

Ministry of Home Affairs



## Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah addresses the Bastar Pandum Program in Bastar, Chhattisgarh

The Modi government is working to give international recognition to Bastar Pandum by bringing its traditions, culture, and art to the world

Bastar Pandum Program will be celebrated in 12 categories next year and tribals from all over the country will participate in it

Naxalites cannot stop the development of entire Bastar; Bastar has now become a symbol of the future, not fear

Where the sound of bullets used to echo, now school bells are ringing, where building roads was a dream, highways are being constructed

Everyone should strive with dedication and fearlessness to make the dreams of development a reality, because under Modi Ji's governance, no one needs to be afraid

Bastar is developing because now instead of Naxalism, Bastar is moving ahead with the flame of development, trust and victory

The Chhattisgarh government will declare any village that successfully gets all Naxalites to surrender as Naxal-free and will provide a development fund of one crore rupees to that village

**When someone from Sukma becomes a sub-inspector, a barrister from Bastar, a doctor from Dantewada and a collector from Kanker, then development will happen and we have to develop and build Bastar in this way**

## **Modi government is committed to make the entire country free from Naxalism by March 2026**

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Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah addressed the Bastar Pandum program in Dantewada Chhattisgarh today. Many dignitaries including Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Shri Vishnu Deo Sai and Deputy Chief Minister Shri Vijay Sharma were present on the occasion.

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation said that Maharaja Praveer Chandra Bhajdev gave his life for the water, forest, land, and culture of the tribal people. He noted that Maharaja Praveer Chandra's popularity as a people's king was unbearable for the then government, leading to his murder through a conspiracy. Shri Shah further emphasized that today, as Bastar stands on the brink of freedom from red terror and has embarked on the path of development, the soul of Praveer Chandra Ji, wherever it may be, is undoubtedly blessing the people of Bastar.

Shri Amit Shah stated that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, starting next year, artists from every tribal district of the country will be included in the Bastar Pandum. He mentioned that to give international recognition to Bastar Pandum, the Modi government is working to showcase the traditions, culture, and art of Bastar by taking ambassadors from all countries on a tour of Bastar, and spreading it worldwide. Shri Shah also mentioned that 47,000 artists from 188 Gram Panchayats, 12 Nagar Panchayats, 8 Nagar Parishads, one Municipality, and 32 Janpads have participated in this festival. The district administration and the culture department have allocated 5 crore rupees for Bastar Pandum. He emphasized that this Pandum will work to preserve and promote local and traditional art, culture, craftsmanship, festivals, food, languages, customs, attire, jewelry, traditional songs, music, and cuisines in their original form.

Union Home Minister said that we want the youth of Bastar to receive the most modern education, compete on every platform with the youth of the world, and attain global prosperity, but they should never forget their culture, language, and traditions. He further noted that the culture, dialects, musical instruments and food of Bastar are the jewels of the culture of not just Chhattisgarh but the entire India and we have to preserve it. Shri Shah mentioned that the Bastar Pandum festival, which is being celebrated in seven categories this year, will be celebrated in twelve categories next year, and tribal people from across the country will participate. Union Home Minister also said that India's strength lies in its unity in diversity, the fusion of various cultures, arts, traditions, languages, dialects, and cuisines. He emphasized that we will stand strong in every competition with the world, but we will also preserve our culture and other heritage, and Bastar Pandum is the beginning of this effort.

Union Home Minister said that the time has passed when bullets were fired and bomb blasts occurred here. He appealed to all Naxalites, urging them to lay down their weapons and join the mainstream because Bastar wants development. He stated that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi wants to give everything to Bastar, but this is only possible when there is peace in Bastar. He emphasized that

children should go to school, mothers' health should be taken care of, tribals and youth should not suffer from malnutrition, arrangements should be made for children's education, every village should have a dispensary, and there should be a hospital in every tehsil—only then can development happen. He further mentioned that this can only be achieved if the people of Bastar decide to make every village Naxal-free. Shri Shah also mentioned that the Chhattisgarh government has announced that any village that gets all Naxalites to surrender will be declared Naxal-free and will be given a development fund of one crore rupees. He added that no one wants to harm anyone, and therefore Naxalites should abandon violence and come into the mainstream, as both the Government of India and the Government of Chhattisgarh will provide protection. Union Home Minister said that Naxalites, with their weapons, cannot stop the development of entire Bastar.

Shri Amit Shah said that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given the slogan "Vocal for Local" and has facilitated the marketing of a unique product from each district by associating it with the GI tag, promoting it in markets across the country. He mentioned that Prime Minister Modi has emphasized that history is not limited to books; our tribal freedom fighters should receive respect and recognition across the country. Prime Minister Modi has taken steps to honor tribal heroes like Veer Gundadhur of Bastar, who fought for independence. He also highlighted that Prime Minister Modi has dedicated the birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda as "Janjatiya GauravDiwas" and has declared the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary year as "Janjatiya Gaurav Varsha".

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation stated that previous governments gave the slogan of "Garibi Hatao", but for 75 years did nothing for the development of the poor. Prime Minister Modi, over the past 10 years, has built over 4 crore houses for the country's millions of poor, provided 11 crore gas connections, constructed 12 crore toilets, delivered tap water to 15 crore homes, distributed free rations to 80 crore people, and provided free medical treatment up to 5 lakh rupees for 70 crore people.

Shri Amit Shah said that those who have understood that for development, one needs a computer, not a gun in hand, and a pen, not IEDs and grenades, have all surrendered. He mentioned that in the direction of ending Naxalism, 521 Naxalites have surrendered so far this year, while 881 Naxalites surrendered in 2024. Shri Shah expressed confidence that those Naxalites who lay down their arms will be able to join the mainstream and progress, but those who choose the path of violence by picking up weapons will be dealt with strictly by the security forces. He added that the Modi government is committed to making the entire country free from Naxalism by March 2026.

Union Home Minister said that Bastar has now become a symbol of the future, not fear. Earlier, due to the terror of Naxalites, politicians were stopped from holding rallies and gatherings, but times have changed. Today, they are celebrating Ram Navami, Ashtami, and the Bastar Pandum Festival in front of 50,000 tribal brothers and sisters. He mentioned that where once the sound of bullets echoed, now the sound of machines is heard; where villages were once desolate, now school bells ring; where roads were once a dream, highways are being built; and where children once feared going to school, today they are connecting with the world through computers. He added that Bastar's development is happening because no one is associating with Naxalism anymore.

Shri Amit Shah said that Bastar is now moving forward with the light of development, trust, and victory. He emphasized that village assemblies should be convened to encourage Naxalites to surrender and help open the path to development. Shri Shah further stated that when someone from Sukma becomes a Sub-Inspector, from Bastar becomes a Barrister, from Dantewada becomes a

Doctor, and from Kanker becomes a Collector, then development will take place. This is the kind of development and progress we need to create in Bastar. He urged everyone to work with dedication and fearlessness to make the dreams of development a reality, as under PM Modi's leadership, no one needs to be afraid.

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**RK/VV/PR/PS**

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