

## PRESS RELEASE

### Workshop on Prison Visiting System

The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, in association with the Department of Prisons and Correctional Services, Rajasthan, is conducting the first of a series of workshops to strengthen the Prison Visiting System on February 14-15, 2012 in Jaipur.

The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) is an independent, non-partisan, international non-governmental organization, mandated to ensure the practical realisation of human rights in the countries of the Commonwealth. It has been working on the legal rights of prisoners and prison visiting system for a decade and in Rajasthan for the last 3 years. According to Mr. R.K. Saxena, Retd. I.G. Prisons, Rajasthan,

**“The Prison Visiting System is a window opening into a closed administration set-up which was earlier screened from public viewing. It is a government approved system to oversee the prison administration. Official and Non-Official Visitors are both important in this system”.**

Openness and accountability are essential tools to prevent delay in justice to prisoners, who often suffer extremely unfavourable conditions of detention and delay in trial. Maja Daruwala, Director, CHRI says,

**“NOVs have a very responsible role to play in helping prisoners, especially undertrial ones. Often they are without help, do not have lawyers, do not know how to get in touch with their families and do not know about the court process. NOVs can help be a bridge to make sure they have legal aid and get information to their families. NOVs can bring the community into the prison to help provide services, training and employment after prisoners come back into society. The government must not neglect putting in place the Board of Visitors. This is an important mechanism needed by law and all too often it is not there”.**

30 NOVs from 1 Central Jail, 9 District Jails and 7 Sub Jails, from Bharatpur, Tonk, Nagaur, Jhunjhunu, Dausa, Sawai Madhopur, Dholpur and Karauli districts would be participating in the workshop. Key speakers for the workshop include Dr. Upneet Lalli, Deputy Director, Institute of Correctional Administration, Chandigarh, Rajasthan; Maja Daruwala, Director, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Mr. R.K. Saxena, Retd. I.G. Prisons, Rajasthan; and Mr. Omendra Bharadwaj, D.G. Prisons, Rajasthan.

The valedictory address would be delivered by the Hon'ble Minister of Jail, Shri Ram Kishore Saini. Announcing the workshop, Mr. Omendra Bharadwaj states,

**“I look forward to the workshop for NOVs which would provide the basis for their constructive engagement in building a more humane environment for the reformation of prisoners and ultimately, the building of a safer society. After attending the workshop, the NOVs would also hopefully be able to facilitate a more robust prison-society interaction which would pave the way for better social integration and rehabilitation of prisoners”.**

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