

Volume 32 | Number 3 | March, 2025



HUMAN RIGHTS

Newsletter

A monthly publication of the National Human Rights Commission, India



Consultation

Core group on children
Core group on disabilities
Core group on women

Open house

'Ensuring privacy and human rights in the digital era'

Report

National conference on combating human trafficking in the digital era

HUMAN RIGHTS

Newsletter

Volume 32 | Number 03 | March, 2025

National Human Rights Commission

Chairperson

Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian

Members

Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi

Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani

Shri Priyank Kanoongo

Secretary General

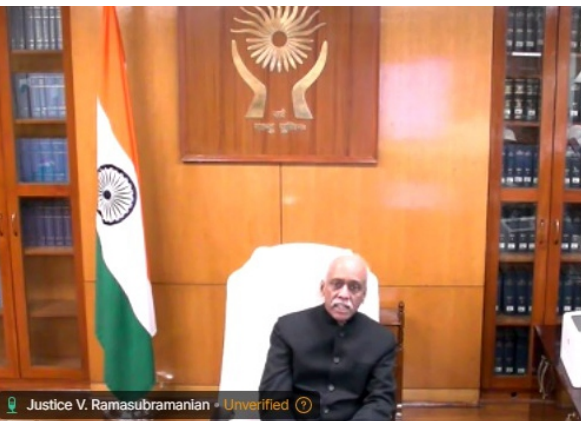
Shri Bharat Lal

Editor

Shri Jaimini Kumar Srivastava

Dy. Director (M&C), NHRC

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.



- ▶ NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V Ramasubramanian addressing online the National Colloquium on 'Redefining IP & Privacy in an Accelerating Digital Landscape at DSNLU, Vishakapatnam, Andhra Pradesh

www.nhrc.nic.in

[@India_NHRC](https://twitter.com/India_NHRC)

Contents

Monthly recap

- 3 From the desk of the Secretary General & Chief Executive

Consultation

- 4 The meeting of the Core group on children
- 6 The meeting of the Core group on disabilities
- 8 The meeting of the Core group on women
- 11 Open house discussion on 'Ensuring privacy and human rights in the digital era'

Report

- 13 National conference on combating human trafficking in the digital era

Important interventions

- 15 *Suo motu* cognisance
- 16 Recommendations for relief
- 17 Payment of relief to the victims
- 19 Case studies
- 20 Spot enquiry

Field visits

- 20 Visits by NHRC, India Member
- 20 Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors



- ▶ NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal with the students of IIM Bodh Gaya after delivering the keynote address at the annual leadership meet 'Netritva'

Capacity building

- 22 Academy for Prison and Correctional Administration officers
- 22 Indian Forest Service officers
- 23 Online short term internship
- 24 Workshops
- 25 Exposure visits

Awards

- 26 NHRC short film competition- 2024
- 27 NHRC in the International arena
- 28 News from State Human Rights Commissions
- 30 News in brief
- 31 Forthcoming events
- 32 Complaints in February, 2025

From the desk of the Secretary General & Chief Executive

February, 2025 witnessed a series of activities undertaken by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India. The NHRC, India organised three meetings of its core groups on children, disabilities and women, one 'Open House Discussion' on ensuring privacy and human rights in the digital era, besides supporting a national conference on combating human trafficking in the digital era. This edition of the Newsletter presents detailed reports on these consultations giving an insight into the key issues and potential solutions discussed.

Additionally, the NHRC organised a specialised session for the Academy for Prison and Correctional Administration (APCA) officers on 12th February, 2025 to facilitate their capacity building on the importance of human rights in the prison system. The session emphasised that the administration of justice must be guided by principles of fairness, compassion, and respect for human dignity. Jail officials are responsible for ensuring humane living conditions and the provision of medical care and legal representation, with a focus on rehabilitation rather than punishment. On 14th February, 2025 the Commission hosted Indian Forest Service officers in a session aimed at reinforcing the importance of human rights within environmental and forest administration.

In the realm of education and awareness, the NHRC also conducted a two-week online internship for 70 university students from across the country, providing them with a comprehensive understanding of diverse human rights issues through interactive sessions and expert-led discussions. These students were provided with a deeper understanding of human rights frameworks through sessions led by NHRC officers, domain experts, and civil society representatives, coupled with virtual tours of Tihar Jail and Asha Kiran Shelter Home. Such initiatives are crucial in empowering the younger generation, ensuring they understand their responsibility to advance India's human rights agenda.

The Commission also declared the results of the winning short films of its 10th edition of short film competition on human rights after a three-tier jury process of the selection among 243 valid entries out of a record 303 short films received. Over the years, this flagship competition has gained a lot of traction in different parts of the country with wonderful short films and documentaries being prepared focusing on various aspects of human rights with varied perspectives. The Commission deeply values all such contributions that adopt a citizen-centric approach to promoting and protecting human rights, even as the selection of winners remains a challenging task. The year-wise awarded films are uploaded on the website of the Commission, open for screening to build awareness about human rights and sensibilities. This edition carries a report on the prize-winning films in 2024 for which the award ceremony will be organised some time later.

I had the privilege of addressing young minds during talks at IIM Bodh Gaya and St. Stephen's College, Delhi. Drawing inspiration from historical figures such as Lord Buddha, Ashoka, Gandhi, and Mandela, transformative ideas require action, and it is the responsi-

bility of today's youth to generate and act on these ideas for the betterment of society. Human rights are not mere legal constructs but core human values that define India's 5,000-year-old civilisation.

India's legacy as a land of acceptance, not merely tolerance, is woven into the very fabric of its civilisation, shaped by its historical embrace of diversity and compassion. The nation has offered refuge to those in need, from Polish children during World War II to Tibetan exiles, and displaced populations from East Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and several African nations. This tradition of compassion is not just a cultural trait but a core value that has influenced India's approach to human rights.

In today's India, with a population of 1.44 billion, the role of the younger generation in shaping the future is more critical than ever. The government's focus on fulfilling socio-economic and cultural rights has accelerated, and significant strides are being made in improving the quality of life for citizens.

India's Constitution guarantees fundamental rights that protect liberty, equality, justice, and dignity, with Article 32 allowing citizens to seek justice directly from the Supreme Court. Institutions like the NHRC play a vital role in ensuring that these rights are not just ideals but tangible realities, actively intervening on issues such as workplace safety and the rights of marginalised communities.

India's commitment to upholding the rights of its citizens—whether children, marginalised communities, prisoners, or people with disabilities—is evident in the continuous work of institutions like the NHRC. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 has played a key role in protecting the rights of disabled individuals, though challenges remain, especially in areas such as healthcare and insurance.

As India moves forward, it is essential to remember that human rights are not just legal frameworks but a reflection of the nation's core values. The ongoing efforts to improve the socio-economic and cultural rights of all citizens, especially the most vulnerable, ensure that India remains on track to fulfil its age-old tradition of ensuring dignity, equality, and justice for all. The responsibility now lies with the younger generation to carry this legacy forward, ensuring that no one is left behind in the pursuit of a just and inclusive society.

It is hoped that this edition of the Newsletter provides insightful reading, featuring special reports and regular updates on various aspects of the Commission's activities.



[Bharat Lal]

Secretary General &
Chief Executive Officer

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has constituted several core groups on various thematic issues related to human rights to hold discussions with the domain experts, academicians and senior government functionaries representing concerned ministries. Besides these core group meetings, the Commission also organises open house discussions with different stakeholders on various issues of human rights. The Commission, from time to time, also holds national seminars to address the obstacles in existing framework and suggests possible solutions. In February, 2025, the Commission organised three such consultations.

The meeting of the Core Group on Children

On 4th February, 2025, the Commission organised a hybrid meeting of its core group on children focused on the theme 'Human rights of children in conflict with law' at its premises. Chairing the meeting, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian, Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India said that it is necessary to have authentic and verified data on the children in conflict with the law to have a clear understanding of their problems and make suggestions to address them. Member, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, senior officers and expert speakers working in the field were present.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V Ramasubramanian chairing the meeting

Justice Ramasubramanian said that going by the discussions on the subject, two major concerns have emerged, including how to collect data and how to authenticate the data already available on the children in conflict with law. Therefore, he concurred with the suggestion to constitute a working group of experts to check and authenticate the available data related to the children in conflict with the law, particularly their age and numbers and not necessarily their identities in coordination and consultation with the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) and different High Courts.

The NHRC, India Chairperson also asked the experts working in the field of Juvenile Justice Care to segregate their suggestions so that the NHRC, India within the scope of its powers recommend the state authorities necessary measures to bring improvements in the area of Juvenile Justice System. He also concurred with the suggestion to organise State-wise meetings of the Juvenile Justice Boards, District Legal Services Authority, State Legal Services Authority and the NHRC to find a way forward in terms of their counselling, rehabilitation and reintegration into families.

Referring to the report of a working group called 'the Commission for the Application of Alternative Measures' under the auspices of UNICEF titled 'Rights of Children in Conflict with the Law 2007', the NHRC Chairperson expressed the hope that the NHRC core group could develop solutions for Juvenile Justice Care on those lines which included recommendations for developing diversion programmes;

- i.) Juvenile offenders must admit to the crime;
- ii.) Juvenile offenders should not be placed in custody to participate in diversion programmes;
- iii.) Juvenile offenders are entitled to a court procedure if they or their guardians disagree with the diversion measures;

iv.) Juvenile offenders may withdraw from the diversion process at any time and opt for the formal court procedure.

The diversion programme includes seven components: victim-offender mediation, admonition, local community corrections councils, joint family meetings, circle trials, juvenile courts, and community service.

The UNICEF working group report argues that while crimes are often seen as offences against the state, they should also be viewed from the victim's perspective, seeking reconciliation. It suggests that allowing juveniles to make amends, the society can help them reintegrate faster, without a criminal record, which would help them avoid impediments in their future employment or social inclusion.



► NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressing the participants

Before this, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal said that the Commission is committed to ensuring the protection and promotion of child rights. In this context, it has been organising various consultations on the different thematic issues of the human rights of children and issuing advisories from time to time. According to him, one of the major reasons for organising the discussion on the human rights of children in conflict with the law, was to identify the challenges in order to suggest measures for improvement in the Juvenile Justice System with a specific focus on juveniles in adult prisons, juveniles in correctional homes and measures for rehabilitation of juveniles in conflict with the law. He stressed that juveniles must be viewed as victims of circumstances rather than mere offenders, calling for a focus on rehabilitation measures that would help reintegrate them into society, offering them opportunities for a better future.

NHRC, India Director, Lt. Col Virender Singh gave an overview of the meeting and the identified three critical areas of discussion, significant to the children in conflict with law. Several experts and senior officers like Shri Rajeev Kumar Sharma, Director General, BPR&D; Ms. Isha Pandey, DIG, BPR&D; Shri Balkrishan Goel, NHRC Special Monitor on Children; Shri Amod K. Kanth,

Founder and Mentor, Prayas Juvenile Aid Centre (JAC) Society; Prof. Vijay Raghavan, Tata Institute of Social Sciences; Shri Sourabh Ghosh, CRY; Ms Swagata Raha, Legal Researcher, & Head Restorative Practices Enfold India; Adv. Anant Kumar Asthana, Child Rights Lawyer; Ms Deepshikha, Prayas Juvenile Aid Centre (JAC) Society, among others, gave their suggestions and inputs. NHRC DG (I), Shri Ram Prasad Meena and Registrar (Law), Shri Joginder Singh also attended the meeting.

Some of the other suggestions emanated from the discussions were as follows;

- Make information on proceedings involving Children in Conflict with the Law available on a portal, without revealing their identities;
- Establish a cadre of child protection officials in all States;
- Identify and delineate responsibilities within the child protection workforce, and fill vacant positions to strengthen the child care mechanism;
- Conduct a social audit of Child Care Institutions, ensuring adequate manpower, including counsellors;
- Encourage institutional contributions to engage children in useful activities;
- Strengthen the Legal Aid Mechanism for Children in Conflict with Law;
- Increase 'Community Service' as a correctional measure for child offenders;
- Revamp rehabilitation and social reintegration programmes for Children in Conflict with Law;



► A section of participants

- Introduce joint training for stakeholders involved in child welfare, focusing on the behavioural aspects of child offenders;

- Collate and publicise best practices for the welfare of child offenders across the country;
- Increase funding and staff recruitment for Child Care Institutions;
- Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to streamline the process.

The Commission will further deliberate upon these suggestions and gather more inputs to finalise its recommendations to protect the human rights of children in conflict with law, in the country.

The meeting of the Core group on disabilities

On 17th February, 2025, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India organised a hybrid meeting of its core group on disability at its premises in New Delhi. The discussions focused on 'Recognising progressive disabilities- Adopting a holistic approach to disability rights'. It was chaired by the NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian in the presence of Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi; Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal; Shri Rajesh Aggrawal, Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disability & Chief Commis-

sioner for Persons with Disabilities; other senior officers from the government and NHRC, domain experts, civil society and medical professionals.

Justice Ramasubramanian noted that it took 30 years for the world to adopt a human rights approach to disability rights. Recalling the evolution of laws and policies related to seeking the welfare of disabled persons in the world, he said that parallel to the international developments, crystallisation of the framework in India include the 1987 Mental Healthcare Act, the 1995 Persons with Disabilities Act, and the 2016 Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act.

However, he said that there may be a scope for improvement in disability-related laws, policies and their implementation. For this, he said that all the stakeholders needed to prioritise their suggestions for the improvement in disability-related laws,



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V Ramasubramanian flanked by Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, chairing the meeting

policies and their implementation, requiring the intervention of Parliament, NHRC and judiciary. Accordingly, these suggestions need to be segregated into three categories to evolve a clear action plan.



► NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi addressing the meeting

NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi said that there is a need to strategise and find ways to improve the lives of persons with disabilities. Therefore, all the stakeholders, including the Government, need to come together and give them moral support to live with dignity. The issue of their medical expenses needs to be taken into consideration.

NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal while setting the agenda for discussions, said that the Commission engages with many stakeholders including government officials, domain experts, researchers, academicians, and people working on the ground. He gave an overview of the three technical sessions, 'Defining and classifying progressive disabilities', 'Legal & policy framework for addressing disabilities' and 'Promoting inclusive & equitable support services'.



► NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressing the participants

Shri Rajesh Aggarwal, Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Union Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment said that the 2011 Census reports 2.2% of India's population as having disabilities. However, at times stigma leads to under-reporting, especially among the elderly, as disabilities in old age are often considered normal. While polio cases are decreasing due to institutional deliveries and improved care, disabilities from accidents and autism are rising, resulting in changes in the nature of disability orders. He said that there is a 4% reservation for jobs in government and public sector units and 5% reservation in education for persons with disabilities (PwDs). He said that digital accessibility to them is relatively better but physical accessibility in buildings and transport needs to be improved. Presently, more than 70% of disability certificates in the country are permanent. He said that though toilet facilities for PwDs have improved, more has to be done in order to ensure accessibility to PwDs.

The participants included Dr Sunita Mondal, Additional Director General, Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Rupali Roy, Assistant Director General, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Shri Rajive Raturi, Consultant, Ms. Shivani Jadhav Representative, National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP), Dr Satendra Singh, Director-Professor of Physiology, University College of Medical Sciences & GTB Hospital, Ms Purva G. Mittal, Asst. Prof, University of Delhi, Shri Akhil S. Paul, Director, Sense International (India), Dr Vaibhav Bhandari, Founder, Swavlamban Foundation, Shri Vikas Trivedi, Member Secretary Rehabilitation Council of India, New Delhi, NHRC DG(I), Shri R Prasad Meena,



► Shri Rajesh Aggarwal, Secretary, Department of EPwD, Union Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment participating in the discussions

Registrar (Law), Shri Joginder Singh, Director, Lt Col. Virender Singh among others.

Some of the suggestions emanated from the discussions included:

- Encourage collaborative efforts with the private sector to provide quality employment for PwDs;
- Need to revisit the 40% mark for benchmark disabilities, as this holds back many beneficiaries from being able to access quality healthcare services and even a disability certificate;
- Create adequate healthcare and rehabilitation provisions, particularly for those requiring high support needs, consequently, alleviating the burden of caregivers;
- Establish a clear and comprehensive definition of progressive disabilities and promote the development and accessibility of assistive technologies;

- Ensure more inclusive and comprehensive health insurance regimes and schemes, along with increased attention to financial accessibility;
- Need for prenatal and post-natal diagnosis for early intervention;
- Reduce the cost of medical expenses;
- Enhance local production of medicines to make them more cost-effective;
- Awareness and training for doctors, and community-based workers, including ASHA workers, needs to be increased for proper care of PwDs;
- Ensure the availability of AI products to assist persons with disabilities;
- Better healthcare policies, treatments, screenings, financial aid, psychological support;
- Create awareness against workplace discrimination;

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

Meeting of the Core group on women

On 19th February, 2025, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India organised a hybrid meeting of its core group on women at its premises in New Delhi. The discussions focused on the theme 'Empowering Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs): Securing the right to work with dignity'. The NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian chaired the meeting in the presence of Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, senior officers, experts, and Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs).

Justice Ramasubramanian highlighted the remarkable contributions made by the ASHAs over the past 20 years towards improvements in the healthcare sector in the country. He emphasised that the significant impact of ASHAs has

led to notable progress in reducing neonatal and infant mortality rates. They showed that individuals without formal education can still be trained to become skilled workers. He also noted that while there are many educated people today, the number of skilled workers is decreasing. This gap is being addressed by the ASHA scheme. However, he pointed out that ASHAs' remuneration is not in proportion to their contribution to society. The irony



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V Ramasubramanian chairing the meeting

is that those who contribute the most often receive the least; those who care for the marginalised end up being marginalised themselves.

Justice Ramasubramanian said that public health and fixing of minimum wages is a subject coming under the State. Population control and family planning fall under the Concurrent list. Hence, there should be a collaborative effort between the Centre and State Governments to address the issues concerning ASHA workers' welfare. He also called for a concrete policy and actionable measures for improving the working conditions and living standards of ASHAs.

NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi said that the ASHAs are the first responders to any distress related to pregnant women and children in the village areas before consultation with any doctors materialises. Therefore, their role as activists should be better recognised with adequate incentives, compensation, and security to ensure their right to life and dignity.

Before this, giving an overview of the discussions, the NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal highlighted the theme of the three technical sessions.



► NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi participating in the discussions

These included: 'The evolving nature of challenges faced by ASHA', 'Role of the government in protecting and promoting the rights of ASHAs', and 'Way forward: Ensuring the right to work with dignity for ASHAs.' He said that the Government has come up with various schemes for women's empowerment and given the contribution of ASHAs in primary healthcare, their issues such as meagre wages, excessive workload, and insufficient resources also need to be addressed. He highlighted their role during COVID-19, which was also acknowledged by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The speakers included Ms Pallavi Agarwal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women & Child Development, Shri Saurabh Jain, Joint Secretary, MoHFW, Dr Shweta Khandelwal, Senior Advisor Jhpiego India, Ms Ruth Manorama, President, National Alliance of Women (NAWO), Dr Sabiha Hussain, Professor and Director, Sarojini Naidu Center for Women's Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, Ms. Vaishali Barua, National Coordinator, UN Women India, Ms Dipa Sinha, Visiting Professor, Azim Premji University, Ms Surekha Secretary, ASHA Workers' and Facilitators' Federation of India (AWFFI), Ms Sunita, ASHA Worker, Haryana, NHRC, India DG (I), Shri R Prasad Meena, Registrar (Law), Joginder Singh, Director, Lt Col Virender Singh among others.

Some of the suggestions that emanated from the discussion included;

- Need for granting ASHAs formal worker status with fixed monthly salaries, pensions, and paid leave;
- Standardise wages across states, ensuring that honorariums align with minimum wage regulations;
- Replace incentive-based payment structure with a fixed salary plus performance-based benefits;



► NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressing the participants

- Provide health insurance, maternity benefits, and accident coverage to ASHAs;
- Ensure free personal protective equipment (PPE), transport allowances, and access to clean rest areas during field visits;
- Enforce strict policies against harassment and violence, ensuring safe working conditions for ASHAs in all regions;
- Utilise Rs 49,269 crore (As of 2022) of unspent funds from the Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Cess Act for childcare, elderly care, and ASHA welfare;
- Allocate Rs 70,051 crore health sector grants towards strengthening early childhood care and healthcare workers' training;
- Establish state-funded creches at primary health centres and community centres to support ASHAs who are also primary caregivers at home;

- Develop structured career pathways for ASHAs to transition into higher-paying healthcare roles, such as nursing, midwifery, and public health administration;
- Provide regular skill enhancement training in disease surveillance, mental health counselling, and emergency medical response;
- Introduce bridge courses in collaboration with medical colleges and universities to certify ASHAs for formal healthcare roles;
- Incentivise private sector investments in childcare and elderly care infrastructure, with tax benefits for employers offering workplace childcare solutions;
- Promote cooperative models, like the SEWA model, to ensure ASHAs have decision-making power over wages and working conditions; and
- Foster public-private partnerships to expand affordable community-based care services, creating decent job opportunities for ASHAs.



► An ASHA, Ms. Sunita sharing her experiences in the meeting

Open house discussion on 'Ensuring privacy and human rights in the digital era'



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V Ramasubramanian chairing the open house

On 18th February, 2025, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India organised an open house discussion in hybrid mode on 'Ensuring privacy and human rights in the digital era: A focus on corporate digital responsibility' at its premises in New Delhi. It was chaired by the Chairperson, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian in the presence of Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, senior officers, domain experts, industry representatives among others.

Justice Ramasubramanian emphasised that safeguarding privacy as a human right in the digital world is necessary. The technological advancements should align with fundamental human rights and privacy protections. The responsibility must begin with the individual users. He highlighted that maintaining digital hygiene is crucial. He also pointed out the significant decline in value systems, cautioning that one must bear the consequences of this shift.



► NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi participating in the discussions

He reaffirmed the Commission's commitment to fostering inclusive discussions on digital rights and corporate accountability for developing a robust regulatory framework that balances innovation, security, and individual privacy.

NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi raised concerns regarding the lack of digital literacy, which makes many people dependent on others, standing a risk of being duped. He called for simplifying the processes of digital technology to maximise its safe usage by the common people in the country.

Before this, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, while setting the agenda for the discussion, gave an overview of its three sub-themes: 'Establishing a proper regulatory framework and compliance mechanism', 'Building a culture of data privacy' and 'Identifying threats and best practices'. Citing data from 2023, he mentioned that over 20% of global data is generated in India, whereas it has only about 3% of the storage capacity, requiring a major role for Indian corporate houses.

He also said that collection, storage and processing of personal data 'brings' huge responsibility on entities to keep this data as a 'trustee'. Any breach of trust in this trusteeship, is unacceptable. He stressed that protecting people's privacy online is a collective responsibility requiring joint efforts from individuals, private sectors, which plays a major role, and the government and its agencies. Shri Lal said that while the Digital Personal



► NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressing the participants in the open house

Data Protection Act, 2023, and other regulations are in place, the challenges in the digital age are increasing. The draft rules have been notified and the consultation process is going on to fine tune them.

The meeting extensively discussed the intensity of the problem that arises due to misuse of data and data breaches. Further, several key provisions of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 were also discussed.

The participants raised concerns over the extensive control exerted by the global technology companies on user data, which complicates regulatory enforcement. Law enforcement agencies often face challenges in accessing critical data due to data storage in offshore centres. Additionally, the increasing reliance on digital platforms makes maintaining individual privacy more challenging.

Discussions also highlighted the gaps in the draft data protection rules, including the requirement to report data breaches within 72 hours and the accountability of research institutions handling personal data. The Government representatives highlighted ongoing consultations on data protection regulations, particularly the introduction of the Right to Nomination to enhance data privacy rights.

The Corporate representatives shared best practices in data protection, digital well-being, and compliance-by-design strategies. However, they also highlighted operational challenges, particularly in navigating complex multi-layered digital operations. Companies transitioning from a low digital penetration environment to a structured data protection framework emphasised the need for regulatory flexibility to accommodate evolving business models and global compliance requirements such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of the European Union. Referring to the Draft Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025, the corporate stakeholders said that it should include explicit penal provisions for non-compliance and guidelines for obtaining verifiable parental consent for minors.

The participants noted that consumers have limited choices in consenting to data collection, as many business models mandate data sharing. The existing

Do-Not-Disturb (DND) mechanism by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) was deemed ineffective.

The participants included Shri Shailendra Trivedi, Chief General Manager-in-Charge, Department of Information Technology, Reserve Bank of India, Shri Deepak Goel, Group Coordinator (Cyber Law), Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, Shri Ankur Rastogi, Principle Project Engineer, EGSTM, Centre For Railway Information Systems (CRIS), Shri Sanjoy Bhattacharjee, Chief Data Officer, HDFC Bank, Shri Ajay Gupta, Executive Director, ICICI Bank, Shri Soumendra Mattagajasingh, Group Chief Human Resources Officer, ICICI Bank, Shri Rajiv Kumar Gupta, President, PB Fintech, Policy Bazaar, Shri Sameer Bajaj, Head of Communication & Corporate Affairs, MakeMyTrip, Shri Ashish Aggarwal, Vice President and Head of Policy, NASSCOM, Dr Muktesh Chander, NHRC Special Monitor, Cyber Crime and Artificial Intelligence, Shri Tanveer Hasan A. K., Executive Director, Centre for Internet & Society (CIS) in India and Shri Sameer Kochhar, President, SKOCH Development Foundation, NHRC, India Registrar (Law), Joginder Singh, Director, Lt Col Virender Singh among others.

Some of the important suggestions that emanated from the discussion included;

- Simplify the user agreements and policy frameworks to enhance consumer understanding and control over personal data;
- Establish clear accountability structures for data breaches, especially for research institutions and third-party data processors;
- Strengthen user consent frameworks for greater transparency and informed decision-making;



► A section of participants in the open house discussion

- Define the mandate and composition of the proposed Data Protection Board;
- Develop a localised approach to data privacy regulations to support small businesses while addressing India-specific challenges;
- Encourage companies to integrate privacy-by-design principles in digital operations;
- Enhance consumer awareness through targeted digital privacy and cybersecurity literacy programmes;
- Have explicit penal provisions for non-compliance;
- Need for bilateral agreements to address cross-border security and data-sharing concerns;
- Address the challenges arising from strict data localisation mandates; and
- Clear guidelines for obtaining verifiable parental consent for minors.

Reports

National conference on combating human trafficking in the digital era



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V Ramasubramanian addressing online the National conference on combating human trafficking in the digital era

On 7th February, 2025, the Commission in collaboration with the Hidayatullah National Law University, Raipur, Chhattisgarh organised a day-long National Conference on 'Combating human trafficking in the digital era'. With digital technologies increasingly being exploited for human trafficking, this conference examined the role of the internet, social media, cryptocurrency, and various online tools in facilitating trafficking crimes and the role of technology, law enforcement agencies, and the community in preventing them.

Inaugurating it virtually, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian, Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India highlighted the various forms of digital trafficking such as sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, organ trafficking, and forced marriage. He also highlighted "Active Recruitment", known as Hook Fishing, and "Passive Recruitment", known as Net Fishing using digital technology to lure in gullible people.

The NHRC, India Chairperson emphasised the need for building awareness among people about the pitfalls while engaging with digital spaces to ensure their safety, besides strengthening the regulatory and institutional frameworks as well as technological solutions to check effectively the misuse of digital space.



► A section of the attendees in the national conference on combating human trafficking in the digital era

The conference was divided into two thematic sessions. The first session focused on 'The role of the Internet in facilitating human trafficking and migrant smuggling: A legal, administrative, and regulatory perspective'. It was chaired by Smt Bhamathi Balasubramanian, IAS (Retd.), co-chaired by Dr Sanjeev Shukla, Inspector General of Police, Bilaspur. Other resource persons included Dr K.V.K. Santhy, Professor of Law, NALSAR, Hyderabad; Shri Kirtan



► NHRC, India Registrar (Law), Shri Joginder Singh addressing the conference online

Rathore, Additional SP, Raipur; and Smt Pratibha Tiwari, Additional SP, Mahasamund.

The session provided a comprehensive discussion on the various factors contributing to human trafficking, with a strong emphasis on its gendered dimensions and the growing role of digital anonymity in facilitating such crimes. A significant portion of the discussion focused on the issue of migrant smuggling in different parts of India, particularly examining recruitment strategies, coordination networks, and the smuggling of victims.

Experts highlighted trafficking cases from Chhattisgarh, shedding light on the persistent problem of non-reporting and the critical role played by Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs) in addressing these challenges. The session also explored the regulatory mechanisms in place to combat trafficking, emphasising the need for capacity building and the development of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) tailored to the digital era. Additionally, the speakers underscored the role of the internet, artificial intelligence, and digital forensics in tracking and preventing trafficking cases, particularly those involving social media and missing children.

The second session was focused on the theme "Preventive Strategies against Human Trafficking: Role of Technology, Law Enforcement Agencies, Victim Support, and Community Engagement". It was chaired by Dr Manish Mishra, Joint Director, Chhattisgarh State Human Rights Commission, and co-chaired by Dr Purushotam Chandrakar, Member, Child Welfare Committee (Raipur). The panellists also included Ms Pallabi Ghosh, Founder & Director, Impact and Dialogue Foundation (Kolkata);

Ms Chetna Desai; Shri Ritesh Kumar, Child Protection Officer, UNICEF, Chhattisgarh; and Prof. (Dr) Vishnu Konoorayar, Professor of Law, HNLU.

Shri Joginder Singh, Registrar (Law), NHRC, India in his concluding remarks said that combating human trafficking is a global effort requiring collaboration between governments, NGOs, technology companies, and individuals.

The conference brought forward several key suggestions to address the multiplying challenges of combating human trafficking, some of which were as follows:

- Amend the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (ITPA) to provide clearer distinctions between child and adult trafficking, with specific provisions to include cyber trafficking within its scope;
- Formal linkage is needed between the ITPA and the

IT Act to fill existing legal gaps and address trafficking in the digital realm;

- Increase awareness regarding self-reporting portals such as the Centralized Complaint and Prevention of Women and Children (CCPWC), which could serve as an effective tool for public participation in reporting trafficking cases;
- Equip and train Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs) to combat trafficking in the digital era;
- Authentic data on human trafficking needs to be systematically collected across different categories to better inform policies and interventions;
- Enhance community engagement as a critical component in combating trafficking in all its forms by encouraging local communities to take an active role in preventing and reporting such crimes.

Important interventions

The media reports have been a very useful instrument for the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India, to know about the incidents of human rights violations. Over the years, it has taken *suo motu* cognisance of many such issues and brought succour to the victims of human rights violations. During February, 2025, the Commission took *suo motu* cognisance in 04 cases of alleged human rights violations reported by the media and issued notices to the concerned authorities for reports. Summaries of some of these cases are as follows:

Suo motu cognisance

Students falling ill after inhaling poisonous gas

(Case No. 28/33/22/2025)

On 23rd January, 2025, the media reported that about 38 students of a government-run school fell ill after inhaling poisonous gas emitting from a nearby cement factory in Baloda Bazar district, Chhattisgarh. According to the media report, the students complained of nausea, vomiting and uneasiness, and they started fainting.

The Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary, Government of

Chhattisgarh calling for a detailed report in the matter. It is expected to include the health status of the children and steps taken to deal with the reported health hazard adversely affecting the health of the people.

Death after inhaling toxic gases

(Case No. 168/25/5/2025)

On 3rd February, 2025, the media reported that three construction workers died due to drowning reportedly after inhaling toxic gases while entering a 10-foot deep manhole to

repair a sewer joint at Kolkata Leather Complex on 2nd February, 2025. According to the media report, carried, they were deployed by a contractor to renovate a portion of a drainage network under the Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA).

The Commission has observed that the contents, if true, raise a serious issue of violation of the human rights of the victims. Therefore, it has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and Commissioner of Police, West Bengal calling for a detailed report in the matter. It is expected to include the

status of the investigation, also in the matter.

Death of two persons while cleaning a septic tank

(Case No. 212/25/23/2025)

On 16th February, 2025, the media reported that two persons died and

two others of the same family got injured after inhaling toxic gas while cleaning a septic tank in Nandigram Block of Vekutia village in Purba Medinipur district, West Bengal.

The Commission has observed that the contents of the media report, if true, raise a serious issue of violation of the

human rights of the victims. Therefore, it has issued notices to the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police, Purba Medinipur, West Bengal calling for a detailed report. The report is expected to include the status of the investigation of the cases as well as compensation, if any, paid to the next of kin of the deceased persons.

Recommendations for relief

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

regularly takes up various such cases and gives directions and recommendations to the concerned authorities for relief to the victims. In February, 2025 monetary relief of more than Rs 193.25 lakh was recommended for the victims or their next of kin (NoK) in the 27

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

S. No.	Case Number	Nature of complaint	Amount (Rs in lakh)	Authority
1.	4221/18/27/2018-AD	Custodial death (Police)	10.00	Odisha
2.	2904/20/14/2018-AD	Custodial death (Police)	7.50	Rajasthan
3.	5581/30/6/2019-PCD	Custodial death (Police)	5.00	Delhi
4.	234/9/3/2020-PCD	Custodial death (Police)	5.00	Jammu & Kashmir
5.	693/36/24/2020-AD	Custodial death (Police)	5.00	Telangana
6.	1753/1/5/2021-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Andhra Pradesh
7.	3100/4/30/2020-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Bihar
8.	1469/7/3/2022-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Haryana
9.	1643/7/18/2022-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Haryana
10.	2195/24/4/2021-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Uttar Pradesh
11.	33081/24/61/2022-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Uttar Pradesh
12.	1405/25/19/2022-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	West Bengal
13.	1715/6/5/2022-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	4.00	Gujarat
14.	30444/24/12/2022	Non-payment of pension/compensation	1.00	Uttar Pradesh
15.	2317/1/10/2022	Non-payment of pension/compensation	0.50	Andhra Pradesh
16.	332/10/11/2023-WC	Sexual assault of a mentally-ill patient	2.00	Karnataka
17.	9732/24/4/2023	Non-registration of FIR in a case of gang rape of a minor	0.50	Uttar Pradesh

S. No.	Case Number	Nature of complaint	Amount (Rs in lakh)	Authority
18.	2543/1/21/2021	Inaction by the state/central govt. officials	0.25	Andhra Pradesh
19.	582/4/1/2023	Negligence of Electricity Dept.	2.00	Bihar
20.	678/4/38/2023	Withholding of family pension	0.25	Bihar
21.	1954/12/8/2022	Stalking and harassment	0.25	Madhya Pradesh
22.	169/20/34/2023	Illegal arrest	0.50	Rajasthan
23.	3402/18/8/2022	Death due to electrocution	3.00	Odisha
24.	19424/24/18/2021	Death due to electrocution	5.00	Uttar Pradesh
25.	3575/25/9/2022	Death due to consumption of illicit liquor	72.00	West Bengal
26.	87/25/23/2022	Accidents in the industry/factory	34.00	West Bengal
27.	593/34/12/2020	Police atrocity	0.50	Jharkhand

Payment of relief to the victims

During February, 2025, the Commission closed 51 cases, either on receipt of the compliance reports and proof of payment from the public authorities or

by giving other observations/ directions. An amount of Rs 304.2 lakh was paid to the victims or their next of kin (NoK) on the recommendations of the Commission. The specific details of

these cases can be downloaded from the NHRC website by logging the case number given in the table below:

S. No.	Case Number	Nature of complaint	Amount (Rs in lakh)	Authority
1	31/2/11/2020-PCD	Custodial death (Police)	5.00	Arunachal Pradesh
2	2817/4/13/2015-PCD	Custodial death (Police)	7.50	Bihar
3	2094/30/4/2020-PCD	Custodial death (Police)	7.50	Delhi
4	636/7/6/2018-PCD	Custodial death (Police)	7.50	Haryana
5	144/8/11/2019-PCD	Custodial death (Police)	7.50	Himachal Pradesh
6	25/14/15/2018-PCD	Custodial death (Police)	5.00	Manipur
7	7882/24/38/2019-PCD	Custodial death (Police)	7.50	Uttar Pradesh
8	2539/18/14/2019-PCD	Custodial death (Police)	5.00	Odisha
9	273/20/10/2019-PCD	Custodial death (Police)	5.00	Rajasthan
10	28760/24/14/2017-PCD	Custodial death (Police)	5.00	Uttar Pradesh
11	15/3/8/2021-PCD	Custodial death (Police)	5.00	Assam
12	23887/24/69/2019-AD	Custodial death (Police)	5.00	Uttar Pradesh
13	26868/24/18/2020-AD	Custodial death (Police)	7.50	Uttar Pradesh

S. No.	Case Number	Nature of complaint	Amount (Rs in lakh)	Authority
14	1185/25/17/2022-AD	Custodial death (Police)	7.50	West Bengal
15	23/23/6/2020-AD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Tripura
16	30100/24/44/2017-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Uttar Pradesh
17	33437/24/21/2019-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	10.00	Uttar Pradesh
18	35188/24/63/2017-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	3.75	Uttar Pradesh
19	7491/24/43/2021-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Uttar Pradesh
20	164/25/24/2020-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	West Bengal
21	479/25/13/2021-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	West Bengal
22	1416/18/3/2019-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	1.00	Odisha
23	150/6/26/2020-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	4.50	Gujarat
24	328/6/14/2017-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.50	Gujarat
25	547/6/21/2021-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Gujarat
26	1469/7/3/2022-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Haryana
27	1980/7/1/2022-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Haryana
28	1016/20/14/2019-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Rajasthan
29	606/22/31/2021-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	3.00	Tamil Nadu
30	13196/24/3/2019-JCD	Custodial death (Judicial)	5.00	Uttar Pradesh
31	219/4/19/2020-AD	Custodial death (Judicial)	7.50	Bihar
32	3311/30/0/2021	Failure in taking lawful action	0.50	Delhi
33	5725/30/2/2022	Intimidation/ threatening/extortion by anti-social elements	0.10	Delhi
34	1641/34/0/2016-ED	Death in police encounter	4.00	Jharkhand
35	3530/18/32/2022	Educational/ technical institutions (govt./pvt.)	5.00	Odisha
36	3575/25/9/2022	Death due to consumption of illicit liquor	72.00	West Bengal
37	1721/24/39/2023	Corporal punishment	0.60	Uttar Pradesh
38	29522/24/8/2021-WC	Police inaction in a case of sexual assault	0.50	Uttar Pradesh
39	151/20/12/2018	Death in police firing	7.50	Rajasthan
40	498/35/2/2020	Death in the lock up of Revenue authorities	5.00	Uttarakhand
41	151/3/22/2020	Medical negligence	3.00	Assam
42	19376/24/20/2022	Medical negligence	7.00	Uttar Pradesh
43	317/3/3/2022	Death of a minor domestic help	2.00	Assam

S. No.	Case Number	Nature of complaint	Amount (Rs in lakh)	Authority
44	20775/24/59/2022	Death of a girl after a gate of a Primary School falls on her	2.00	Uttar Pradesh
45	340/20/18/2022	Sexual assault of a minor student by her teacher	5.00	Rajasthan
46	1196/18/6/2022	Death due to electrocution	4.00	Odisha
47	3999/18/27/2022	Death due to electrocution	5.00	Odisha
48	3280/4/12/2020	Death due to electrocution	4.00	Bihar
49	1236/30/6/2022	Harassment by Police	1.25	Delhi
50	2584/12/22/2022	Police atrocity against an elderly person	1.00	Madhya Pradesh
51	1817/24/61/2021	Torture by police	2.00	Uttar Pradesh

Case studies

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

Death of an under trial prisoner

(Case No. 4343/30/9/2019-JCD)

The Commission received intimation from the Superintendent, Central Jail No.1, Tihar, New Delhi in 2019 regarding the death of an Under Trial Prisoner. The Commission took cognisance in the matter and sought reports in the matter from the State authorities. After various follow-ups, the concerned authorities submitted the reports wherein it was stated that no official or public servant was responsible for the death of the victim. However, it was also found that the prisoner after getting admitted to the jail, subsequently developed some problems over a while. He was brought to the hospital in an unconscious state with a ligature mark around his neck.

The Commission observed that his life may have been saved if the prison staff had been alert. The safety of any person in custody of the State is the responsibility of the State authorities. Therefore, it recommended that the Government of NCT Delhi pay Rs 5 lakh to his next of kin, which was paid.

Police atrocity

(Case No. 117/10/1/2024)

The matter pertained to the incident where a Police Officer threatened the victim, unlawfully accessed his Phone Pay account and transferred Rs. 50,000/- to another account forcibly in Bengaluru, Karnataka in 2023.

The accused officials removed crucial evidence from the case file, intimidated and attempted to fabricate false charges against the complainant. The

accused officials called his family members in Dy. SP office, PS Hebbagoddi, and took bribe of Rs. 50,000/-.

The Commission took cognisance of the matter and sought a report from the State authorities. The Commission noted from the reports of the Enquiry Officer that the allegations of taking bribe of Rs. 50,000/- were true and the accused police officers of Sarjapura Police Station were involved in unlawful activities violating the fundamental rights of the complainant. The departmental action was also initiated against them. Hence, the Commission recommended that the Government of Karnataka pay Rs 1 lakh as a relief to the victim, which was complied with.

Spot enquiry

Case No.32320/24/31/2023

From 17th-19th February, 2025, the NHRC, India team conducted a spot inquiry in Ghaziabad, UP on the allegations of misuse of power by police personnel.

Case No: 33/30/3/2025

From 17th to 21st February, 2025, the NHRC, India team conducted a spot

enquiry in Tihar Jail, Delhi regarding allegations of illegal activities, corruption, and extortion by the jail officers.

Case No.1031/24/67/2025

From 26th to 28th February, 2025, the NHRC, India team conducted a spot enquiry in Siddharth Nagar, Uttar Pradesh in connection with the

complaint of police inaction in a case of a missing of a 14-year-old minor girl.

Case No. 174/34/7/2024

From 26th to 28th February, 2025, the NHRC, India team conducted a spot enquiry in Garhwa, Jharkhand on the allegations of police inaction in a case of murder by a public servant despite the lapse of more than a year.

Field visits

The Chairperson, Members and senior officers of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India visit various places in the country from time to time to assess the human rights situation and the status of the implementation of the Commission's advisories, guidelines and recommendations by the respective state governments and their concerned authorities. They also visit shelter homes, prisons, observation homes, etc. and sensitise the government functionaries to make necessary efforts towards ameliorating the cause of human rights. Submission of timely reports by the state authorities to help the Commission in the early disposal of cases of human rights violations is also emphasised.

Visits of the NHRC, India Member

On 8th February, 2025, NHRC, India Member, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani visited the Engineering Girls Hostel of SV University, Tirupati, Tamil Nadu. She also interacted with the Tirupati District MRO and Revenue Officer and



► NHRC, India Member, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani interacting with the officers during her field visit

pointed out the shortcomings. Based on these guidelines, on 13th February, 2025, the MRO, Tirupati visited BC Welfare and Tribal Welfare Hostel in Tirupati and took remedial measures in the grey areas of functioning of these institutions.

Special Rapporteurs and Monitors

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

Special Rapporteur

- i.) From 4th- 11thFebruary, 2025, Shri Umesh Kumar Sharma visited Government Health Care Institutions catering to Primary, Secondary and Tertiary levels of healthcare in Gujarat & Diu (UT).
- ii.) From 23rd- 27thFebruary, 2025, Shri Mahesh Singla visited Old Age Home/ Senior Citizen Home in Delhi to assess the human rights situation.



► NHRC, India Special Rapporteur, Shri Mahesh Singla visiting an old age home in Delhi

- iii.) From 27th- 28thFebruary, 2025, Smt Suchitra Sinha visited Old Age Home, Ranchi; SC/ST School, Ramgarh; Kasturba Gandhi Vidyalaya, Ramgarh; Orphanage Home, Ramgarh; Old Age Home, Ramgarh) to assess the human rights situation.
- iv.) From 26th- 28thFebruary, 2025, Shri Umesh Kumar visited and inspected the Anganwadi Centre at Pamlakrai in Laitkor, Meghalaya.

Special Monitor

- i.) From 17th-20thFebruary, 2025, Shri Khushwant Singh Sethi visited Panchayats in three districts (Unnao, Hardoi and Barabanki) in the state of Uttar Pradesh to assess the human rights situation.
- ii.) From 17th -22ndFebruary, 2025, Dr. Pradeepta Kumar Nayak visited State and District officials of Leprosy Programme, Social Welfare, Mental Health and other Departments, Hospitals, CHCs, PHCs, General Communities and Leprosy Colonies in the Districts of Raipur, Durg, and Rajnandgaon in Chhattisgarh, and RLTRI, Raipur.
- iii.) From 20th-27th February, 2025, Shri Balkrishan Goel visited Old Age Homes, Child care institutions & Observation Homes & Anganwadi Centres, etc. in Goa for an on-the-spot inspection and data collection.
- iv.) From 26th- 28th February, 2025, Shri Yogesh Dube visited One Stop Centre, Working Women Hostel, Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan, Balika Graha / Girls Home etc. in Guwahati, Assam to assess the human rights situation.
- v.) From 26th-28th February, 2025, Shri Prem Singh Bisht visited and inspected public sector units prone to human rights violation pertaining to business activities in the business and industrial set up in Calcutta, West Bengal.

Capacity building

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

Academy for Prison and Correctional Administration officers

On 13th February, 2025, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India organised a specialised training session in New Delhi for 30 police officers of the Academy for Prison and Correctional Administration (APCA) Vellore, Tamil Nadu. It aimed to enhance their understanding of human rights and legal frameworks within the prison administration context, reinforcing correctional officers' role in upholding justice and dignity.

In his address, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal emphasised the importance of trainees serving as role models in their profession. He urged the officers to see their duties not merely as jobs, but as a chosen dharma, upholding the law in both letter and spirit while ensuring basic human rights for all in their custody. He also underscored the important role of correctional officers in shaping a humane and rehabilitative prison environment for individuals in their care.

The officers had interactive sessions by senior officials of the Commission. Ms Vijay Lakshmi Vihan, Presenting Officer gave an overview of the Protection of

Human Rights (PHR) Act, 1993, and the functioning of the Commission's Law Division. Shri Dushyant Singh, Deputy Superintendent of Police, briefed them on the functioning of the Investigation Division, focusing on addressing human rights concerns in prison administration. Shri Sanjeev Sharma, Senior System Analyst, took a session on the online complaints management system of the Commission, covering login creation, uploading death intimations, submitting action taken reports, etc and utilising available digital tools. The training programme concluded with a vote of thanks by NHRC, India Director, Lt Col Virender Singh.



► NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressing the officers

Indian Forest Service officers

On 14th February, 2025, the Commission organised a training programme in New Delhi for the Indian Forest Service (IFS) officers as part of the 14th - Mid Career Course (Phase III) of the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy, Dehradun. Addressing the officers, NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V Ramasubramanian emphasised the important role of the Indian Forest Service officers in protecting the nation's natural heritage. He said that they face the challenging task of balancing development needs with the imperatives of conservation. He said that to effectively discharge their duties, they need to understand the historical context of forest legislation, the evolving challenges, and the interplay between law, policy, and enforcement.

The Chairperson also highlighted the historical evolution of forest legislation from the British era to the present, emphasising the shifting balance between development and conservation. The discussion covered the impact of the 2013 Land Acquisition Act on forest land acquisition, which ultimately led to the 2023 amendment of the Forest Conservation Act.

He said that the courts have also played a crucial role in shaping forest conser-



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V Ramasubramanian addressing the Indian Forest Service officers

vation. The landmark T. N. Godavarman case of 1995, for instance, significantly curbed the timber industry's impact on forest cover. This case highlighted the need not just for strong laws, but also for effective enforcement mechanisms. The court's ongoing involvement in the Godavarman case, through the concept of 'continuing mandamus,' underscores the persistent challenges in balancing development and conservation.

NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal in his address said that history shows how moments of reflection can reshape the destiny and bring in transformation. Emperor Ashoka embraced a path of peace after the Kalinga



► The Indian Forest Service officers attending the training

Online short-term internship

On 7th February, 2025, the two-week online short-term internship programme organised by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India concluded. It started on 27th January, 2025 with 70 students from various universities in different regions and far-flung areas of the country.

NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal in his valedictory address congratulated the students for the successful completion of their internship. He urged the interns to reflect on the knowledge they gained in various sessions on different aspects of human rights and carry it forward to make meaningful contributions to society.

War. Similarly, Gautama Buddha abandoned his privileges, attained enlightenment, and dedicated his life to guiding humanity. Mahatma Gandhi's expulsion from a train led to a movement world-over that changed the destiny of humanity.

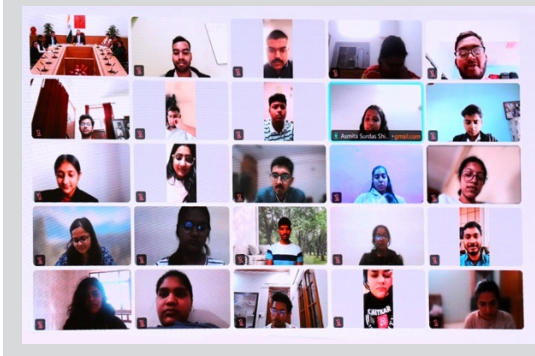
Shri Lal said that human rights are the most basic need and we have to believe in them to protect the rights of everyone, particularly the marginalised. He underscored the collective commitment to the human rights principles enshrined in the Indian Constitution, notably Article 32, which guarantees equal rights irrespective of caste, gender, or religion. He highlighted the importance of leveraging early field experience as a foundation for the strategic development of policies in the later stages of one's career.

Shri Lal also gave an overview of the Commission's constitution as per the PHR Act, 1993 besides its various functions. He urged them to reflect on the knowledge they gained and carry it forward to make meaningful contributions to society. This was followed by an insightful Q & A session. The session concluded with a vote of thanks by NHRC, India Director, Lt Col Virender Singh.

Shri Lal said the nation earned its hard-fought freedom to have a Constitution guaranteeing civic and political rights to every individual. In recent years, concerted efforts are being made to ensure socio-economic and cultural rights and dignity to all. A massive effort is on to improve the quality of life, ease of living and dignity to all. The idea is that no one is left behind. It is for the youth of the country to make the best use of the constitutional provi-



▶ NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressing the online internship programme of the Commission



▶ Workshop in progress at BBAU, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

sions for the all-round development of the country with new ideas in keeping pace with the changing times.

The Secretary General also encouraged the students to internalise core human values of empathy and sensitivity. He stressed that once the opportunity to help someone is lost, it is lost forever. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that there is improved quality of life, enhanced ease of living, access to all basic amenities, safe and secure public spaces and workplaces, education for all and the rights of every individual including the vulnerable and marginalised, are protected.

Lt Col Virender Singh, Director, NHRC, India presented the internship report. Besides the sessions on different aspects of human rights by the senior NHRC officers, experts and civil society representatives, the interns were also taken for virtual tours to the Tihar Jail and Asha Kiran Shelter Home in Delhi. They were given an understanding of how different government institutions function, the mechanisms to protect human rights, the realities on the ground, and the necessary steps to protect the rights of vulnerable sections of society. He also announced the winners of the book review, group research

▶ Workshop in progress in the University of Science & Technology, Meghalaya

project presentation, and declamation competition.

Workshops

During February, 2025, the Commission also supported 04 collaborative human rights awareness workshops which were as follows:

- On 3rd February, 2025, NHRC, India organised one-day national seminar on 'Human rights of prisoners: Issues, challenges, and prospects' in collaboration with the Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU), Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. About 200 participants attended.



- On 10th February, 2025, NHRC, India organised a two-day national conference on 'Elderly Life Matters: A Human Rights Perspective,' in collaboration with the Department of Social Work at the University of Science & Technology, Meghalaya. The conference aimed to discuss the challenges and opportunities for the elderly. About 250 participants attended.



- On 15th February, 2025, NHRC, India organised a two-day national conference on the 'Right to mental health' in collaboration with the

School of Law, Sister Nivedita University, New Town, Kolkata, West Bengal. About 200 participants attended.



▶ Workshop in progress in the School of Law, Sister Nivedita University, New Town, Kolkata, West Bengal

- On 24th February, 2025, NHRC, India in collaboration with the Rajagiri College of Social Sciences (Autonomous), Kochi, Kerala organised a two-day human rights training programme. About 120 students and faculty members attended. It covered topics related to Human rights and Queer Trans mental health in India, Anti-human trafficking from an Indian perspective, Rights of vulnerable groups, Human rights and ragging in Kerala, child rights with a focus on the UN convention, POCSO Act, 2012 & JJ Act, 2015.



▶ Workshop in progress in Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, Kochi, Kerala

Exposure visit

To promote human rights awareness among college-level students and their faculties, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India invites them to visit the Commission to understand human rights, their protection mechanism, and its functioning for this purpose in line with the Protection of Human Rights Act, (PHRA), 1993. During February, 2025, 329 students and faculty members from various colleges and universities visited the Commission and were briefed by senior officers about the functioning of the Law & Investigation Divisions and Complaints Management System. Their visits were as follows:

- On 3rd February, 2025, 35 students and 3 faculty members from the Gokhale Education Society Law College, Raigad, Maharashtra, visited the NHRC.



- On 14th February, 2025, a group of 91 students and faculties from Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar College of Law, Nagpur, Maharashtra & Islamia College of Law, Saharanpur, UP visited the NHRC.



- On 17th February, 2025, a batch of 36 students and a faculty member from Siddharth Law College, Mumbai, Maharashtra, visited the NHRC.



- On 20th February, 2025, a group of 28 students and 2 faculty members from Yeshwant Mahavidyalaya, Wardha, Maharashtra and 36



students & 2 faculty members from Durgapur Institute of Legal Studies (DILS), Durgapur, West Bengal, visited the NHRC.

- On 21st February, 2025, a batch of 42 students and 2 faculty members of Anjuman-I- Islam's



Barrister A.R. Antulay College of Law, Mumbai, Maharashtra visited the NHRC.

- On 24th February, 2025, 50 students and 2 faculty members from the Campus Law Center, University of Delhi visited NHRC.



Awards

The National Human Rights Commission has instituted some awards to encourage the participation of citizens in promoting and protecting human rights and human values. The human rights short film competition is one such scheme instituted in 2015. Since then, several people from different parts of the country have participated and contributed to the Commission's repertoire of some quality short films including documentaries on various aspects of human rights, which are uploaded on its website for awareness purposes.

Winners of NHRC, India short film competition 2024

The Commission has announced the winners of its tenth prestigious annual competition for short films on human rights in 2024. It has chosen 'Doodh Ganga- Valley's Dying Lifeline' for the first prize of Rs. 2 lakh. This documentary film by Er. Abdul Rashid Bhat from Jammu & Kashmir raises concerns on how the free flow of various waste materials into the pristine water of Doodh Ganga river has polluted it and the need for its restoration

for the overall good of the people in the valley. The film is in English, Hindi and Urdu with subtitles in English.

'Fight for Rights' by Shri Kadarappa Raju from Andhra Pradesh has been selected for the second prize of Rs. 1.5 lakh. The film raises the issue of child marriage and education. It is in Telugu language with subtitles in English.

'GOD' by Shri R. Ravichandran from Tamil Nadu has been selected for the third prize of Rs. 1 lakh. The silent film through an old protagonist raises the value of potable water.

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

1. 'Aksharabhyasam' by Shri Haneesh Undramatla from Telangana. The silent film raises the importance of child education;



► The short film competition final round jury meeting presided over by the NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri V Ramasubramanian in progress



► The Jury watching the short films to decide the award winners

2. **'VilayillaPattathari** (An inexpensive graduate)' by Shri R. Selvam from Tamil Nadu. It is in Tamil with subtitles in English. The film highlights the concerns and rights of older persons;
3. **'Life of Seetha'** by Shri Madaka Venkata Satyanarayana from Andhra Pradesh. It is in Telugu with subtitles in English. The film highlights the rights violation of children due to religious practices and the need for reformation;
4. **'Be a Human'** by Shri Lotla Naveen from Andhra Pradesh. The film in

Hindi with subtitles in English highlights the issues surrounding domestic violence, assault on women, girl child abandonment and societal intervention.

The final round of the Jury was chaired by the NHRC Chairperson, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian comprising Members, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, DG (I), Shri R. Prasad Meena, and Registrar (Law), Shri Joginder Singh.

For the tenth edition of this competition in 2024, after a scrutiny of a total of 303 short films, received within the stipulated time, in different Indian languages from various parts of the country, 243 entries were in the fray for the awards. The awards presentation ceremony will be organised later.

NHRC in the International arena

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

Delegation visits to NHRC, India



On 26th February, 2025, 25-member delegation of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, led by its CEO, Ambassador Ivo Daalder, met the Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal. He spoke about the Indian ethos, constitutional values and institutional framework to protect and promote human rights.



On 27th February, 2025, Ambassador Arindam Bagchi, Permanent Representative of India to the UN made a courtesy call to the NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian. He also called on the Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal. Ambassador Bagchi briefed the Chairperson about the work done by the Permanent Mission in Geneva. He had a wide-ranging discussion with the Secretary General, NHRC on the emerging issues in human rights.

News from State Human Rights Commissions

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

Arunachal Pradesh State Human Rights Commission

On 14th February, 2025, the Arunachal Pradesh State Human Rights Commission (APSHRC) organised a Joint Consultative Meeting with the Manipur State Human Rights Commission (MSHRC) at its office in Itanagar. The meeting focused on sharing best practices, working protocols, and strengthening human rights protection.



► The APSHRC Acting Chairperson, Shri Bamang Tago and senior officers with the visiting delegation of Manipur SHRC

Experts, officials, and stakeholders discussed proactive approaches to addressing human rights violations. Sessions covered the history and functioning of APSHRC and MSHRC, the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, and the Paris Principles, successful initiatives and challenges faced in the implementation of human rights policies in the State.

The meeting reinforced the need for collaboration between various human rights bodies, government agencies, and civil society to strengthen the institutional framework. It concluded with a commitment to enhancing awareness, ensuring accountability, and upholding human rights principles for all individuals.



► The APSHRC officers visiting the rehabilitation centres in Itanagar

The APSHRC also visited Rehabilitation Centres within the capital, Itanagar and assessed its facilities, operations and inmate welfare. They interacted with the residents, reviewed rehabilitation programs, and assessed the living conditions of the residents. They also made some suggestions to improve care, support and skill development to help the residents in overcoming addiction and to rebuild their lives with positivity.

Punjab State Human Rights Commission

On 29th January, 2025, the Punjab State Human Rights Commission (PSHRC) conducted an inspection of the Model Jail, Chandigarh (Burail Jail), led by Chairperson, Justice Shri Sant Parkash. The jail houses 977 inmates, including 39 women and two children living with their mothers. Justice Parkash visited the barracks and interacted with the inmates to ascertain their grievances in order to suggest solutions. Key areas inspected included the canteen, hospital, art centre, kitchen, and internal radio station.

He commended the radio initiative, suggesting educational programmes on human rights and disease prevention. The jail's factory, producing sweets for sale, and medical facilities were also reviewed and found satisfactory. Justice Parkash also interacted with female inmates, directing the administration to arrange schooling for a child residing with his mother in the prison.



► Punjab SHRC Chairperson, Justice Shri Sant Prakash inspecting the Model Jail, Chandigarh

On 10th February, 2025, Justice Parkash led an inspection to Sub Jail, Pathankot, housing 67 inmates. Concerns about the lack of a dedicated dispensary were addressed, with immediate steps for setting up a temporary medical facility. The Chairperson praised a candle-making initiative for providing vocational skills to inmates.

On the same day, Justice Parkash laid the foundation stone for the Jagriti Community Centre in Ghat Bagrauli, a remote village in Punjab. He addressed challenges such as poor infrastructure and lack of healthcare, assuring villagers of necessary interventions.

Karnataka State Human Rights Commission

During February, 2025, the Karnataka State Human Rights Commission (KSHRC) visited Belagavi and Mandya Districts in connection with the complaints of human rights violations. In Mandya, the KSHRC conducted full bench sittings on 28th February and resolved 24 cases. The Deputy Commissioner, CEO Zilla Panchayat and Superintendent of Police and other District level officers were present. The Commission had an interactive session with the District-Level officers, where more than 300 officers of the various departments of Mandya District participated.

Besides, the officers also made surprise visits to the District prison, Government girls' and boys' hostels and other government-funded institutions in the district and interacted with the public and other stakeholders.

During the month, the KSHRC disposed off 330 cases of human rights violations; recommended Rs. 13 lakh in 5 cases besides departmental enquiry against the erring public functionaries.



► Karnataka SHRC delegation on a field visit

Madhya Pradesh Human Rights Commission

During February, 2025, the Madhya Pradesh Human Rights Commission (MPSHRC) recommended Rs 5 lakh as monetary relief to the next of kin (NoK) of a woman under trial prisoner in Indore District Jail due to suicide. Besides this, in 14 other matters of human rights violations, the MPSHRC received a compliance report from the public authorities with a payment of monetary relief of Rs 66 lakh to the victims or their next of kin.

News in brief

- On 2nd February, 2025, NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi inaugurated the Saraswati Group of Institutions at Belagachia Trisulia, Cuttack in Odisha managed by the Computer Application Centre for Research and Education Trust of India. The Member highlighted the importance of promoting and protecting human rights and building awareness about the same through education.
- On 3rd February, 2025, Shri Bharat Lal, NHRC Secretary General, delivered an insightful talk on 'Human Rights in a Globalized World' at the School of International Studies, JNU, New Delhi, with faculty & students in attendance. His address focused on India's civilisational ethos of empathy & compassion. He highlighted that India has never supported violence or attacked another country. It has a tradition of equality and dignity for all, with four religions originating here that teach non-violence. He also pointed out that four religions from

West Asia have flourished in India.

Shri Lal stressed that violence, terrorism, and war are opposite to human rights, and emphasised India's long history of offering refuge to the persecuted. He mentioned India's alignment with the developmental aspirations of the Global South, advocating for sharing and justice. He also spoke about the Constitution advocating justice, liberty, equality and fraternity, imbibing the spirit of the UDHR assuring equality and dignity to individuals.

He highlighted Directive Principles of State Policy, the role of the judiciary, fundamental rights, civil & political rights as well as advancing socio-economic & cultural rights, the framework for promoting & protecting human rights, NHRC's work, complaint management system etc. He also spoke about UDHR, UNHRC, GANHRI promoting & protecting human rights. He highlighted India's approach in supporting the global fraternity during COVID-19,

aligning with its ancient ethos of *Vasudhaiva Kudumbakam* - the world is one family.

Prof Amitabh Mattoo, Dean, SIS, JNU, chaired the session and lauded Shri Lal's outstanding contribution to this lecture series, which otherwise features eminent academicians only. The lecture was followed by a Q&A session.

- On 4th February, 2025, NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi addressed as the Chief Guest a seminar on 'Walk for the Warriors' on World Cancer Day organised by the Prameya & News7 in Cuttack, Odisha.
- On 10th February, 2025, Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General, inaugurated and delivered the keynote address at the annual leadership meet 'Netritva' of IIM, Bodh Gaya. In his address, he highlighted the role of civilisational and cultural values which shape leadership. He gave numerous examples of the people who devoted their whole life to work for the well-being and dignity

of others, inspiring millions to follow their footsteps. In this, Indian ethos of empathy, compassion and selflessness played a huge role.

- On 12th February, 2025, NHRC Member, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani exhorted the students to become harbingers of human rights compliance & become voice of the voiceless. She was the Chief Guest of the 34th Annual Day & Prize Distribution Function of Dr B R Ambedkar College, University of Delhi.
- On 12th February, 2025, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal delivered an address and engaged with the students at St. Stephen's College, Delhi, in a session organized by the Princeton Foundation for Peace & Learning.
- On 14th February, 2025, Shri Priyank Kanoongo, Member, NHRC visited Prayagraj to attend the 4th Cultural Economy Conclave #CEC25 and Mahakumbh Dialogues by India Think Council during Mahakumbh 2025 at Mahakumbh Mela Area Prayagraj in association with UP Government and Incredible India (Ministry of Tourism).
- From 18th-20th February, 2025, Major Vishnu S.P., Under Secretary, NHRC attended in-person Workshop on APF Annual Programme on GANHRI Accreditation sponsored by the Asia Pacific Forum at Bangkok, Thailand.
- On 20th February, 2025, NHRC Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressed as the Chief Guest at a national seminar on 'Sustainable futures: Integrating human rights in environmental & climate policies', organised by the Kirori Mal College, Delhi, supported by NHRC, India. About 200 partici-

pants attended. Shri Lal in his address said that we Homo sapiens are responsible for ecological damage. India always followed the minimalist, nature-connected lives of our ancestors and tribal communities. Human rights, dignity and the environment are interconnected. He said that it is time for self-reflection and recognising our responsibility towards planet Earth. Like Mahatma Gandhi and Emperor Ashoka, one must use introspection to guide our actions.

Shri Lal urged students to reflect on and deepen their understanding of human rights, dignity, and the environment. He emphasised the importance of finding purpose in life to make meaningful contributions, ensuring a sustainable future for our only liveable planet Earth.

He said that India is prioritising the enhancement of people's quality of life by providing essential amenities such as toilets, cooking gas, and clean tap water for all, while also working on rejuvenating rivers, promoting rainwater harvesting, and improving the environment.

- On 27th February, 2025, NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi addressed, as the Chief Guest, the Odisha Human Rights conclave organised by the Human Rights Front India at

Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

- On 28th February, 2025, NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian addressed online the National Colloquium on 'Redefining IP & Privacy in an Accelerating Digital Landscape' organised by the Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University (DSNLU), Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. He said that digital technology is not only invading the privacy of individuals but also infringing upon the intellectual property rights. He said that the history of the Intellectual Property regime is about 230 years old. But in the first 2 centuries of its governance, the IP regime didn't face the kind of challenges that it started facing after the advent of the internet and the growth of digital technology.

He said that the cases of infringement of copyright in the digital world present a more complex picture than those relating to trade marks. He quoted different court decisions in the US and in India highlighting the complex issue. The Chairperson said that with the dawn of AI, the debate has added more dimensions to privacy and piracy. He said that if the IP regime has suffered a setback, privacy rights have taken the worst hit from digital technology.

Forthcoming events

3rd - 8th March, 2025	Commission will organise ITEC Executive Capacity Building programme for senior functionaries of the NHRIs of Global South.
3rd March, 2025	Online short term internship of the Commission will begin.

