



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN INDIA

The Hour has come; let us get going

February - March 2026

E-Newsletter

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Gender Justice and Human Dignity: A Continuing Ecumenical Commitment

For more than a century, the global observance of *International Women’s Day*—celebrated for over 110 years since 1911—has reminded the world of the ongoing struggle for gender equality and justice. While progress has been made, many women and girls continue to experience discrimination, exclusion, and various forms of violence in homes, workplaces, and even within faith communities. These realities call the Church to move beyond symbolic affirmation toward transformative action.

The Christian faith proclaims that all people are created in the *image of God* (Genesis 1:27), deserving dignity, respect, and equal participation in community life. The ministry of Jesus consistently affirmed women’s dignity and challenged social barriers that marginalized them. In the same spirit, the Church is called to embody God’s justice by standing with those who face oppression and violence.

Initiatives such as the *Thursdays in Black* campaign—a global movement of the ecumenical community—invite individuals and churches to wear black as a sign of resistance against rape and gender-based violence. It is a visible witness that says: violence will not be tolerated, and survivors will not walk alone.

As we continue our ecumenical journey, the call to gender justice remains central to our mission—creating safe spaces, promoting equality, affirming dignity, challenging patriarchy, and nurturing communities of justice, peace, and solidarity. Together, we must cultivate cultures of respect, accountability, and compassion, ensuring that justice and dignity flourish for all.

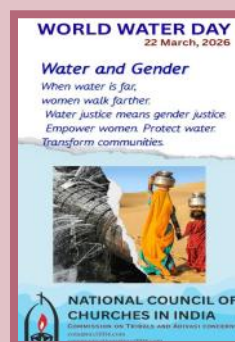
Rev Dr Asir Ebenezer
General Secretary

SIGNIFICANT DAYS

- Mar 19** - Ugadi
- Mar 21** - Ramzan
- Mar 22** - World Water Day
- Mar 31** - Mahavir Jayanthi
- Apr 02** - World Autism Awareness
- Apr 14** - Ambekar Jayanthi
- Apr 15** - National Transgender Day
- Apr 22** - World Earth Day
- Apr 29** - Palm Sunday

NCCI General Secretary’s Message in the Context of War

[Click here](#)



“Unity prevails over conflict.” - Pope Francis

NEWS FROM NCCI

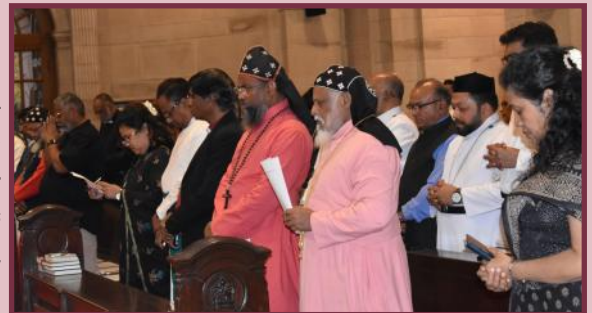
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN INDIA UNITES IN PRAYER FOR PEACE



Communities from across the country gathered in prayer for world peace at the Ecumenical Prayer for Peace, organised by the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) on 12 March 2026 at the CNI Cathedral Church of the Redemption, New Delhi. The prayer gathering brought together church leaders and members of the Christian community to intercede for peace, particularly in the context of the recent developments in the Middle East and the growing tensions related to the US–Iran conflict. Through scripture, songs, and intercessory prayers, the ecumenical community expressed its concern over war, violence, and cross-border aggression affecting many parts of

the world.

The President of NCCI, H.G. Geevarghese Mar Yulios, opened the service with a call to “pray without ceasing” amid increasing violence and strife across nations. Archbishop Anil Couto, Secretary General of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India, addressed the gathering, while H.G. Yuhannon Mar Demetrios, President of the North West India Council of Churches, shared the message from the Word. Solidarity messages were offered by Dr. Basanti Biswas, Vice President of NCCI, and HG Rt. Rev. Dr. Mar Zacharius Aprem, Bishop of the Delhi Diocese of the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church. Choirs from the Manipur Evangelical Lutheran Church, The Salvation Army, Methodist Church in India, and the Tamil Choir of the Cathedral Church of the Redemption presented songs in different languages. The gathering reaffirmed the call for peace, justice, and reconciliation among nations. Rev. Jyoti Singh Pillai, Executive Secretary, NCCI Women Concerns, led the worship, with support from the NCCI National Office staff. Rev. Dr. A. Joshua Peter, Treasurer of NCCI, and Rev. Dr. Asir Ebenezer, General Secretary of NCCI, also graced the occasion and guided the organisers. [Read more...](#)



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STRENGTHENING CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATION IN A CONNECTED WORLD



An insightful seminar on “AI and Social Media for Christian Ministries” was organized in Nagpur through a joint initiative of NCCI and the Christian Institute of Management (CIM). The programme aimed to equip church leaders, communication professionals, and ministry workers with practical knowledge and skills for effective digital engagement in ministry. The seminar began with prayer and worship, with Mr. Miracle Frank (CIM) and Ms. Neelam Gaiwad (NCCI) leading the organization of the event. CA. Richard Wesley from Hyderabad served as the resource person and guided participants through key discussions on the growing importance of media as an essential dimension of ministry in today’s context. Participants were introduced to various social media platforms that can strengthen ministry outreach and community engagement.

Sessions also highlighted the importance of media analytics, helping ministries understand audience reach and measure communication impact more effectively. A significant focus of the seminar was on the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Christian ministries. Participants explored different AI tools and practical ways these technologies can support communication, content creation, and digital outreach. [Read more...](#)

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A LIFE THAT SPOKE JUSTICE: A TRIBUTE



National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) mourns the passing of Dr. Ricky Andrew J. Syngkon, a cherished friend of the ecumenical movement, respected preacher, and political leader whose life reflected integrity, courage, and a deep commitment to justice.

Dr. Syngkon served with distinction as the Member of Parliament from Shillong, representing the Voice of the People Party,



where he faithfully raised the concerns of the people of Meghalaya and advocated for the rights of indigenous communities and marginalized groups. Known for his thoughtful contributions in Parliament, he viewed public service as a responsibility to build a just and compassionate society.

A close friend of NCCI, Dr. Syngkon actively participated in ecumenical consultations and gatherings, offering theological insight and practical wisdom. His humility, courage, and pastoral concern strengthened the bonds of fellowship within the ecumenical community. The NCCI remembers Dr. Syngkon as a leader who embodied faith through service and justice. While mourning his loss, the Council gives thanks to God for his life and witness. [Read more...](#)

BUILDING LIVELIHOODS AND DIGNITY THROUGH SHGs IN UMRED



An exposure visit was organized by EFICOR, Nagpur, to understand and learn from the work of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) that support sustainable livelihoods in Umred town. The visit particularly focused on initiatives that empower positive women—women living with HIV—by enabling them to achieve

economic independence and social dignity.

During the visit, participants interacted with SHG members and local facilitators to learn about income-generating activities, savings practices, and collective support systems that strengthen the resilience of these women. The SHGs have played a crucial role in creating safe spaces where women can share experiences, build confidence, and develop sustainable livelihood opportunities.

The exposure visit provided valuable insights into community-based approaches that combine economic empowerment with social support. Participants appreciated the dedication of SHG members who, despite challenges, continue to build strong networks of solidarity and self-reliance.

Such initiatives highlight the importance of grassroots efforts in promoting dignity, inclusion, and economic empowerment for marginalized communities, particularly women living with HIV. The visit also encouraged participants to explore similar models in their respective contexts.



BSI MARKS 215TH FORMATION DAY WITH ECUMENICAL CELEBRATION

The Bible Society of India (BSI) marked its 215th Formation Day with a thanksgiving celebration on 20 February 2026, bringing together church leaders, ecumenical partners, and members of the Christian community. The event featured an Ecumenical Celebration, the Mary Jones Public Lecture, and vibrant cultural programmes commemorating the longstanding ministry of the Bible Society.

Rev. Dr. Asir Ebenezer, General Secretary of NCCI conveyed greetings, appreciating BSI's faithful commitment to making the Scriptures accessible to people in diverse languages and contexts across the

country. He acknowledged the Society's historic contribution to the mission of the Church through Bible translation, publication, and distribution.

The celebration also provided an occasion for reflection on BSI's enduring witness and service over the past two centuries. As part of the programme, office bearers for the new triennium were elected, marking a new phase of leadership for the organization. The gathering concluded with thanksgiving for BSI's continuing ministry and a renewed commitment to sharing the Word of God in ways that nurture faith, unity, and mission among churches in India.

STRENGTHENING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FOR MISSION AND MINISTRY

A consultation on the Bachelor of Divinity (BD) curriculum was held at United Theological College (UTC), Bengaluru, on 24 February 2026, bringing together theological educators and church leaders to reflect on the future direction of ministerial formation and theological education.

Rev Dr Asir Ebenezer, General Secretary of NCCI participated in the consultation upon invitation and contributed to the discussions on revising and strengthening the BD curriculum. In his remarks, he emphasized the importance of crafting theological education that remains deeply connected to the life

of the Church and the realities of society. He highlighted that theological institutions play a crucial role in shaping ministers and theologians who are not only academically equipped but also socially sensitive and pastorally committed. Stressing the need for contextual and transformative learning, he encouraged the integration of community engagement, social analysis, and ecumenical perspectives within theological training.

The discussions also reaffirmed the need for theological formation that nurtures leadership, justice, and service in the mission of the Church.

FORTY YEARS OF FAITHFUL WITNESS GURUKUL CELEBRATES RUBY JUBILEE



Rev Dr Asir Ebenezer, General Secretary conveyed warm greetings and appreciation on the occasion of the Ruby Jubilee celebrations of Gurukul, marking forty years of a remarkable journey in theological education and social engagement. The message was shared on 3 March 2026, celebrating four decades of Gurukul's faithful commitment to scholarship, spirituality, and social responsibility. In his message,

he expressed gratitude for forty years of God's sustaining grace, noting that this milestone is not merely a measure of time but a testimony to Gurukul's courageous journey in seeking justice, nurturing knowledge, and serving transformation. He highlighted that in a world marked by inequality, exclusion, and ecological crises, Gurukul has remained a vibrant space where faith confronts injustice through critical scholarship, contextual reflection, and community engagement. Concluding the message, the NCCI General Secretary expressed hope that the Ruby Jubilee would renew Gurukul's commitment to speaking truth to power, nurturing compassionate leadership, and strengthening a spirituality of resistance, reconciliation, and transformative witness in the years to come.

WOMEN CONCERNS

THURSDAYS IN BLACK: NCCI'S ONGOING WITNESS FOR JUSTICE



The “Thursdays in Black” campaign, a global advocacy against sexual harassment, rape, and all other forms of violence against women. Women Concern released posters on every Wednesday in the context of announcing a honouring voice, equality, domestic violence and accountability to create a society in which women and girls may live in equality, safety, and dignity.

YOUTH CONCERNS

BUILDING BRIDGES OF HOPE THROUGH ECUMENICAL YOUTH FELLOWSHIP



NCCI – Commission on Youth organized an Ecumenical Youth Gathering in Mumbai on 21 February 2026 at St. Peter’s Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church, Malad West. The gathering served as a platform for networking and capacity strengthening among local youth, while fostering city-level ecumenical partnerships to support Internally Displaced People (IDPs), particularly those affected by the ongoing ethnic conflict in Manipur. The

event encouraged church youth leaders to take active responsibility in nurturing young people to serve the needy, affirming such service as both a vocation and a Christian obligation. The gathering also emphasized the role of youth in promoting solidarity, compassion, and justice in response to humanitarian challenges. Around 35 church youth leaders and representatives from various churches and fellowships across Mumbai participated. These included the Methodist Church of India (MCI), Believers Eastern Church (BEC), Evangelical Church of India (ECI), The Salvation Army (SA), Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church, Church of North India (CNI), Poumai Naga Christian Fellowship, Kuki Worship Service, and Zomi Christian Fellowship. Senior NCCI staff, including Mr. Rajesh Jadhav, Coordinator – Urban Rural Mission, were also present. The programme provided a meaningful space for ecumenical fellowship, awareness building, and collaborative planning for youth-led initiatives in support of vulnerable communities.

ECUMENICAL FORA

INDIAN DISABILITY ECUMENICAL ACCOMPANIMENT (NCCI-IDEA)

BUILDING INCLUSIVE CHURCHES FOR PERSONS USING WHEELCHAIRS



NCCI-IDEA observed International Wheelchair Day, marked on 1 March 2026, by drawing attention to the importance of accessibility, inclusion, and mobility for wheelchair users. The observance was held as part of the monthly online fellowship and advocacy on 7 March 2026. The programme featured Mr. Victor Vankhogin Doungel, a disability rights activist from Assam, who shared insights on the continuing challenges faced by wheelchair users in accessing public spaces and places of worship. He emphasized that despite government initiatives such as the ADIP scheme, which provides subsidized assistive devices including wheelchairs and tricycles, many of these mobility aids remain costly and inaccessible for several persons with disabilities.

He encouraged churches and faith communities to play an active role in bridging this gap by supporting persons in need of mobility aids and ensuring that church spaces become more accessible. He highlighted the need for simple yet significant changes, such as constructing ramps with handrails and creating inclusive environments for persons using wheelchairs. The gathering concluded with a collective call to churches to prioritize accessibility, inclusion, and mobility, affirming the message: “Let us make church spaces accessible for persons using wheelchairs.”

ECUMENICAL ENTREPRENEURS' FELLOWSHIP (EEF)

STRENGTHENING NETWORKS THROUGH ECUMENICAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP



During the last week of February and the first week of March 2026, several chapters of the NCCI—EEF held their monthly meetings across different cities, bringing together entrepreneurs and professionals for fellowship, learning, and collaborative growth.



The Nagpur Chapter met on 24 February 2026 at the NCCI Campus, Civil Lines, welcoming

new members and forming a five member core team. The chapter also resolved to meet regularly on the third Wednesday of every month.

The Kottayam Chapter gathered on 3 March 2026 at YMCA, Kottayam, where Mr. Baiju Nedumkery spoke on Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Kerala, and an 8-member core team was inducted.

The Thrissur Chapter met on 5 March 2026 at CSI Bethel Ashramam, with Mr. Jacob Samuel, Chairman of CEDAR Retail Services Pvt. Ltd., delivering a keynote on Business Beyond Profit. The chapter also elected a 4-member core team.

The Bengaluru Chapter convened on 7 March 2026 at St. Andrew's Church around the theme

The Entrepreneurial Walk, while the Trivandrum Chapter met the same day at St. Thomas Mar Thoma Syrian Church, where Mr. Nitin



Jacob Biju addressed participants on Fear God, Fear No Human.

These gatherings strengthened local networks and encouraged values-based entrepreneurship within the ecumenical community.



NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON HIV/AIDS (NCCI-NTFH)

FROM STIGMA TO SOLIDARITY CHURCHES PUT PEOPLE FIRST

NCCI – National Task Force on HIV & AIDS (NCCI-NTFH) observed Zero Discrimination Day on 1 March 2026 under the global theme “People First.” The observance encouraged constituent churches to reaffirm their commitment to creating inclusive faith communities free from stigma and discrimination toward people living with HIV (PLHIV+) and their families.

As part of the initiative, NCCI-NTFH shared key resources to strengthen awareness and advocacy within churches. These included the NACO Handbook on Prevention and Management of Stigma and Discrimination Associated with HIV & AIDS, the India HIV Estimation Technical Report 2025, and WHO factsheets on HIV/AIDS.

The observance also highlighted encouraging efforts by constituent churches that have actively supported people living with HIV and their families. Among those acknowledged were the Hindustan Covenant Church, the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church (Kottayam–Kochi Diocese), and the Madras–Calcutta–Bangalore Diocese for their meaningful engagement and compassionate outreach.

NCCI-NTFH further announced that such impact stories from churches will be shared every month to inspire more congregations to nurture safe and welcoming spaces where dignity, compassion, and acceptance are upheld for people living with HIV and their families.

NEWS FROM CHRISTIAN SERVICE AGENCY (CSA)

VOICES OF RESILIENCE DISPLACED WOMEN MARK INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY



Jan Vikas Kendra – CSA observed International Women’s Day on 8, 9, and 10 March 2026 in Bela-Bhamni’s displaced village, bringing together 45 women for a meaningful gathering that celebrated resilience, solidarity, and hope.

The programme provided a space for women to share their experiences and reflect on the challenges they face in their daily lives. A key highlight of the event was the sharing of success stories by members, which illustrated the strength and determination of women who continue to rebuild their lives despite displacement and socio-economic hardships.

The gathering encouraged dialogue, mutual support, and collective reflection on the importance of women’s empowerment and community solidarity. Participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to come together, share their journeys, and inspire one another toward greater confidence and resilience.

Through this observance, Jan Vikas Kendra reaffirmed its commitment to supporting women in marginalized communities and strengthening spaces where their voices, experiences, and leadership are recognized and celebrated.



NEWS FROM AUTONOMOUS BODIES

INDIA PEACE CENTRE (IPC)

RECOGNISING WOMEN CHANGEMAKERS ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY



The India Peace Centre (IPC) observed International Women’s Day by recognizing women who have been selflessly contributing to society. While the United Nations announced the theme “Rights. Justice. Action. For All Women and Girls” and the official campaign adopted “Give To Gain,” IPC chose to celebrate the transformative role of women in building a just and inclusive society. Around 70 women and men gathered to affirm the values

of equality, dignity, and justice for women.

Ms. Surbhi Shirpurkar, journalist and news anchor, the chief guest, spoke about the importance of amplifying women’s voices and shared her personal journey of growth and empowerment. Ms. Alice Joe Paul, former AGM of Air India, inspired participants with reflections from her professional experiences, while Ms. Nargis Chimthanawala, an educationist, highlighted the importance of education in empowering women.

Mr. Angelious Michael, Director of IPC, emphasized the need for women and men to work together in envisioning a just society. Rev. Kasta Dip, former Director of IPC and currently serving in Poland, shared stories of hope for an inclusive community where women are respected and valued. The programme was facilitated by Dr. Tejinder Singh Rawal, Treasurer of IPC, who noted that no society can progress without the full participation of women. The event was anchored by Ms. Tejal, RJ.



NEWS FROM CONSTITUENT MEMBERS

MALANKARA MAR THOMA SYRIAN CHURCH

MAR THOMA SEVIKA SANGHOM ORGANIZES WORLD DAY OF PRAYER



The Mar Thoma Sevika Sanghom, Thiruvalla, organized the World Day of Prayer, bringing together women and members of the church community in a spirit of prayer, reflection, and fellowship.

The gathering provided an opportunity for participants to unite in prayer for peace, justice, and the well-being of communities across the world. Through scripture readings, prayers, and

reflections, the programme emphasized the importance of faith, solidarity, and collective responsibility in addressing the challenges faced by societies today. Participants also reflected on the role of women in nurturing faith communities and promoting compassion, reconciliation, and service. The observance encouraged those present to strengthen their commitment to prayer and to work toward building communities rooted in justice, peace, and hope. The event concluded with a renewed call for believers to remain steadfast in prayer and action, affirming the spirit of global Christian unity that the World Day of Prayer represents.

NEWS FROM ECUMENICAL PARTNERS

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (WCC)

ECUMENICAL BODIES EXPRESS CONCERN OVER WIDENING CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Several global Christian organizations have issued a joint statement expressing deep concern over the widening conflict in the Middle East and its growing humanitarian and social consequences. The statement was released on 9 March 2026 by the World Council of Churches along with partners including the Middle East Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation, World Communion of Reformed Churches, World Methodist Council, Mennonite World Conference, Christian Conference of Asia, and ACT Alliance. The ecumenical bodies warned that the escalation of violence threatens peace and stability across the region and could lead to severe humanitarian consequences for civilians. They noted that the conflict is already affecting communities, livelihoods, and the future of people across the region.

The statement urged all parties involved in the conflict to respect international humanitarian law and to ensure the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. It also expressed concern about reports of violations of international law during ongoing military operations. Emphasizing the Christian commitment to peace, the ecumenical leaders rejected the logic of war and called for justice, human dignity, and renewed efforts toward peace and stability in the region. They further urged the international community to act responsibly and work toward ending violence and preventing further suffering among the people of the Middle East. [Read more...](#)

CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE OF ASIA (CCA)

REIMAGINING ECUMENISM IN A CHANGING ECCLESIAL LANDSCAPE.

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) has announced an international consultation on “Emerging Ecclesial Landscapes and Ecumenical Paradigms in Asia,” aimed at reflecting on the changing realities of churches and the ecumenical movement in the region. The consultation will bring together church and ecumenical leaders to discuss emerging trends and challenges affecting ecclesial unity, conciliar fellowship, and ecumenical cooperation in Asia. [Read more..](#)

CAMPAINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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