

NHRC, India's 2-week Online Short-Term Internship (OSTI) Programme, March – 2026 concludes today

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Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal says, protecting and promoting human rights is a sacred and shared responsibility rather duty

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The second two-week Online Short Term Internship Programme (OSTI) in the year 2026 organized by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India concluded today with 71 university - level students from diverse academic background successfully completing it. They were shortlisted out of 1,147 applicants from 17 states and UTs, including remote areas. Out of these selected students, 54 were girls and 17 boys.

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



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



In his opening remarks NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal congratulated the interns on completing their internship with the Commission. He urged them to internalise what they learnt to develop sensitivity and responsiveness, and to evolve as model citizens aware of their rights and duties. Emphasising self-introspection and reflection on one’s actions, he said that the responsibility to protect and promote human rights does not lie only with the government but with individuals as well. Protecting human rights - upholding the rights and dignity of every individual is a sacred and shared responsibility of every individual.



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



Earlier, Smt. Saisingpuii Chhakchhuak, Joint Secretary, NHRC, presented the internship report. She highlighted that the students were exposed to various aspects of human rights through interactive sessions with eminent speakers, including the Chairperson, Members, Secretary General, senior NHRC officers, officials from the Government of India, human rights defenders and members of civil society. She also announced the winners of competitions held during the programme, including the book review, group research project presentation and declamation competitions. This online internship programme has been started to reach out to students who are unable to travel to New Delhi and can learn various dimensions of human rights from their place of living. Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar was also present.



The online programme ensures that NHRC is able to reach out to students living in far-flung, remote and forested/ tribal areas. In the year 2025-26, such 6 online and 2 in-person (summer and winter) internship programmes have been organized by the NHRC, enabling these students to interact with eminent persons, domain experts, human rights defenders, academia, diplomats, jurists and senior officials, thus promoting and empowering youth on human rights.

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