



## Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah chairs the 26th meeting of Eastern Zonal Council in Patna, Bihar, today

Being the cultural capital of the country, the eastern region has also been the centre of many major educational institutions since ancient times

Eastern Region has laid the foundation for the industrial development of the entire country, before and after independence many patriots from this region have made significant contribution for the redevelopment of the country

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has not only given the vision to strengthen the spirit of cooperative federalism but has also realized it in the last 9 years

Zonal Council meetings should avoid differences on political matters and try to resolve issues in a liberal manner

There is a need to conduct a review every three months at the Chief Minister, Minister and Chief Secretary level on issues like eliminating malnutrition among children, reducing school dropout ratio of children, prompt investigation of rape cases against women and children

Land acquisition for Hajipur-Sugauli New Rail Line Project is almost complete, Land acquisition has been started for Nabadwipghat -Nabadwipdham New Rail Project (15 Km) of

# West Bengal, the work of Gauge conversion of the complete section of Krishnanagar-Nabadwipghat (12.2 Km), i.e. Krishnanagar-Amghata(8.30 km) has been started

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The Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah chaired the 26<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Eastern Zonal Council in Patna, Bihar today. The Chief Minister of Bihar Shri Nitish Kumar, and senior Ministers from Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand attended the meeting. Secretary of the Inter State Council Secretariat, Chief Secretaries of member states, senior officials of state governments and central ministries and departments were also present in the meeting.



In his address, Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah said that apart from being the cultural capital of the country, the eastern region has also been the center of many major educational institutions since ancient times. He said that a lot of experiments have taken place in the field of education in the eastern region and even in competitive examinations, children from the eastern region are most successful. The Home Minister also said that the Eastern Region has laid the foundation for the industrial development of the entire country and many patriots from this region have contributed significantly to the redevelopment of the country before and after independence. The region is rich in mineral resources and water and the eastern states like Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand and West Bengal provide almost all the mineral resources for the needs of the entire country.

Shri Amit Shah said that the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of strengthening the spirit of cooperative federalism has been realized in the last 9 years. Highlighting the increase in number of Zonal Council meetings after Shri Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister, the Home Minister said that from 2004 to May 2014, the total number of meeting of the Zonal Councils and their Standing Committees was only 25 and during this period on an average 2.7 meetings were held every year. But in the last 9 years from June 2014 till now, despite the Covid-19 pandemic, a total of 56 meetings of the Zonal Councils and their Standing Committees were held and an average of 6.2

meetings were held every year. A total of 9 meetings have been held so far this year which includes 4 meetings of Zonal Councils and 5 meetings of standing committees. He added that this increase of more than double showcases the Prime Minister Modi's Team India concept.

Addressing the meeting that lasted for about three hours, the Home Minister said that 1157 issues have been resolved in the meetings of the zonal councils. He said that in the zonal council meetings, differences on political matters should be avoided and efforts should be made to resolve matters in a liberal manner. Shri Amit Shah said that many issues of national importance have also been included in the agenda of the Zonal Council meetings. These include eliminating malnutrition among children through Poshan Abhiyan (nutrition campaign), reducing the dropout rate of school children, operationalisation of Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) for speedy investigation and speedy disposal of rape cases against women and children. The facility of Banks/India Post Payment Bank branches within 5 km of each village, formation of two lakh new Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACs) in the country and strengthening of all existing PACs in the country have also been included. He said that these issues need to be reviewed every three months at the level of Chief Minister, Minister and Chief Secretary. Issues related to mining, central financial assistance on some items, construction of basic infrastructure, land acquisition and land transfer, water sharing, implementation of Direct Benefit Transfer scheme, state reorganization and issues of common interest at the regional level were also discussed in the meeting.

Shri Amit Shah said that in the meeting, all four states – Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha gave impressive presentations regarding good practices being implemented in respective states. He said that these good practices will inspire other states to take positive steps. It was informed in the meeting that the land acquisition work for Hajipur-Sugauli new railway line project has almost been completed. Also, land acquisition work for Nabadwipghat-Nabadwipdham New Railway Project (15 km) of West Bengal has also started. Additionally, work on the completed section of Krishnanagar-Nabadwipghat gauge conversion (12.2 km), i.e. Krishnanagar-Amghata (8.30 km) has been commissioned.



Regarding the caste-based survey conducted in Bihar, the Home and Cooperation Minister said that when his party was in power in Bihar, it had supported the caste-based survey. He said the Governor also approved the bill. He added that there are some issues regarding caste based survey, which he hoped that the state government will resolve them. Shri Shah said that the Central government never had any intention of creating hurdles in the caste based survey.

The Union Home Minister said that although the role of the Zonal Council meetings is advisory, but on the basis of my four and half years of experience as Union Home Minister, I can say that by giving importance to the meetings of the Council and its Standing Committee, we have resolved many issues. A total of 48 issues were discussed in depth in the 13th meeting of the Standing Committee held on 17 June 2023, out of which a total of 28 issues were resolved by mutual consent after discussion between the Chief Secretaries of the member states and senior officials of the states and the Centre. A total of 21 issues were discussed in today's meeting.

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