rights, the National Human Rights Commission organised two significant commemorative events to mark its 32nd Foundation Day and Human Rights Day. The Foundation Day function was graced by the Former President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, as the Chief Guest. In his address, Shri Kovind observed that India has developed a strong and comprehensive human rights framework. He also noted that since its establishment in 1993, the NHRC, India has grown into one of the most respected human rights institutions in the world.

He said that commemorating its 32nd Foundation Day is more than just an institutional milestone. It is an occasion to reaffirm our collective commitment to the timeless values of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity enshrined in our Constitution. He said that through its interventions, including investigations, advisories and advocacy, the Com-



► Former President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind addressing the NHRC Foundation Day function as the Chief Guest

mission 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 lies in how it treats its most vulnerable member.

Chairpersons 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 were present during the event.

NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian said that the Commission, with the guidance of the Hon'ble Members and the dedicated support of

its staff, has been making continuous efforts to uphold the standards set by its distinguished predecessors and to meet the rightful expectations of victims of human rights violations.

In his welcome address, the NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal said that the Commission has endeavoured to act as the conscience keeper of human rights in the country's democracy through its various interventions aimed at safeguarding the rights of all, especially the dignity of the most vulnerable and marginalised sections of society.



▶ A section of dignitaries attending the NHRC Foundation Day function

Human Rights Day

Continuing in the same spirit, the Human Rights Day function of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India was organised. It was graced by the President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, as the Chief Guest. The event was attended by Chairpersons and Members of State Human Rights Commissions, members of the judiciary, senior government functionaries, diplomats, human rights defenders and representatives from NGOs, civil society and academia, along with other national and international dignitaries.

Addressing the gathering, the President said that Human Rights Day serves as a reminder that universal human rights are inalienable and form the foundation of a just, equitable and compassionate society. She noted that India has played a significant role in shaping the global human rights framework, guided by the vision of its freedom fighters who aspired for a world grounded in human dignity, equality and justice. Emphasising inclusivity, she underscored that human rights must reach every individual, including those at the last mile, in line with the philosophy of Antyodaya. She further highlighted the importance of active citizen participation in the nation's developmental journey towards building a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

On the occasion, the President also launched the NHRC Mobile App, aimed at improving public access to human rights services. The application enables users to file complaints, monitor their status in real time and stay informed about case progress. It also offers access to educational resources, official publications and Newsletters, thereby fostering greater transparency and responsiveness in addressing human rights concerns in India.

In his address, NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian emphasised the need for introspection and for renewing the collective commitment to promote human rights as inalienable, indivisible and

interdependent human values. He observed that the true purpose of such observances is realised only when human rights are elevated to the level of fundamental human values.

In his welcome address, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal described the Commission as a people-centric institution that stands firmly with the public, particularly the most vulnerable sections. He stressed the need for collective efforts to create an enabling environment where every individual can realise their full potential and where society is just, inclusive and equitable, ensuring dignity and respect in everyday life across homes, public spaces and workplaces.



▶ The President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu addressing the Human Rights Day function as the Chief Guest

On this occasion, the NHRC also released its English journal and *Nayi Dishayein*, two compilations of scholarly articles in English and Hindi contributed by eminent experts and practitioners. These publications present thoughtful perspectives on a wide range of contemporary human rights issues, including gender justice, environmental rights, challenges in the digital age and the rights of marginalised communities. Together with the mobile application, they reflect the Commission's continued efforts to leverage technology and knowledge dissemination to enhance awareness, encourage public engagement and address human rights concerns in India



► Address of the President of India in progress

Addressing complaints of human rights violations

From 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026, NHRC, India registered a total of 77,168 cases of various human rights violations. A significant portion of the registered cases pertained to custodial deaths. These included 276 cases of deaths in police custody and 2,502 cases of deaths in judicial custody i.e., in prisons. There were 229 cases related to deaths in police encounters.

Among these, 128 were *suo motu* registered cases, reflecting the Commission's proactive approach to human rights issues. Most common of the *suo motu* cases pertained to the deaths of sanitation workers cleaning hazardous waste manually and without protective gear, incidents of rape and sexual assault, medical negligence and hospital mismanagement, assault on journalists, corporal punishment, suicides by students, among others. Some of the major incidents included a fake doctor working as a Cardiologist at the Mission Hospital in Damoh, Madhya Pradesh, the death of a nursing student following a suicide attempt amidst allegations of harassment by her hostel warden in Kasaragod District, Kerala, 38 students of a government-run school falling ill after inhaling poisonous odour from a cement factory in Baloda Bazar district, Chhattisgarh, the rescue of six Indian workers facing torture in captivity by their employer in Thailand, long-pending payment of their dues by the Government of Telangana to fishermen community of Andhra Pradesh and the re-building of Anganwadi centres in six villages in Rampachodavaram, Andhra Pradesh.

In the same period, 46,977 cases were disposed of, including those carried forward from previous years. In 178 cases, the Commission recommended monetary relief amounting to more than Rs 9.9 crore. 40,713 cases are under consideration of the Commission at different stages of disposal, reflecting its ongoing efforts to address human rights violations effectively throughout the year. The

Commission also conducted spot enquiries in 68 cases of human rights violation during the year under reference.

The Commission also issued a statement condemning the killing of several people by terrorists in Pahalgam. It said that time has come to act against those aiding, abetting, supporting and advancing terrorism and to hold them accountable for this menace. Otherwise, it may result in shrinking of democratic space, intimidation, reprisals, harmony among communities and grave violation of various human rights, including right to life, liberty, equality, fraternity and livelihood. It is expected that the State will take all the necessary steps to fix accountability; bring the perpetrators to justice and provide succour to the families of the victims in all possible manners.

In another important intervention, the Commission issued notices to the Chief Secretaries and Director Generals of Police of all the States/ UTs to identify such NGOs/ individuals who are misusing the name of the National Human Rights Commission or using names deceptively similar to it and take immediate legal action against them, including cancellation of their registrations obtained in violation of norms. They were also asked to sensitise registering authorities to remain vigilant and take necessary action against defaulters.

Thus, through timely notices and active engagement with the concerned authorities, the NHRC pushed for accountability and justice.

In addition to its judicial interventions in cases of human rights violations, the National Human Rights Commission also engaged with a wide range of stakeholders on pressing human rights concerns through national conferences, open house discussions, core group meetings, collaborative conferences and workshops. These platforms brought together senior government officials, representatives of National and State Commissions, legal experts, academics, civil society representatives, as well as the NHRC's Special Monitors and Rapporteurs, serving as effective forums for dialogue and exchange of ideas.

National Conferences: Dialogue for Change

During the year, the National Human Rights Commission organised three National Conferences to highlight pressing human rights issues and encourage meaningful dialogue. The objective was to assess existing legal frameworks, identify gaps in implementation and develop actionable solutions for the effective protection of human rights across the country. The conferences were chaired and addressed by the NHRC Chairperson, Members and Secretary General along with government representatives' experts and key stakeholders, including representatives from NGOs and civil society organisations.

Key themes addressed:

- **Rights of Transgender Persons: Revamping Spaces, reclaiming Voices**

The National Conference on the 'Rights of Transgender Persons: Revamping Spaces Reclaiming Voices' was organised at the India Habitat Centre in New Delhi on 4th September 2025. It sought to address documentation challenges faced by the transgender community and highlighted the need for inclusive interventions that ensure care, dignity, protection and equal access to welfare, justice and employment opportunities.

The deliberations were conducted through three technical sessions followed by a panel discussion. The sessions focused on 'Strengthening Garima Greh Shelters', 'Institutional Care for Gender Non- Conforming Children and Elderly Transgender Persons' and 'Building a Fair and Inclusive Law Enforcement Framework.'



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian addressing the National Conference on the 'Rights of Transgender Persons: Revamping Spaces, Reclaiming Voices'

The speakers included Former NHRC Members, Dr. D. M. Mulay and Smt. Jyotika Kalra, Secretary, MoSJE, Shri Amit Yadav; Ms. Shalini Singh, Director General of Police, Puducherry; Chief Commissioner, Income Tax Department, Smt. Anita Sinha; Joint Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Smt. Latha Ganpathy; Joint Secretary, National Commission for Women, Smt. B. Radhika Chakraborty; Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP, India, Ms. Isabelle Tschan; Project Director, Dostana Safar, Patna Ms. Reshma Prasad; Co-Director, Tapish Foundation, Shri Nikunj Jain; Additional Secretary, MWCD and Chairperson, NCPCR, Smt. Tripti Gurha; NHRC Special Monitor and Core Group Member, Ms. Laxmi Narayan Tripathi, Managing Director, Tweet Foundation, Ms. Abhina Aher; Intersex and Gender queer activist, Founder, Srishti Madurai, Shri Gopi Shankar Madurai; Dy. Commissioner Police, Delhi, Shri Ram Dulesh; Founder, Sahodari Foundation, Ms. Kalki Subramaniam; Transgender Rights Activist, Ms. Shreegauri Sawant; Managing Director, Pride Business Network Foundation, Ms. Zainab Patel and Manager, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Lalit Suri Hospitality Group, Ms. Nishtha Nishant.

- **Human Rights of Prison Inmates**

The National Conference on the 'Human Rights of Prison Inmates,' held to commemorate the 32nd Foundation Day of the National Human Rights Commission, was organised at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on 18th October 2025. The conference aimed to deliberate on the human rights concerns of prison inmates and to develop practical recommendations for improving prison conditions, rehabilitation and correctional systems. The conference was divided into

three technical sessions. These included 'Enhancing quality of life of Inmates: Ensuring Dignity, well-being and human rights behind bars', 'Female inmates and their children: Strengthening institutional framework for gender-sensitive prison reforms' and 'Undertrials inmate: Tackling judicial delays, strengthening legal aid and promoting alternatives to incarceration.'



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

The speakers included Secretary (Justice), Ministry of Law and Justice, Shri Niraj Verma; Chairperson, NCPCR, Smt. Tripti Gurha; Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Shri Rakesh Kumar Pandey; Former DG, BPRD and Core Group Member, NHRC, Smt. Meeran Chadha Borwankar; Former DGP, Haryana, Dr. K. P. Singh; NHRC Core Group Member and Project Director, Prayas, Professor Vijay Raghavan; Former DG (I), NHRC, Shri Manoj Yadava; Co-founder and Lead, India Justice Report, Shri Valay Singh; Indian Prison Reformer, Media Educator and Commentator, Prof (Dr.) Vartika Nanda; Director of Mitigation, Mental Health and Criminal Justice, Square Circle Clinic, Ms. Maitreyi Misra; Director, India Vision Foundation, Ms. Monika Dhawan; and Dr. Rakesh Kumar, National Executive Director, SPYM.

• Ensuring Everyday Essentials: Public Services and Dignity for All

The National Conference on 'Ensuring Everyday Essentials Public Services and Dignity for All' was organised to commemorate Human Rights Day at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on 10th December 2025. Dr. P. K. Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister delivered the keynote address in the inaugural session chaired by Justice V. Ramasubramanian, Chairperson, NHRC, India. The conference sought to underscore the significance of equitable access to everyday public services as an essential component of human rights and dignity and to promote dialogue on strengthening service delivery and governance to ensure that basic amenities are delivered to all citizens in a fair and effective manner.

The two thematic sessions included 'Basic Amenities for All: A Human Rights Approach' and 'Ensuring Public Services and Dignity for All'. Eminent persons including NHRC Members, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi and Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani; Member, NITI Aayog, Dr. V. K. Paul; Member, EAC- PM, Dr. Shamika Ravi; Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Shri Sudhansh Pant; Chief Executive Officer, UIDAI, Shri Bhuvnesh Kumar and Director General, Centre for Science and Environment, Ms. Sunita Narain addressed and participated in the discussions.



► Dr. P. K. Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister delivering the keynote address

Open House Discussions

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

1. Re-examining ragging in higher educational institutions: Creating safer campuses through awareness, accountability and action

The deliberations centred on three key aspects: the challenges and impact of ragging on Indian campuses, the adequacy of existing legal and institutional anti-ragging frameworks and the need to strengthen prevention through awareness action and inclusion. The three technical sessions included 'Understanding the challenges and impact of ragging in Indian campuses', 'Reviewing the existing legal and institutional anti-ragging frameworks' and 'Exploring ways to strengthen prevention through awareness, action and inclusion.'



- ▶ NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian chairing the Open House Discussion on 'Re-examining ragging in higher educational institutions: Creating safer campuses through awareness, accountability and action'

2. Rethinking Beggary: Bridging Gaps between Policy, Practice and Dignity

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has been instrumental in shaping a humane approach to beggary through its advisory that calls for decriminalisation, dignified rehabilitation, the development of robust and reliable databases and stronger coordination among government departments to protect vulnerable populations. Complementing these efforts, civil society organisations and grassroots initiatives have actively contributed through field outreach, legal support, community-based rehabilitation and programmes aimed at livelihood restoration and social reintegration. Within this broader context, consultation gained significance as a platform for advancing well-informed, coordinated and rights-based responses. It featured three focused technical sessions: 'Addressing the Scope and Challenges of Beggary,' 'Data, Documentation and Ground Realities,' and 'Rehabilitation, Employment and Long-Term Solutions.'



- ▶ NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi addressing the Open House Discussion on 'Rethinking Beggary: Bridging Gaps between Policy, Practice and Dignity'

3. Measures to Curb Spurious Medicine in India

The consultation addressed the serious public health challenge posed by spurious, substandard and falsified medicines in India and its implications for the rights to life and health. It highlighted constitutional jurisprudence

under Article 21 mandating safe and quality medicines and reviewed ongoing government and NHRC-led regulatory measures such as strengthened inspections, pharmacovigilance, surveillance systems, digital track-and-trace mechanisms and stricter enforcement under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, alongside civil society efforts on awareness and accountability. It was felt that despite these interventions, persistent gaps remain in detection, reporting, enforcement and public awareness.



► NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi chairing the Open House Discussion on 'Measures to Curb Spurious Medicine in India'

The Open House Discussion was split into four technical sessions: 'Legal and Regulatory Framework Review', 'Public Health Risks and Consequences of Spurious and Substandard Medicines', 'Leveraging Technology for Transparency and Traceability in Drug Regulation' and 'Best Practices for Strengthening Regulatory Oversight.' The deliberations were outcome-oriented, aimed at generating concrete and actionable recommendations to address the issue comprehensively.

4. Access to Social Media by Children

The discussion focused on growing concerns around children's excessive use of social media and gaps in child protection online, alongside global and Indian policy responses to regulate platform use. It also examined usage trends in India, including the scale of young users and the evolving digital behaviour shaped by short-form content and AI-enabled features, while questioning the suitability of age-based restrictions in India's diverse socio-digital context.

The three technical sessions of the discussions included 'Understanding the positive and negative impacts of social media on children', 'Assessing the Indian regulatory framework' and 'Evaluating age-based restrictions/ ban on access to social media for children.'



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian chairing the Open House Discussion on 'Access to Social Media by Children'

Core group meeting

The NHRC, India has constituted several core groups on various thematic issues related to human rights and holds discussions with domain experts, academicians and senior government functionaries representing concerned Ministries. During the year under review, the Commission organised one core group meeting to discuss and understand the challenges facing human rights to firm up its recommendations to the government for improvements on the following subject:

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 meeting discussed concerns over the re-verification and reassessment of disability certificates of government employees with disabilities. While acknowledging the need to prevent misuse of benefits, the group cautioned that blanket reassessments can lead to harassment and violate dignity. The three technical sessions of the meeting 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.'

The meeting stressed that verification should be targeted, justified and rights-based, rather than routine and supported a UDID-enabled digital system to improve transparency and reduce repeated scrutiny. The discussion highlighted the need to balance administrative checks with non-discrimination, procedural fairness and protection of genuine persons with disabilities.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian addressing the core group meeting on 'Human rights violations emerging from re-verification and re-assessment of certificates of government employees with disabilities'

Statutory Full Commission meeting

On 3rd June 2025, the NHRC, India held a Statutory Full Commission meeting bringing together all seven deemed member Commissions and the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities in New Delhi. The meeting focused on enhancing coordination and synergy among the Commissions for the promotion and protection of human rights. Chairing the session, Justice V. Ramasubramanian, Chairperson, NHRC, India underlined the importance of collaborative functioning among the Commissions.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian chairing the Statutory Full Commission meeting, flanked by Members, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani and Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal



► NHRC Chairperson, Members, Secretary General with the Chairpersons, Members and senior officers of 7 deemed member Commissions and Chief Commissioner for PwDs

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 orientation, ensuring benefits of development reach common citizens on 22nd January 2026. 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 fulfill the purpose of their appointments.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian addressing the meeting of Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors



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

Camp sittings

The Commission periodically conducts camp sittings in state capitals to directly hear complaints of human rights violations in the presence of complainants, victims and concerned senior officials, enabling on-the-spot recommendations and directions. In July, the NHRC, India organised two such sittings in Bhubaneswar, Odisha and Hyderabad, Telangana.



► NHRC, India camp sitting and open hearing in Bhubaneswar, Odisha



► NHRC, India camp sitting and open hearing in Hyderabad, Telangana

During these sittings, Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian along with Members, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi and Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani heard 144 cases in Bhubaneswar and 109 in Hyderabad, recommending a total relief of Rs 77.65 lakh for the victims. In addition to case disposal, officials were sensitised to the importance of promoting and protecting human rights as a key aspect of good governance.

Officials were also urged to ensure timely submission of reports to facilitate prompt case resolution and the status of action taken reports on the Commission's advisories was reviewed. Civil society organisations and human rights defenders were encouraged to bring forward issues requiring intervention, while regional media coverage of the sittings helped enhance awareness and promote human rights literacy.

Collaborative programmes and other supportive events

The Commission also collaborated with different organisations for seminars and activities that focused on various facets of human rights to create awareness and sensitisation. Some of the important collaborative programmes organised with the Commission's support were:

- **Women's Safety at Work and Public Spaces**

A National Symposium on 'Women's Safety at Work and Public Spaces' was held in Lucknow on 25th July 2025 by the University of Lucknow in collaboration with the NHRC, India. In his virtual keynote, NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian highlighted the contradiction between cultural reverence for women and the high incidence of gender-based violence, noting that around 51 FIRs are registered every hour. He called for stronger awareness, enforcement and systemic reforms to ensure women's safety and dignity.

Smt. Saindingpuii Chhakchhuak, Joint Secretary, NHRC stressed the need for proactive action, as despite existing legal frameworks, incidents of gender-based violence persist daily. She underscored gender-sensitive education and sustained policy focus and enforcement. She also highlighted NHRC's proactive role in addressing such violations.

Speakers highlighted systemic injustices, gender stereotypes and institutional inertia as key barriers to the realisation of constitutional guarantees. They stressed the need for greater legal awareness, proactive state intervention and enhanced representation of women in decision-making roles.

The discussions also covered the evolution of human and women's rights in India and globally, noting alignment between Indian constitutional provisions and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Existing support mechanisms such as SHE-Box, One Stop Centres and Pink Police Booths were also highlighted.

- **Ageing in India: Emerging Realities, Evolving Responses**

A National Conference on "Ageing in India: Emerging Realities, Evolving Responses" was organised in New Delhi on 1st August 2025 by the Sankala Foundation, a non-profit organisation, with support from NITI Aayog and the Union Ministries of Social Justice & Empowerment and Health & Family Welfare. The conference focused on addressing key issues such as healthcare, economic security and digital exclusion through dialogue, policy innovation and a reframing of ageing as an opportunity.

Deliberations covered integrated care, financial inclusion, digital literacy and the development of age-inclusive societies in the context of a projected elderly population of 347 million by 2050. On the occasion, the Sankala Foundation also released the report 'Ageing in India: Challenges and Opportunities,' which highlights both the vulnerabilities and potential of the elderly population.



▶ NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian virtually addressing the National Symposium on 'Women's Safety at Work & Public Spaces' in Lucknow



▶ NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Smt. Saindingpuii Chhakchhuak addressing the National Symposium



▶ NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian addressing the National Conference on 'Ageing in India: Emerging Realities, Evolving Responses' in New Delhi

- **Tribal Arts and India's Conservation Ethos: Living Wisdom**

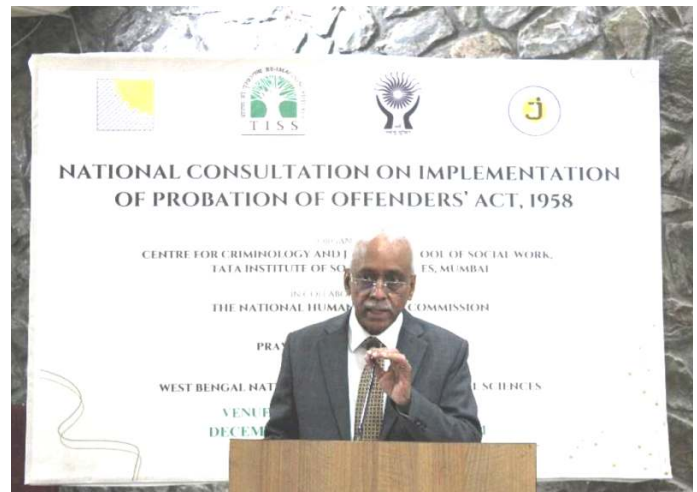
A National Conference on 'Tribal Arts and India's Conservation Ethos: Living Wisdom' was organised in New Delhi on 10th October 2025 as a dialogue on heritage, culture and conservation. NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian delivered the valedictory address. On this occasion, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal delivered the keynote address. It was organised by the Sankala Foundation in partnership with the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Ministry of Culture, Government of India and Confederation of Indian Industries.



► A scene from the National Conference on 'Tribal Arts and India's Conservation Ethos: Living Wisdom' in New Delhi

- **National Consultation on Implementation of Probation of Offenders' Act**

On 1st December 2025, NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian addressed the National Consultation on 'Implementation of Probation of Offenders' Act, 1958' at the TISS campus, Mumbai organised by the Commission in collaboration with TISS, Mumbai. Justice Ramasubramanian said that probation evolved from a humanitarian approach led by John Augustus and was later institutionalised in laws like the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958. He said that it serves as a reformatory alternative to imprisonment, aiming to rehabilitate offenders and reduce prison overcrowding. He said that challenges like inconsistent application and rigid conditions can dilute its purpose and emphasised the need for a humane, balanced justice system focused on reformation. Presenting Officer, Shri Anjane Anuj also chaired a session on the PO Act in the consultation.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian addressing the National Consultation on 'Implementation of Probation of Offenders' Act, 1958'

Research

During the year, the National Human Rights Commission organised three National Conferences to highlight pressing human rights issues and encourage meaningful dialogue. The objective was to assess existing legal frameworks, identify gaps in implementation and develop actionable solutions for the effective protection of human rights across the country. The conferences were chaired and addressed by the NHRC Chairperson, Members and Secretary General along with government representatives' experts and key stakeholders, including representatives from NGOs and civil society organisations.

The NHRC, India continued to promote research studies on various aspects of human rights as per its mandate under the PHR Act. It provided more impetus to this activity during the calendar year by focusing on pursuing and monitoring the progress in the research studies commissioned by it in 2023 and 2024 and to be conducted by different institutions. Seven research studies completed during the year are as follows:

- Commercialization of Non-Timber Forest Product: Determinants and Supply Chain in India
- A study on custodial deaths: trends and patterns in Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal
- Inclusive Education among Persons with Disabilities in Punjab: Prospects and Challenges
- Human Trafficking: An Evaluation Study of Functioning of Anti-Human Trafficking Units
- Life Satisfaction and Quality of Life of Elderly Living in Old Age Homes: A Comparative Study of Western India and North-East India
- Forest Rights Act 2006: Assessment of Ground Reality
- A study of the Socio-legal aspects of the Adoption Process in India with special reference to Delhi- NCR

The following 17 research studies are on-going:

- Caring about the rights of healers - Analysing human rights violations related to frontline doctors in India
- Social Barriers that Children of Women Engaged in Intergenerational Prostitution Face in Access to Education
- Skilling for Enhancing Access to Labour Market and Employment among Women with Disabilities, particularly migrant households
- Access to Employment by Persons with Disabilities: Status, Identification of Barriers and Associated Factors
- Compensating Victims of Crime: A Pan-India Study of Victim Compensation Schemes and their Effectiveness
- A study to understand the reasons for the rising number of cases among the Children in Conflict with Law and Undertrials in observation Homes and Under Trial/ Convicts under the NDPS Act lodged/ languishing in CCI/ Observation Homes and Prisons and exploring the existing legislative Policy and Schematic Response in sample states i.e. Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh
- Children in the Shadows: Unveiling dimensions of organised begging in Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata
- Review of Drinking Water Situation in India vis-a-vis Government Policy and Action - Ground Reality, Challenges and the Way Forward
- A study on Mechanisms Adopted by Sports Bodies to Combat Human Rights Abuse and an Examination of the Legal Policy Framework Along with the Status of Implementation in Kerala
- Optimal design of questionnaire survey on awareness of clinical trials among different stakeholders
- Impact of Ekalavya Model Residential Schools on ST Children in the fifth and sixth schedule areas of India with reference to Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tripura and Mizoram
- Study of the quality of life of elderly persons living in old age homes with special reference to the Northern region
- Promotion of Human Rights in Local Self Governance - A study of Selected Village Panchayats from Tamil Nadu and Kerala States in India
- Pandemic, Human Rights and The Future of Livelihood: An Empirical Evidence from the Indian Economy
- Reintegration and Rehabilitation of Acid Attack Victims
- Analysis of Trends and patterns of Death in Prison and in Police Custody: An analytical study of such deaths in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi
- Status of manual Scavenging and Sewerage Water Workers in the Hyderabad-Karnataka Region- Policy and Practice

Significant Reports and Guidelines

During the calendar year, the Commission came out with a significant report emphasising better facilities for transgender persons and upkeep of their Garima Greh shelters, besides two letters to the authorities in states and union territories underlining implementation of guidelines to ensure the well-being of homeless and vulnerable segments of society during extreme hot and cold weather events.

Report post Garima Greh visits

During 2024–25, the NHRC visited 12 Garima Greh shelters to gather ground-level insights, culminating in a report titled *'Transgender Persons: Revamping Spaces, Reclaiming Voices – Insights from Garima Greh Shelters and Beyond,'* released at the National Conference on 4th September 2025. The report calls for strengthening the initiative through active monitoring committees, timely funding, improved infrastructure and better staffing norms. It emphasises simplified ID processes, expanded healthcare including mental health and HIV services and faster rollout of Ayushman Bharat TG Plus. Further, it recommends enhanced livelihood opportunities, extended shelter support for education, legal reforms for minors and greater transparency to ensure dignity, empowerment and inclusion for transgender persons.



► The report on 'Transgender persons: Revamping spaces, reclaiming voices – Insights from Garima Greh Shelters and Beyond' being released

Pre-emptive steps during cold and heat waves

In 2025, the NHRC, India issued two letters to States and UTs urging preventive and responsive measures against extreme weather events like heat waves and cold waves. It flagged the human rights concerns arising from such conditions, including loss of life, health risks and displacement. The Commission stressed timely relief, awareness drives and implementation of heat action plans in line with National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) guidelines. It also called for focused support for vulnerable groups such as the elderly and economically weaker sections.

Field visits

In addition to its research work, the NHRC, India actively undertakes field visits to evaluate the human rights situation and review the implementation of its advisories and guidelines by states and authorities. Members including Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani and Shri Priyank Kanoongo, along with senior officers, visited institutions such as shelter homes, prisons, observation homes, hostels and schools to sensitise officials and promote improvements, carrying out around 32 such visits during the year.



► NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani at a One Stop Centre in Kurukshetra, Haryana interacting with the beneficiaries besides holding discussions with the concerned officials



► NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi visiting the Regional Mental Hospital in Pune, Maharashtra

Further, the Commission has appointed 15 Special Rapporteurs to monitor human rights conditions across regions through field visits and detailed reporting, alongside 18 Special Monitors who focus on specific thematic issues and provide inputs to guide future action.

Capacity Building

The Commission continues to expand its outreach and promote human rights sensitisation through internship programmes, collaborative training and related initiatives. These internships are conducted both in online and in-person modes, alongside specialised training programmes for officers of various services to strengthen the protection of human rights and dignity across institutions.

During the year under review, the NHRC organised multiple workshops, exposure visits and capacity-building programmes, including 8 two-week online short-term internships and 2 in-person four-week summer and winter internships. Interns were introduced to diverse human rights issues through sessions led by NHRC Chairperson, Members, senior officers and subject experts, along with virtual and physical field visits to prisons, police stations and NGOs.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian addressing the valedictory function of Winter Internship Programme

Training and sensitisation programmes were conducted for officers of the Indian Forest Service, Indian Police Service and Prison & Correctional Administration in collaboration with their respective academies. Additionally, around 2,225 students and faculty members from 49 universities and colleges were oriented on human rights and the Commission's functioning through exposure visits. The NHRC also partnered with educational institutions for 11 moot courts and 16 seminars, conferences and workshops and supported 35 training programmes by various institutes, reaching about 3,000 participants. It further collaborated with the Indian Law Institute, New Delhi for 4 programmes aimed at awareness and capacity building of specialists and judicial officers.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian addressing the Indian Forest Service (IFS) probationers at IGNTA, Dehradun, Uttarakhand

The Commission also conducted a one-day in-house training programme for 6 officers of the Arunachal Pradesh State Human Rights Commission and organised a one-day attachment programme for 4 IRPFS probationers undergoing training at the JR RPF Academy, Lucknow.

International arena

The NHRC, India has sustained its global engagement through active and meaningful participation in international human rights forums, reflecting its growing role in advancing human rights worldwide during 2025–26. Through effective representation at GANHRI and APF, capacity-building efforts for the Global South and high-level strategic dialogues, the Commission has positioned itself as a key contributor to inclusive and rights-based governance at national and international levels. Guided by the ethos of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (the world is one family), the NHRC continues to promote justice, equality and dignity for all through collaboration, innovation and shared learning.

Participation in global forums

- **58th Session of UNHRC at Geneva**

During the 58th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council held in Geneva from 24th February to 4th April 2025, the NHRC, India participated through prerecorded video statements presented by its Members, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi and Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, along with Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal. These statements were delivered during interactive sessions with the Special Rapporteurs on Environment, Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Human Rights Defenders, highlighting the Commission's proactive approach and ongoing work in these areas in India.



► From left to right: NHRC, India Members, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani and Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal

- **UN Human Rights Council meet in Colombo, Sri Lanka**

On 26th September 2025, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressed the UN Human Rights Council meet in Colombo, Sri Lanka on the theme 'Corruption and Human Rights – India's Experience and Institutional Responses.' He emphasised that corruption is not merely a governance issue but a criminal offence and a serious human rights violation, as it erodes trust, weakens democracy, undermines the rule of law and disproportionately impacts the poor and vulnerable. He further noted that diversion of resources deprives people of essential services such as education, healthcare, food and housing, while also leading to environmental degradation.



► NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressing the UN Human Rights Council meet in Colombo, Sri Lanka

- **APF AGM and Biennial Conference at Fiji**

Continuing its international engagement, the NHRC, India also participated in the Annual General Meeting and Biennial Conference of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF) held in Fiji on 11th November 2025. The two – member delegation, led by the Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian and Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary, contributed to regional discussions on human rights priorities. During the plenary session, NHRC, India delivered a detailed presentation on gender equality, highlighting the Commission's recent efforts to support and protect the rights of girls and women. Justice Ramasubramanian also held an engaging discussion with the participating NHRIs on the progress made and challenges that remain in the sphere of women's empowerment in India. He reaffirmed NHRC, India's commitment to promoting gender equality across the country. A Senior Executive Officers (SEO) meeting was attended by Shri Samir Kumar. At this meeting, NHRC, India made a strong case for expanding GANHRI membership to include more Asia Pacific countries not yet represented.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian and Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar with Fiji's Acting President and Chief Justice Salesi Temo

Strategic international outreach

- **World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund Spring Meet:** On 23rd April 2025 at the World Bank Group and IMF Spring Meeting, NHRC Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal represented India in the session titled '*Empowering Cities: The Vital Role of Sub-national Financing in Delivering Urban Infrastructure and Jobs.*' As a key speaker, he highlighted India's progress in urban development and emphasised the importance of sub-national governance and financing in promoting inclusive growth, public welfare and protection of human rights.



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



- **High-level Policy Dialogue on 'Multi-sectoral Partnerships for Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Restoration':** On 11th June 2025, Shri Bharat Lal delivered the Chair Address at this UN Ocean Conference side event organised by the India Water Foundation in Nice, France. He noted that the dialogue builds on the momentum of the 2025 UN Ocean Conference and underlined the urgency of advancing SDG-14 (Life Below Water), emphasising the role of oceans in climate regulation, biodiversity conservation and sustaining over 3 billion people globally.



- ▶ NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal delivering the Chair Address at the High-level Policy Dialogue on 'Multi sectoral Partnerships for Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Restoration' in UN Ocean Conference side event



- **Interactive session with the EU Ambassador and Ambassadors and diplomats of EU Member States:** On 21st November 2025, Shri Bharat Lal, accompanied by Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar, participated in an interactive session hosted by EU Ambassador, Mr. Hervé Delphin with ambassadors and senior delegates from 27 EU member countries in New Delhi. He highlighted shared values of democracy, diversity and human dignity guiding India-EU cooperation and outlined the evolution of human rights in India from its civilisational roots to its constitutional and institutional framework of national and state human rights bodies and the functioning of various sectoral commissions.



- ▶ NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, flanked by Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar, addressing the Ambassadors and senior delegates from 27 EU member countries in New Delhi

- **US-India Strategic Partnership Forum:** On 12th November 2025, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal interacted with the Board of the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum in New Delhi. He spoke on India's efforts to enhance quality of life, environmental sustainability, ease of living and doing business and protection of human rights. The session, facilitated by Shri Mukesh Aghi, President and CEO of the US- India Strategic Partnership Forum, included insights from eminent speakers such as Shri Amitabh Kant, Former G20 Sherpa and Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu, Former Ambassador.



- ▶ NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal interacting with the Board of USISPF in New Delhi

Bilateral engagements and delegation visits

Throughout the year, NHRC, India received delegations from Sweden, Germany, UNDP India, Nepal Human Rights Commission, Norway and Indonesian Minister of Human Rights. UK High Commissioner to India, Ambassador of Denmark to India, United Nations Resident Coordinator in India, British High Commission and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights also visited the Commission and met with the Chairperson and Secretary General. These interactions enabled a constructive exchange of ideas and further enhanced NHRC, India's global partnerships.



▶ NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal and Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar with Mr. Volker Türk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, OHCHR Spokesperson, Ms. Ravina Shamdasani and Human Rights Officer, Ms. Aida Martirous-Nejad



▶ NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal and senior officers with Ms. Irina Schoulgin Nyoni, Sweden's Ambassador-at-Large for Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law along with H.E. Mr. Jan Thesleff, Ambassador of Sweden to India



▶ NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian, Members, Justice (Dr.) B. R. Sarangi, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani and Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal and senior officers with the visiting Indonesian delegation led by Minister of Human Rights, Mr. Natalius Pigai

Online meetings

- **Meeting of GANHRI Working Group on Business and Human Rights:** On 23rd April 2025, Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary, NHRC, India participated in the meeting of the GANHRI Working Group (WG) on Business and Human Rights (BHR). Mr. Marizen Santos, Division Chief, International Obligations Monitoring Human Rights Policy Linkages Offices, Commission on Human Rights (CHR) of the Philippines chaired it. Besides India, attending NHRIs included Argentina, Ecuador, Germany, Morocco, Malawi, Northern Ireland, the Philippines, Portugal, France and Denmark. The agenda covered the election of the WG Vice-Chair, with Morocco NHRI elected unanimously. The group reviewed the 2025/ 2026

Strategic Plan, including the proposal submitted to the 14th UN Forum on BHR. It was also decided to have a discussion on migrant workers, gender equality and work in the subsequent meetings of the Working Group.

- On 23rd June 2025, Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary, NHRC, India attended the 6th Annual Meeting of the UN Network on Migration to launch the Network work plan for 2025- 2026 and include the Migration MPTF (Multi-Partner Trust Fund) Consultative Forum. The meeting was attended by 131 participants across the world.
- On 13th August 2025, Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary and Ms. Prerna Hasiya, Junior Research Consultant, NHRC, India attended the GANHRI Working Group on Business and Human Rights.

- From 24th - 26th November 2025, Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary and Ms. Prerna Hasija, Junior Research Consultant, NHRC, India attended the 14th United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights on the theme 'Accelerating action on business and human rights amidst crises and transformations' organised at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland.
- On 8th September 2025, Ms. Varsha Apte, Consultant (Research), NHRC, India attended the 'Learning call on International Humanitarian Law (IHL): Convergence points between state-led national IHL committees and NHRIs.' It was organised by the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines.
- On 10th September 2025, Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary, NHRC, India attended the monthly GANHRI Working Group on Business and Human Rights.
- On 18th September 2025, Smt. Saidingpui Chhakchhuak, Joint Secretary, NHRC, India and Ms. Varsha Apte, Consultant (Research) attended the meeting regarding the APF Gender Strategy Reference Group to contribute towards the development of a Gender Strategy Toolkit for NHRIs.
- On 4th December 2025, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal attended an online oral presentation to the Bureau Members of the GANHRI Sub-Committee on Accreditation.
- On 16th December 2025, Smt. Saidingpui Chhakchhuak, Joint Secretary, Ms. Varsha Apte, Research Consultant and Ms. Stuti Joshi, Junior Research Consultant, NHRC, India attended a meeting of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group for the elaboration of a legally binding instrument on the promotion and protection of human rights of older persons (OEIGWG–Older Persons).
- On 15th December 2025, Shri Yuvraj, SSP, NHRC, India attended an online meeting organised by the University of Padova Human Rights Centre and the Network of African NHRIs on 'National Enquiries and Economic and Social Rights Monitoring.'
- 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, India attended a bilateral online meeting with the National Human Rights Institution (Defensoría del Pueblo de Paraguay) of Paraguay.
- On 2nd February 2026, Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General, Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary, Lt. Col. Virender Singh, Director, Ms. Varsha Apte, Consultant (Research) and Ms. Radhika Goel, Research Assistant, NHRC, India attended a bilateral online meeting with the National Human Rights Institution (Defensoría del Pueblo de Paraguay) of Paraguay.

Capacity building programmes for NHRIs

The Commission deputed its senior officers to attend various training and learning programmes abroad to broaden their understanding of human rights with a global perspective. The Commission also pursued its ITEC Capacity Building Programme on Human Rights for the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) of the Global South with the support of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

Abroad

Regional blended learning course on monitoring human rights in climate-induced mobility

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



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

Workshop on economic, social and cultural rights in action

From 28th - 30th October 2025, Smt. Ilakkiya Karunakaran, SSP and Shri Indrajeet Kumar, Deputy Registrar (Law), NHRC, India 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 Karunakaran and Deputy Registrar (Law), Shri Indrajeet Kumar at the Workshop

APF Blended Learning Programme

From 19th to 21st January 2026, Smt. Vijay Lakshmi Vihan, Presenting Officer, NHRC, India 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



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

online learning modules with an in-person workshop and idea exchange for participants. The participants were given an understanding of developing a toolkit. Additionally, they also discussed issues related to the welfare and rehabilitation of the members of the transgender community.

In India

ITEC capacity building programme for Global South

In September 2025, the Commission, in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs, organised a six-day ITEC Capacity Building Programmes on Human Rights for forty- three senior officials from twelve National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) from the Global South. They included Mauritius, Jordan, Georgia, the Philippines, Qatar, Fiji, Uzbekistan, Bolivia, Nigeria, Mali, Morocco and Paraguay. Aimed at strengthening institutional capacities, the initiative reflects the Commission's commitment to global human rights dialogue, South-South cooperation and the promotion of rights-based governance. The programmes facilitated peer learning and collaboration, covering civic, political, socio-economic and cultural rights through interactive sessions with eminent speakers and domain experts.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian inaugurating the 4th ITEC Executive Capacity Building Programme on human rights in New Delhi

The programme also featured cultural immersion visits and concluded with encouraging reflections on global human rights cooperation. Participants appreciated the tailored content, expert interactions and knowledge-sharing opportunities, while the NHRC, India expressed its intent to strengthen future collaboration, including through potential MoUs.

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).



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian addressing the visiting senior civil servants from Sri Lanka

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

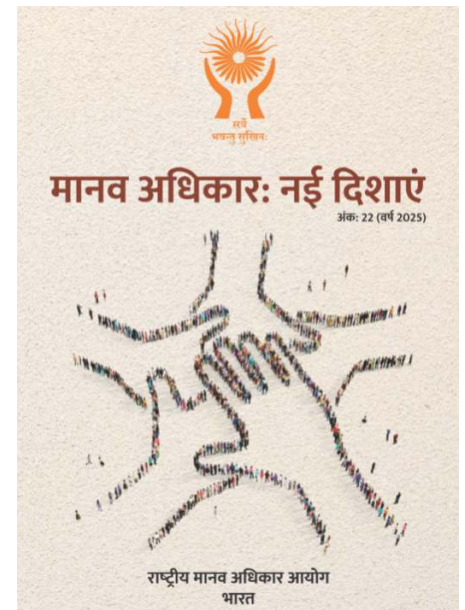
IT initiative: NHRC, India App

Further strengthening its multifaceted efforts to enhance human rights awareness and accessibility, the NHRC, India launched a mobile application on 10th December 2025. The app enables users to file complaints, track their status in real time and receive updates on case progress, while also providing access to key resources such as educational materials, Newsletters and other publications. With its user-friendly interface and streamlined processes, it serves as a comprehensive platform for public engagement. By promoting transparency, encouraging participation and ensuring timely grievance redressal, the initiative underscores the Commission's continued commitment to leveraging technology to advance human rights awareness and responsiveness.



Publications and library

Continuing its broad-based efforts to promote human rights awareness, the Commission also strengthens human rights literacy through its publications, in addition to its monthly Newsletters in English and Hindi. Over 100 publications have been made available on its website for wider public access. During the year, the Commission released its two annual publications- Journal (English) and Nayi Dishayein (Hindi)- further enriching the dissemination of knowledge on human rights.



Media interface

Consistent with its sustained efforts to enhance human rights awareness, the Commission continues to actively engage in outreach through diverse interventions and communication platforms. During the year under reference, it issued 174 press releases and shared over 3,852 posts and reposts on its X handle, while also expanding the digital circulation of its monthly Newsletters in English and Hindi. Media coverage remained significant, with around 7,700 news clippings highlighting the Commission's work across newspapers and magazines nationwide. In the run-up to Human Rights Day, interviews of the Chairperson were broadcast on DD National, DD India and AIR News, along with interviews of the Secretary General on AIR News and RedFM, further amplifying awareness about human rights and the Commission's initiatives.

Competitions and awards

NHRC debate competition for Central Armed Police Forces

Further advancing its outreach initiatives, the NHRC, India organised the final round of its 30th annual debate competition for Central Armed Police Forces in collaboration with the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) in New Delhi. The debate centred on the theme 'Human rights can be observed by paramilitary forces without compromising national security concerns.' A total of 16 participants competed in Hindi and English, presenting arguments for and against the motion after progressing through zonal and semi-final rounds. The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) emerged as the best team and won the running trophy.



► The winning team of CISF with the NHRC, India Chairperson; Member; Secretary General, DG (I); Special DG, SSB; and jury members

NHRC, India Short Film Competition 2025

In continuation of its efforts to promote human rights awareness through creative expression, the NHRC, India announced the winners of its eleventh annual short film competition on human rights for 2025. The Full Commission Jury awarded the first prize of Rs 2 lakh to 'Rani' by Ms. Sarika Jain from Uttar Pradesh, which portrays the struggles of women domestic workers and the impact of class-based stereotypes. The second prize of Rs 1.5 lakh went to 'Meanwhile She.' by Shri Amal S. from Kerala, highlighting the disproportionate burdens faced by working women amid gender stereotypes and domestic violence. The third prize of Rs 1 lakh was awarded to 'The Delivery' by Shri Sai Shashank Tati from Tamil Nadu, depicting the challenges faced by gig workers.

Additionally, four films – 'Malati', 'Second Chance', 'Dusk of Life' and 'Bhagyashree' received Certificates of Special Mention along with cash awards of Rs 50,000 each. The competition witnessed an overwhelming response, with 526 entries received in about 24 languages and dialects from across the country, of which 438 films meeting the prescribed criteria were considered for awards.

Programmes for its officers and employees

In continuation of its comprehensive and year-round efforts, the Commission also focused on internal capacity building and awareness through two gender sensitisation programmes and four in-house training sessions for its officers and staff, including one on medical emergencies. It further encouraged the use of official and regional languages through activities organised during Hindi Fortnight, alongside initiatives such as a painting competition for employees' children to promote human rights awareness.

Overall, 2025-26 stood out as a dynamic and impactful year, marked by the Commission's wide-ranging and multi-dimensional initiatives that collectively advanced its mandate under the Protection of Human Rights Act, reinforcing its commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights across the country.



► CPR training in progress



► A scene from the children's painting competition



► Winners of the NHRC Hindi Fortnight competitions

