



Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia interacts with first batch of Ashtalakshmi Darshan Youth Exchange Programme students

Students from Goa and Uttarakhand explore Arunachal Pradesh under Ashtalakshmi Darshan

Ashtalakshmi Darshan is a Youth Exchange Programme designed to deepen national integration and strengthen bonds between young people from different regions of the country

Minister Scindia encourages them to carry forward the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'

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Union Minister for Communications and Development of North Eastern Region, Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, today virtually interacted with the first batch of students participating in the Ashtalakshmi Darshan Youth Exchange Programme. The session was also attended by the Secretary, DoNER, Joint Secretary, DoNER, and the Acting Vice Chancellor and Registrar of Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU).



The inaugural edition of the programme brought together 39 students — 19 from Goa and 20 from Uttarakhand — who are visiting Arunachal Pradesh as part of the first batch. Rajiv Gandhi University, a Central University in Arunachal Pradesh, is hosting the first batch.

Organized and funded by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) and the North Eastern Council (NEC), the Ashtalakshmi Darshan Youth Exchange Programme aims to strengthen youth-to-youth connect, foster inter-regional understanding, and promote cultural appreciation in line with the vision of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi’s **“Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat”** initiative. This exchange programme involves 1280 students in 40 batches from 28 states/UTs visiting and experiencing all North Eastern States.



The Minister shared that while conceptualizing this programme, it was the government’s conscious resolve to ensure equal participation of boys and girls, reaffirming the commitment to inclusivity and empowerment. He described Ashtalakshmi Darshan as a distinctive cultural and educational exchange

initiative under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, designed to strengthen emotional and cultural bonds between youth across India and the eight Northeastern states. The programme allows students to immerse themselves in the region's languages, traditions, environment, and community life, helping them see India in its full diversity and unity.

Recalling his recent visit to Ziro Valley, Scindia spoke fondly of its serene charm, saying it felt like "time slows down just enough for you to listen to the earth." His reflections resonated with the students, many of whom shared similar impressions from their own travels through the valley and Itanagar.

During the interaction, the Minister engaged with several students on their experiences and learnings. He asked Saumya Bisht from Uttarakhand whether she would bring her family or friends to Arunachal Pradesh next time, to which she replied with a smile, "Both." Speaking with Rucha Parab from Goa about the contrasting climates, he also briefly switched to Marathi in a warm exchange that surprised the students. Deepani from Goa described her experience in Ziro Valley as deeply positive and memorable.



Responding to Aviral from Haldwani, who reflected on India's diverse culture and heritage, the Minister said, "It is the responsibility of this generation to pass on this bhawna to the next generation." Navneet Rawat suggested having more field visits along with lectures while Evangeline Menoka added that future groups could also explore other tribes and lifestyles across Arunachal Pradesh for a more diverse experience.

Students from Rajiv Gandhi University in Arunachal Pradesh, including a My Bharat Awardee (2023–24), also shared their experiences of interacting with participants from Goa and Uttarakhand, describing it as a valuable exchange of ideas and friendship.

In his closing remarks, Jyotiraditya Scindia commended the enthusiasm of the students and encouraged them to share their experiences widely. He said, "You are the first batch and alumni of the Ashtalakshmi Darshan journey, the torchbearers of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Ek

Bharat Shreshtha Bharat. Carry this experience with you, keep these friendships alive, and continue to be ambassadors of unity and understanding.”

He urged the participants to tell their families and friends about the people, traditions, and beauty of Arunachal Pradesh, reminding them that the Northeast does not only need tourists, but friends who understand and celebrate its culture.

The Ashtalakshmi Darshan Exchange Programme stands as a testament to the government’s commitment to promoting cultural integration, youth engagement and national unity. It continues to reflect the essence of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat and the shared vision of a Viksit Bharat 2047.

Samrat

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