



**Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah, attends the closing ceremony of Bastar Pandum 2026 in Jagdalpur Chhattisgarh today as the Chief Guest**

**Bastar's identity is not 'Barud'; its true identity is its rich culture and heritage**

**'Bastar Pandum' has revived the local culture by encompassing 12 categories, including Bastar's cuisine and dances**

**Participation of 55,000 tribal people in Bastar Pandum is proof that Bastar is becoming free from the fear of Naxalism**

**Fully committed to the protection of tribal communities, the Modi govt is giving global recognition to Bastar's dances, arts, and tribal culture**

**Those Naxalites who surrender will be rehabilitated by the govt, but any use of weapons will be met with a response in kind**

**In the next five years, Bastar will become the most developed region among all tribal areas, and new tourism activities will enrich Bastar with employment opportunities**

**Declaring the birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda as Tribal Pride Day and his 150th birth anniversary as the Year of Tribal Pride is a clear testament to Modi Ji's respect for the tribal community**

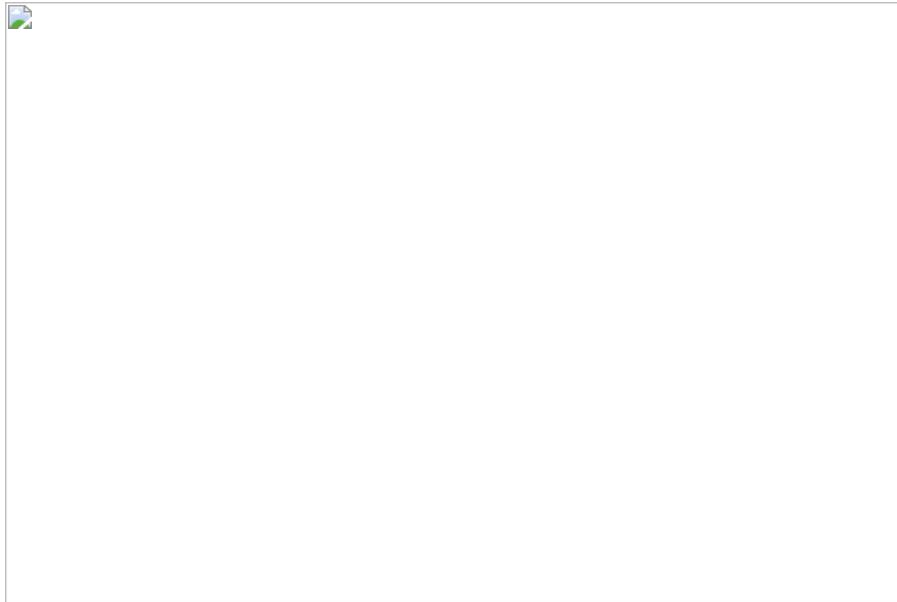
**Core basis of the fight against Naxalism is the protection of tribal farmers, innocent children, and women**

**New industrial area being developed on 118 acres will become a strong foundation for employment for the people of Bastar**

**Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision is to showcase Bastar's culture to the nation and the world**

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah, attended the closing ceremony of Bastar Pandum 2026 in Chhattisgarh today as the Chief Guest. On this occasion, several dignitaries, including the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, Shri Vishnu Deo Sai, and Deputy Chief Minister Shri Vijay Sharma, were present.

In his address, Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah, said that Bastar, which till a few years ago lived in fear of Naxalites, where mortar shells, gunfire, and IED blasts spread terror among our tribal brothers and sisters. Today in the same Bastar 55 thousand people revived the local culture across 12 disciplines such as cuisine, songs, dance, drama, attire, traditions, and forest-based medicines. He said that this is a very significant achievement.



Shri Amit Shah said that the Chhattisgarh government has breathed new life into the culture of Bastar. In the previous Bastar Pandum festival, competitions were held in 7 categories, and this time, by adding five new categories, Chief Minister Shri Vishnu Deo Sai has worked to promote tribal and Bastar culture. He said that this time, 55,000 participants from seven districts, 1,885 gram panchayats, and 32 block headquarters took part across 12 categories.

Union Home Minister said that the culture and art of Bastar are unparalleled across any tribal region of the world, and we want to preserve them for hundreds of years to come. He added that Bastar's art, culture, songs, and dances are not only the pride of Bastar but also a jewel in the crown of India's culture, and the Bastar Pandum festival has further promoted this rich heritage. Shri Shah said that the tribes of Bastar have their own distinct culture. He said that since the time of Lord Ram, they have preserved their culture. The region's major dances are also gaining recognition on the national platform in the coming days.



Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation said that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision is to take Bastar's culture to the nation and the world. He said that Bastar's identity should not be associated with 'Barud', but with its rich culture and heritage. Shri Shah also said that we are fully committed to the protection of tribal communities, the Modi government is giving global recognition to Bastar's dances, arts, and tribal culture. Prime Minister Modi firmly believes that history is not only what is written in books; history is what lives on in the memories of the people.

Shri Amit Shah said that declaring the birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda as Tribal Pride Day and his 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary as the Year of Tribal Pride is a clear testament to Modi Ji's respect for the tribal community. He said that Modi Ji has promoted the commercial use of tribal crafts, culture, cuisine, and forest produce, and put in place arrangements for the branding and marketing of around five lakh forest products and traditional handicrafts.



Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation said that Pandit Ram Mandavi of Narayanpur, Hemchand Manjhi, Ajay Kumar Mandavi of Kanker, and Bhudhari Dati of Dantewada have been honored with Padma awards in the fields of art, health, and education, thereby gaining recognition across the country. He added that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji has launched a comprehensive programme to honour more than 700 tribal communities. The Prime Minister initiated the Tribal Museum with a cost of ₹200 crore, which preserves the memories of all tribal leaders who participated in the freedom struggle.

Home Minister thanked the President of India for attending the inauguration ceremony of Bastar Pandum. Shri Shah said that he had requested that the participants who secured the first three positions in all 12 categories be invited for a meal at Rashtrapati Bhavan, which the President has accepted. He added that these participants will showcase their culture and art at the President's House, which is a matter of great honour.



Union Home Minister, Shri Amit Shah, said the core basis of the fight against Naxalism is the protection of tribal farmers, innocent children, and women. He said that when Naxalites plant IEDs, don't they realize that tribal farmers may step on them and become permanently disabled? Don't they realize that an innocent child could be devastated by this? Where do the Naxalites get such cruelty from? Appealing to the remaining Naxalites to lay down their arms, Union Home Minister said that the government will take care of those who surrender in every way and will rehabilitate them with dignity. Shri Shah added that the rehabilitation package prepared by the Chhattisgarh government is very attractive.

Shri Amit Shah said that he wants to appeal to all Naxalites to send their daughters for rehabilitation, because the girls have their whole lives ahead of them. He said that those who have surrendered on a large scale will not face any harm. The Home Minister said that those who fire bullets in villages, plant IEDs in fields and on roads, burn schools and hospitals, and shut down mobile towers will not be spared. He said that weapons will be met with weapons.

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation said that today Bastar is shining before the entire country as an excellent brand. Many schools that had been closed for 40 years have been reopened by the Chhattisgarh government. Shri Amit Shah said he wants to ask tribal brothers and sisters: whom did the Naxalites benefit by shutting down schools? Our new generation was deprived of basic education. Shri Shah said that in the next five years, Bastar will become the most developed region among all tribal areas, and new tourism activities will enrich Bastar with employment opportunities. All closed primary health centres, hospitals, and schools will be restarted, and higher secondary schools and colleges will also be built. He added that now post offices are opening in every village, mobile towers are being installed, and roads connecting villages are being built properly. The Home Minister said that in many villages, the national flag, the Tricolour, has been hoisted after four decades.

Shri Amit Shah said that every village will have connectivity, and a post office or bank branch will be opened every 5 kilometres. Paddy from every tribal farmer will be procured at the rate of ₹3,100, and each tribal person will be given 5 kg of rice per person per month free of cost. In addition, gas cylinders will be provided, every household will get tap connections, and water will flow from the taps. Elected representatives alone will represent panchayat, tehsil panchayat, and district panchayat. He said that once Naxalism ends, many new forms of tourism such as adventure tourism, homestays, canopy walks, and glass bridges will begin to develop, and very soon we will take Bastar far ahead. Shri Shah added that in Bastar, a new industrial area and an auto gig hub are being developed over 118 acres, which will provide employment to tribal youth.

Union Home Minister said that work on the Raoghat–Jagdalpur rail project, costing ₹3,500 crore, has begun. The river-linking project is also being taken forward, and efforts are underway to provide vocational training in various trades to more than 90,000 youths. A new irrigation project on the Indravati River, costing ₹36 crore, will also be introduced, which will generate 120 megawatts of power as well.

Shri Amit Shah said that today there is no curfew-like atmosphere in Bastar, and at night one can see glimpses of cultural dances in the villages—this is a very big change for Bastar. He said that the Bastar Olympics has been successfully held, and now we are thinking of expanding Bastar Pandum further. Home Minister thanked all the security personnel who took part in the strong and decisive fight against Naxalism on behalf of the tribal people of Bastar, and expressed gratitude to the families of the brave security personnel who sacrificed their lives in this struggle. He said that Bastar will become Naxal-free within the stipulated time frame, and no one should have any doubt about this.

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