

[Print](#) [Close Window](#)



India's human rights under UN scanner today, AG to defend

Maneesh Chhibber Posted online: Thu May 24 2012, 02:29 hrs

New Delhi : Attorney General Goolam E Vahanvati, who will be at the United Nations on Thursday to defend India's record in maintaining human rights at the second four-yearly Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the United Nations' Human Rights Council, Geneva, has a tough task in hand. For, apart from the highly critical reports sent by many NGOs, he is expected to provide a strong rebuttal to the damning report sent by the National Human Rights Commission NHRC.

The NHRC report, finalised in December last year, comes down heavily on the government for persisting with the Armed Forces Special Powers Act in J&K and the Northeast even though, by its own admission, "India does not face either international or non-international armed conflict situations".

It also says that "it would be a travesty" if the original Prevention of Torture Bill, which was passed by the Lok Sabha, became a law. The NHRC report is critical of the government on many other counts, particularly overcrowding of jails, custodial deaths, instances of malnutrition, bonded labour.

Sources said the decision to send Vahanvati was taken in view of the possibility of India facing uncomfortable questions at the UPR.

It is learnt that the AG will inform the member-countries that India is the only country that outsourced the task of preparing the national report to a non-governmental committee.

On AFSPA, apart from pointing out that it has been upheld as constitutional by the Supreme Court, Vahanvati is likely to say that there are strict guidelines for the armed forces when dealing with terrorists and insurgents. He may talk of the affect that reforms like NREGA, Right to Education Act, National Rural Health Mission, Right to Information Act, have had on the citizens.

Sources said an issue on which India could face criticism is the failure of completely implement all recommendations of the 2008 UPR.