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HUMAN RIGHTS

Newsletter

A monthly publication of the National Human Rights Commission, India



Consultation

Core group meeting on Protecting Migrant Workers Rights

Conference of SHRCs, Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors

Advisory 2.0

NHRC Advisory 2.0 to ensure the welfare of transgender persons

Article

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and the idea of justice in the Indian Constitution

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National Human Rights Commission, India

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



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian delivering an address as Chief Guest the 18th Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Memorial Lecture at the IIPA, New Delhi



► NHRC, India Core Group on Business and Human Rights on the theme 'Protecting Migrant Workers' Rights: Shared Responsibility'



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Monthly Recap

From the desk of the Secretary General and Chief Executive

India has a sophisticated framework of progressive laws, welfare schemes and judicial protections. The breakdown occurs in implementation and accountability.

As India navigates an era of rapid technological advancement, industrial evolution and climate complexity, our collective journey toward becoming a developed nation must be measured by a singular, non-negotiable metric: how we treat our most vulnerable citizens. True societal progress does not reside in economic growth metrics or infrastructure milestones alone. Rather, it is defined by a society's collective capacity to remain profoundly humane, inclusive and fundamentally just. In May 2026, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India engaged in a series of interventions, training initiatives and high-level consultations to turn these foundational ideals into reality.

Across every forum- from selecting 100 brilliant young minds for our Online Short Term Internship (OSTI) Programme to organising the Conference of State Human Rights Commissions (SHRCs), Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors- a singular, resounding truth emerged. If our constitutional ideals of equality, justice, liberty and fraternity are to be truly realised, India's human rights ecosystem must undergo a paradigm shift. We must transition from an era of fragmented, reactive interventions to one characterised by proactive prevention, seamless inter-agency coordination and an unyielding commitment to last-mile delivery.

The institutional framework established under the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993 has provided India with a robust rights protection network. Today, the cooperative framework between the NHRC and its dedicated network of 15 Special Rapporteurs and 18 Special Monitors as well as the 27 functioning State Human Rights Commissions represents an essential safeguard for human rights and civil liberties.

Over the last five years, the NHRC has received more than 4.28 lakh complaints. This staggering volume represents a complex reality. On one hand, it reflects an enduring public trust in the Commission as an accessible forum for grievance redressal. On the other hand, it shines an uncompromising spotlight on deep systemic gaps in administration and justice delivery.

Systemic issues such as custodial violence, institutional abuse, gender-based discrimination, manual cleaning of hazardous waste and the denial of basic dignity to marginalised sections of society cannot be solved by post-facto corrections alone. A humane society must move ahead of the violation and identify emerging risks before they manifest as crises. India has a sophisticated framework of

progressive laws, welfare schemes and judicial protections. The breakdown occurs in implementation and accountability. To bridge this gap, the NHRC expects that the SHRCs enforce a strict and result-oriented coordination by on-boarding a common online platform- HRCNet portal to expand outreach and ensure that duplication of complaints and bureaucratic delays do not morph into human rights violations.

The need for a proactive human rights approach is perhaps more urgent in our response to environmental realities and corporate accountability. Speaking at the India Heat Summit 2026 in New Delhi, organised by Climate Trends under the theme 'Rising Temperatures, Shared Solutions' and supported by the NHRC, I underscored that extreme heat is no longer merely an environmental or seasonal inconvenience; it is fundamentally a human rights crisis. The release of the landmark report, 'Nighttime Thermal Stress in Low and Middle-Income Housing in India,' highlights how rising temperatures directly threaten the fundamental rights to life, health, housing, water and safe working conditions.

While climate change affects everyone, outdoor labourers, informal workers, low-income urban households, pregnant women, children and the elderly bear the brunt of thermal stress. To counter this, climate resilience must be firmly anchored in social justice, translating localised Heat Action Plans into street-level protections.

Reiterating the guidelines of the National Disaster Management Authority to mitigate the impact of heat waves and prevent casualties, the Commission, in its letter sent last month to 21 states and the NCT of Delhi, has asked authorities to take advance action and implement relief measures to protect vulnerable people during heat waves across the country. It has also called for action-taken reports.

A similar commitment to structural equity guided the NHRC's Core Group meeting on Business and Human Rights, which held a vital consultation on 'Protecting Migrant Workers' Rights: Shared Responsibility of Government and the Private Sector.' Internal migrants

comprise nearly 28.9% of India's population and drive vital sectors like construction, manufacturing, logistics and the gig economy. Despite this immense contribution, language barriers, high physical mobility, informal employment arrangements and substandard housing leave them highly vulnerable to irregular wages and social exclusion.

The corporate and administrative sectors must shift away from a purely business-oriented approach. Ensuring fair wages, safe housing and complete portability of social security benefits across state lines and time-bound grievance redressal mechanisms is an absolute obligation. Treating workers with dignity is sound economic policy, as investing in worker welfare directly boosts productivity and family stability.

In line with ensuring institutional equity and progressive policy protections, the Commission issued its Advisory 2.0 to ensure the welfare of transgender persons, targeting gaps in socio-economic inclusion and workplace dignity. This focus on foundational equity is underscored in an insightful article penned by Justice V. Ramasubramanian, Chairperson, NHRC, India.

The article examines Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and the idea of justice in the Indian Constitution. Concurrently, the Newsletter's Spotlight segment is on safeguarding human rights against digital arrest scams. As cybercriminals increasingly use psychological coercion and illegal digital confinement, the NHRC is actively working with law enforcement agencies to treat these acts as severe violations of personal liberty.

Ground-level remediation remains the Commission's most critical tool, powered by important interventions and the swift exercise of *suo motu* cognizance in cases of systemic negligence. The Commission's law and investigative wings continue to conduct rigorous spot enquiries and detailed case studies, generating concrete recommendations for relief and ensuring the prompt payment of relief to the victims. Indeed, the protection of human rights cannot be ensured by a single institution alone, it requires a daily commitment from all stakeholders in society.



[Bharat Lal]
Secretary General &
Chief Executive Officer

Consultation

Protecting Migrant Workers' Rights

As part of its ongoing mandate to safeguard human rights, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India regularly convenes core groups, open house discussions and national conferences to engage domain experts, academics and senior government functionaries in addressing systemic gaps and proposing practical policy reforms. In alignment with this proactive approach, the Commission organised a high-level core group meeting on 'Protecting Migrant Workers' Rights: Shared Responsibility of Government and the Private Sector' on 12th May 2026 in New Delhi.

This critical dialogue comes at a pivotal time: migrant workers serve as a vital backbone across key economic sectors including construction, logistics, hospitality and domestic work. Despite a robust foundation of statutory

safeguards, these workers continue to face disproportionate challenges, ranging from language barriers and unstable shelter to severe wage exploitation and structural loopholes by employers. By bringing together top NHRC leadership, Union and State government officials and UN representatives, this consultation aimed to bridge the persistent gap between legal frameworks and ground-level implementation, shifting the paradigm from mere regulatory compliance to a robust, rights-based culture of dignity and social security.

Chairing the meeting, the Chairperson, NHRC, Justice V. Ramasubramanian said that the migrant workers face greater challenges compared to others because most belong to the unorganised sector. Language barriers, mobility and lack of stable shelter prevent them from

protecting their rights. He also recalled the strong tradition of trade unions for workers' rights. NHRC Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, DG (I), Smt. Anupama Nilekar Chandra, Registrar (Law), Shri Joginder Singh, Joint Secretaries, Shri Samir Kumar and Smt. Sainingpuii Chhakchhuak, senior functionaries of Government of India, eminent domain experts and representatives of various UN bodies were present in the meeting.

Justice Ramasubramanian referred to laws such as the 1979 legislation recognising migrant workers and the Industrial Disputes Act provisions granting protection after 240 days of continuous work, while noting loopholes like employers giving breaks before eligibility periods. He highlighted the role of the NHRC, India and its core group in advising governments.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian chairing the core group meeting in the presence of Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal and senior officers and experts



► A section of attendees

He said that while India has strong labour laws, including migrant worker protections since 1979, implementation remains a concern. He said that the problems being faced by migrant workers are widely known and the Commission expects that multi-stakeholder discussions result in suggesting practical solutions as recommendations to the Union and state governments for implementation.

The NHRC Chairperson emphasised the need for a rights-based culture for migrant workers. He also stressed systemic reforms such as interstate coordination, portable social protection and stronger implementation of labour laws. He said that the immediate focus should be on the migrant workers engaged in construction, hotel, business and domestic work. Linguistic identity-based association members should be taken on-board the coordination councils to improve the ecosystem for migrant labourers.

NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi said that migrant workers are neither given due

regard nor wages. He said that non-payment of remuneration on time defeats their purpose of leaving their homes. They need to be provided sufficient wages, housing, health and educational facilities for their children to survive with dignity. He also said that a database on the family members accompanying them should also be created to ensure that they also get all the due benefits.

Before this, referring to a report on migration, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal said that migrants worldwide are driving the economy at all levels. He noted that nearly 28.9% of India's population consists of migrant workers moving between rural and urban areas, playing a vital role in every sector of the economy. Recalling the severe hardships faced during the COVID-19 crisis, he expressed concern over the exploitation of outsourced workers, many of whom reportedly do not receive even minimum wages, with contractors allegedly deducting large sums through payment apps. He stressed the need for greater social

sensitivity toward migrants.

Emphasising the importance of targeted investments and welfare measures for workers, he said that these result in an increase in their efficiency. In this context, he cited a study by the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad on migrants. The welfare measures led to an increase in factory workers' efficiency, which rose by 1.38 times and improved family welfare, education and prospects for their children. He observed that apparent discrimination and injustice may sometimes lead to violence. Emphasising that ensuring fair wages and social security is a collective responsibility, supported by new labour codes and digital governance systems, he highlighted NHRC, India's initiatives during COVID-19. While appreciating initiatives like One Nation One Ration Card, he emphasised the need to bridge the gap between laws and implementation. He also called for stronger interstate coordination, portable social protection and worker upskilling.

NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar gave an overview of the three technical sessions of the Conference which included 'Legal and Institutional Framework: Gaps in Protection and Implementation', 'Role of Businesses in Protecting the Rights of Migrant Workers in India' and 'Identifying Practical Measures for Strengthening the Protection and Welfare of Migrant Workers in India: Multi-stakeholder Approach.' He emphasised that migrant workers are very important and recalled how labour protests in NOIDA, Uttar Pradesh impacted daily life. He also referred to migrant workers returning home during the recent state elections, which created labour shortages that affected cities and public systems.

Shri Vimal Bhattar, Deputy General Manager, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) explained how the Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report (BRSR), under ESG reporting, discloses a listed company's environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance, capturing labour welfare data,

including migrant and contract workers. However, he noted that most migrants fall outside regulation due to their presence in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and the unorganised sector. Smt. Anuja Bapat, Policy Division, Deputy Director General, Ministry of MSMEs emphasised that migrant workers should be seen within a broader family and ecosystem context and said that the schemes like PM Vishwakarma, PMEGP and Udyam Registration can reduce distress migration by creating local livelihoods.

Shri Deepangkar Guha, Director, Ministry of Labour and Employment said that the e-Shram portal is a strong foundation, but its real value depends on better integration and use of its data across government schemes for the welfare of migrant workers. Shri K. C. Meena, Joint Director (CSR), Ministry of Corporate Affairs referred to compliance frameworks and reporting structures, highlighting that certain reporting obligations for listed companies are voluntary or evolving and statutory requirements vary.

Shri Tom Thomas, CEO, Praxis Institute for Participatory Practices emphasised the need for better data systems, especially linking and strengthening platforms like the e-Shram portal, to track migrant workers for social protection coverage. He also focused on improving data flow between databases so that even partial coverage could significantly improve policy targeting and welfare delivery.

Dr. Kishlay, Research Associate, Centre for Migration, Mobility and Diaspora Studies, Indian Council of World Affairs focused on construction workers and highlighted subcontracting issues, lack of documentation, exclusion from welfare schemes and the need for affordable housing and fair floor wages. Shri Sanjay Awasthi, Head of Office, International Organization for Migration urged for compliance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, ethical recruitment, zero recruitment fees, accountability across subcontracting chains and stronger grievance redress systems and data systems.



► The meeting in progress



► A section of participants

Ms. Nusrat, Business and Human Rights Specialist, Representative, United Nations Development Programme, India called for clearer and more sector-specific articulation of corporate responsibility toward migrant workers, suggesting an updated National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct and stronger policy coherence on business and human rights. Shri Insaf Nizam, Specialist on Fundamental Principles and Rights of Migrants, International Labour Organization emphasised a rights-based approach for all workers and not only migrants, stressing the need to address structural and institutional barriers and to uphold labour laws while improving governance and enforcement systems. Shri Namit Agarwal, Asia Policy Lead, World Benchmarking Alliance, highlighted the need to arbitrage the wage structure for the migrant workers.

Shri Pradeep Narayanan, Director, Partners in Change, noted India's leadership in ESG disclosures and proposed linking ESG ratings to

migrant worker welfare. Dr. Jatinder Singh, Deputy Secretary General, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry proposed integrating e-Shram with Aadhaar, EPF, ESIC and state schemes, QR-based migrant IDs and a national migrant labour dashboard. He also suggested multilingual grievance systems, contractor compliance declarations, pre-departure training and migrant-specific disclosures in the BRSR reporting. Shri S. Giridhaya Rajan, Founder Chair, International Institute of Migration and Development called for real-time migration data, sector-specific interventions and recognition of migrants as permanent contributors, not guests. He highlighted poor living conditions, wage theft, lack of overtime, language barriers in services, digital payments, interstate coordination and climate vulnerability. Shri Santosh Poonia, Director (Knowledge and Learning), Aajeevika Bureau raised the issue of migrant workers' access to healthcare and the need to move away from a one-size-fits-all approach.

The other speakers included Shri

Anant Swarup, Secretary General, FICCI; Shri Sunil Misra, Principal Advisor, Confederation of Indian Industry; Dr. Rajesh Kumar Dangeti, Chief General Manager, SEBI; Prof. Vasanthi Srinivas, IIMB; Dr. Vidya Tikoo, Senior Vice President, Aditya Birla Management Corporation Pvt. Ltd; Ms. Catherine Laws, Labour Migration Specialist, DWT-South Asia; Ms. Pichamon Yeophantong, Asia-Pacific Member, UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights; Shri Kailash Bhandari, Joint Director, Department of Public Enterprises; Shri S. Irudaya Rajan, Founder Chair, IIMAD; NHRC Special Monitor, Shri D. S. Dhapola; Special Rapporteur, Smt. Shomita Biswas, among others.

Some of the suggestions that emanated from the discussion are as follows:

- Need for a coordination council to address the issue of the migrant labourers;
- Focus on sector-wise associations and member networks organised

- around shared linguistic identities is needed so that migrant workers can approach them more easily for support and communication;
- National migrant workers' dashboard needed to track their movement district-wise;
 - Link and harmonise databases across government systems, not just e-Shram alone, to create an integrated migrant worker information ecosystem for real-time governance;
 - Make value-chain/ supply-chain disclosure standards broader and more uniform so that migrant labour data becomes part of ESG/ BRSR-style reporting even beyond top-listed companies;
 - Introduce sector-specific corporate responsibility guidelines, especially for high-migrant-intensity sectors like textiles, gig work and construction, rather than relying on generic business responsibility frameworks;
 - Create a formal national-level advisory or consultation mechanism for migrant workers themselves, ensuring they are directly represented in policy formulation;
 - Improve institutional coordination between departments at an operational level, reducing delays caused by multi-layered bureaucratic approvals in addressing worker grievances;
 - Update migration data systems at district and real-time levels, since existing national data was described as outdated and insufficient for crisis response;
 - Standardise certification processes for migrant workers in welfare schemes, especially in construction, hospitality and domestic work, so that they may access benefits like education support and insurance;
 - Embed migrant worker considerations into urban planning frameworks, not as an afterthought but as a core component of housing and infrastructure planning;
 - Strengthen portability architecture beyond existing schemes, ensuring smoother cross-state access not only to rations but also to health, insurance and welfare entitlements;
 - Develop clearer articulation of 'corporate responsibility' under business and human rights frameworks, especially to address informality and subcontracting ambiguity;
 - Create ESG-linked incentives through rating systems so that companies that improve migrant worker welfare receive better ESG ratings, encouraging compliance through market mechanisms;
 - Identify and regulate 'invisible value chains,' where no single company takes responsibility, by making sectoral 'top companies' jointly accountable for migrant worker conditions;
 - Bring sectoral industry leaders into NHRC/ core group platforms to co-design practical, sector-specific migrant welfare solutions, not just policy discussions;
 - Strengthen education on collective bargaining innovations, especially for workers outside traditional trade union structures;
 - Integrate caste-specific vulnerability analysis into labour policy, including coordination with National Commissions for SC/ ST and historically migrant communities;
 - Develop coordinated multi-commission policy responses involving human rights, caste and tribal commissions for historically mobile populations;
 - Establish delivery-focused policy architecture, ensuring discussions translate into actionable mechanisms rather than remaining academic deliberations;
 - Mandate contractor-level migrant welfare declarations, requiring suppliers to certify compliance on wages, safety, housing and recruitment conditions;
 - Create actionable grievance systems with strict timelines, ensuring complaints are not only recorded but resolved within defined periods;
 - Introduce structured pre-departure orientation programmes in high-migration districts, covering rights awareness, contracts, wages and legal protections;
 - Include migrant-specific disclosure sections in ESG/ BRSR frameworks, covering registration status, wage audits, grievance resolution rates and housing/ safety compliance;
 - Move towards "living wage" benchmarks instead of minimum wages, based on the actual urban cost of living rather than statutory floors;
 - Develop migrant-sensitive urban planning frameworks, integrating long-term housing and service access for migrant populations;
 - Promote digital wage payment systems linked to payroll records to reduce wage theft and improve transparency; and
 - Strengthen interstate migration corridor coordination mechanisms, especially between high-outflow and high-inflow states.
 - The Commission will further deliberate on various suggestions to finalise its recommendations to the government.

Conference of SHRCs along with its Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors

India has a unique human rights protection mechanism under the Protection of Human Rights (PHR) Act, 1993. The Act provides for the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the State Human Rights Commissions (SHRCs). Both derive their powers from the same Act but function independently within their respective jurisdictions.

The NHRC operates across the country and can seek reports or information on human rights violations from the Central Government, State Governments and related authorities on all legislative subjects including those on concurrent list. SHRCs function at the state level are generally restricted to matters concerning subjects in the State List and Concurrent List and can seek reports or information from State Governments and subordinate authorities. The NHRC is also not an appellate authority over the SHRCs. Despite the difference in jurisdictions, both institutions work in coordination to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights in the country.

To further strengthen mutual cooperation and coordination, the NHRC organised a day-long virtual Conference of SHRCs on 18th May 2026 at its premises in New Delhi. To broaden the scope of discussions, cooperation and understanding



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian chairing the Conference in the presence of Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal and senior officers

of the human rights situation and related issues on the ground, the Commission also invited its Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors to this Conference. These functionaries undertake field visits in accordance with their assigned thematic and geographical areas respectively and submit reports to the Commission for making appropriate recommendations to the concerned governments.

Chairing the Conference, NHRC Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian reiterated that India's human rights framework is unique, as both the NHRC and SHRCs exercise concurrent jurisdiction on certain matters in addition to their subject-specific jurisdiction. He underlined that the country's human rights performance is assessed collectively through the functioning of all Commissions. Therefore, there is a need to avoid duplication of cases, improve information

sharing and promote best practices. NHRC Members, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani; Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal; DG (I), Smt. Anupama Nilekar Chandra and senior officers were present.

Justice Ramasubramanian urged SHRCs to digitise their functioning and join a common integrated HRCNet portal with the NHRC. He also cautioned the Commissions against exceeding their jurisdiction, noting that while courts have expanded the scope of fundamental and human rights, human rights institutions must remain guided by the definition under the Protection of Human Rights Act. He said that maintaining jurisdictional clarity would reduce unnecessary litigation and enable Commissions to function more effectively.

NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi described the interaction between the NHRC and SHRCs as an important initiative to strengthen coordination. He underlined the need for better communication between them to ensure effective implementation of orders and timely delivery of benefits to persons in distress, particularly in sensitive matters such as custodial deaths.

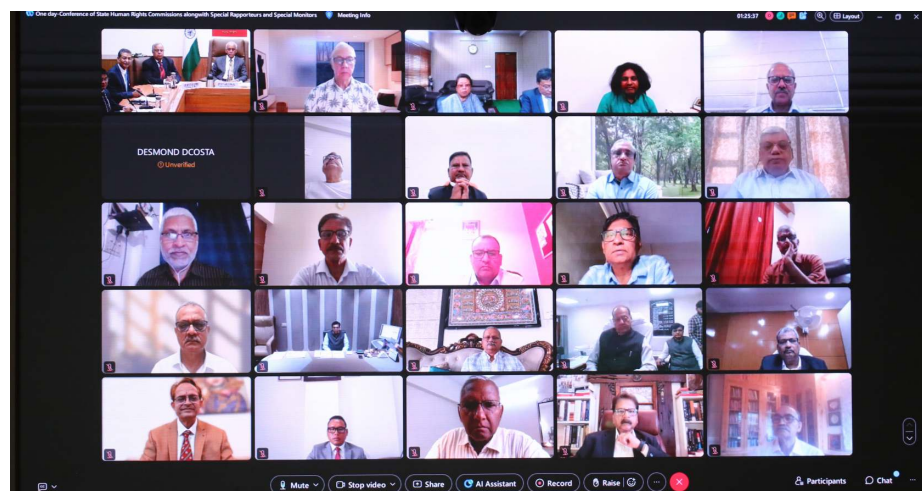
NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani urged SHRCs to increase field visits and engage more with affected communities. She said that coordination between SHRCs and NHRC Special Monitors and Special Rapporteurs may strengthen institutional effectiveness. She also highlighted the initiative of the Karnataka government displaying SHRC's contact details in its departments for public assistance.

Before this, giving an overview of the Conference, the NHRC Secretary

General, Shri Bharat Lal in his opening remarks said that human rights is a complex subject requiring collective action, close coordination and a reconciled approach among the NHRC and its Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors with the SHRCs. Referring to complaints received through the NHRC's online system, he highlighted that in the last 5 years, 4.28 lakh complaints have been received out of which major complaints fall in different categories viz. Police related violations (18%), organised exploitation by mafias (17.4%), service matters – non-payment of pensions/ salary (6%), violations of women's rights (5.8%), conditions in jails and prisons (3.5%), workers rights violations (2.2%), health related violations (2%), human rights violations in educational institutions (2%), child rights violations (1.7%) among others.

Shri Lal highlighted the cases of custodial deaths, abuse in shelter homes, poor living conditions in mental health institutions, manual scavenging deaths and called for proactive monitoring and field-based interventions. In this context, he also underscored the gaps in rehabilitation and certification mechanisms for beggars, persons with disabilities and transgender persons. He expressed the hope that such engagements and dialogues may help in building stronger institutional coordination to bridge the gap between policy intent and ground-level implementation, while creating a more effective deterrent against human rights violations.

Digital governance plays a crucial role in ensuring speedy and efficient redressal of human rights violations. The NHRC has developed the HRCNet portal as a



► SHRCs' representatives, NHRC Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors attending the Conference

complaint management system. Its adoption by all human rights institutions can help avoid duplication and improve coordination in handling cases. So far, out of 27 SHRCs, only 23 have adopted the system and are on-boarded. While the SHRCs of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Jharkhand and Nagaland are yet to on-board, the Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan SHRCs, despite being on-boarded, are yet to begin processing complaints through the portal.

Divided into two sessions, the conference began with an interactive dialogue with the SHRCs to understand their challenges. This was followed by a session with the NHRC, India Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors, who shared their field experiences to help strengthen the human rights mechanism in the country.

The Chairpersons, Members and representatives of the SHRCs of Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Assam, Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Gujarat, Goa and Karnataka

participated in the discussions besides the NHRC Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors.

Some of the important suggestions, among others, that emanated for strengthening of SHRCs and institutional coordination were as follows:

- State governments should strengthen SHRCs with improved staffing, infrastructure, outreach, field engagement and institutional capacity to effectively address increasing complaints relating to custodial violence, police excesses and other human rights violations;
- There is a need to enhance the enforceability and legal clarity of Human Rights Commissions' recommendations and public awareness about their mandate, powers and jurisdiction;
- SHRCs should join the HRCNet portal for handholding and integrated digital data-sharing with NHRC, India to improve coordination, monitoring and avoid duplication of proceedings in the same incidents;
- SHRCs and NHRC Special Monitors and Special Rapporteurs should improve mutual coordination for convergence among government departments and other stakeholders for better accountability and follow-up action;
- Increase frequency of coordinated field visits, inspections and institutional follow-up, including visits to prisons, mental health institutions, de-addiction centres, shelter homes, hospitals, old age homes and other vulnerable institutions;
- NHRC and SHRCs need to strengthen outreach, legal aid and accessibility mechanisms for vulnerable persons unable to independently approach institutions, including women, children, homeless persons, elderly persons

- and persons with mental illnesses;
- SHRCs should follow up NHRC directives to states to prevent misuse of human rights platforms by fraudulent organisations, intermediaries and vested interests;
 - SHRCs need to further expand NHRC's initiatives for human rights awareness, education and sensitisation through academic institutions, human rights cells and community outreach programmes;
 - Based on the inputs and feedback from the Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors, the suggestions for the thematic and sector-specific human rights concerns were as follows:
 - Focus may be on preventive human rights interventions through regular training and capacity-building of police, correctional staff and CAPFs, rather than relying primarily on punitive action after violations occur;
 - Follow up implementation of prison reforms by the concerned authorities, including reduction of overcrowding, improved living conditions, better communication facilities, standardisation of prison wages and expansion of observation homes and shelter homes;
 - Follow up proper rehabilitation of rescued child labourers, bonded labour victims and other vulnerable children through stronger coordination, legal enforcement and awareness among district authorities and police;
 - Take up strengthening of Child Welfare Committees, child protection systems and restoration of child and senior citizen helplines across districts and states;
 - Prioritise mental health, leprosy and disability rights through rehabilitation, stigma reduction, welfare access and community-based monitoring;
 - Ensure protection and recognition of intersex infants, gender non-conforming children and other vulnerable groups, including monitoring of institutional and medical practices affecting them;
 - Improvements needed in dignity and accessibility to welfare delivery systems, including PDS shops and institutions serving vulnerable populations;
 - Encourage use of scientific and real-time environmental monitoring systems, evidence-based research and environmental justice mapping to address pollution, water contamination and climate-related human rights concerns;
 - Improvements required in occupational safety, healthcare, insurance and welfare protections for sanitation workers, dump-site workers, truck drivers, mine workers and other vulnerable labour groups;
 - Strengthening of awareness campaigns and preventive mechanisms needed for occupational diseases such as silicosis through safer technologies, protective measures and diagnostic infrastructure;
 - Conditions require improvements in schools, tribal hostels, hospitals, prisons and other institutions through regular inspections, grievance redressal and monitoring mechanisms;
 - Availability of specialised teachers and inclusive educational support systems needed for children with hearing, visual and other disabilities;
 - Replication needed of successful welfare and rehabilitation models, including Anganwadi-linked childcare facilities in prison and community-based support systems, across states;
 - Ensure compensation, rehabilitation and welfare support for frontline workers and disaster-affected personnel; and
 - Address concerns relating to recruitment standards and quality of public health services as part of the right to health framework.

Advisory 2.0

Ensuring welfare of transgender persons

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India is mandated to protect and promote the human rights of every individual in the country. In addition to making recommendations on complaints of human rights violations, the Commission also issues Advisories from time to time to Union Ministries, State Governments and Union Territory Administrations to strengthen the protection and promotion of human rights.

Some of the Advisories issued by the Commission relate to the 'Protection and Rehabilitation of Individuals Engaged in Begging,' 'Protection of Human Rights of Widows,' 'Protection of Children Against Child Sexual Abuse Material,' 'Mental Health,' 'Mitigating Deliberate Self-Harm and Suicide Attempts by Prisoners,' 'Protection of the Human Rights of Truck Drivers,' 'Elimination of Discrimination Against Persons Affected by Leprosy'

and the 'Right to Food Security and Nutrition,' among others.

As part of its continued commitment towards the protection and promotion of the rights of transgender persons, the Commission had also issued an Advisory for their welfare on 15th September 2023. However, despite the positive response to this Advisory by the government, following the enactment of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, including the rollout of allied schemes and policy measures aimed at improving their socio-economic conditions, the Commission noted that a range of issues persisted besides the emerging challenges affecting their rights and welfare.

Therefore, based on the outcome of its continued engagements, including field interactions, stakeholder consultations and reviews of implementation, the Commission issued Advisory 2.0 on 18th May 2026 to ameliorate the cause of transgender persons' rights and welfare.

The Advisory 2.0 has been sent to the Secretaries of 11 Union Ministries, the Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India and the Chief Secretaries/ Administrators of all States and Union Territories. The Ministries include Social Justice and Empowerment, Home Affairs, Law and Justice, Education, Health and Family Welfare, Women and Child Development, Corporate Affairs, Statistics and Programme Implementation, Labour and Employment, Housing and Urban Affairs and Rural Development. They have been requested to implement the recommendations contained in the Advisory and furnish Action Taken Reports to the Commission within two months.

The Advisory focuses on ten key areas for action. These include integrating gender diversity into national data systems; reviewing laws, rules and policies to ensure gender inclusivity; building an inclusive legal framework; protecting the right to property, education and healthcare; promoting inclusivity at the workplace; safeguarding the rights of children with diverse sex characteristics and gender identities/ expressions; protecting the rights of elderly transgender persons and strengthening Garima Greh shelters. The detailed Advisory is available on the website of the Commission: www.nhrc.nic.in

Some of the key recommendations are as follows

- Include distinct categories such as 'Intersex', 'Transmen' and 'Transwomen' in the upcoming Census of India and other national surveys to ensure accurate and inclusive gender-disaggregated data collection;

- Review laws, including the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, Juvenile Justice Act and succession laws to ensure recognition of self-identified gender and protection of the rights of transgender and intersex persons;
- Ensure equal inheritance, succession, housing and property rights for transgender and intersex persons without discrimination;
- Develop comprehensive SOPs for police and correctional institutions regarding arrest, detention, searches, interrogations, imprisonment, confidentiality and access to gender-affirming healthcare for transgender persons;
- Establish dedicated legal aid cells, helplines and independent grievance-redressal mechanisms for transgender and gender-diverse persons facing discrimination, violence or custodial abuse;
- Ensure admission of transgender students in educational institutions based on self-identified gender without requiring medical proof, along with the creation of gender-neutral facilities and grievance-redressal mechanisms;
- Make gender-sensitisation training mandatory for teachers, counsellors, police, prison personnel, judicial officers and healthcare professionals to promote inclusion and reduce discrimination;
- Develop standardised and ethical medical protocols for gender-affirming healthcare, regulation of Sex Reassignment Surgery costs and equal insurance coverage for transgender healthcare needs;
- Prohibit coercive or non-consensual medical procedures on intersex children, except in life-saving situations, while ensuring counselling and psychosocial support for parents;
- Promote inclusive workplaces through gender-neutral facilities, inclusive human resource policies, workplace grievance mechanisms and mandatory diversity disclosures, alongside welfare measures for elderly transgender persons; and
- Simplify documentation process and enable self-identification-based enrolment for elderly transgender persons in welfare schemes and establish transgender-inclusive old-age homes and community shelters, ensuring privacy, healthcare access, social interaction and emotional well-being.

Article

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and the idea of justice in the Indian Constitution

Justice V. Ramasubramanian
Chairperson, NHRC, India

(Based on his lecture on the occasion of the 18th Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Memorial Lecture at the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi on 15th May 2026)



Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is a synonym for social justice. No single adage captures his vision more sufficiently than what he himself noted in a conversation quoted by Shri M.O. Mathai, Personal Secretary to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in his Reminiscences of the Nehru Age:

“The Hindus wanted Vedas and they sent for Vyasa who was not a caste Hindu. The Hindus wanted an Epic, they sent for Valmiki who was an Untouchable. The Hindus want a Constitution and they sent for me.”

The Constitution, steered by Dr. Ambedkar, was not born merely out of academic knowledge. It was drawn out of painful experiences undergone by Dr. Ambedkar in his personal life experiences that continued even after he became one of the tallest intellectuals of modern India. Therefore, Dr. Ambedkar's life, vision and the idea of justice in the Indian Constitution deserve a continuous revisit.

The architecture of "justice" in the constitutional text

The word “justice” appears 50 times in the Indian Constitution: once in the preamble and 49 times across 30 distinct articles. However, the word “justice” as a core philosophical concept appears only 9 times once in the preamble and 8 times within Articles 38(1), 39-A, 46, 139-A, 142, 225, 243G and 243W.

The Preamble and Article 38(1): The word “justice” appears alongside its categorisation into three specific types: social, economic and political.

Article 39-A: The word is used in the context of the State's responsibility to secure a legal system that promotes justice on the basis of equal opportunity.

Article 46: The text outlines the State's responsibility to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in particular, and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

Articles 139-A and 142: The word is employed in the context of the extraordinary power of the Supreme Court to ensure complete justice.

Article 225: It is used regarding the role of the High Courts in the administration of justice.

Articles 243G and 243W: The empha-

sis is placed on the powers of local bodies to plan and implement measures for economic development and social justice.

Articles 38(1), 39-A and 46, together with the Preamble, provide the foundational framework of justice, illustrating how Dr. Ambedkar fertilised the entire document with this ideal. Interestingly, Article 366, which contains definitions of expressions used throughout the document, does not explicitly define “justice.”

The philosophical conundrum of defining justice

To understand this omission, we must ask: what do we mean by “justice”? Classical philosophy identifies justice as a cardinal virtue originating from the Latin word *iustitia*, meaning fairness or righteousness.

However, in a complex society, what is fair to one man may not be fair to another. In pluralistic democracies, disagreements about right and wrong are rampant. Some defend affirmative action through reservation as a method of righting past wrongs, whereas others believe it is unfair to individuals who deserve admission purely on merit.

Throughout history, scholars have grappled with various theories to define this concept. In The Institutes, a component of the 6th-century codification of Roman law, justice is

defined as “the set and constant purpose which gives to every man his due.” Yet, in a society where evils like untouchability, the caste system and systemic discrimination were rampant, we cannot rely on a traditional definition that merely gives each man his due based on an unequal status quo.

Michael Joseph Sandel, a Harvard professor, addresses this complexity in his book 'Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?'. He noted that a just society must distribute goods i.e. income, duties, rights and opportunities in the right way. However, the hard questions begin when we ask what people are actually due and why.

To highlight this moral ambiguity, Sandel shares a 2005 case study of a US Navy SEALs reconnaissance mission in Afghanistan. After encountering unarmed civilian goatherds, the team faced a moral dilemma: release them and risk compromising their position to the Taliban or execute them. Choosing mercy, they released the civilians. Shortly after, the unit was ambushed by a massive Taliban force, resulting in the deaths of three SEALs and sixteen rescue personnel. The lone surviving officer was haunted by his decision for the rest of his life.

This tragic dilemma demonstrates that absolute, flawless moral justice is an elusive ideal in real-world scenarios. Realising this inherent difficulty within the Indian social landscape, Dr. Ambedkar conceived that justice must be practically categorised into three tangible types: social, economic and political.

The three pillars of constitutional justice

Dr. Ambedkar's vision sought to achieve political justice by providing two foundational rights: the right to elect representatives and the right to be elected. The right to elect was conferred upon every adult citizen

through universal adult franchise under Article 326. The right to representation in proportion to population size is guaranteed under Articles 330 and 332 for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. By giving the marginalised a direct share in governance, political justice was achieved in practice.

However, achieving social and economic justice proved far more complicated. Consequently, these aspects were left primarily as dynamic duties for lawmakers under Part IV (Directive Principles of State Policy), which Article 37 declares fundamental to the governance of the country.

Article 38(1) imposes two specific obligations upon the State:

- a) To promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life; and
- b) To minimise the inequalities in income and endeavour to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities.

Realising that the mere conferment of a right without a remedy is meaningless, Article 39-A imposes an obligation to provide free legal aid so that justice is not denied due to economic or other disabilities.

To ensure this equality of opportunity, the Constitution incorporates structural manifestations of social justice:

Article 15(4) enables the State to make special provisions for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes or for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Article 15(5) empowers the State to make special provisions regarding admissions to educational institutions, including private institutions.

Article 16(4) enables reservation in appointments in favour of any backward class of citizens that the State deems inadequately represented in public services.

Economic justice serves as a vital corollary to social justice, demanding that there be no discrimination based on economic standing, as reflected in Articles 38, 39 and 43. By adopting a mixed economy model, India sought to strike a balance between free-market competition and State intervention through land reforms, taxation strategies and regulations on the concentration of wealth.

A comparative historical perspective

The speed and depth of what was achieved by the Indian Constitution becomes phenomenal when contrasted with global historical precedents, particularly that of the United States.

While the 1776 American Declaration of Independence proclaimed that "all men are created equal," the US Constitution of 1787 actively institutionalised slavery, codifying each slave as a mere three-fifths of a person for political representation. It took 74 years and a bloody Civil War for President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation (1863) and the Thirteenth Amendment (1865) to formally abolish slavery. Even then, racial segregation persisted for another 90 years, legally protected under the Supreme Court's "separate but equal" doctrine in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), until it was finally dismantled by *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954.

In sharp contrast to America's century-long struggle to legally recognise basic human equality, it took the Constituent Assembly of India just a few months to constitutionally abolish untouchability and introduce robust affirmative action to secure social, economic and political justice simultaneously. This historic leap was made possible through Dr. Ambedkar's untiring efforts, deep commitment and unmatched vision. His life remains to be celebrated by all humankind.

Spotlight

Safeguarding human rights against digital arrest scams

India has achieved rapid progress in building a robust Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), with over 86% of households gaining internet access according to the 80th round of the National Sample Survey between January and March 2025. This rapid expansion of digital connectivity has transformed governance, strengthened welfare delivery mechanisms, expanded financial inclusion and enabled innovation across sectors. However, this connectivity has simultaneously expanded the digital vulnerability surface. As interactions leave persistent data trails that are hard to erase, ordinary citizens find themselves at a structural disadvantage within an opaque data lifecycle. Among the most unsettling manifestations of this vulnerability is the "digital arrest" scam.

The anatomy and magnitude of the threat

A digital arrest scam occurs when fraudsters impersonate law enforcement or regulatory authorities. Weaponising the authority, symbols and language of public institutions, they exploit leaked or unlawfully obtained personal data to extract money through prolonged psychological captivity and fear. These scams shatter the myth that cybercrime only targets the digitally illiterate; instead, they successfully manipulate highly educated, digitally confident citizens in India's major urban and tech hubs.

The financial and social magnitude of cyber-enabled fraud is staggering, and it is not only limited to the digitally illiterate. Well-educated professionals, retired officials, businesspersons and senior executives have also become victims. Data compiled by the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), based on reports received through the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal indicate:

- **Overall losses:** Over the past six years, Indians have lost nearly Rs 52,976 crore to cyber fraud.
- **Digital arrest impact:** By late 2025, data submitted by the Government of India to the Supreme Court revealed that fraudsters syphoned approximately Rs 3,000 crores solely through digital arrest tactics.
- **Geographic hotspots:** States with high digital penetration and financial activity, such as Maharashtra recorded the highest number of complaints with losses of Rs 3,203 crore, followed closely by Karnataka with over 21 lakh

complaints and losses of Rs 2,413 crore.

- **High-profile exploitation:** Notable cases include an industrialist being extorted of Rs 7 crore, a Mumbai businessman losing Rs 58 crore across a staged 40-day video-call trial and a Bengaluru executive defrauded of Rs 32 crore.

These incidents reveal that digital arrest scams succeed not because of lack of education but because of sustained psychological manipulation, impersonation of authority and fear-based coercion.

Why digital arrest scams succeed

Perpetrators consistently outpace institutional response mechanisms due to several operational complexities:

- **Velocity of Funds:** Fraudsters use automated banking systems to instantly move stolen money through a chain of "mule accounts" (often belonging to unsuspecting students, workers or senior citizens) across different banks and states within seconds.
- **The "Golden Hour" Dilemma:** The probability of successfully freezing defrauded funds is highly time sensitive.

Time elapsed since fraud	Success rate of freezing funds
Within 1 hour	~90%
Within 2 hours	70% – 80%
Beyond 6 hours	Drops sharply to ~19%

- **Institutional delays:** Banks often lack immediate legal authority to freeze accounts until a formal complaint is registered via the 1930 Helpline, by which time the "golden hour" has frequently passed.
- **Advanced & transnational tactics:** Criminals leverage the dark web for ransomware tools, employ deepfakes and AI-generated documents and funnel funds into private cryptocurrency wallets. Furthermore, a significant share of these operations feature cross-border linkages originating in Southeast Asian countries like Cambodia, Myanmar and Laos, rendering recovery incredibly difficult.

Human rights implications

Digital arrest scams simulate the coercive power of the State, creating a state of psychological confinement that violates democratic governance. The impact is uniquely devastating for senior citizens, who are the primary targets. When an elderly person is manipulated into parting with their life savings, the injury extends far beyond financial damage. It erodes their lifelong sense of safety, dignity and independence.

Additionally, these scams expose deep systematic failures in data privacy. While the Supreme Court affirmed the right to privacy under Article 21 in Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017), years of unregulated data harvesting have allowed illicit data markets to thrive. This enables scammers to aggregate disparate details (Aadhaar, phone numbers, travel records) into 360-degree victim profiles.

Current initiatives & institutional defences

India has actively deployed legal, regulatory and technological measures to counter cyber fraud:

- **Legal framework:** Anchored by the Information Technology Act, 2000 (Section 79) and reinforced by the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023 and its 2025 Rules, which enforce strict security obligations on data fiduciaries.
- **Reporting infrastructure:** Citizens can utilise the National Cybercrime Helpline (1930) for financial frauds and the Chakshu facility on the Sanchar Saathi platform to report early-stage suspicious communications.
- **Regulatory action:** The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) introduced the Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI) in May 2025 to flag high-risk numbers, blacklisted hundreds of thousands of fraudulent SIM cards and established a coordinate MoU with the Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND).

- **High-level intervention:** The Supreme Court initiated suo motu proceedings, granting pan-India investigative authority to the CBI. Concurrently, a Ministry of Home Affairs Inter-Departmental Committee is evaluating an emergency "Kill Switch" within UPI and banking Apps to instantly freeze transactions upon activation.

Moving forward: The core agenda

Despite these measures, significant challenges remain. Digital arrest scams operate at a speed that often outpaces institutional response systems. The rise of data-driven governance has intensified concerns around privacy and misuse of personal information. Digital arrest scams depend heavily on unauthorised access to such information, including phone numbers, Aadhaar details, banking information, travel history and social media activity. To shift the battle from bureaucratic delay to technological speed, future deliberations must prioritise three key agendas:

1. **Overcoming structural constraints:** Addressing coordination gaps caused by "Police" and "Public Order" being State subjects. There is a pressing need to institutionalise real-time intelligence exchange and consider a statutorily empowered, nationwide specialised cybercrime force.
2. **Proactive prevention:** Maximising ecosystem vigilance, including AI-driven mule detection (such as RBI's MuleHunter.AI), stricter SIM card issuance protocols and immediate transaction flagging by banks.
3. **Victim-centric protection:** Transforming grievance architecture from a reactive complaint model to an automatic, coordinated freeze protocol. Furthermore, just as deposit insurance historically preserved banking trust, establishing a structured compensation mechanism for victims of institutional negligence is a democratic necessity to safeguard digital governance.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has scheduled an Open House Discussion on 9th June 2026 to address this growing threat to human rights and public trust.

Suo motu cognizance

The media reports have been a very useful instrument for the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India to know about 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 May 2026, the Commission took *suo motu* cognizance in 10 cases of alleged human rights violations reported by the media and issued notices to the concerned

authorities to send action taken reports. Summaries of these cases are as follows:

Deaths while cleaning a sewer

(Case No. 591/7/3/2026)

The media reported that two sanitation workers died while cleaning a sewer at the Puri Pranam Society in Greater

Faridabad, Haryana on 2nd May 2026. Reportedly, the workers had entered a manhole on the directions of the Estate Manager of the building without being provided any protective gear or gas masks. The Commission has noted with concern that despite guidelines issued by the Supreme Court and the NHRC Advisory emphasising the use of mechanised cleaning of sewers with adequate safety gear to the sanitation workers, such incidents continue to occur frequently in the country. Therefore, the Commission has issued notices to the Commissioner, Municipal Corporation and the Commissioner of Police, Faridabad, Haryana, calling for a detailed report on the matter. It is expected to include the status of the investigation and compensation paid to the next of kin of the deceased persons.

Nursing students contracting Tuberculosis in the hostel

(Case No. 38/8/9/2026)

On 2nd May 2026, the media reported that nineteen female students were infected with tuberculosis in the hostel of the MGMSC Nursing College, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh. Reportedly, during the two recent inspections of the premises on 31st March and 17th April 2026, serious deficiencies were observed in the management of the hostel, including sanitation and overall institutional functioning. However, no corrective measures were taken by the authorities, resulting in the students contracting Tuberculosis. Therefore, the Commission has issued a notice to the Chief Secretary, Government of Himachal Pradesh, calling for a detailed report on the matter. Reportedly, the students at the hostel face overcrowded, damp and unhygienic living conditions with severely inadequate sanitation. Food quality is poor and lacks basic nutrition. They are reportedly denied rest during illness and forced to work as hospital staff even on holidays.

Remand Home inmate's death

(Case No. 344/34/3/2026-WC)

On 4th May 2026, the media reported about the death of a 19-year-old female inmate of a Remand Home in the Charki Pahadi area of the Deoghar district of Jharkhand on 2nd May 2026 under suspicious circumstances. The cause of her death is yet to be ascertained. Therefore, the Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary, Government of Jharkhand and the Superintendent of Police, Deogarh, calling for a detailed report on the matter. Reportedly, when the inmate's condition suddenly deteriorated, the Remand Home staff rushed her to the Deoghar Sadar Hospital, where she died during treatment. Reportedly, five inmates of this Remand Home have died since 1st January 2026, raising questions about its security and arrangements.

Death of an activist in an attack by quarry operators' men

(Case No. 777/13/37/2026)

On 12th May 2026, the media reported that a political activist and a Mandal Revenue Officer (MRO), who had gone to inspect a stone quarry, were attacked by a group of people associated with the quarry operators in the Shirgaon locality of Virar East in Palghar district, Maharashtra. The activist died in the attack and the MRO sustained injuries. Reportedly, there were complaints received on a government portal regarding illegal operations at the stone quarry. Therefore, the Commission has issued notices to the Director General of Police, Maharashtra and the District Magistrate, Palghar, calling for a detailed report on the matter. The report is expected to include the status of the investigation and health of the Revenue Officer. Reportedly, the victims were dragged out of their vehicle upon arrival at the site and assaulted with sticks and stones. The perpetrators also vandalised their vehicle.

Arbitrary arrest of five environmental activists

(Case No. 401/36/2/2026)

On 13th May 2026, the media reported that five environmental activists, protesting against tree-felling around the Kasu Brahmananda Reddy (KBR) National Park in Hyderabad, Telangana, were arbitrarily arrested and detained for several hours at a police station. Reportedly, an FIR was filed against them under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita before being released on bail. The sections deal with wrongful restraint, aggravated mischief causing damage to property and criminal intimidation. Therefore, the Commission has issued notices to the Director General of Police, Telangana and the District Magistrate, Hyderabad, calling for a detailed report on the matter. Reportedly, one of the volunteers was detained by the police after the protest and four other activists, who had gone to the police station to enquire about him, were also detained subsequently.

Students falling ill after consuming mid-day meal

(Case No. 1033/4/24/2026)

On 21st May 2026, the media reported that 60 students fell ill after consuming mid-day meal in a government-run school in the Nalanda district, Bihar. Reportedly, the students complained of vomiting, stomach-ache, nausea and loose motion. They were admitted to different nearby hospitals for treatment. The Commission has issued a notice to the District Magistrate, Nalanda, Bihar, calling for a detailed report on the matter. Reportedly, the mid-day meal was served to the students without being tasted by the teachers,

as required. After several students complained of illness, a teacher reportedly consumed the food, fell sick and was rushed to the hospital.

Death due to explosion at a chemical factory

(Case No. 702/7/16/2026)

On 25th May 2026, the media reported that six persons sustained injuries in an explosion at a chemical factory located in an industrial area in the Rewari district of Haryana on 19th May 2026. Reportedly, repair work was underway at the factory's chilling plant when the explosion triggered fire. One of the workers died in the hospital during the course of treatment on 20th May 2026. The skeletal remains of two other workers were recovered from the factory. The Commission has issued notices to the Haryana Chief Secretary and the Superintendent of Police, Rewari, calling for a detailed report on the matter. The report is expected to include the status of the health of the injured and compensation, if any, paid to the next of kin of the victims and injured. Reportedly, the factory manufactures chemical products, industrial inks and aluminium foil for domestic and overseas markets. About 300 employees of the factory were evacuated following multiple explosions.

Death of a patient after a fire in a private hospital

(Case No. 243/35/5/2026)

On 21st May 2026, the media reported a fire incident at a private hospital in the Dehradun district, Uttarakhand on 20th May 2026. Reportedly, 14 patients were rescued and shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment. Among them, a female patient was declared dead while four others were discharged. The Commission has issued notices to the Uttarakhand Chief Secretary and the Senior Superintendent of Police, Dehradun, calling for a detailed report on the matter. Reportedly, the blast occurred due to a short circuit in the air conditioner resulting in the fire.

Death while cleaning sewage tank

(Case No. 1446/30/2/2026)

On 26th May 2026, the media reported the death of a worker and injury to another while cleaning a sewage tank at a residential accommodation in New Ashok Nagar, East Delhi on 24th May 2026. Reportedly, the house owner had engaged a contractor, who deployed the two workers for the work but did not provide them with protective gear, oxygen support, masks or safety kits. The Commission has issued notices to the Delhi Municipal Commissioner and the Police Commissioner, calling for a detailed report on the matter. The report is expected to include the status of the investigation of the case as well as compensation, if any, paid to the NoK of the deceased person and to the injured worker. Reportedly, both workers allegedly fell unconscious within minutes of entering the tank. They were rushed to a hospital, where doctors declared one of them dead on arrival, while the other remains critical.

Death after inhaling toxic gas inside septic tank

(Case No. 471/18/6/2026)

On 27th May 2026, the media reported that six persons died and another was injured after inhaling toxic gases inside an under-construction septic tank at a house in the Gauda Karlakhunta village, Kalahandi district of Odisha. Reportedly, on 26th May 2026, the workers, along with the house owner and his son, suffocated inside the 10-foot-deep tank while rescuing a mason, who accidentally fell into it. They were reportedly removing the centering materials of the tank. The Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary, Government of Odisha and the Superintendent of Police, Kalahandi, calling for a detailed report on the matter. The report is expected to include the status of the investigation, health of the injured worker, as well as compensation, if any, disbursed to the victims.

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 May 2026, an amount of Rs 41.25 lakh was recommended for the victims or their next of kin (NoK) in 06 cases, wherein it was found that public servants had either violated human rights or been negligent in protecting them. The specific details of these cases can be downloaded from NHRC, India website by logging the case number given in the table as follows:

S. No.	Case Number	Nature of complaint	Amount (Rs in lakh)	Authority
1.	4053/4/20/2023-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Bihar
2.	7/16/4/2023-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Mizoram
3.	2655/20/30/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Rajasthan
4.	1876/1/39/2025	Derogatory language by police personnel causing humiliation and mental trauma	0.75	Govt. of Andhra Pradesh
5.	1076/10/1/2022	Unlawful arrest on unverified facts by police	0.50	Govt. of Karnataka
6.	7/18/5/2025	Police inaction in a case of death of a boy and permanent injuries to another caused due to electric trap set for hunting wild animals by some people	2.50	Govt. of Odisha

Payment of relief to the victims

During May 2026, the Commission closed 11 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 67.08 lakh was paid to the victims or their next of kin (NoK) on the recommendations of the Commission. The specific details of these cases can be downloaded from NHRC, India website by logging the case number given in the table below:

S. No.	Case Number	Nature of complaint	Amount (Rs in lakh)	Authority
1.	830/7/15/2021-PCD	Death in police custody	5.00	Govt. of Haryana
2.	10/14/15/2019-PCD	Death in police custody	7.50	Govt. of Manipur
3.	3153/18/14/2020-PCD	Death in police custody	5.00	Govt. of Odisha
4.	1947/22/41/2018-PCD	Death in police custody	5.00	Govt. of Tamil Nadu
5.	1654/25/26/2020-PCD	Death in police custody	5.00	Govt. of West Bengal
6.	216/3/11/2023-JCD	Death in judicial custody	10.00	Govt. of Assam
7.	5800/30/2/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of NCT of Delhi
8.	369/34/5/2020-AD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Jharkhand
9.	19/2/13/2023-ED	Death in police encounter	1.00	Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh
10.	3225/7/6/2022	Death due to electrocution	13.58	Govt. of Haryana
11.	239/19/1/2021	Death in police firing	5.00	Govt. of Punjab

Case studies

In many cases, the Commission found that contrary to the claims of the state authorities, human rights of the victims were violated due to their unlawful action, inaction or omission. Therefore, on a case-to-case basis, the Commission issued notices to them to show cause why monetary relief should not be recommended to be paid to these victims or their next of kin (NoK) and why action should not be taken against the erring/ negligent officials. The merits of the states' approach to responding to show cause notices prompted the Commission to recommend monetary relief to the victims of human rights violations or their NoK. The Commission also received reports of compliance with recommendations by the respective state authorities. Summaries of such cases are as under:

Police inaction in a case of rape and murder

(Case No.4421/4/8/2021)

The matter pertained to the gang rape and murder of a minor girl of Nepali origin at Kundawa Chainpur Bazar in the East Champaran district, Bihar, in 2020. It was referred to the NHRC, India by the National Human Rights Commission, Nepal. The house owner and his supporters allegedly took the victim's parents hostage and forcibly cremated the body.

Based on reports received in response to its notices, the Commission found the allegations to be true and held the SHO (Station House Officer) of Kundawa Chainpur responsible for hiding the evidence and tampering with it. During the enquiry, the staff posted at the police station also stated that the SHO had failed to take any action despite being informed about the crime.

The SHO subsequently surrendered before a court and a chargesheet was filed against him and twelve other arrested co-accused in May 2022. Consequently, the Commission recommended that the Government of Bihar pay Rs 2 lakh as relief to the next of kin (NoK) of the victim, which was complied with. The matter has been closed and the NHRC, Nepal has also been informed.

Death in encounter

(Case No.19/2/13/2022-ED)

The matter pertained to the death of two alleged NSCN-IM insurgents in an encounter with the defence/ police forces in the Tirap district, Khonsa, Arunachal Pradesh in 2022. Based on reports received in response to its notices, the Commission observed that there was no lapse on the part of the defence/ police forces while retaliating in self-defence to the firing by the insurgents.

The crossfire resulted in the death of two individuals, including a civilian and left another civilian injured. Consequently, the Commission recommended that the state government pay Rs 5 lakh to the next of kin (NoK) of the deceased civilian and Rs 50,000 to the injured, which was complied with.

Suicide in prison

(Case No. 216/3/11/2023-JCD)

The matter pertained to the suicide of a 34-year-old under trial prisoner in the District Jail, Kokrajhar, Assam in 2023. Based on the reports received in response to its notices, the Commission found that the victim committed suicide by hanging due to negligence on part of the concerned jail authorities in providing due care and protection to the victim. Consequently, holding the state vicariously liable for the lapse of its officials, the Commission recommended that it pay Rs 5 lakh as relief to the NoK of the victim, which was paid.

Death due to electrocution

(Case No. 3225/7/6/2022)

The matter pertained to the death of a man due to electrocution after he came into contact with a loose wire hanging from the transformer in the Hissar district, Haryana in 2022. Based on the reports received in response to its notices, the Commission noted the negligence of State functionaries and observed that the accident was completely avoidable. Consequently, holding the state vicariously liable for the lapse of its officials, the Commission recommended that it pay Rs 5 lakh as relief to the next of kin (NoK) of the deceased. In response, the state government informed that it paid Rs 8.58 lakh as compensation in compliance with the directions of the Punjab and Haryana High Court on a petition on the matter as well as the Commission's recommendations.

Death in police firing

(Case no. 239/19/1/2021)

The case pertained to the death of a man in police firing at a check post within the jurisdiction of the Jandiala Police Station in Amritsar Rural, Punjab in 2021. The incident occurred when he allegedly attempted to drive through the check post by breaching the barricades. Based on reports received in response to its notices, the Commission observed that the police personnel had deployed excessive force and held the state vicariously liable for the loss of life. Consequently, the Commission recommended that the Government of Punjab pay Rs 5 lakh as relief to the NoK of the deceased, which was complied with.

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. 2615/7/10/2022-AD

From 4th to 8th May 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation regarding death in police custody of a person due to alleged third-degree torture by police in Karnal, Haryana.

Case No. 5665/24/31/2023

From 7th to 6th May 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegations that a man admitted to a drug rehabilitation centre in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh died after being assaulted by the centre's manager and his accomplices.

Case No. 1641/36/2/2025

From 18th to 22nd May 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation of suicide by a first-year intermediate student due to mental harassment at the Sri Chaitanya Junior College hostel in Bachupally, Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh. The complainant alleged that the incident reflected a recurring pattern of students' deaths in private residential junior colleges in Telangana due to excessive academic pressure, mental harassment, lack of counselling and emotional support, poor hostel management and negligence by college authorities, amounting to violations of their right to life.

Case No. 26049/24/57/2022-JCD

From 20th to 23rd May 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation regarding the death of a 28-year-old under trial prisoner in Muzaffarnagar District, Uttar Pradesh.

Case No. 9030/24/30/2025

From 18th to 22nd May 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation that the police of PS Kasna, Gautam Budh Nagar in Uttar Pradesh illegally detained the complainant's husband on the pretext of obtaining some information from him and refused to let his family see him. Later, he was shot in the foot during a staged, fake encounter to falsely implicate him in a registered case.

Case No. 407/22/42/2026

From 25th to 29th May 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation that salt pan workers in the coastal areas of the Villupuram district, particularly Marakkanam, Tamil Nadu are forced to work in hazardous conditions with long hours under extreme heat and high salinity. The complainant stated that these workers lack basic safety equipment such as gloves, footwear or protective eyewear and many suffer from skin infections, eye problems, dehydration and chronic muscle pain.

Case No. 18649/24/30/2024

From 25th to 29th May 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation that some senior citizens living in Pristine Avenue, Gaur City-2 in Greater NOIDA West, Uttar Pradesh were wrongfully arrested by the police of PS Bsirakh u/s 126, 135 and 170 BNS. The complainant claimed that the police did not provide case documents and intimidated them, which caused fear for their potential displacement.

Case No. 3196/30/9/2023

From 25th to 29th May 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegations of overcrowding in Tihar Jail, New Delhi and inaction by the authorities to resolve the issue.

Field visits

Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has designated 15 Special Rapporteurs to monitor human rights conditions across various regions of the country. They conduct visits to shelter homes, prisons, observation homes and similar institutions and write reports for the Commission that detail their observations and suggestions for future action. Additionally, the Commission has appointed 18 Special Monitors tasked with overseeing specific thematic human rights issues and reporting their findings to the Commission.

Special Rapporteur

From 12th to 16th May 2026, Shri Sayeed Ahmed Baba visited Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, where he held a meeting with the Chief Secretary and other senior officers of the state government. To assess the human rights situation on the ground, he also inspected the District Jail in Jully (Itanagar), the Golden Jubilee Anganwadi Centre in Chimpu, the Deepak Nabam Living Home (NGO) and the State Mental Health Hospital in Midupu, Papum Pare.

From 11th to 16th May 2026, Shri Subhash Chandra, visited mining areas across the Raipur, Korba, Jashpur and Sarguja

districts in Chhattisgarh. His visit aimed to assess human rights conditions within key institutions, including Anganwadi centres, shelter homes, facilities for *Divyangjan* and senior citizens, prisons and detention centres, as well as schools and hostels for tribal students. During his tour, he also held meetings with the DGP (Prisons) and various district authorities.

Special Monitor

From 4th to 8th May 2026, Dr. Poonam Malakondaiah visited Kichha and Rudrapur in the Udham Singh Nagar district and Haldwani in the Nainital district of Uttarakhand. During her visit, she assessed the human rights situation in elementary schools and Anganwadi Centres (AWCs), interacting directly with students, parents and teachers. She also held comprehensive review meetings with the Education Officer, Child Development Project Officer (CDPO), Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), District Education Officer (DEO) and District Magistrate. These discussions focused on key issues including literacy levels,

quality of education, school sanitation, the implementation of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme and early childhood education, nutrition and healthcare services at the AWCs.



► NHRC, India Special Monitor, Dr. Poonam Malakondaiah visiting an Anganwadi centre in Ramnagar village, Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand

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 court competitions, to expand its outreach and human rights sensitisation of especially university-level students. Internships are conducted in-person as well as online. The month-long in-person internships in summer and winter 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 National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India organised its two-week Online Short Term Internship Programme (OSTI) for university-level students from 18th to 29th May 2026. 100 students from diverse academic backgrounds attended the internship. They were shortlisted out of 1,417 applicants from 29 states and union territories across the country.

Chairing the valedictory session, Justice V. Ramasubramanian congratulated the interns and urged them to go beyond academic success to become compassionate and responsible human beings. Highlighting the



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian urges interns to go beyond academic success to become compassionate and responsible human beings

importance of sensitivity, social responsibility and human rights, he said that today's generation must focus not only on demanding change and reforms but also on contributing meaningfully to society.

Highlighting India's historical contributions to mathematics, science, philosophy and education, including the work of Aryabhata, Bodhayana and ancient universities like Takshila and Nalanda, the Chairperson urged the interns to reflect on restoring the spirit of love, giving and forgiveness in society. Referring to the evolution of human rights discourse, he underscored that for nearly 2000 years, societies relied on moral injunctions and duties rooted in religious literature. However, when such frameworks failed, the discourse gradually shifted from duties to rights, leading to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and the Protection of Human Rights Act in 1993, under which the NHRC was established. He emphasised the need to maintain a balance between duties and rights and urged interns to strive towards becoming better human beings.

In his valedictory address, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal said that protecting human rights is a collective responsibility. Urging interns to help those in need, including persons involved in begging, people with disabilities and victims of trafficking, he said that compassion and empathy reflect the constitutional values of justice,

equality and fraternity. He also expressed the hope that they would build on the knowledge and sensitisation gained during the OSTI.

Earlier, inaugurating the programme, Justice V. Ramasubramanian highlighted the growing importance of human rights awareness and dialogue in a situation when the world is facing nearly 130 armed conflicts, the highest since World War II. Citing the Global Peace Index 2025, he said that 98 countries are currently experiencing external conflicts and the global economic damage has reached nearly 20 trillion dollars with over 122 million people forcibly displaced world over impacting their human rights. He said that technology has created new opportunities for communication and participation in society, but it has also contributed to unrest and instability in several instances, with protests amplified through social media at times turning them violent and influencing political developments in different countries.

Referring to ethical and philosophical questions surrounding justice and fairness, Justice Ramasubramanian encouraged the interns to remain open to dialogue and differing viewpoints. Stressing the importance of empathy or 'Daya,' which is regarded in Indian scriptures as the greatest dharma, he said that the internship programme aims to help students become more empathetic, fair and sensitive towards society and human rights issues.



► A section of online interns

NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal said that the OSTI, launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, enables students from across the country to participate without facing financial and logistical constraints. He said that the number of internship programmes have been increased from three or four to six in a year, while the intake has risen from 80 to 100 students per batch. This enables the NHRC to reach 600 students in a year through this format. He encouraged them to imbibe constitutional values of equality, justice and fraternity to be sensitive and extend support to those in need as well as develop the ability to reflect before reacting to situations.

Smt. Saindingpuii Chhakchhuak, Joint Secretary, NHRC gave a detailed overview of the internship programme. The interns had 45 curated sessions, with 40 eminent speakers drawn from a pool of senior government officials, academicians, human rights defenders, representatives from international organisations, civil society organisations and experts in law enforcement, mental health, child rights and human rights protection. The interns also had virtual tours of a Police station, Tihar Prison and Asha Kiran Shelter Home to gain practical insights into their functioning. The programme also included interactive learning activities such as book review competitions, declamation and group research project presentations.

Training programmes

NHRC, India supports training programmes and conferences organised by different institutions. These are also addressed by the Chairperson, Members, Secretary General and senior officers of the NHRC, India. On 13th May 2026, the NHRC, India extended support to Climate Trends convened India Heat Summit 2026 on the theme 'Rising Temperatures, Shared Solutions' at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. The Summit aimed to address the human, economic and environmental impacts of heat stress. Delivering a special address, Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General, NHRC emphasised that extreme heat has transcended being a mere seasonal or environmental concern to become a fundamental human rights challenge.

He said that rising temperatures directly threaten the constitutional rights to life, health, safe working conditions, water, housing and dignity. He noted that outdoor workers, low-income households, children, pregnant women and the elderly bear a disproportionate burden of this multi-sectoral crisis, which is actively disrupting public health, livelihoods, agriculture and energy demands.

While highlighting India's policy frameworks, such as the Heat wave Guidelines of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the National Action Plan on Heat-Related Illnesses, the India Cooling Action



► NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal delivering a special address at India Heat Summit 2026

Plan and state-level Heat Action Plans, Shri Lal stressed that the next critical step is translating these guidelines into ground-level protection. He said that the NHRC, India has consistently urged vulnerable states to strengthen preparedness, anchoring climate resilience firmly in justice, inclusion, accountability and human dignity.



A section of packed audience

To mitigate the crisis, Shri Lal highlighted key priority areas, including nature-based urban planning, equitable access to cooling and water, heat-responsive labour measures for informal workers, robust public health surveillance and affordable, energy-efficient cooling solutions to combat energy poverty.

He noted that extreme heat is a defining test of institutional values. By placing human dignity at the centre of climate action, the country can successfully affirm human rights as its core guiding value. On the occasion, a crucial report titled 'Nighttime Thermal Stress in Low & Middle-Income Housing in India' was also released.

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. They are briefed by senior officers. A total of 207 students and 9 faculties of the following institutions visited the Commission in May 2026:



- A group of 33 students with 3 faculties from the Bimal Chandra College of Law, Kandi, Murshidabad, West Bengal.



- A group of 28 students and 2 faculty members from the Delhi Metropolitan Education, Law School, NOIDA, Uttar Pradesh.



- A group of 29 students and 4 faculty members from Dr Vishwanath Karad MIT World Peace University, Pune, Maharashtra.



- A group of 59 students and 4 faculty members from the Saveetha School of Law, Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

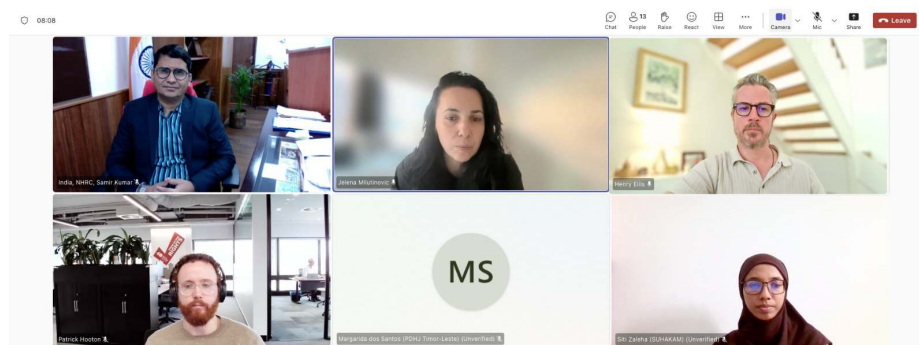
NHRC, India in the International arena

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India continues to actively engage with a range of international programmes and initiatives to promote the exchange of ideas and best practices on diverse aspects of human rights. As part of these efforts, institutional delegations from different countries regularly visit the Commission and interact with its Chairperson, Members and senior officers to gain insights into its mandate, functioning and initiatives for the promotion and protection of human rights.

The Commission's Chairperson, Members and senior officers also participate in various international forums and engagements to share the Commission's experiences and achievements, strengthen cooperation with other National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and deliberate on emerging human rights challenges in an increasingly fast-evolving global landscape.

Online engagements

- On 6th May, 2026, Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary and Ms. Lakshmi, Junior Research Consultant, NHRC, India attended the first meeting of the APF Working Group on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights.



- On 13th May, 2026 Shri Samir Kumar and Smt. Saindingpuii Chhakchhuak, Joint Secretaries; Smt. Vijay Lakshmi Vihan, Presenting Officer, Shri Raghendra Singh and Ms. Pratyush Rathore, Junior Research Consultants, NHRC, India attended the meeting with the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law.
- On 13th May, 2026 Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary and Ms. Prerna Hasija, Junior Research Consultant, NHRC, India attended the monthly meeting of the GANHRI Business and Human Rights Working Group.

News from the State Human Rights Commissions

Given the ever-expanding dimensions of human life and the evolving challenges associated with them, the promotion and protection of human rights remain a continuous and dynamic process. In India, democratically elected governments remain committed to ensuring the welfare of the people and safeguarding their rights through an extensive executive framework. This commitment is further reinforced by robust democratic institutions, including the legislature and the judiciary, along with a vibrant and vigilant media. The National Human Rights Commission and the State Human Rights Commissions (SHRCs) play a vital role in the protection and promotion of human rights across the country. In addition, several national commissions, supported by corresponding state-level bodies, work at the regional level to safeguard the rights and welfare of different sections of society. Together, these institutions function as important watchdogs, ensuring accountability, justice and inclusive welfare measures. This column seeks to spotlight the significant and noteworthy initiatives undertaken by various SHRCs in advancing the cause of human rights and strengthening the culture of dignity, justice and equality in society.

Haryana State Human Rights Commission

During May 2026, the Haryana State Human Rights Commission (HSHRC), led by Chairperson Justice Lalit Batra, initiated several sweeping actions to promote and protect human rights. The Commission addressed institutional neglect in the Nuh district, where primary schools (specifically Kubda Bas and Kalu Bas) were found operating out of cattle sheds and open fields, forcing children to study near animal waste.

Furthermore, citing the *NCRB Crime Report 2024*, the HSHRC demanded immediate action plans from police and child protection units regarding an alarming surge in POCSO offences, murder and human trafficking, which has given Haryana the highest crime rate against children in the nation. Similarly, analysing the *NCRB Prison Statistics India-2024*, the Commission demanded a three-year data audit from the Home and Prison departments to address rising custodial suicides, violent prison clashes and an absence of mental health counselling.



► HSHRC Chairperson, Justice Lalit Batra and senior officers holding consultative meeting on prison reforms

In response to a public grievance regarding an impoverished family forced to transport a deceased woman on a motorised cart in Faridabad, the Commission issued a state-wide mandate requiring free hearse vans for poor families at all district hospitals. The HSHRC ordered a time-bound enquiry into government hospitals in the Jhajjar and Bahadurgarh districts over an alleged racket involving excessive patient referrals to private clinics despite having specialised public doctors on site.

Madhya Pradesh State Human Rights Commission

The Chairperson of the Madhya Pradesh State Human Rights Commission (MPSHRC), Dr. Awadhesh Pratap Singh visited the Vidisha district and reviewed measures relating to the protection of human rights and the expeditious redressal of public grievances. As part of the administrative review, he assessed the district's drinking water supply and summer water management arrangements, including the deployment of water tankers, the operational status of tube wells and hand pumps and the progress of infrastructure

projects being implemented under the AMRUT 2.0 scheme. He also examined the district's overall administrative arrangements, the Commission's local functioning and the mechanisms in place for conducting public hearings.

In May 2026, monetary relief of over Rs 1 crore was paid to the legal heir of deceased persons in 14 cases on the recommendations of the MPSHRC. These included the drowning incidents of children and other individuals in ponds, under-construction reservoirs, wells and farm drains; a house fire resulting in a death and property damage; fatalities and injuries caused by attacks by tigers, wild bears, wild boars and a leopard; the death of a labourer trapped in a mixer machine; the electrocution death of a tent-erection worker; deaths due to venomous snake bites and a fatal lightning strike on a school ground.

The intervention of the MPSHRC also ensured the disbursement of financial assistance and compensation of more than Rs 5 lakh in several public grievance cases concerning administrative delays in long-pending retirement benefits, pending salaries of health care takers and police negligence.



► MPSHRC Chairperson, Dr. Awadhesh Pratap Singh holding review meeting with officers in the Vidhisha district

News in brief

- On 2nd May 2026, NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani addressed as the Chief Guest for Narada Jayanti, organised by Samachara Bharati Cultural Association, Hyderabad, Telangana. She emphasised that the National Human Rights Commission values the contribution of media in exposing human rights violations and facilitating *suo motu* cognizance of such incidents resulting in justice to the victims. She said that media has a

crucial responsibility in a democratic society to create transparency, accountability and public awareness.

The Member said that only responsible media can act as a bridge between the people and institutions, contributing significantly to social consciousness by addressing important issues like injustice, corruption, environmental concerns and human rights violations. The programme,

attended by many senior journalists, eminent media personalities and distinguished cartoonists, served as a platform to recognise their invaluable contribution in promoting democratic values, social responsibility, human dignity and bringing the grievances of vulnerable sections of society to public attention.

- On 6th May 2026 NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressed participants of the

INSA–CBC Administrative Training Programme for Science Administrators on the theme 'Strategic Decision Making.' Highlighting the growing importance of science, technology and innovation in India's journey towards becoming a developed and innovation-driven nation, he underlined that while science advances knowledge, it is good governance and strong institutions that sustain progress through effective and strategic decision-making. He stressed that science administrators must move beyond the search for certainty and develop the ability to take informed decisions amid complexity and imperfect information.

Emphasising that strategic decisions shape long-term national outcomes, Shri Lal said that clarity, accountability, transparency, responsiveness and intellectual integrity are essential pillars of governance. He also spoke about balancing autonomy with accountability, the importance of timely decision-making and the need for collaboration over institutional silos. Referring to India's successes such as the Green Revolution, Space Research and COVID-19 management, he noted that coordinated efforts and people-centric approaches are key to achieving national priorities. He urged science administrators to lead



with vision, discipline, empathy, responsibility and integrity, stating that the decisions taken today will shape India's future in the years to come.

- On 11th May 2026, NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani delivered a lecture on human rights at Sri Vivekananda Junior College, Girls Campus, Ananthapuram, Andhra Pradesh. She said that it is important for young individuals to be aware of their rights, which among others, include the right to education, safety, equality, dignity, freedom of expression, cyber safety, privacy rights and protection from online exploitation.

She said that education and awareness give confidence and courage to young people to stand against exploitation and injustice. She underscored that empowered and educated youth are the backbone of a strong family, progressive society and developed nation. She said that a society that respects its youth is a truly developed society.

- On 12th May 2026, NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani addressed as the Chief Guest the International Nurses Day Programme 2026 at the Government General Hospital and Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences in Balaga, Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh. She highlighted the role of nurses in protecting and promoting human rights. She said that nurses are not only healthcare providers but also guardians of dignity, compassion, commitment, empathy, equality and selfless service.



She noted that nurses are custodians of fundamental human rights, which include the right to health, care and respectful treatment. She appreciated the dedicated services rendered by nurses, especially in challenging situations and highlighted their contribution to building a humane and healthy society.

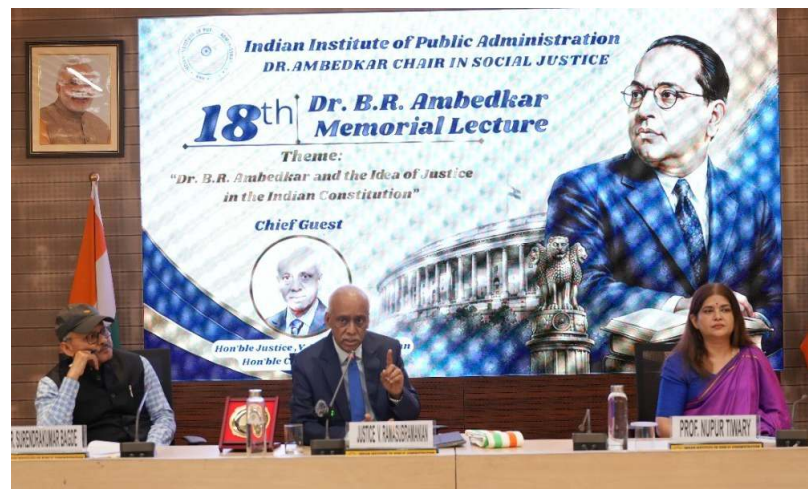
- On 14th May 2026, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal participated in a dialogue on 'Towards Zero Fatalities in Sanitation Work' organised by the Urban Management Centre in New Delhi. Addressing the gathering, Shri Lal emphasised that sanitation work is not merely an urban management issue but a matter of human dignity, equality, occupational safety and constitutional rights. He said that every sewer or septic tank death is preventable and represents a grave violation of the right to life and dignity.



Highlighting the continued risks faced by sanitation workers, particularly from marginalised communities, he stressed the need for complete mechanisation of sanitation work through technologies such as AI-enabled monitoring, robotics, GIS mapping, gas detection systems and mechanised sewer cleaning and brought attention to the NHRC Advisory in this regard. Referring to the Supreme Court judgment in *Dr. Baram Singh vs. Union of India & Others*, he underlined the importance of implementing the 14-point guidelines in letter and spirit.

He also referred to initiatives such as the NAMASTE Scheme, Swachh Bharat Mission, Jal Jeevan Mission, AMRUT, Smart Cities Mission and Odisha's GARIMA initiative as important steps towards dignity-centred sanitation governance. Reaffirming the NHRC's commitment to occupational safety, rehabilitation and strict enforcement of legal protections, he said that a truly developed India would be one where no individual is forced to risk life for sanitation work and every sanitation worker receives dignity, safety and respect. On the occasion, the eminent filmmaker, Shri M. K. Raina was also felicitated for his film 'Samman,' which highlights the dignity and lived realities of sanitation workers.

- On 15th May 2026, NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian addressed as Chief Guest the 18th Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Memorial Lecture at the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi. An article based on his address has been carried in the earlier pages of the Newsletter.



- On 19th May 2026, Shri Joginder Singh completed his tenure as Registrar (Law) at the NHRC, India and will be joining his parent cadre in Madhya Pradesh. During a farewell ceremony held in his honour, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal commended his discipline, exceptional professionalism and prompt execution of all responsibilities entrusted to him. Shri Lal also acknowledged and appreciated Shri Singh's dedicated commitment to streamlining and strengthening the functioning of the Commission's Law Division. Shri Singh had joined the Commission on deputation from the Madhya Pradesh Higher Judicial Service on 1st July 2024.
- On 20th May 2026, NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani addressed as Chief Guest the Sadhana Residential Camp Closing Ceremony, organised by the Gnana Saraswathi Foundation, Rangareddy, Telengana. She said that sports promote discipline, equality, teamwork and respect for fellow human beings. Sports empower youth, encourage healthy lifestyles and strengthen national integration.

The Member mentioned that every individual must have an equal opportunity to participate in sports without discrimination based on gender, caste, religion or economic background. She emphasised the need to protect the rights and dignity of athletes and encourage human rights values such as fairness, inclusion and equal opportunity in sporting institutions.

She stressed the need to provide safe and inclusive sporting environments to women, children and differently-abled sportspersons. The Member reiterated that sports could play a major role in preventing violence, drug abuse and social unrest among youth by channelising their energy and time into productive things.



- On 30th and 31st May 2026, NHRC, India Presenting Officer, Smt. Neeru Kamboj attended as a panellist the National Consultation of Stakeholders on 'Enhancing Access to Justice for Women Victims of Domestic Violence by Rethinking Institutional Structures,' organised by National Law University, Odisha.



Forthcoming events

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| From 1st June 2026 | NHRC, India will begin its month-long in-person Summer Internship Programme for postgraduate-level students at its premises in New Delhi. |
| 3rd June 2026 | NHRC, India will organise its Core Group Meeting on 'Heat waves and its mitigation in the urban areas' in hybrid mode at its premises. |
| 9th June 2026 | NHRC, India will organise an Open House Discussion on 'Safeguarding Human Rights against Digital Arrest Scams' in hybrid mode at its premises. |

Complaints in May 2026

Number of fresh complaints received	3,680
Number of cases disposed of including old cases	3,958
Number of cases under consideration of the Commission	41,088

Human rights and NHRC in news



सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः

National Human Rights Commission

Important telephone numbers of the NHRC for filing complaints

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

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

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

Focal point for Human Rights Defenders

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