

Ministry of Home Affairs



## Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah, participates in the Bastar Dussehra festival in Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh

The 75-day-long Bastar Dussehra festival is not only significant for the tribal community, Chhattisgarh, or India but is also the largest cultural festival in the world

For years, some people spread the misconception that Naxalism is a fight for development, but the root cause of Bastar's deprivation from development is Naxalism itself

On behalf of Prime Minister Modi, I want to assure you that after March 31, 2026, Naxalites will no longer be able to hinder Bastar's development or the rights of its people

I urge the people of Bastar to convince the misled youth to lay down their arms, join the mainstream, and become partners in Bastar's development

The Central and Chhattisgarh governments are fully committed to the development of Bastar and all Naxal-affected areas

If anyone attempts to disrupt Bastar's peace with weapons, our armed forces and police will together give a fitting response

Bastar Dussehra, Bastar Olympics, its cuisine, attire, art, and musical instruments have become a center of attraction not only in Bastar but across the world

Since 1874, the active participation, judicial system, efforts to preserve tribal culture, and the historical tradition of public dialogue in the Muria Darbar represent a global heritage

Bastar Dussehra and Muria Darbar work to unite tribal communities and bind the entire Bastar region together

The Rath Yatra of Maa Danteshwari, which began in the 14th century, initiated a cultural awakening across the entire Bastar region

If 140 crore people embrace the pledge of Swadeshi, no one can stop India from becoming the world's leading economic power

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Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah, participated in the Bastar Dussehra festival being organized in Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh today. Prior to his address, Shri Shah visited and offered prayers at the renowned Danteshwari Temple. The Bastar Dussehra Festival was attended by several dignitaries, including Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Shri Vishnu Deo Sai and Deputy Chief Minister Dr. Vijay Sharma.



In his address, Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah said that the 75-day-long Bastar Dussehra, the largest and most unique festival in the world, is not only a cultural event for the tribal community, Bastar, Chhattisgarh, or India but also for the entire world. Shri Shah mentioned that during his prayers at the Danteshwari Temple, he sought blessings for the security forces to gain the strength to make the Bastar region free from Naxalite violence by March 31, 2026. He debunked the misconception propagated by some in Delhi that Naxalism arose from a struggle for development, asserting that Naxalism itself is the primary reason for Bastar's deprivation from progress. He highlighted that while every village in the country now has access to electricity, drinking water, roads, toilets, health insurance up to ₹5 lakh, and free grain distribution, with rice procurement at ₹3,100 per quintal, Bastar has lagged behind in this race for progress.



The Home Minister assured, on behalf of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, that after March 31, 2026, Naxalites will no longer be able to hinder Bastar's development or the rights of its people. Shri Shah said that the youth from Bastar who have misled into Naxalism belong to local villages. He appealed to the people of Bastar to convince these misguided youth to lay down their arms and join the mainstream to contribute to the region's development.

Union Home Minister praised the Chhattisgarh government for formulating the country's most effective surrender policy, noting that over 500 individuals have surrendered in the past month alone. He urged Naxalites to surrender and announced that every village which will be completely free of Naxalism would receive ₹1 crore from the Chhattisgarh government for development. Shri Shah emphasized that Naxalism has brought no benefits and has significantly reduced as a menace.



Shri Shah stated that both the Central and Chhattisgarh governments are fully committed to the development of Bastar and other Naxal-affected areas, with attractive policies in place. Over the past 10 years, Prime Minister Modi has provided approximately ₹4.40 lakh crore for Chhattisgarh's development. The state is progressing at an unprecedented pace, with industries being established, educational institutions being built, healthcare facilities expanding, and small-scale industries being promoted.

Union Home Minister reiterated the appeal for Naxalites to surrender under the attractive surrender policy. However, he also warned that any attempt to disturb Bastar's peace through violence would be met with a strong response from the armed forces, CRPF, and Chhattisgarh Police. He firmly stated that March 31, 2026, is the set date by which Naxalism will be completely eradicated from the country.



Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah said that this year, tribals from across the country will participate in the Bastar Olympics. He stated that Bastar's Pandum festival, cuisine, attire, art, and musical instruments have become a center of attraction not only in Bastar but worldwide. He emphasized that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's resolve is to preserve our culture, language, food, clothing, and musical instruments for centuries, not just for India but for the entire world. The Chhattisgarh government and the Government of India are fully committed to fulfilling this resolve.

Shri Amit Shah highlighted that the Muria Darbar, with its active participation, judicial system, preservation of tribal culture, and tradition of public dialogue since 1874, is no less than a global heritage. He said that the Muria Darbar is a source of inspiration and knowledge for the entire country.



Referring to the Swadeshi Mela organized by the Swadeshi Jagran Manch, Union Home Minister said that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has long emphasized the importance of Swadeshi (indigenous products). The Swadeshi Jagran Manch has been promoting Swadeshi as a mass movement for many years. Now, PM Modi has called upon every household to pledge to use only Indian-made products. He urged every trader to ensure that their shops or shopping malls do not stock foreign goods. Shri Shah stated that if India's 140 crore population embraces the Swadeshi pledge, no one can stop India from becoming the world's top economic power.

Union Home Minister added that Prime Minister Modi has recently provided significant relief to mothers and sisters across the country, including Chhattisgarh, by granting substantial GST exemptions on 395 items. Almost all food and beverage items have been made tax-free, and daily-use items are taxed at only five percent. He said that such extensive tax reductions have never been seen before in the country. By adopting Swadeshi values, the nation's economy will gain unprecedented momentum. Shri Shah mentioned that over 300 Swadeshi companies are participating in the Bastar Dussehra Festival. He added that the Swadeshi Walkathon has become an effective medium to give a new identity to the Swadeshi spirit, and Swadeshi fairs organized nationwide are further accelerating this movement.



Shri Amit Shah said that the 75-day Bastar Dussehra is a matter of pride, identity, and honor for all. He said that the chariot procession, which began in the 14th century, sparked cultural awakening in the region. Shri Shah mentioned that Bastar Dussehra and Muria Darbar work to unite tribal communities and bind the entire Bastar region together.

Union Home Minister said that the Modi government has launched several schemes to honor tribals. For the first time, Prime Minister Modi elevated a daughter of the tribal community, Smt. Draupadi Murmu, to the highest office of the country as President, a matter of great pride. He said that when Her

Excellency Draupadi Murmu meets world leaders, it fills not only the tribal community but all Indians with pride. The elevation of a daughter from a poor family in Odisha to the highest democratic office is a matter of pride for all. Shri Shah added that PM Modi decided to celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of Lord Birsa Munda as Tribal Pride Year, establishing his birth anniversary as Tribal Pride Day. Prime Minister Modi has also approved over 15,000 PM Awas houses for those who surrendered after leaving Naxalism and for the families of those killed in Naxal violence in the seven districts of Bastar division.



Shri Amit Shah mentioned that Shri Pundi Ram Mandavi and Shri Hemchand Manjhi from Narayanpur district, and Shri Ajay Kumar Mandavi from Kanker, have been honored with Padma Awards. On the occasion of the Bastar Dussehra Festival, the 20th installment of the 'Mahtari Vandan Yojana' was distributed, providing ₹607 crore to 70 lakh mothers in Chhattisgarh. The Chief Minister Rural Bus Scheme was also launched, covering Bastar and Surguja divisions and including 250 villages.

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**RK/VV/PS/PR**

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