

EPFO hosts Gurcharan Das in 22nd Edition of 'Reimagining Governance: Discourse for Excellence'

Posted On: 30 OCT 2025 7:27PM by PIB Delhi

The Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya National Academy of Social Security (PDUNASS) of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) hosted the 22nd edition of Reimagining Governance: Discourse for Excellence (RGDE) today, featuring Gurcharan Das, noted author, public intellectual, and former CEO of Procter & Gamble India.



Delivering the keynote address on “The Difficulty of Being Good – Ethics and the Art of Governance,” Das drew lessons from the Mahabharata to explore the moral dilemmas that accompany power and responsibility. He reminded officers that “governance is ultimately a moral act—to be good is difficult because every decision tests our empathy, our courage, and our conscience.”

Drawing from his corporate and philosophical experience, he spoke of compassion as the art of seeing the human being behind every file. Referring to the Bhagavad Gita’s principle of Nishkaam Karma, he urged public servants to perform their duties selflessly, without attachment to outcomes: “We serve best when we act without ego or expectation.”

Recalling his corporate journey, Das shared the story of Kamble, a night-duty security guard who, through curiosity, humility, and love for his work, rose to become a company director. “It is not intelligence but attitude that matters — curiosity, a love for the work you do, and for the people you serve. That is the real secret of happiness,” he said. Emphasising that “execution is more important than strategy,” he called for a culture that values action and service over rhetoric.

During the interaction, Shri Ashish Wig, Member CBT, asked how one builds the inner compass that guides ethical choices amid moral grey zones. Answering the question, Das said that “every situation is different; there’s no formula for goodness.” He urged officers to “improve the moral compass, apply Raj Dharma, and go by your gut — because conscience usually speaks before the mind starts justifying.”

Das also complimented EPFO’s ongoing reforms and urged continued efforts to simplify processes and use technology for transparency, efficiency, and citizen convenience.

Ramesh Krishnamurthi, Central Provident Fund Commissioner, said the session’s message was deeply relevant to EPFO’s mission as a guardian of public money, reaffirming its obligation to remain fair, transparent, and accountable.

Kumar Rohit, Director, PDNASS, described RGDE as “a platform to pause, reflect, and reconnect with the moral imagination of governance.” He noted that previous sessions had led to tangible outcomes — from training modules on compassion after Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi’s talk, to design-thinking initiatives inspired by discussions on innovation and reform.

Moderator Uttam Prakash, RPFC, summarised the discussion as “a moral compass for navigating the modern-day Kurukshetra of public administration,” thanking Das for making ethics feel both practical and deeply personal.

About 800 officers from across India participated in the session, which continues the Academy’s monthly effort to bring distinguished thinkers to engage with EPFO officers on ethics, public service, and excellence in governance.

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(Release ID: 2184323) Visitor Counter : 282

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