

End manual scavenging: PM

Eliminate Inhuman Practice In 6 Months, State Ministers Told

New Delhi: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Friday asked states to help eliminate manual scavenging within six months, saying the success of inclusive growth would be measured by the succour provided to "our sisters and brothers" from the weaker sections of society.

"One of the darkest blots on our development process is that even after 64 years of independence, we still have the heinous practice of manual scavenging," Manmohan Singh said at the inaugural session of a two-day conference here of state ministers of welfare and social justice.

"Today I would like you to pledge that this scourge will be eliminated from every corner of our country in the next six months. The conversion of dry latrines must be completed once and for all," he said.

Manmohan Singh said the success of government efforts towards inclusive growth will be measured by the succour they bring to "our sisters and brothers" of Dalits, tribals, Other Backward Classes, differently-abled and senior citizens. The prime minister called upon states to make use of a recent advisory sent by the home ministry, which said that employing a Dalit or tribal as a manual scavenger would be punishable under the



The National Advisory Council had been drawing the attention of the government about manual scavenging despite it being outlawed

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. "I urge you to make full use of this," he said.

Social justice and empowerment minister Mukul Wasnik said his ministry was planning a fresh survey to identify people still engaged in manual scavenging including their dependents. Wasnik said a self-employment scheme for rehabilitation of manual scavengers was introduced in 2007 with a view to rehabilitate all existing manual scavengers and their families by 2010.

New law to bring dignity to disabled: Manmohan

New Delhi: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Friday said the government was planning to bring a new law that will ensure dignity and equality to the disabled people. India has an estimated 60 million disabled. He also said the government was taking various initiatives that will empower the disabled.

"Various initiatives are being taken to address concerns of persons with disabilities," the prime minister said at the inaugural session of a two-day conference here of state ministers of welfare and social justice. PTI

He said the National Advisory Council had been drawing the attention of the government about manual scavenging despite it being outlawed. "All out efforts will be made to ensure that identified manual scavengers are rehabilitated during the current year itself," Wasnik said.

Manmohan Singh said the UPA government had taken a number of initiatives in cooperation with the corporate sector to employ the weaker sections. IANS