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Editor

Beyond Four Walls: CM Vishnu Deo Sai's Housing Push Gives New Meaning to the Dream of Homeownership Homeownership



From affordable housing and urban planning to the dignity of owning a permanent home, Chhattisgarh's development agenda places ordinary families at the centre of public policy.

A home is more than a structure of bricks, cement and steel. It represents years of hard work, careful savings, family aspirations and the confidence of having a permanent place to call one's own. For thousands of families across Chhattisgarh, the dream of homeownership is closely connected with dignity, financial security and a better future for their children.

Under Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, housing has emerged as an important part of the state's development agenda. The emphasis on affordable residential projects, better planning and institutional accountability reflects a recognition that development must ultimately improve the everyday lives of citizens.

The significance of housing policy, however, cannot be measured through announcements alone. Its real value lies in the homes completed, families accommodated and neighbourhoods developed into safe and liveable communities.

Housing as a Measure of Good Governance

Good governance is often discussed in terms of infrastructure, investment and economic growth. Yet one of its most meaningful achievements is helping families obtain secure housing.

A permanent home provides stability that influences education, health, employment and social wellbeing. Children benefit from a settled environment, working families gain greater financial confidence, and elderly residents enjoy the reassurance of a familiar neighbourhood.

Chief Minister Sai's housing priorities must therefore be understood within this wider social context.

His administration has sought to strengthen the Chhattisgarh Housing and Infrastructure Development Board while supporting affordable housing initiatives across income groups.

The objective should be to ensure that housing development is not limited to constructing residential units but also delivers lasting improvements in people's quality of life.

A Housing Board Moving Towards Wider Development

The Chhattisgarh Housing and Infrastructure Development Board has been undergoing institutional and financial changes intended to improve its capacity to develop residential and infrastructure projects.

According to figures announced by Chief Minister Sai in June 2026, the board generated approximately ₹1,532 crore through the sale of 7,388 residential and commercial properties over two years. These figures indicate substantial property-market activity and improved



revenue generation. However, property sales should not be confused with the number of newly constructed houses or families who have taken possession.

The distinction matters because the success of a housing institution should be assessed through both financial performance and public benefit.

An institution that becomes financially stronger is better positioned to undertake new projects, provided its resources are used responsibly and the needs of economically weaker and middle-income families remain central.

Narendra Modi's Housing Vision and Chhattisgarh's Responsibility

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Housing for All vision has helped establish permanent housing as a major national development priority.

Through the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, the Union government has supported

efforts to improve access to housing among economically weaker sections and low-income households.

Chhattisgarh's responsibility is to translate this national objective into practical results suited to the state's social, economic and geographical conditions.

Housing requirements in Raipur, Bilaspur and other growing urban centres differ from those in remote rural and tribal areas. A successful policy must recognise these differences.

For urban families, affordability, transport connectivity, schools, hospitals and employment opportunities are important considerations. In rural areas, secure construction, basic services and access to livelihood opportunities may be equally significant.

The goal should remain the same: every eligible family deserves the opportunity to live in a safe and dignified home.

Atal Vihar and Affordable

Housing Opportunities

The Chhattisgarh Housing Board's Atal Vihar Yojana seeks to expand access to affordable residential accommodation across income groups.

The board has outlined an ambition to develop one lakh houses under the scheme, with provisions for subsidised housing for eligible economically weaker section and low-income group households.

Such initiatives are important because housing affordability remains a major challenge for families whose incomes have not increased at the same pace as land and construction costs.

The state must ensure that housing projects are financially accessible, appropriately located and supported by essential infrastructure.

A house that is affordable to purchase but expensive to maintain, or located far from employment and public services, may not fully serve the needs of its occupants.

Affordability must therefore be understood as a long-term commitment rather than merely a reduced initial purchase price.

O. P. Choudhary's Role in Strengthening Housing Delivery

Finance, Housing and Environment Minister O. P. Choudhary has an important responsibility in ensuring that the state's housing ambitions are supported by sound financial management and effective planning. Construction quality, transparent allotment procedures, realistic project schedules and timely grievance redressal must remain central to the Housing Board's functioning.

Equally important is the responsibility to ensure that residential developments provide essential services such as drinking water, sanitation, drainage, street lighting, accessible roads and green spaces. Housing development should not become an isolated exercise in constructing buildings. It must be integrated with wider urban planning and environmental sustainability.

Public institutions should also regularly seek feedback from residents and use that information to improve future projects.

National Recognition Brings Greater Responsibility

Chhattisgarh's efforts to improve affordable housing access have also received recognition under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban).

The state's approach to reserving land for economically

weaker and low-income households in private residential developments has been highlighted as a notable practice. According to the state government's October 2026 announcement, land reservations in private colonies have created opportunities for 25,413 houses without direct government expenditure on land acquisition.

This is an encouraging policy development, but the ultimate test will be how effectively the reserved land translates into completed and occupied homes.

Recognition should inspire further improvement, not complacency.

The Human Value of a Permanent Home

Every residential project has a human story behind it.

For a salaried employee, owning a house may represent decades of disciplined savings. For a young couple, it may mark the beginning of a secure family life. For elderly parents, it may provide reassurance that their children have achieved financial stability.

For economically vulnerable families, a permanent home can also reduce exposure to unsafe living conditions and the uncertainty of repeated relocation.

These experiences remind us that housing policy must remain sensitive to the circumstances of different sections of society.

The government should evaluate its programmes not merely through the number of properties developed but also through residents' satisfaction,

the durability of construction and access to essential services.

Development Must Be Measured Through Lasting Satisfaction

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai's housing agenda offers an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between public policy and citizens' everyday aspirations.

The progress reported by the Housing Board, the expansion of affordable housing initiatives and the state's efforts to improve access for lower-income households provide a foundation for further development.

Yet the journey remains incomplete until eligible families can access homes that are affordable, safe, well maintained and supported by dependable civic infrastructure.

The real measure of success will not be the number of announcements made or ceremonies organised. It will be the confidence of families who continue to live comfortably in their homes many years after possession.

A government may construct thousands of houses, but its lasting contribution is measured by the security and dignity those homes provide.

For Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, the greater opportunity is to ensure that Chhattisgarh's housing development becomes a lasting example of citizen-centred governance—where the dream of owning a home is supported by thoughtful planning, public accountability and dependable delivery.

A Resolve to Serve, a Bridge to Good Governance: Chhattisgarh's Development Journey Under Vishnu Deo Sai-By Kumar Bahukhandi

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From welfare delivery and women's empowerment to tribal development, infrastructure and accountable administration, the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan offers an opportunity to examine how public service can become the foundation of lasting progress.

Governance is not judged merely by the number of policies announced, the funds sanctioned or the promises made from public platforms. Its real strength becomes visible when a farmer receives timely assistance, a woman gains greater financial independence, a village gets reliable drinking water, a child can attend school without difficulty and an ordinary citizen finds the administration responsive rather than inaccessible.

This is the larger significance of the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan, being observed in Chhattisgarh from September 17 to October 17, 2026. Under Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, the campaign seeks to connect public service, cleanliness, social responsibility and citizen participation with the wider objectives of good governance and development.

The campaign also raises an important question: can public service become more than an occasional government activity and develop into a permanent administrative culture?

For a state such as Chhattisgarh, with its considerable geographical, social and economic diversity, the answer will depend upon how effectively



Representational image depicting Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai interacting with a woman during a public outreach programme, reflecting the spirit of the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan and the Chhattisgarh government's emphasis on citizen welfare, responsive administration and inclusive development

tively government policies reach people living far from administrative centres.

Service as the Foundation of Governance

Public administration has traditionally been associated with authority, regulation and the implementation of government decisions. Modern democratic governance, however, requires something more: accessibility, accountability and an understanding of the everyday difficulties faced by citi-

zens.

A government office should not merely be a place where applications are received. It should be an institution where problems are resolved.

This distinction is particularly relevant to the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan.

The campaign's emphasis on service and public participation creates an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the administration

and the people. Cleanliness drives, community activities, welfare outreach and public-awareness initiatives acquire lasting significance when they encourage officials and citizens to work together.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai's administration has placed considerable emphasis on extending development and welfare programmes to communities that have historically faced geographical and economic disadvantages.

Yet the success of such an approach cannot be measured through public participation alone. It must also be reflected in the quality of services delivered, the time taken to resolve grievances and the extent to which citizens experience improvements in their daily lives. Good governance begins with intentions, but it earns public confidence through results.

Women's Empowerment and Financial Independence

One of the most visible dimensions of Chhattisgarh's welfare approach has been the emphasis on women's financial security.

The Mahtari Vandan Yojana, which provides eligible women with monthly financial assistance of ₹1,000, has become a significant component of the state government's social-welfare agenda.

According to figures cited by the Chief Minister, approximately 68 lakh women are covered by the scheme, with cumulative assistance exceeding ₹20,000 crore.

The importance of direct



Public service includes the responsibility to protect citizens from avoidable risks. Food safety, sanitation, preventive healthcare and access to essential medicines are as important to good governance as roads and public buildings. Recent enforcement action in Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi district illustrates this dimension of administration. Food-safety authorities have prohibited the sale and distribution of a specified batch of Fortune Maida and initiated action after a paneer sample was declared unsafe following laboratory examination. The restriction concerns the identified batch, not the product generally.

financial assistance should not be understood solely in terms of the amount transferred.

For women managing household expenses, children's education, healthcare requirements and other family responsibilities, even a modest but predictable source of income can provide greater flexibility in financial decision-making.

However, financial assistance is only one element of empowerment.

Lasting progress requires opportunities for education, skills, employment, entrepreneurship and participation in economic decisions. The challenge for policymakers is to connect welfare support with pathways towards greater financial independence.

A woman who receives assistance today should also have opportunities to build

economic security for tomorrow.

Bastar: Development Beyond the Shadow of Conflict

Few regions demonstrate the complexity of development as clearly as Bastar.

For decades, parts of the region have struggled with the consequences of Maoist violence, difficult terrain, inadequate infrastructure and limited access to essential services.

The state government's efforts to improve security and extend roads, schools, healthcare, communication networks and welfare programmes have brought renewed attention to Bastar's development prospects.

The administration has credited coordinated security operations and government initiatives with creating conditions for greater economic activity in previously affected areas.

Nevertheless, the long-term transformation of Bastar will depend upon more than improvements in security.

Its young population needs quality education, employment opportunities and access to modern skills. Tribal communities must be able to participate meaningfully in decisions affecting their land, livelihoods, culture and natural resources.

Bastar possesses considerable potential in agriculture, forest produce, tourism, handicrafts and community-based enterprises.

The opportunity lies in ensuring that these resources generate sustainable income for local communities.

The national Sahakar Se Samriddhi conference being held in Jagdalpur on October 8–9 provides an example of how cooperative institutions could become instruments of economic participation in remote and tribal areas.

For Bastar, development should not mean merely catching up with other regions. It should mean building a future that respects its distinct identity while expanding opportunity.

Infrastructure That Changes Everyday Life

Roads, bridges, housing, drinking-water facilities and urban infrastructure are often presented as separate achievements of individual departments.

For citizens, however, they form part of a single experience of development.

A repaired road enables children to reach school, farmers to transport produce and patients to access healthcare.

Reliable drinking water reduces hardship, particularly for women and families in rural communities. A completed house provides security and dignity.

The Sai government has emphasised the timely execution of public works, housing schemes and water-supply projects.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, the objective of expanding access to permanent housing is particularly significant for economically disadvantaged families.

Similarly, the Jal Jeevan Mission and related drinking-water infrastructure projects have the potential to improve both public health and everyday convenience.

But the completion of infrastructure is not the final measure of success.

A road must remain usable after the monsoon. A drinking-water system must continue functioning after installation. A house must be completed to acceptable standards and become genuinely habitable.

This is where regular monitoring, maintenance and administrative accountability become essential.

The Seva Sankalp Abhiyan provides an appropriate occasion to reinforce these responsibilities.

Good Governance Must Also Protect Public Health

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Food safety, sanitation, preventive healthcare and access to essential medicines are as important to good governance

as roads and public buildings.

Recent enforcement action in Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi district illustrates this dimension of administration.

Food-safety authorities have prohibited the sale and distribution of a specified batch of Fortune Maida and initiated action after a paneer sample was declared unsafe following laboratory examination.

The restriction concerns the identified batch, not the product generally.

Such measures demonstrate the importance of inspection and testing, but effective consumer protection also requires consistent enforcement, transparent communication and timely follow-up.

Public health cannot depend upon occasional campaigns or isolated inspections.

It requires institutions that remain vigilant throughout the year.

Youth, Education and the Promise of Opportunity

Chhattisgarh's future will ultimately be shaped by its young population.

Education, skill development, sporting opportunities and access to employment must therefore occupy a central place in the state's development strategy.

The government has emphasised investment, industrial expansion and employment generation, while also seeking to encourage sporting activities among children and young people.

The significance of sports extends beyond competition and medals. Participation can encourage discipline, confidence, teamwork and physical

well-being. Equally important is the need to connect education with changing employment requirements.

Industrial investment can generate opportunities, but its benefits will be more widely shared when local young people possess the skills necessary to participate.

This calls for stronger coordination among educational institutions, industries, training organisations and government departments.

Development becomes meaningful when young people are not merely spectators to economic change but active participants in it.

Investment and the Road Towards 2047

The vision of a developed India by 2047 has become an important reference point for national and state-level planning.

For Chhattisgarh, the challenge is to translate that long-term ambition into practical economic opportunities.

The state government has sought investment in emerging sectors, including technology, manufacturing, energy and related industries.

Following engagements in Singapore, the government has highlighted investment commitments and expressions of interest in areas such as data infrastructure, renewable energy and food processing.

These initiatives may help diversify Chhattisgarh's economy beyond its traditional industrial strengths.

However, investment announcements should be distinguished from completed

projects and operational employment.

The real measure of economic progress will be the establishment of functioning enterprises, creation of sustainable jobs, development of local supply chains and the benefits experienced by communities.

The vision for 2047 must therefore be accompanied by measurable milestones, transparent implementation and sustained institutional effort.

The Citizen Is Not Merely a Beneficiary

Perhaps the most important message of the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan is that governance cannot remain the responsibility of government alone.

Citizens also contribute to public life through cleanliness, environmental protection, responsible use of public resources, community participation and respect for civic institutions.

Yet citizen participation should never become a substitute for administrative responsibility.

People can support cleanliness campaigns, but municipal bodies must provide dependable waste-management systems. Communities can help protect water sources, but authorities must ensure reliable water infrastructure. Citizens can report problems, but officials must respond within reasonable timeframes.

A healthy relationship between the government and society requires both participation and accountability.

Public cooperation strengthens governance when

institutions are prepared to listen and act.

From a Month-Long Campaign to a Lasting Culture

The Seva Sankalp Abhiyan will conclude on October 17, but the principles associated with it should not end with the campaign.

Its lasting contribution will depend upon whether the emphasis on service, responsiveness and public participation becomes part of routine administration.

Can citizens obtain essential services without unnecessary visits to government offices? Are complaints resolved promptly? Are development works completed on time? Do public schemes reach eligible beneficiaries? Are vulnerable communities able to access the same opportunities as those living in better-connected areas?

These are the questions through which good governance should be evaluated.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai's leadership has placed service and development at the centre of the government's stated priorities. The larger task is to convert those priorities into consistent and measurable improvements across Chhattisgarh.

Service is not simply an administrative obligation; it is the moral foundation of democratic governance.

A government earns trust when it remains accessible, responds to difficulties and recognises the dignity of every citizen.

Chhattisgarh's journey towards greater prosperity will

Over 5,000 Youths Selected at Chhattisgarh Job Fair as CM Sai Pledges Better Employment Opportunities



More than 13,000 candidates participate in two-day State-Level Employment Fair; CM Vishnu Deo Sai distributes around 1,100 offer letters and announces plans to transform the e-Rozgar portal into a digital Skill Market.

- Over 5,000 candidates selected from more than 13,000 participants at the two-day employment fair in Raipur.
- Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai distributes around 1,100 offer letters to successful candidates.
- More than 95 registered employers participate, offering opportunities across industrial and service sectors.
- State government reports employment for over 25,845 youths through 925 job fairs during the past two-and-a-half years.
- E-Rozgar portal to be developed into a Skill Market connecting skilled candidates directly with employers.
- Quality Council of India's third-party assessment report on polytechnic institutions released.



Raipur: A degree may establish a young person's educational credentials, but meaningful employment gives those qualifications their true value. For thousands of young people across Chhattisgarh, the two-day State-Level Employment Fair 2026 in Raipur offered an opportunity to move from academic preparation and professional training towards financial independence.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai reaffirmed his government's commitment to creating employment opportunities within Chhattisgarh as the two-day fair concluded at Sardar

Balbir Singh Juneja Indoor Stadium on Thursday, October 8, 2026.

Addressing the gathering, Sai emphasised that providing quality education, practical skills and employment opportunities suited to individual qualifications remained among the government's foremost priorities.

The Chief Minister said the administration wanted young men and women from Chhattisgarh to find promising careers within their home state rather than being compelled to look elsewhere for suitable opportunities.



He stressed that young people equipped with education, professional competence and determination would become important contributors to the state's economic progress and its long-term development ambitions.

The event, held on October 7 and 8, attracted more than 13,000 candidates from across Chhattisgarh, including remote and tribal regions. Following recruitment procedures conducted by participating companies, more than 5,000 candidates were finally selected.

Around 1,100 successful candidates received offer letters from the Chief Minister during the concluding ceremony.

For many participants, the occasion represented more than a recruitment exercise. It offered a potential beginning to professional careers, economic independence and

greater financial security for their families.

From Education to Employment: Sai Outlines Government's Priorities

Chief Minister Sai underlined the importance of building a stronger relationship between educational qualifications, industry requirements and employment opportunities. He observed that conventional education alone could no longer guarantee professional success in an increasingly competitive employment market. Practical knowledge, technical competence and industry-oriented training had become equally important.

The state government, he said, was working towards creating a continuous pathway connecting education with skill development and skill development with employment.

He referred to the presence of nationally recognised institutions such as IIT, IIM, IIIT, AIIMS and the law university in Chhattisgarh, describing them as important components of the state's expanding educational infrastructure.

Institutions operating under initiatives such as Prayas were also helping talented students prepare for competitive examinations.

Sai emphasised that educational and technical institutions must continue adapting to changing industrial requirements so that students enter the employment market with relevant skills.

The broader objective, he indicated, was to enable young people to pursue professional ambitions without having to leave Chhattisgarh because of limited local opportunities.

More Than 25,845 Youths



Employed Through 925 Job Fairs

The Chief Minister highlighted the government's employment initiatives undertaken over the past two-and-a-half years.

According to figures presented at the event, 925 employment fairs have been organised across Chhattisgarh during this period, helping more than 25,845 young people secure employment.

Sai described the latest state-level fair as another step towards strengthening this recruitment network.

Successful candidates display their offer letters during the concluding ceremony of the two-day State-Level Employment Fair 2026 in Raipur on October 8. More than 5,000 candidates were selected during the recruitment exercise-Photo:channel24india.com via CMO

He congratulated successful candidates and expressed confidence that their professional achievements would

contribute not only to their families' welfare but also to the development of Chhattisgarh and the country.

At the same time, the figures underline the importance of sustained employment generation. Recruitment fairs can connect candidates with employers, but the longer-term success of such initiatives will depend on the quality of placements, employment conditions, career progression and retention.

For young people entering the workforce, securing an appointment is an important first step; building a stable career remains the larger objective.

Over 95 Employers Participate in Recruitment Exercise

The employment fair brought together more than 95 registered employer organisations, alongside other participating companies, representing different industrial and service sectors.

Approximately 50 stalls were established at the venue to facilitate candidate registration, document verification, interviews and recruitment procedures.

Employment opportunities were available to candidates possessing ITI qualifications, diplomas, engineering degrees, undergraduate degrees and other educational or vocational credentials.

The Employment Department coordinated the exercise with industrial training institutes, technical education institutions, polytechnic and engineering colleges, and the Chhattisgarh State Skill Development Authority.

Candidates trained under various skill development programmes also participated in substantial numbers.

The event provided employers with direct access to prospective employees while allowing candidates to understand industry expectations and recruitment requirements.

Such interactions are par-

ticularly significant for young applicants from smaller towns and remote districts, where access to organised recruitment networks may otherwise be limited.

E-Rozgar Portal to Become a Digital Skill Market

One of the important announcements concerned the proposed transformation of the state's e-Rozgar portal into an integrated digital platform called the Skill Market.

The existing portal was used to manage registration, applications, attendance and recruitment-related processes during the employment fair.

Under the proposed expansion, the platform would bring together information about job vacancies, industry requirements, educational qualifications and the skills possessed by employment seekers.

The initiative is intended to help employers identify suitable candidates while enabling young people to search for opportunities corresponding to their qualifications.

A properly developed digital employment marketplace could also reduce geographical barriers by making recruitment information more accessible to candidates living outside major urban centres.

However, its effectiveness will depend on regularly updated vacancies, reliable employer participation, accessible registration facilities and transparent recruitment procedures.

CM Encourages Candidates Who Could Not Secure Jobs

Recognising that not every participant had received an employment offer, Chief Minister Sai encouraged unsuccessful candidates not to lose confidence.

He assured them that the state government would continue organising recruitment fairs and skill development programmes while strengthening coordination with industries to generate additional opportunities.

His message placed particular emphasis on perseverance, professional preparation and the importance of improving employability.

The Chief Minister also congratulated Technical Education, Skill Development and Employment Minister Guru Khushwant Saheb, departmental officials, participating educational institutions and representatives of industrial establishments for their contribution to the event.

Guru Khushwant Saheb Stresses Industry-Oriented Training

Technical Education, Skill Development and Employment Minister Guru Khushwant Saheb said the government was working continuously to connect young people with practical employment opportunities under Chief Minister Sai's leadership.

He emphasised that skill development should not remain confined to classroom training or certification.

The objective, he explained, was to translate acquired skills into meaningful employment and livelihood opportunities.

Referring to the participation of candidates from across Chhattisgarh, the minister said the response reflected the aspirations of young people seeking professional advancement and financial independence.

He also stressed the importance of designing training programmes around current industrial requirements.

Polytechnic Education Comes Under Quality Review

The concluding ceremony also witnessed the release of a third-party assessment report prepared by the Quality Council of India concerning the quality of education and training in Chhattisgarh's polytechnic institutions.

The report examines academic standards, training arrangements, available infrastructure and opportunities for institutional improvement.

According to the government, an action plan has been prepared on the basis of the assessment's recommendations to strengthen technical education and improve the employability of students.

The exercise assumes significance as technical institutions face growing expectations to produce graduates capable of meeting evolving industrial demands.

Improving laboratory facil-

ities, practical training, institutional infrastructure and industry linkages could help bridge the gap between formal technical education and workplace requirements.

Employment Initiative Linked to Seva Sankalp Campaign

Chief Minister Sai also connected the employment fair with the ongoing Seva Sankalp campaign, being organised to mark 25 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public service.

He described employment generation and youth empowerment as important expressions of the government's commitment to public welfare.

Before attending the concluding ceremony in Raipur, the Chief Minister had participated in a Seva Setu programme in Durg, where the 32nd instalment of the Mahtari Vandan Yojana was released and beneficiaries received assistance under various government schemes.

Sai reiterated that the government's development approach sought to strengthen the position of women, young people, farmers, workers and economically disadvantaged communities.

He linked these initiatives with the broader ambition of building a developed Chhattisgarh through economic participation and social empowerment.

A Promising Beginning, but Sustained Employment Remains the Real Test

The State-Level



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Employment Fair 2026 concluded with thousands of candidates receiving opportunities to enter the workforce.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai addresses the gathering at the State-Level Employment Fair 2026 in Raipur on October 8, 2026 outlining the government's commitment to quality education, industry-oriented skills and employment opportunities for Chhattisgarh's youth-Photo:channel24india.com via CMO

The participation of more than 13,000 young people demonstrated both the demand for employment and the willingness of candidates to pursue opportunities through organised recruitment platforms.

With over 5,000 selections reported, the event represents a significant recruitment exercise for the state.

Yet the larger challenge extends beyond the distribution of offer letters.

The durability of these appointments, the suitability of jobs to candidates' qualifi-

cations, workplace conditions and prospects for professional growth will ultimately determine the long-term impact of the initiative.

The proposed Skill Market, industry-linked training programmes and quality improvements in technical institutions could strengthen Chhattisgarh's employment ecosystem if implemented effectively.

For the young people who left the stadium with offer letters, however, the immediate significance was unmistakable: an opportunity to begin their professional journey.

The ceremony was attended by Cabinet Minister Tank Ram Verma, Chhattisgarh State Commission for Protection of Child Rights Chairperson Varnika Sharma, State Minorities Commission Chairman Amarjeet Chhabra, MLAs Sunil Soni and Rohit Sahu, representatives of industrial establishments, departmental officials and a large gathering of young candidates.

43,600 Crore Investment Commitments, Skilling MoU and Global Partnerships: Chhattisgarh's Singapore Visit Delivers



Three days of engagements bring major investment proposals, industry-linked skilling and new international collaborations for Chhattisgarh



The Chhattisgarh delegation led by Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai returned to Raipur on Wednesday after a three-day Singapore visit that brought investment commitments worth ₹43,600 crore, alongside agreements and discussions spanning skilling, technology, food processing, renewable energy, tourism and urban development.

Chhattisgarh and Haryana were the two states nominated by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, for the inaugural Singapore-India Network for Growth

(SING) Forum 2026.

The largest investment proposal during the visit came from Singapore-headquartered Energy Capital Global (ECG), which plans to develop a 100 MW AI-ready data centre campus in Chhattisgarh with an investment of ₹41,750 crore.

Sunstream Green Energy Pvt Ltd received an Invitation to Invest worth ₹1,500 crore for a 300 MW solar project with battery storage, while Valency International Pte Ltd received an Invitation to Invest worth ₹350 crore for an integrated Agro and Food

Processing and Export Hub aimed at developing a farm-to-market value chain in the state.

The proposed investments could create opportunities extending beyond large industries. The data centre and technology projects are expected to generate demand for professionals in AI, digital infrastructure and allied high-technology sectors, while startups and MSMEs could emerge as suppliers and service partners. The proposed agro-processing hub could also provide farmers with stronger links to domestic

and international markets.

Skilling Partnership for Chhattisgarh's Youth

Alongside investment promotion, the state sought to strengthen the skills required for emerging industries.

Chhattisgarh signed an MoU with ITE Education Services, Singapore, for cooperation in technical and vocational education and training. The partnership envisages industry-aligned curricula and stronger pathways connecting training with employment opportunities.

At the SING Forum, organised by the Singapore Business Federation (SBF), Chhattisgarh presented its investment potential and ongoing reforms before business and institutional leaders.

Participants included Gan Siow Huang, Singapore's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Trade and Industry; SBF Chairman Mark Lee; SBF CEO Kok Ping Soon; and senior representatives from major companies.

During a fireside chat, Chief Minister Sai said that under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chhattisgarh was pursuing reforms shaped by industry requirements, with investment being linked to employment generation across the state.

Singapore Engagement Extends Beyond Investment

Chief Minister Sai also met Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, with discussions focusing on strengthening India-Singapore cooperation at the state level in investment,

* Chhattisgarh returns from Singapore with investment commitments worth ₹43,600 crore.

* Energy Capital Global proposes a ₹41,750-crore, 100 MW AI-ready data centre campus.

* Sunstream Green Energy receives Invitation to Invest for a ₹1,500-crore, 300 MW solar project with battery storage.

* Valency International receives Invitation to Invest for a ₹350-crore integrated agro and food processing and export hub.

* State signs skilling MoU with ITE Education Services, Singapore.

* Talks with Gardens by the Bay and Mandai Wildlife Group explore cooperation in green development and tourism.

skilling, urban planning and technology.

The Chief Minister led a CEO Roundtable involving leaders from more than 15 global companies, including TCS, SMBC, Tolaram Group and Agrocorp.

Discussions with the Global Finance & Technology Network focused on training Chhattisgarh's youth in AI and digital finance and helping startups connect with international investors and markets.

Aquatech Pacific Holdings Pte Ltd discussed possibilities for wastewater reuse infrastructure for industries, while Adroit Overseas Pte Ltd explored opportunities in food processing.

Tourism and Green Development Enter Partnership Agenda

The Singapore visit also opened discussions extending beyond industry and finance.

Engagements with Gardens by the Bay explored how Singapore's experience could contribute to the development of botanical gardens in Nava Raipur and greener urban spaces elsewhere in Chhattisgarh.

Discussions with Mandai Wildlife Group focused on possibilities for developing Nandanvan Jungle Safari into an internationally recognised wildlife and tourism destination.

"This visit has shown the world that Chhattisgarh is ready for global investment, and we return with commitments, partnerships and a clear path forward. Our government will now rigorously follow up with every investor so that these projects are grounded at the earliest, creating careers for our youth and new opportunities for our entrepreneurs," Chief Minister Sai said.

The next stage will be the conversion of the investment commitments and institutional discussions into projects on the ground, with the state government indicating that it will maintain follow-up with participating investors and organisations.

From 2001 to 2047: Narendra Modi's 25-Year Journey and the India He Envisions-By Kumar Bahukhandi

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From taking charge of Gujarat in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake to serving a third consecutive term as Prime Minister, Narendra Modi completes 25 continuous years as a head of government. The milestone offers an opportunity to look beyond the anniversary—to the policies that have defined his years in office, the debates that have accompanied them, and the ambitious Viksit Bharat vision he has placed before India for 2047.

October 7, 2001, and August 15, 2047, stand almost half a century apart. Yet, in Narendra Modi's political narrative, the two dates have increasingly become connected.

The first was the day he took oath as Chief Minister of Gujarat. The second will mark 100 years of India's Independence—and has become the destination for what Modi calls Viksit Bharat, his vision of India as a developed nation.

On October 7, 2026, Modi completes 25 uninterrupted years as a head of government: first as Chief Minister of Gujarat and, since May 2014, as Prime Minister of India.

A quarter-century in executive office is long enough to invite more than celebration. It invites examination.

What changed during these years? What ideas travelled with Modi from Gandhinagar to New Delhi? Which programmes became defining features of his governments? And, perhaps more importantly, what remains to be accomplished if India is to reach the destination he has set for 2047?

The story begins not in Delhi but in a Gujarat struggling to recover from disaster.

The Unexpected Beginning
When Modi became Gujarat



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who completed 25 continuous years as a head of government on October 7, 2026, has placed the goal of Viksit Bharat 2047 at the centre of India's development agenda. His journey in executive office began as Gujarat Chief Minister on October 7, 2001, before he became Prime Minister in 2014.

Chief Minister in October 2001, he had never previously held elected executive office.

The circumstances were difficult. Gujarat was still recovering from the catastrophic Bhuj earthquake of January 2001. The state had also experienced droughts, a cyclone and political instability.

Looking back on those years, Modi has recalled something strikingly personal. Before he assumed office, his mother gave him two pieces of advice: work for the poor and never take a bribe.

That recollection has subse-

quently become part of Modi's own explanation of his approach to governance.

The Gujarat years would also establish themes that later became familiar nationally: close monitoring of government programmes, infrastructure, investment promotion, technology in administration, electricity reforms and direct interaction between government and citizens.

The SWAGAT grievance-redressal initiative, for instance, used technology to connect citizens with the administration and received a United Nations

Public Service Award in 2010. The Gujarat Jyotigram initiative focused on electricity supply and separate feeders for agriculture. The biennial Vibrant Gujarat summits attempted to position the state as an investment destination.

The Gujarat period, however, cannot be reduced to development programmes alone. It was also marked by intense political controversy, most notably over the 2002 communal violence. Modi's supporters and critics developed sharply different assessments of his leadership, and those arguments followed him long after he left Gandhinagar.

By 2013, however, his political trajectory had moved decisively towards Delhi.

From Gujarat to Delhi

When the BJP named Modi its prime ministerial candidate ahead of the 2014 general election, his campaign was built heavily around development, governance and aspiration.

The BJP won a parliamentary majority in 2014, and Modi became Prime Minister on May 26 that year. He returned after the 2019 election and began a third consecutive term in 2024.

The transition from Gujarat to Delhi brought an obvious change of scale. A state-level administrative approach now had to operate across a country of more than a billion people.

Some of Modi's earliest national initiatives signalled the direction.

Jan Dhan Yojana sought to bring people outside formal banking into the financial system. Swachh Bharat turned sanitation and toilet construction into a mass campaign. Ujjwala

sought to provide cleaner cooking fuel to poorer households. Housing, electricity, tap-water connections and health insurance subsequently became important components of the welfare architecture.

The Union Cabinet, in its resolution marking Modi's 25 years in government, said Jan Dhan accounts had approached 60 crore and more than four crore houses had been delivered through government housing programmes. These are government figures and form part of the administration's own assessment of its record.

What distinguished this welfare model was its combination with technology.

The Smartphone Became Part of Governance

Perhaps one of the most visible changes in India during the Modi years has occurred not inside government offices but in people's hands. The combination of Jan Dhan bank accounts, Aadhaar identification and mobile connectivity—the JAM architecture—expanded the government's ability to transfer benefits directly to beneficiaries.

Then came UPI.

Digital payments moved rapidly from an urban convenience to an everyday method of transaction—from shopping centres and restaurants to neighbourhood stores and street vendors.

The larger significance was not simply technological. It represented an attempt to create public digital infrastructure at population scale.

The Modi government also pushed Digital India, online public services and technolo-

gy-based welfare delivery. In parallel, India expanded its ambitions in electronics manufacturing, semiconductors, artificial intelligence, quantum technology and space.

The Cabinet's 2026 assessment says electronics production rose from roughly ₹2 lakh crore to more than ₹13 lakh crore during the period it reviewed.

Technology, in this model, was expected to perform two roles: make the state more accessible and make the economy more competitive.

Infrastructure Became Visible Politics

Highways, expressways, airports, railway stations, metro systems, freight corridors and other large infrastructure projects became another defining feature of the Modi era.

Government capital expenditure rose sharply. The Union Cabinet's 25-year resolution notes an increase in public capital expenditure from around ₹2 lakh crore to more than ₹12 lakh crore.

Railway electrification accelerated, while Vande Bharat trains became the most visible symbol of railway modernisation. The redevelopment of stations through the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme extended the infrastructure narrative beyond trains themselves.

There was a political dimension to this emphasis as well.

A bridge, highway, railway station or airport is immediately visible. Unlike many administrative reforms, infrastructure can be seen and experienced. Development consequently

became something governments increasingly sought to demonstrate physically.

But infrastructure also poses the next question for 2047: not simply how much India can build, but how efficiently it can maintain, integrate and use what it builds.

From Make in India to Atmanirbhar Bharat

When Make in India was launched in 2014, its central proposition was straightforward: India needed to manufacture more. The ambition subsequently expanded into Atmanirbhar Bharat, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in global supply chains. Electronics, mobile-phone production, defence manufacturing, renewable energy and, more recently, semiconductor fabrication have become prominent areas of policy attention. The government's current argument is that self-reliance does not mean economic isolation. Rather, India should possess sufficient domestic capability in strategically important sectors while remaining connected with international trade and investment.

That distinction will become increasingly important on the road to 2047.

India cannot become a developed economy simply by consuming what the world produces. Nor can an economy of India's size prosper by turning inward. The challenge is to manufacture competitively, innovate domestically and export globally.

Modi captured part of that challenge in his 2026 Independence Day address through three words: cost, qual-

ity and scale.

Farmers, Women and the Politics of Direct Delivery

The Modi years have also seen welfare programmes increasingly directed towards clearly identified social groups.

Under PM-KISAN, money is transferred directly to eligible farming households. The government's 2026 assessment says cumulative transfers had crossed ₹4 lakh crore.

For women, policy has ranged from Ujjwala cooking-gas connections and sanitation to bank accounts, self-help groups and the Lakhpati Didi initiative.

The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, providing for reservation of one-third of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies once the constitutional prerequisites for implementation are completed, added a political representation dimension to this agenda.

Yet the 2047 test will go considerably further.

Women's participation in the labour force, quality employment, safety, entrepreneurship, access to capital and representation in decision-making will matter as much as the number of schemes carrying women as beneficiaries.

The same distinction applies to young Indians.

India's demographic advantage is frequently celebrated. But a young population becomes an advantage only when education, skills and economic opportunities keep pace with expectations.

An India That Builds—and an India That Innovates
Few moments captured

India's technological aspirations as dramatically as Chandrayaan-3's landing near the Moon's south polar region in 2023.

The achievement belonged first to India's scientists and decades of institutional development at ISRO. Politically, however, it fitted neatly into Modi's larger narrative of an India increasingly confident about attempting projects once considered beyond its reach.

The opening of the space sector to greater private participation, growth of India's startup ecosystem and investment in emerging fields such as semiconductors, artificial intelligence, quantum technology and biotechnology reflect the same aspiration.

For 2047, this may be one of the most consequential transitions.

A developed India cannot depend indefinitely on low-cost labour or imported technology. It will need universities that generate knowledge, companies that create intellectual property, laboratories capable of fundamental research and an education system that rewards curiosity rather than merely examination performance.

The next phase, therefore, cannot be only Make in India. It will increasingly have to become Invent in India. National Security and a More Assertive State National security has occupied a central position in Modi's political identity.

The 2016 surgical strikes following the Uri attack and the 2019 Balakot air strikes after the Pulwama terror attack were presented by the government as evidence of a changed response to cross-border terrorism.

Tourism as a Pathway to Rural Empowerment: CM Vishnu Deo Sai's Vision for a Prosperous Chhattisgarh By-Dhananjay Rathore



From Tribal Homestays and Community-Based Tourism to the Chendru State Rural Tourism Award, Chhattisgarh Is Seeking to Transform Its Natural and Cultural Heritage into Sustainable Livelihood Opportunities

Chhattisgarh's forests, rivers, waterfalls, mountains and centuries-old tribal traditions are emerging as powerful resources for rural development under Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai's tourism initiatives. From the natural landscapes of Bastar to the cultural richness of Surguja, the state government is seeking to create an economic model in which tourism does more than attract visitors: it generates livelihoods, encourages local entrepreneurship, preserves indigenous heritage and brings new opportunities to villages that have traditionally remained outside the mainstream tourism economy.

The government's strategy brings together three major initiatives: recognition of tourism as an industry under the Industrial Policy 2024–2030, promotion of village-based accommodation through the Chhattisgarh Homestay Policy 2025–2030, and the introduction of the Chendru State Rural Tourism Award.

Together, these measures seek to place rural communities at the centre of tourism development, ensuring that the ben-



Tourists enjoy traditional bamboo-raft rides along the scenic, forest-fringed waterways of Chhattisgarh, showcasing the state's growing potential for nature-based and community-led tourism. Under Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai's rural tourism initiatives, such experiences are being promoted to encourage local entrepreneurship, generate employment and strengthen village economies

efits of growing visitor interest reach local families, artisans, women, young entrepreneurs and traditional cultural practitioners.

Chhattisgarh's Natural Heritage Offers New Opportunities

Stretching from the northern hills of Surguja to the forested landscapes of Bastar, Chhattisgarh possesses an extraordinary combination of

natural beauty and cultural diversity.

Its rivers, waterfalls, forests, historic settlements, tribal traditions, handicrafts and regional cuisines provide opportunities to develop distinctive tourism experiences.

Bastar, in particular, has attracted attention for its forests, indigenous communities and living cultural traditions. The region's appeal extends beyond conventional sightseeing.

Visitors can encounter local art forms, traditional food, village life and cultural practices that have been preserved across generations.

The state government's approach seeks to connect these attractions with improved accommodation, transport, visitor services and opportunities for local participation.

Bastar's Cultural Identity Finds a Wider Audience

Bastar's cultural heritage has long held a distinctive place in Chhattisgarh's identity.

Among its most celebrated traditions is Bastar Dussehra, a festival renowned for its elaborate rituals, community participation and cultural significance. Unlike conventional celebrations centred on the burning of Ravana's effigy, Bastar Dussehra is associated with the region's distinctive religious and tribal traditions.

The festival, whose observances extend over approximately 75 days, attracts visitors interested in the region's cultural history and traditional ceremonies.

The government expects tourism associated with Bastar's festivals, forests and cultural attractions to create opportunities for hospitality providers, transport operators, artisans and local businesses.

However, sustaining this growth will require careful attention to environmental protection, cultural sensitivity and the interests of the communities whose traditions attract visitors.

Three Initiatives Designed to Strengthen Rural Tourism

The Sai government's rural tourism strategy combines policy support, financial incentives

and public recognition of community contributions.

The decision to accord industry status to tourism under the Industrial Policy 2024–2030 is intended to encourage investment in accommodation, tourism infrastructure and related services.

The Chhattisgarh Homestay Policy 2025–2030 seeks to help rural families convert suitable homes into accommodation for visitors.

The Chendru State Rural Tourism Award, meanwhile, recognises individuals and organisations working to preserve local culture, natural heritage and community-based tourism.

Together, the initiatives aim to develop tourism as a source of income that can support village economies while encouraging the preservation of Chhattisgarh's distinctive identity.

Chendru Mandavi's Legacy Inspires a New State Award

The Chendru State Rural Tourism Award takes its name from Chendru Mandavi, the celebrated boy from Bastar whose friendship with a tiger named Tembu attracted international attention.

Popularly remembered as Bastar's 'Tiger Boy', Chendru became known internationally through the Swedish film *Jungle Saga*.

His story introduced audiences beyond India to the natural surroundings and everyday life of Bastar.

By naming the award after him, the state government seeks to honour a figure associated with the region's international recognition and its close relationship with nature.

The award also symbolises the belief that rural communities and their cultural traditions can become central to the state's tourism identity.

Rs 1 Lakh Award to Honour Rural Tourism Contributors

The Chendru State Rural Tourism Award Rules, 2025, provide the framework for recognising individuals and organisations contributing to rural tourism.

The award carries a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh and a certificate of appreciation. It is intended to honour contributions to rural tourism, folk arts, handicrafts and the conservation of natural heritage.

A six-member jury chaired by the Managing Director of the Chhattisgarh Tourism Board will select the recipient.

The winner is to be honoured during the state's Rajyotsav celebrations, with an illustrated commemorative publication highlighting the recipient's contribution.

The initiative is designed to give public recognition to grassroots individuals and institutions whose work helps protect local traditions while creating opportunities for tourism development.

Homestays Could Bring Tourism Income Directly to Villages

One of the most significant components of the government's strategy is the promotion of homestays in rural and tribal areas. Under the Chhattisgarh Homestay Policy 2025–2030, eligible households are intended to receive opportunities to develop visitor

accommodation within their existing homes or through suitable improvements.

For tourists, the model offers an experience different from conventional hotel accommodation.

Visitors may have opportunities to enjoy traditional regional meals, experience village hospitality, explore agricultural surroundings and learn about local customs and lifestyles. For host families, homestays could provide supplementary income without requiring them to abandon their traditional occupations.

The policy also envisages financial assistance for establishing or upgrading accommodation and training in hospitality, cleanliness and business management. These provisions are intended to help rural households develop tourism-related enterprises while maintaining appropriate standards for visitors.

Women and Self-Help Groups Could Benefit from Local Tourism

Community-based tourism has the potential to create income opportunities extending well beyond accommodation. Women involved in self-help groups may find opportunities in preparing traditional food, producing handicrafts, supplying locally made products and offering hospitality services. Artisans could gain access to customers interested in authentic regional crafts.

Local farmers and small producers may also benefit when homestays and tourism establishments purchase food and other supplies from nearby vil-

lages. The government's approach seeks to keep a greater share of tourism-related spending within local communities.

Its success will depend on effective implementation, training, access to finance and the ability of rural enterprises to attract visitors consistently.

Tourism Receives Industry Status Under New Industrial Policy

The Chhattisgarh Industrial Policy 2024–2030 includes tourism, entertainment and other social service activities within its framework for industrial development.

The decision to recognise tourism as an industry is intended to improve access to investment incentives and encourage the development of tourism-related infrastructure.

The policy provides for applicable concessions and support measures for eligible projects, including those associated with accommodation and visitor facilities.

For rural tourism, the government envisages benefits for eligible entrepreneurs and self-help groups developing homestays, ecotourism projects and related infrastructure.

Capital subsidies, interest assistance and single-window clearance mechanisms are among the incentives outlined in the government's tourism development approach.

Such measures are intended to reduce barriers for entrepreneurs seeking to establish tourism enterprises.

Local Youth Could Become Tourism Entrepreneurs

The state government's plans

place particular emphasis on creating employment and self-employment opportunities for young people.

Tourism can generate demand for guides, drivers, hospitality workers, accommodation operators, cultural performers, craft producers and digital service providers.

The government has outlined training opportunities in hospitality, tour guiding and digital marketing to help rural youth develop relevant skills.

These initiatives could allow young people to establish enterprises within their own communities rather than depend entirely on employment opportunities elsewhere.

The objective is to create a local tourism economy in which residents participate as business owners, service providers and skilled professionals.

Private Investment Expected to Strengthen Tourism Infrastructure

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai has highlighted the importance of investment in developing Chhattisgarh's tourism sector. According to the state government's account, Indian Hotels Company Limited has expressed interest in investment opportunities in Chhattisgarh.

Sai said such investment could strengthen tourism infrastructure and create new employment and self-employment opportunities for local youth. The government is also focusing on road connectivity, accommodation, transport and visitor services to improve access to tourism destinations.

The development of these facilities could make less-



er-known destinations more accessible while supporting tourism enterprises in surrounding communities.

Expressions of investment interest, however, should be distinguished from finalised projects and operational facilities. Sustainable Tourism Must Protect Nature and Tribal Heritage The development of rural tourism presents opportunities as well as responsibilities. Chhattisgarh's natural landscapes and indigenous traditions are among its greatest attractions, but they also require protection from unplanned development and excessive commercialisation.

Tourism initiatives will need to consider environmental safeguards, waste management, water resources and the preservation of cultural practices.

Community participation will be particularly important in tribal areas, where tourism development should respect local traditions and decision-making processes. A sustainable approach can help ensure that tourism creates livelihoods without undermining the natural and cultural resources on which those livelihoods depend.

From Tourist Destinations to Stronger Village Economies

The central idea behind the Sai government's tourism strategy is to make rural communities active participants in the visitor economy.

A homestay operator, a traditional craftsman, a village guide or a women's self-help group can become part of a wider network of tourism services. The Chendru Award adds recognition to this model by celebrating people who contribute to rural tourism and cultural preservation. Industry status and the homestay policy provide the proposed economic and institutional support.

If implemented effectively, the three initiatives could help distribute tourism benefits more widely and strengthen local entrepreneurship.

A New Direction for Rural Empowerment

Chhattisgarh's tourism potential lies not only in its scenic destinations but also in the people who preserve its traditions and welcome visitors into their communities.

The state's effort to link tour-

ism with rural livelihoods represents an opportunity to create a development model rooted in local identity, cultural heritage and natural resources.

From Bastar's internationally recognised traditions to the emerging possibilities of village homestays, the government's initiatives seek to turn tourism into a source of dignity, enterprise and economic opportunity. Under Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai's leadership, the proposed model aims to ensure that the growth of tourism contributes not merely to the visibility of Chhattisgarh's destinations but also to the prosperity of the communities that sustain them.

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A Healthy Mind Is Not a Luxury - It Is a Necessity-By Kumar Bahukhandi



Beyond the smiles we wear and the success we celebrate lies an often-neglected reality: mental wellbeing is as essential to human dignity as physical health, and a compassionate society must learn to recognise the struggles that remain unseen.

We live in an age in which almost everything is measured. We count our steps, monitor our heartbeats, calculate calories, track productivity and celebrate professional achievements. We invest in physical fitness, appearance and material comfort, yet often overlook the one thing that influences how we experience every aspect of life: the health of our minds.

A person may appear physically fit, professionally successful and socially confident, yet struggle silently with anxiety, emotional exhaustion, loneliness or depression. A cheerful photograph may conceal a difficult day. A confident voice may belong to someone who has spent the night worrying. A successful career may coexist with an overwhelming sense of emptiness.

And therein lies one of the greatest contradictions of modern society.

We have learnt to recognise physical pain, but we are still learning how to acknowledge emotional suffering.

World Mental Health Day, observed every year on

October 10, should therefore be more than an occasion for messages, seminars and social media campaigns. It should encourage us to examine how we treat people, how we define success and whether our families, educational institutions and workplaces genuinely provide space for emotional wellbeing.

The Invisible Burden Behind a Confident Smile

Human behaviour is complex. People do not always reveal what they feel, and outward appearances seldom tell the complete story.

The colleague who greets everyone cheerfully may be dealing with personal difficulties. A student who performs exceptionally well may be struggling under academic expectations. A parent who appears strong may be overwhelmed by responsibilities that leave little room for personal rest.

Not every smile conceals suffering, and not every moment of sadness indicates a mental health condition. Nevertheless, we should never assume that outward confidence is proof of inner peace.

Society has developed a habit of admiring resilience without asking what it costs the individual.

We praise people who work without rest, remain available at all hours and continue performing despite personal difficulties. We sometimes interpret exhaustion as dedication and silence as strength.

But emotional wellbeing cannot be sustained indefinitely through endurance alone.

There comes a point when people need understanding rather than advice, companionship rather than criticism and an opportunity to speak without fear of being judged.

When Success Becomes a Source of Stress

Modern society celebrates achievement, often without acknowledging the pressures that accompany it.

A student is expected to secure excellent marks, gain admission to a prestigious institution and establish a successful career. A young professional is encouraged to earn more, achieve promotions and remain constantly competitive. Parents are

expected to provide financial security while fulfilling family and social obligations.

There is nothing inherently wrong with ambition. The problem begins when personal worth becomes inseparable from achievement.

A disappointing examination result is then interpreted as personal failure. A delayed promotion becomes a source of shame. Financial difficulty is mistaken for inadequacy.

Social media can intensify these comparisons by presenting carefully selected moments from other people's lives as though they represent everyday reality.

We see celebrations but rarely the disappointments that preceded them. We admire success without witnessing the uncertainty, rejection and struggle behind it.

Gradually, individuals may begin comparing their private difficulties with the public achievements of others.

Success should enrich life, not become a burden that makes life unbearable.

Mental Health Is Not a Question of Weakness

One of the most damaging misconceptions surrounding mental health is the belief that emotional difficulties reflect a lack of willpower or personal strength.

People experiencing depression may be told to think positively. Those struggling with anxiety may be advised to stop worrying. Someone experiencing prolonged emotional distress may hear that they simply need to become stronger.

Such responses, even when



well intentioned, can discourage people from seeking appropriate help.

Mental health conditions involve complex interactions among biological, psychological and social factors. They cannot always be resolved through motivation, positive thinking or determination.

Professional assessment, counselling, psychological therapies and, where appropriate, medical treatment can make a meaningful difference.

Seeking support should be regarded with the same seriousness and respect as consulting a physician for a physical illness.

Nobody should feel ashamed of asking for help when emotional distress begins affecting daily life, relationships, sleep, concentration or personal safety.

Acknowledging that we need help is not surrender. It is an act of self-awareness and courage.

Students Need Understanding, Not Unrelenting

Pressure

Educational institutions have a particularly important responsibility.

For students, academic life is not limited to lectures, examinations and assignments. It also involves questions of identity, belonging, financial security, career prospects and personal expectations.

Young people may face pressure from families, peers and their own ambitions. Some struggle with the fear of disappointing their parents, while others worry about employment opportunities or their ability to meet professional expectations.

In medical and dental education, demanding academic schedules and clinical training can add further pressures.

Awareness programmes, such as those organised by educational institutions on World Mental Health Day, can help students understand the importance of emotional well-being. But the responsibility

should not end with a single event.

Colleges and universities should encourage approachable teachers, confidential counselling services, responsible academic practices and supportive environments in which students can discuss difficulties without humiliation.

Teachers must also recognise that discipline and compassion are not opposing principles.

An educator's responsibility is not merely to assess performance but also to encourage intellectual growth, confidence and emotional maturity.

A student who receives understanding during a difficult period may remember that kindness long after forgetting a classroom lesson.

Workplaces Must Recognise the Human Being Behind the Employee

Professional life presents another challenge.

Long working hours, unrealistic deadlines, job insecurity, financial obligations and constant digital connectivity can affect emotional wellbeing.

Technology has made communication easier, but it has also blurred the boundaries between professional and personal life.

Messages arrive after office hours. Meetings extend into family time. Employees may feel compelled to remain available even when they are exhausted.

In such circumstances, work-life balance becomes more than a fashionable

expression. It becomes a matter of wellbeing.

Employers should recognise that productivity cannot be sustained by treating employees as though they have unlimited emotional and physical resources.

Reasonable workloads, respectful communication, fair treatment, appropriate leave and access to mental health support can help create healthier workplaces.

Equally important is an organisational culture in which seeking assistance does not threaten an employee's dignity or career prospects.

A successful organisation should not be judged solely by its financial performance, but also by how responsibly it treats the people who contribute to that success.

Families Must Become Places of Conversation, Not Judgement

The family is often described as an individual's strongest support system. Yet families can sometimes become places where emotional difficulties remain unspoken.

Parents may dismiss their children's concerns as immaturity. Young people may hesitate to discuss personal struggles because they fear criticism. Older family members may conceal loneliness because they do not want to burden others.

These silences can create emotional distances even among people living under the same roof. Listening is therefore one of the most valuable forms of care. does not

require us to possess every answer. Nor does it mean agreeing with every concern expressed.

Sometimes, simply allowing someone to speak without interruption or ridicule can help them feel less isolated. However, compassionate listening should not be mistaken for a substitute for professional care when someone needs clinical support.

Families must learn to recognise when a problem requires more than reassurance and should encourage timely consultation with qualified mental health professionals.

The Loneliness of a Hyperconnected Generation

Never before have human beings had so many ways to communicate. We have smartphones, messaging platforms, video calls and social networks capable of connecting people across continents within seconds.

Yet digital connection does not always produce emotional closeness. A person may have hundreds of online contacts and still lack someone with whom they can discuss a personal difficulty.

We exchange messages but sometimes neglect meaningful conversations. We react to photographs but may overlook changes in the behaviour of people close to us.

This does not mean technology is inherently harmful. Digital platforms can provide friendship, access to information and valuable mental health resources.

The challenge is to use technology without allowing it

to replace every form of personal interaction. A conversation across a table, a walk with a friend or an unhurried evening with family can offer something that constant notifications cannot always provide: undivided attention.

Mental Health Awareness Must Go Beyond One Day

World Mental Health Day provides a valuable opportunity to encourage public discussion, but awareness must become a continuing social responsibility. Educational institutions should integrate mental health literacy into student support systems. Workplaces should create psychologically safer environments. Families should encourage open conversations. Public healthcare systems should work towards making appropriate mental health services more accessible and affordable.

The media also has a responsibility.

Journalists should report on mental health with sensitivity, avoid sensational descriptions and refrain from portraying individuals experiencing psychological difficulties through stereotypes.

Responsible journalism can challenge stigma, communicate reliable information and help readers understand when professional support may be necessary. Language matters. The words we use can either encourage someone to seek help or deepen their fear of being judged.

Mental health awareness is not simply about identifying conditions. It is about creating

a society in which people can seek care without losing respect.

Compassion Is Not a Weakness; It Is a Social Strength We often associate strength with authority, achievement and the ability to overcome adversity.

But there is another form of strength that deserves greater recognition: the willingness to treat others with compassion.

It takes maturity to listen without immediately judging. It takes patience to understand experiences different from our own. It takes courage to acknowledge our vulnerabilities.

Compassion does not require us to ignore responsibility or excuse harmful behaviour. It requires us to recognise that people are more complex than their mistakes, circumstances or outward appearances.

A healthier society cannot emerge from medical infrastructure alone. It also requires dignity, social support, access to appropriate care and a culture that respects emotional wellbeing.

A Healthy Society Begins With Healthy Minds

Perhaps the most important question on World Mental Health Day is not whether we have posted an inspiring message or attended an awareness programme.

It is whether our behaviour towards others will change after the occasion has passed.

Will we listen more patiently?

Will we stop treating emotional distress as a personal

weakness?

Will we encourage someone who needs professional assistance to seek it without embarrassment?

Will we allow ourselves time to rest without feeling guilty?

And will we recognise that our own wellbeing matters just as much as the expectations placed upon us?

The answers to these questions will determine whether mental health awareness becomes a meaningful social movement or remains an annual observance.

We must learn that a person's value cannot be measured solely through professional success, academic achievement, financial status or public recognition.

Human dignity belongs equally to those who are flourishing and those who are struggling.

Mental health deserves understanding, not judgement; compassion, not criticism; and conversation, not silence. A healthy mind is not a luxury reserved for those who can afford leisure, comfort or professional success. Mental wellbeing is an essential part of human health, and access to appropriate mental healthcare should be available to everyone.

Behind every confident smile may be a story we do not know. Before judging another person's silence, behaviour or struggle, perhaps we should first offer the simple kindness of understanding. Because ultimately, a healthy society begins with healthy minds.

Sai Cabinet Renames Tribal Development Department, Clears Recruitment of Former Agniveers to 36 Police Constable Posts



Chhattisgarh Cabinet also reviews preparations for President Droupadi Murmu's visit, adopts a resolution marking Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 25 years in executive leadership and reiterates its commitment to Viksit Bharat 2047

Raipur: The Chhattisgarh Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, met on Sunday, October 11, 2026, at 12 noon at the Chief Minister's Residence Office in Civil Lines, Raipur, and approved two significant decisions concerning tribal administration and employment opportunities for former Agniveers. The Council of Ministers cleared the renaming of the Tribal Development Department as the Tribal Affairs Department and approved recruitment of former Agniveers against 36 vacant constable posts in the Home Department. The Cabinet also reviewed preparations for President Droupadi Murmu's forthcoming visit to Chhattisgarh, adopted a congratulatory resolution marking Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 25 years in executive leadership and reaffirmed its commitment to Viksit Bharat 2047.

The decisions reflect a combination of administrative restructuring, personnel recruitment, constitutional protocol and long-term development planning.

The change in departmental nomenclature is intended to align the state government's administrative terminology more closely with the contemporary framework of tribal affairs, while the constable recruitment decision creates a route for former Agniveers to enter the state's police establishment.

Tribal Development Department to Be Renamed Tribal Affairs Department

One of the principal decisions taken at the meeting concerns the department responsible for tribal welfare and related government programmes. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai presides over a meeting of the Chhattisgarh Council of Ministers on Sunday, October 11, 2026, at 12 noon at the Chief Minister's Residence Office in



- Cabinet approves renaming the Tribal Development Department (Adim Jati Vikas Vibhag) as the Tribal Affairs Department (Janjatiya Karya Vibhag).
- Amendment to the Chhattisgarh Government Business (Allocation) Rules approved to facilitate the change.
- Recruitment of former Agniveers to 36 vacant constable posts in the Home Department receives Cabinet clearance.
- Ministers discuss preparations and interdepartmental coordination for President Droupadi Murmu's forthcoming Chhattisgarh visit.
- Cabinet adopts a congratulatory resolution marking Prime Minister Narendra Modi's completion of 25 years as a head of government.
- State reiterates its commitment to contributing to Viksit Bharat 2047 through the development of Chhattisgarh.

Civil Lines, Raipur, where decisions concerning tribal administration and former Agniveer recruitment were approved. The Cabinet also adopted a

congratulatory resolution marking Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 25 years in executive leadership. Photo:channel24india.com via CG/CMO

The Cabinet approved a proposal to amend the Chhattisgarh Government Business (Allocation) Rules to change the department's name from Adim Jati Vikas Vibhag to Janjatiya Karya Vibhag.

In English, the change can be described as renaming the Tribal Development Department as the Tribal Affairs Department.

The decision represents a change in official administrative nomenclature and is expected to be reflected in government rules, correspondence and departmental records following the required formalities.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs already functions at the Union government level, and the proposed state nomenclature follows a similar institutional approach. The terminology also places emphasis on tribal affairs as a wider field of public administration, encompassing welfare, development, rights, educational opportunities and the implementation of relevant government programmes.

However, the Cabinet announcement does not specify any immediate change to the department's budget, existing schemes, staffing structure or statutory responsibilities.

Those aspects will depend on any subsequent government orders and administrative notifications.

Administrative Identity and Tribal Development

Chhattisgarh has a substantial tribal population, making the functioning of the department responsible for tribal affairs particularly important. Government programmes in tribal regions cover a wide range of concerns, including education, healthcare, livelihood opportunities, infrastructure and access to essential public services.

The renaming decision offers an opportunity to examine how administrative institutions can respond more effectively to the requirements of communities living in remote and underserved regions. A change in departmental name alone does not automatically alter service delivery.

Its practical significance will depend on the quality of implementation, the effectiveness of existing programmes and the responsiveness of the administration to the communities it serves.

For tribal families, the meaningful measure of governance will continue to be access to schools,

healthcare facilities, livelihood support and the timely delivery of welfare benefits.

Former Agniveers to Get Recruitment Opportunity in State Police

The Cabinet also approved recruitment of former Agniveers against 36 vacant constable posts in the Home Department.

The decision creates an employment opportunity for individuals who have completed their service under the Agnipath recruitment scheme.

Former Agniveers have undergone military training and acquired experience in discipline, physical fitness and organised service environments. These attributes may be relevant to policing duties, although police work also requires specific training in criminal law, investigation procedures, public interaction and the protection of constitutional rights.

The Cabinet decision does not specify the detailed eligibility conditions, selection procedure, age relaxation, reservation provisions or recruitment timetable.

Those requirements will need to be clarified through the applicable recruitment rules and subsequent official notifications.

Reintegration of Trained Youth into Civilian Service

The recruitment decision has wider significance in the context of employment opportunities for young people leaving short-term military service.

Former Agniveers may seek careers in public administration, security services, private industry and other fields after completing their period of service. The availability of posts in the state police can provide one route for the continued use of their training and experience.

At the same time, transparent recruitment procedures will be important to ensure that appointments comply with applicable service rules.

The immediate Cabinet approval concerns 36 vacant posts and should not be interpreted as a broader recruitment announcement beyond that number.

Cabinet Reviews Preparations for President Murmu's Chhattisgarh Visit

The Council of Ministers also discussed preparations for the forthcoming visit of President Droupadi Murmu to Chhattisgarh.

A presidential visit requires coordination among several government departments and agencies,



including those responsible for protocol, security, transport and arrangements at official venues.

The Cabinet's discussion placed emphasis on administrative readiness and coordination between the departments concerned.

The detailed itinerary, specific programmes and venues were not provided in the Cabinet account. These particulars will become clear when the President's official programme is announced.

The visit is expected to be an important occasion for the state administration, requiring careful planning to ensure that official engagements proceed smoothly.

Cabinet Congratulates Modi on 25 Years in Executive Leadership

The Cabinet adopted a congratulatory resolution marking Prime Minister Narendra Modi's completion of 25 years as a head of government.

The resolution recognised his period of leadership at the state and national levels and referred to development initiatives undertaken during that time. Modi first became Chief Minister of Gujarat in October 2001 and subsequently assumed office as Prime Minister of India in May 2014.

The Cabinet's resolution highlighted central government schemes and initiatives that the Chhattisgarh government considers important for the state's development.

These included programmes relating to housing, food security, healthcare, farmers' welfare and women's empowerment.

The resolution also referred to infrastructure development, investment proposals and central support for projects in sectors such as roads, railways and electricity.

Central Support and Chhattisgarh's Development Priorities

The state government's resolution placed particular emphasis on the relationship between national development programmes and their implementation in Chhattisgarh.

Housing assistance, public distribution of food-grains, healthcare programmes and support for agricultural households remain important components of welfare delivery. Infrastructure projects, meanwhile, can influence connectivity, industrial investment and economic opportunities. The Cabinet referred to these areas while acknowledging the contribution of Union government initiatives to the state's development agenda. The announcement did not provide a consolidated, independently verifiable financial statement of the resources or investment amounts referenced in the resolution.

Accordingly, no additional financial figures have been attributed to the Cabinet beyond those contained in the supplied account.

Viksit Chhattisgarh as a Contributor to Viksit Bharat 2047

The Council of Ministers also reiterated its commitment to the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, the national objective of building a developed India by the centenary of Independence.

The Cabinet affirmed that the development of Chhattisgarh would form part of the country's broader progress towards that goal.

For the state, long-term development will involve improving public services, expanding infrastructure, strengthening education and healthcare, supporting agriculture and encouraging sustainable economic activity.

The effectiveness of this vision will depend on measurable improvements in citizens' living conditions and the creation of durable economic

opportunities.

CM Sai's Leadership and the Cabinet's Governance Agenda

The Cabinet decisions were taken under Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai's leadership and reflect several priorities of his administration.

The renaming of the tribal department concerns administrative identity and governance structures. The recruitment decision addresses employment opportunities for former military personnel. Preparations for the President's visit involve constitutional protocol, while the resolutions concerning national leadership and Viksit Bharat 2047 reflect the government's wider political and developmental outlook.

Taken together, the decisions illustrate the different responsibilities undertaken by the Council of Ministers, ranging from specific personnel matters to long-term policy direction.

The next stage will be the issuance of formal notifications and the implementation of the decisions through the departments concerned.

'Nation First and Good Governance': CM Sai Hails Modi's Leadership

Following the Cabinet meeting, Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai addressed the media and described Prime Minister Modi's completion of 25 years in executive leadership as a historic milestone. "It is a historic milestone in an extraordinary journey guided by the principles of nation first, public service, good governance, welfare of the poor and upliftment of the last person," Sai said. He expressed gratitude to the Union government for supporting Chhattisgarh through cooperative federalism and helping extend housing, drinking water, sanitation, food security, healthcare and clean cooking fuel to disadvantaged households.

Referring to the state's early development experience, Sai said:

"Chhattisgarh, which was formed in 2000, also learnt from successful experiences of the Gujarat model during its initial years of development and made rapid progress."

The Chief Minister also presented figures illustrating the state's progress under centrally supported programmes.

According to Sai, 20.65 lakh rural houses and 2.25 lakh urban houses have been completed under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. He stated that 11.78 lakh houses were constructed during

the preceding three years.

He further reported that 26.57 lakh farmers in Chhattisgarh had benefited directly from PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi.

On fiscal support, the Chief Minister said the state's share of central taxes had increased substantially over successive periods, citing ₹3,46,806 crore received during the preceding 12 years, compared with ₹47,100 crore during 2004–2014. These figures were presented as part of the government's assessment of central support.

Chief Minister Emphasises Tribal Welfare, Employment and Development

Sai also highlighted government initiatives intended to improve living conditions in tribal regions, including programmes for housing, connectivity, drinking water and essential public services. He referred to the expansion of infrastructure in Bastar and the importance of strengthening education, healthcare and communications in previously underserved areas.

The Chief Minister linked these development priorities with the broader vision of Viksit Chhattisgarh and Viksit Bharat 2047.

His remarks placed particular emphasis on using the state's natural resources, agricultural strength, young workforce and tribal heritage as foundations for future progress.

Implementation Will Determine the Impact of Cabinet Decisions

The Cabinet's approval of the departmental name change will require the corresponding amendment to the Government Business (Allocation) Rules.

Similarly, the recruitment of former Agniveers against 36 constable vacancies will have to proceed in accordance with the applicable recruitment framework. The state has already provided for 10 per cent category-wise reservation for former Agniveers in the relevant posts.

For the state administration, the immediate priorities will include completing the necessary procedural formalities and ensuring that the decisions are implemented transparently.

The Sai Cabinet's latest meeting has thus combined administrative reform, employment opportunities for former Agniveers and a renewed declaration of its development priorities, while the Chief Minister has reaffirmed his government's commitment to advancing Chhattisgarh's progress through cooperation with the Union government.

Indian-Origin Jurist Navi Pillay Wins 2026 Nobel Peace Prize for Defending International Law



Former UN Human Rights Chief Honoured for Her Lifelong Fight Against Apartheid, War Crimes and Genocide; Nobel Committee Recognises Her Courage in Upholding Justice and Human Dignity

South African human rights lawyer and internationally respected jurist Navanethem “Navi” Pillay has been awarded the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize for her lifelong commitment to promoting peace, defending international law and ensuring accountability for war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee announced the prestigious award on Friday, October 9, recognising the 85-year-old former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for her exceptional contribution to strengthening international legal institutions at a time when the global rules-based order faces mounting challenges. Born into a family of Indian Tamil origin in Durban, South Africa, Pillay overcame racial discrimination under the apartheid regime to become one of the world’s most influential voices for justice and human dignity.

The Nobel Committee praised her courage, integrity and determination to uphold universal legal principles, describing her career as an example of how international law can protect vulnerable populations and hold powerful indi-



viduals accountable.

The award comes against the backdrop of continuing armed conflicts, growing concerns about violations of international humanitarian law and increasing political pressure on institutions responsible for investigating international crimes.

Pillay’s journey from apartheid-era South Africa to the highest institutions of international justice represents an extraordinary chapter in the global struggle for equality.

Born on September 23, 1941, she grew up in a society where racial segregation determined access to education, employment and fundamental rights. Despite these barriers, she pursued legal studies and established her own law practice in Durban in 1967.

At a time when opportunities for women, particularly women of colour, were severely restrict-

ed, Pillay challenged discriminatory practices and represented individuals who had little access to legal protection.

Her legal career included defending anti-apartheid activists, among them Nelson Mandela, whose struggle against racial segregation eventually transformed South Africa’s political landscape.

Following the end of apartheid, Pillay was appointed to South Africa’s High Court in 1995, becoming the first non-white woman to hold such a judicial position in the country.

Her appointment marked a significant development in a legal system that had historically excluded large sections of the population from positions of judicial authority.

Pillay subsequently entered international judicial service, where her work helped shape the legal response to some of the most serious human rights violations of the modern era.

Her association with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda proved particularly influential. The tribunal was established to prosecute those responsible for the 1994 genocide, during which hundreds of thousands of people were killed.

Pillay contributed to landmark judicial developments recognising sexual violence, including rape, as conduct capable of constituting genocide when committed with the required intent.

These legal principles significantly strengthened the international framework for prosecuting atrocities committed during armed conflicts.

Her contribution helped establish that sexual violence was not merely an incidental consequence of war but could constitute a grave international crime requiring prosecution and accountability.

Nobel Peace Prize

Pillay later served as a judge at the International Criminal Court, an institution created to prosecute individuals accused of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression within its jurisdiction.

Her experience across national and international courts established her reputation as a jurist committed to applying legal principles without discrimination.

Between 2008 and 2014, she served as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, one of the organisation's most important positions for monitoring and addressing human rights violations worldwide. During her tenure, she repeatedly emphasised the responsibility of governments to protect fundamental freedoms, prevent discrimination and ensure accountability for abuses committed by state and non-state actors.

Her work also brought her into direct confrontation with

governments and political authorities accused of violating international human rights standards.

Pillay remained an outspoken advocate for the independence of judicial institutions, arguing through her professional work that justice must not be subordinated to political convenience.

More recently, she chaired the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel. The commission concluded in 2025 that Israel had committed genocide in Gaza, a finding strongly rejected by the Israeli government. Israel disputed the commission's conclusions and accused it of political bias. The commission's findings are distinct from a final judicial determination by the International Court of Justice.

Pillay has also criticised crimes committed by Hamas, maintaining that violations of international humanitarian law must be examined regardless of the identity of those responsible. Her involvement in these highly sensitive international investigations demonstrated her continuing commitment to legal accountability even when findings generated intense political controversy.

Pillay also serves as an ad hoc judge at the International Court of Justice in proceedings concerning allegations of genocide against Myanmar's Rohingya population.

Her judicial responsibilities reflect the continuing importance of international legal institutions in addressing dis-

putes involving states, ethnic communities and allegations of mass atrocities.

Announcing the Nobel Peace Prize, the Norwegian Nobel Committee emphasised that a functioning international legal order remains essential for preventing conflict and resolving disputes through peaceful means. The committee observed that the international legal system is under considerable pressure as geopolitical rivalries and military conflicts increasingly challenge established principles of justice.

Its decision to honour Pillay is therefore being interpreted as recognition not only of an individual career but also of the institutions and legal principles she has defended.

The award underscores the importance of independent courts, credible investigations and the prosecution of serious international crimes in preserving global peace.

Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre congratulated Pillay and described the recognition as particularly relevant at a time when international law faces severe challenges. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa also welcomed the announcement, acknowledging her contribution to justice and her distinguished career in national and international institutions. Pillay's Indian ancestry adds another dimension to her remarkable professional journey. Her family background reflects the history of Indian communities in South Africa, many of whose ancestors arrived during the colonial period and subsequently faced discrimination under apartheid.

When Sankat Meets Shraddha: Why the Shri Hanuman Chalisa Remains a Source of Strength-By-Kumar Bahukhandi



“ From a pilot fighting for his life to a young industrialist facing overwhelming responsibility, different experiences show how remembrance of Lord Hanuman can become courage, endurance and inspiration

Kumar Bahukhandi | Assistant Professor, Journalism & Mass Communication, Working Journalist & Editor



There are moments in life when knowledge tells us what to do and experience tells us how to act, yet something within us still searches for strength. For millions of devotees, that search leads naturally towards prayer, and among the most familiar and deeply cherished prayers in Indian devotional life is the

Shri Hanuman Chalisa.

Its forty verses have travelled through generations. They are recited in temples and homes, before journeys and difficult decisions, during illness and uncertainty, and sometimes in circumstances where fear becomes immediate and intensely personal.

The Shri Hanuman Chalisa

repeatedly speaks of courage, protection, service and deliverance from sankat. Yet sankat does not always arrive in the same form. It can be a threat to life, the death of someone loved, an overwhelming responsibility, uncertainty about the future, or simply a moment when one's inner strength appears inadequate

to the situation ahead.

This is what makes three very different contemporary experiences — those of Captain Smit Machchhar, industrialist Kumar Mangalam Birla and former US President Barack Obama — particularly interesting. Their circumstances cannot and should not be equated, but each illustrates, in a different way, how remembrance associated with Lord Hanuman can enter human experience at a moment of vulnerability.

When a Pilot Fighting for His Life Remembered the Shri Hanuman Chalisa

Captain Smit Machchhar's experience represents perhaps the most dramatic of the three.

During the violent cockpit attack aboard a Flydubai aircraft in 2026, Machchhar was not sitting peacefully in a temple or reciting a prayer as part of his daily routine. He was injured and confronting an immediate threat to his own life as well as the safety of those aboard the aircraft.

Amid the violence and physical pain, his mind returned to the Shri Hanuman Chalisa.

Machchhar later spoke publicly about continuing to recite it during the ordeal. He also recounted his experience while speaking with Prime Minister Narendra Modi from his hospital bed.

There is no reason to separate his professional ability from his faith in order to understand what happened. He was a trained pilot. His experience, judgement, physical effort and decisions were

critical. Yet his own account adds another dimension to those facts — while fighting for his life, he turned towards Lord Hanuman for courage and strength.

For Machchhar, therefore, the Shri Hanuman Chalisa was not an interpretation added after the danger had passed. According to his testimony, it accompanied him while the crisis itself was unfolding.

The familiar verse assumes an especially powerful meaning in that context:

संकट ते हनुमान छुड़ावै। मन क्रम
बचन ध्यान जो लावै॥

His was sankat in its most immediate form — survival.

At 27, Kumar Mangalam Birla Faced a Very Different Sankat

Kumar Mangalam Birla's experience could hardly have been more different.

He was only 27 when his father, industrialist Aditya Vikram Birla, died in 1995. It was first a son's personal loss, but grief was accompanied almost immediately by another formidable reality. A young man suddenly had to shoulder responsibility for a vast business legacy.

Birla has recalled the uncertainty of that period and the difficulty of imagining how he would manage everything that had unexpectedly come before him. During that phase, he has said, he began reciting the Shri Hanuman Chalisa four times a day. Nothing about the situation disappeared simply because he prayed.

His father's death remained irreversible. The businesses still had to be managed. Decisions

still had to be taken. Responsibility still had to be carried and the future still had to be confronted.

That is precisely why his experience deserves attention.

Captain Machchhar turned towards the Shri Hanuman Chalisa while fighting for his life. Kumar Mangalam Birla turned towards it while seeking the strength to shoulder an overwhelming responsibility.

One crisis unfolded within terrifying moments. The other demanded endurance over years.

The difference helps us understand sankat more deeply. From sankat need not always mean that the difficulty itself disappears. Sometimes it may mean discovering the strength to walk through it.

Lord Hanuman in the Pocket of an American President

Barack Obama's experience introduces an entirely different dimension.

During a White House interview in 2016, the then US President displayed several small personal objects that he carried with him. Among them was a small figurine of Lord Hanuman.

Obama explained that these keepsakes reminded him of people he had encountered and their stories. When he became tired or discouraged, the objects could help him regain perspective, remember the people whose lives were affected by his decisions and renew his determination to continue.

His experience must be represented accurately. There is

no reason to claim that Obama recited the Shri Hanuman Chalisa, nor did he present the figurine as evidence of supernatural intervention.

Its significance lies somewhere else.

A representation of Lord Hanuman had crossed geographical, cultural and religious boundaries to become one of the personally meaningful objects carried by a President of the United States.

Machchhar's experience was about survival. Birla's was about strength amid grief and responsibility. Obama's was about remembrance and inspiration.

Survival. Strength. Inspiration.

Three very different experiences, but each touches a point where ordinary human strength encounters its perceived limits.

Why Lord Hanuman Represents More Than Escape from Difficulty

The enduring appeal of the Shri Hanuman Chalisa also lies in the character of Lord Hanuman himself.

Lord Hanuman is not remembered as a passive observer of adversity.

He crosses the ocean. He searches for Sita. He enters Lanka. He confronts danger. He brings the Sanjeevani when Lakshman lies unconscious. He serves Lord Ram with complete devotion.

His strength is accompanied by humility. His intelligence is directed towards purpose. His courage leads to action. His extraordinary abilities remain inseparable from service.

“ He was only 27 when his father, industrialist Aditya Vikram Birla, died in 1995. It was first a son's personal loss, but grief was accompanied almost immediately by another formidable reality. A young man suddenly had to shoulder responsibility for a vast business legacy. Birla has recalled the uncertainty of that period and the difficulty of imagining how he would manage everything that had unexpectedly come before him. During that phase, he has said, he began reciting the Shri Hanuman Chalisa four times a day.

Nothing about the situation disappeared simply because he prayed. His father's death remained irreversible. The businesses still had to be managed. Decisions still had to be taken. Responsibility still had to be carried and the future still had to be confronted. That is precisely why his experience deserves attention. Captain Machchhar turned towards the Shri Hanuman Chalisa while fighting for his life. Kumar Mangalam Birla turned towards it while seeking the strength to shoulder an overwhelming responsibility. One crisis unfolded within terrifying moments. The other demanded endurance over years. The difference helps us understand sankat more deeply. Deliverance from sankat need not always mean that the difficulty itself disappears. Sometimes it may mean discovering the strength to walk through it.

The Shri Hanuman Chalisa therefore contains not merely

a promise of protection but a devotional model of active

courage.

**दुर्गम काज जगत के जेतें।
सुगम अनुग्रह तुम्हरे तेते॥**

The verse does not tell the devotee that life will contain no difficult tasks. It places the difficult beside the possibility of overcoming it through grace.

line speaks even more directly to fear:

तुम रक्षक काहू को डरना॥

To someone frightened or vulnerable, such words are not merely literary expressions. Within devotion, they carry the assurance that the individual does not confront difficulty alone.

Devotion Does Not Need a Certificate from Science

Discussions about ancient devotional practices sometimes fall into an unnecessary argument. One side tries to declare everything scientifically proved, while another assumes that whatever cannot be scientifically demonstrated has little meaning.

The Shri Hanuman Chalisa does not require either approach.

Science and devotion need not be placed in a hierarchy.

Science seeks knowledge through observation, investigation, evidence and reason. Devotion grows through shraddha, remembrance, surrender and the relationship between the devotee and the divine.

To place devotion above science as a scientific proposition would misunderstand science. But to place devotion beneath science merely because devotion cannot always be measured would

misunderstand devotion.

The Shri Hanuman Chalisa does not become meaningful because science approves it, nor does it become less meaningful where science remains silent.

Its primary realm is devotion.

A devotee reciting

संकट कटै मिटै सब पीरा॥

जो सुमिरै हनुमत बलबीरा॥

is not conducting an experiment. The devotee is remembering Lord Hanuman.

Knowledge Has Its Place, and So Does Shraddha

Indian philosophical thought itself offers a wider understanding of knowledge and spiritual experience.

The Bhagavad Gita says:

**तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि
मतोऽधिकः।**

**कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी
भवार्जुन॥**

The verse does not ask us to reject knowledge. Rather, it reminds us that intellectual knowledge does not exhaust the possibilities of human experience.

Knowledge has its place. Action has its place. Discipline has its place. And shraddha has its place.

A trained pilot can rely upon his professional knowledge while also praying.

An industrialist can exercise judgement and leadership while seeking strength from Lord Hanuman.

A President operating within the intensely rational world of government can still carry a sacred symbol that possesses deeply personal meaning.

Human experience is large

enough to contain all of these dimensions.

The Miracle May Also Be the Strength to Continue

The word miracle often makes us look for something spectacular. Perhaps that understanding is too narrow.

A person survives circumstances that appeared almost impossible.

Someone grieving finds the courage to shoulder a responsibility that initially appeared unbearable.

Someone exhausted finds enough inner strength to rise again and continue.

The external circumstances may not always change.

Sometimes the person confronting them does.

This is where the meaning of sankat and shraddha meet.

The Shri Hanuman Chalisa lives not only in books or temples but also in memory. That means it can accompany the devotee wherever life leads — into a home, a hospital, an office, an aircraft or a moment when nobody else can fully understand the fear within.

And therein may lie one of its most profound meanings.

The perceived power of the Shri Hanuman Chalisa may lie not only in the hope that Lord Hanuman will remove sankat, but also in the faith that the devotee will not face sankat alone.

The miracle, within lived faith, may sometimes be survival.

At other times, it may be courage.

And sometimes, it may simply be the strength to continue.