

Hinder - 6-12-12

CITY

Cluster scheme buses to cross 400 mark

With the opening of a new route and addition of new buses, the total number of cluster buses would cross the 400 mark in the Capital: Page 4



'Women'

Union Minister stressed up job works t

Voice your grievances louder, kids with disabilities told

Sowmiya Ashok

NEW DELHI: "Your voices should always be higher not lower," said National Commission for Protection of Child Rights chairperson Shantha Sinha, addressing close to 100 children with disabilities who had come together from across the country for a 'National Assembly' here on Tuesday. "With your voices, we can build capacities within the system as there is a deficit in the system presently," she added.

The adults have a lot of work to do within the government and society, said the chairperson, while also encouraging the children to keep voicing their demands. Before Ms. Sinha spoke, representatives from various States such as Karnataka, Orissa and West Bengal voiced their demands in specific fields such as accessibility, reservation, education and healthcare. Among the demands put forth by the children were making public infrastructure accessible to all, providing quality education such as provisions for scholarships and trained teachers, free health care facilities and increasing the reservation quota to 8 per cent for people with disability in government and private sector jobs.



CARVING THEIR SPACE: Congress leader Oscar Fernandes with participants of India's first 'National Assembly' for children with disabilities at Vishwa Yuvak Kendra in New Delhi on Tuesday.

- PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

"Parents of children with disabilities should allow their children to leave the house. They should encourage their children to attend school and motivate drop-outs to continue their education," said Manoj from Andhra Pradesh. Other children demanded separate toilet facilities in schools, concessions on public transport, equal attention paid to both boys and girls with respect to nutritional intake and separate spaces for children with disabilities to be treated in hospitals. They also asked for investments in

skill development and training.

Amar Thakur from Kolkata spoke about how persons with disabilities should be included in governance and decision-making. "We are not included in decision-making in our villages because we are disabled," said Amar Thakur from Kolkata. "Even we should be given opportunities like everyone else," he said. As for Rekha Kumari, who was representing the Delhi/NCR region, she said that the attitude of people cost her six years of education. "When I went for

admissions to schools they would keep asking me how I will be able to attend school in this condition. Due to this, I wasn't admitted for many years," she said. "I would have finished my graduation by now but I am still in school."

Going through the demands put forth by the children, Deputy Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities T. D. Dhariyal guided the children on what else to add to the list or pointers on how to modify certain demands. "A good question to ask will be a list of organisations and commissions that work for the rights of children with disabilities. Then find out if these organisations are protecting your rights?" he said. Mr. Dhariyal pointed to the alarming fact that the government does not have figures for the number of children with disabilities.

He also suggested reviewing the demand for reserving 8 per cent of jobs for persons with disabilities. "The earlier figure of 3 per cent was set based on census figures on the number of persons with disabilities. Asking for 8 per cent does not seem logical," he advised.

The National Assembly of Children with Disabilities was organised by World Vision India.