



Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah launches various initiatives related to women empowerment and cooperation in Kollam, Keralam

Empowerment of women through cooperation is one of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's core objectives, because when the woman of a household prospers, the entire family prospers

Our objective is to ensure that the benefits of 'Sahkar se Samridhi' reach the rural and poor women of the country:
Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation

Shri Amit Shah inaugurates 'Vanitham She-Mart Shops' and launches the sale of NCCF's 'Janah' products

It is a matter of immense satisfaction that 'She-Mart' is being launched from Keralam, which has more than 23,000 active cooperative societies and a well-organised cooperative movement dating back to the pre-Independence era

She-Mart is an important initiative to directly connect women Self-Help Groups and rural women entrepreneurs with markets and consumers: Shri Amit Shah

Farmers and women entrepreneurs will benefit across the entire value chain — from procurement and processing to branding, packaging and direct access to retail markets

Along with NCCF's more than 2,500 retail outlets, over 300 'She-Marts' will be opened across Keralam, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, providing farmers and women entrepreneurs the

benefit of direct market access

Under Modi Ji's leadership, women-led development has received sustained impetus; women's participation in the labour force has risen from 23% in 2014-15 to 40% today

Bank accounts of 36 crore women have been opened, Triple Talaq has been prohibited, more than 11,000 daughters are serving as officers in the Armed Forces, and 3 crore women have become Lakhpati Didis — a number targeted to reach 6 crore by 2029

Keralam has immense potential in the Blue Economy; the Modi Government has introduced numerous schemes to strengthen it through cooperation

Greetings to all Malayali sisters and brothers on the journey from Kerala to Keralam

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In line with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of "Sahkar se Samriddhi", and as an important step towards strengthening the rural economy through cooperation and giving fresh impetus to women-led development, Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah today launched various initiatives related to women empowerment and cooperation at the Pavithram Convention Centre in Kollam, Keralam. Union Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas and Tourism Shri Suresh Gopi, along with several dignitaries and representatives associated with the cooperative sector, was present on the occasion.

At the outset of his address, Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah congratulated and extended his best wishes to all Malayali brothers and sisters on the journey from Kerala to 'Keralam'. He said that during the Amrit Kaal of Independence, farmers and people associated with the cooperative sector had long demanded the creation of a separate Ministry of Cooperation at the Centre. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi took a major step towards the country's rural development, agricultural development and women empowerment by establishing the Ministry of Cooperation at the Centre, infusing new energy and momentum into the cooperative sector.

Highlighting Keralam's rich cooperative legacy, Shri Amit Shah said that Keralam is among those states where the cooperative movement has remained strong and well-organised since even before Independence. Regions such as Travancore, Kochi and Malabar have had a strong tradition of cooperation since the pre-Independence era, making Keralam's cooperative movement an important

example for the entire country. He said that the 'She-Mart' initiative being launched today in the cooperative sector was announced by the Union Finance Minister in the Budget, and it is a matter of great satisfaction that the initiative is being launched from Keralam.

Elaborating on the initiatives launched to make affordable food products available to the people and farmers, the Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation said that an initiative has also been launched in Keralam to make onions, Bharat Atta and Bharat Rice available to farmers and the general public through NAFED's mobile vans. He said that under the Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses, urad and gram seeds are being provided to women farmers. Similarly, under the NAFED-Kalyan Scholarship Scheme, scholarships are being provided to girl children from nearly 2,000 families.

Underscoring the significance of 'She-Mart' for women Self-Help Groups and rural women entrepreneurs, Shri Amit Shah said that the most important aspect of today's programme is the launch of 'She-Mart'. The concept of She-Mart is an important initiative aimed at directly connecting women Self-Help Groups and rural women entrepreneurs with markets and consumers. He said that institutions such as NAFED, Kendriya Bhandar and Amul will also help women-led enterprises expand on a much larger scale.

Referring to the expansion of 'She-Mart' and the new opportunities it will create for farmers and women entrepreneurs, the Union Minister of Cooperation said that there are plans to establish more than 300 She-Mart stores across Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, where local products, along with Bharat Brand products, will be made available to consumers. He said that farmers and women entrepreneurs will benefit at every stage of the value chain — from procurement, processing, branding and packaging to direct access to the retail market.

Appreciating Keralam's robust cooperative ecosystem, Shri Amit Shah said that the state has a very old, extensive and strong cooperative structure, with more than 23,000 cooperative institutions functioning effectively. Inviting Keralam's Minister of Cooperation to visit Delhi, he said that the Union Government would be happy to ensure that Keralam receives the maximum possible benefit from all Government of India schemes. He added that the Union Government can also extend the necessary support to Keralam in organic agriculture and other related sectors.

Highlighting the central role of women empowerment in Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of 'Sahkar se Samridhi', the Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation said that empowering women through cooperation is one of the Prime Minister's key objectives and forms an important foundation of his larger vision and core goals. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has consistently guided that when the woman of a household prospers, the entire family prospers. When a woman in the household is empowered, its impact is reflected in the empowerment of the entire family. Therefore, the Government's objective is to ensure that the greatest benefits of 'Sahkar se Samridhi' reach the rural and poor women of the country.

Referring to the role of NAFED and NCCF in strengthening cooperation at the national level, Shri Amit Shah said that both NAFED and NCCF are important institutions operating across the country. At present, around 8 lakh farmers are associated with NAFED and nearly 6 lakh women farmers are associated with NCCF. He said that efforts will be made in the coming days to further increase these numbers and strengthen both institutions.

Highlighting the steps taken in recent years towards women empowerment and the outcomes achieved, the Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation said that several important initiatives have been undertaken under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to promote Nari Shakti and women empowerment. Women's labour force participation, which stood at around 23 percent in 2017-18, has now increased to approximately 40 percent. He said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, bank accounts of nearly 36 crore women have been opened.

Referring to the measures taken by the Union Government to expand women's rights, dignity and opportunities, Shri Amit Shah said that the important decision to prohibit Triple Talaq was taken to protect the rights of Muslim women. Earlier, there were restrictions on Muslim women undertaking Haj without a male companion, but now Muslim women can perform Haj independently. He said that today more than 11,000 women officers are serving in the Indian Armed Forces, while the Union Government has also made provision for 26 weeks of maternity leave for women.

Referring to the goal of further expanding women's economic empowerment, the Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation said that the target of creating nearly 3 crore 'Lakshpati Didis' was achieved before 2024, and the target now is to make 6 crore women Lakshpati Didis by 2029.

Highlighting the vast economic potential inherent in Kerala's Blue Economy, Shri Amit Shah said that the state's long coastline, backwaters, rivers and rich maritime tradition provide it with immense opportunities in the Blue Economy. Numerous schemes are available in the fisheries sector, ranging from providing large trawlers to production, processing, packaging, branding and exports. He urged Kerala's Minister of Cooperation to take the initiative in this direction, obtain details of these schemes and ensure that Kerala derives the maximum possible benefit from them. Emphasising the need for joint efforts by the Centre and the State to transform the potential of the fisheries and marine sectors into a major economic opportunity, the Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation said that Kerala has enormous potential in these sectors and, if the Centre and the State work together to take these opportunities forward, the fisheries and marine sectors can be transformed into a major economic opportunity.

During the programme, the Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation flagged off the NCCF and NAFED mobile vans providing onions at a subsidised price of Rs 35 per kg and inspected various stalls. On the occasion, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was exchanged between NCCF and The Central Financial Credit and Investment Co-operative (India) Limited (CFCICI). MoUs were also exchanged for supply-chain logistics integration of fisheries products of the Bharatiya Matsya Pravartak Sangham with NCCF's 'Janah' brand, and between NCCF and Bharat Lajhna Sahakari Samiti for opening 300 She-Mart shops across Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

Shri Amit Shah also launched the sale of NCCF's 'Janah' products and remotely inaugurated the 'Vanitham She-Mart Shops', developed through collaboration between NCCF and CFCICI. He also launched the sale of 'Bharat Atta' and 'Bharat Rice' to women customers through the Vanitham She-Mart Shops. In addition, free urad and gram seed kits were distributed to women farmers under the Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses, while scholarship cheques were presented to daughters of registered farmers under the NAFED-Kalyan Scholarship Scheme.

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