

Union Home Minister inaugurates two-day NHRC National Seminar on Good Governance, Development and Human Rights

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The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh said that in Indian culture, the focus has always been on duties and not on rights; if everybody attends to his duties, the rights of all automatically get protected. He was addressing at a National seminar on Good Governance, Development and Human Rights, organized by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) here today. He said that the concept of Human Rights in the centuries old Indian ethos is rooted in peace, unlike the West where it shaped up with conflict post- World War-II. The concept of protection of Human Rights in India is linked with the wellbeing of the whole universe, wherein all elements live in mutual coexistence peacefully. This, he said, reflects even in our spiritual and divine invocations.

Referring to the issue of governance, Shri Rajnath Singh said that any sovereign nation is free to take action against illegal migrants. He said that the issue of deportation of Rohingyas for India is not a matter of ego and confrontation but of principles. Those who, in the name of human rights, are expressing concern on the rights of others should bother first for the rights of the citizens of India. The citizens of the country have the first right on its resources and not the illegal migrants. Rohingyas are illegal migrants; they are not refugees for which a process is required to be completed, which they never followed.

He said that India is not a signatory to International Laws on Refugees or to the UN Refugee Convention 1951, hence, the question of its violation does not arise. The principle of non-refoulement would apply to Rohingyas only if, they were given asylum in India. He said that the Government is very clear on the issue and to this effect has filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court. The Union Home Minister said the Government of India has extended aid to Bangladesh for the welfare of Rohingyas there. He described both Bangladesh and Myanmar as friendly countries and said that the State Counsellor of Myanmar, Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi has raised a ray of hope by saying that her country is prepared to take back Rohingyas. He expressed the hope that Myanmar would take some solid steps in this direction at the earliest.

The Union Home Minister said that Good Governance, Development and Human Rights are an inseparable trio and the Government is committed to uphold them. Describing the seminar organized by the NHRC as very relevant, Shri Rajnath Singh said that development without bringing dignity to human life would be meaningless. He said that the PM Ujjwala Yojna was meant to ensure dignified life to crores of women and we believe development without dignity is of no use. He listed several measures and schemes introduced by the Government during the last three years, which are aimed at overall welfare of the people by bringing transparency and accountability in its initiatives so that benefits of welfare schemes reached out the real beneficiaries. He said that the Government aims to provide 'Housing to All' by 2022 and electricity to all villages.

Earlier, inaugurating the seminar, Shri Justice H L Dattu, Chairperson, NHRC said that the universality of Human Rights, their focus on human dignity and their concern for accountability make them uniquely appropriate for reshaping notions of development, cooperation, good governance and combating discrimination and exclusion to reach the goal of achieving a society where 'Human Rights for All' becomes a reality. He said that for any country to find its due place among civilized nations, the most important factors are eradication of poverty and provision of healthcare, education and equitable life opportunities to all without distinction. Unfortunately, even after more than half a century of independence, our country stands only at the fringe on all these counts. Justice Dattu said that there is a need to bring together politics, economics and culture in a more symbiotic relationship to constructively contribute to humanity so that the human being can become the pivot around which all governance and development activities, policies and programmes can revolve.

Shri Ambuj Sharma, Secretary General, NHRC, welcoming the participants, underlined the significance of the national seminar and how the Commission has been making efforts to strive for good governance both in-house and outside through its interventions and functioning. Dr. Ranjit Singh, Joint Secretary, NHRC in his introductory remarks emphasized the importance of good governance and development and how significant are these to the protection of human rights.

The Seminar is divided into five technical sessions spread over two days. These are being chaired by NHRC Members and participants include domain experts and top government functionaries from the Centre, State Governments and Union Territories. The discussion will focus on the role of media in civil society in promoting good governance and human rights, discerning indicators of good governance, global best practices and impact of information technology on good governance, service delivery mechanism and measures to enhance transparency and accountability, health and Swachh Bharat initiatives, new paradigm and challenges in good governance with an Indian perspective.

Union Minister for Law & Justice and Electronics and Information Technology, Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad will deliver the valedictory address in the concluding session tomorrow.

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