

PESA Mahotsav 2025 Concludes on a Grand Note in Visakhapatnam

Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj Prof. S. P. Singh Baghel addresses the participants of two-day PESA Mahotsav in Visakhapatnam on PESA Day; emphasizes constitutional backing for tribal rights; calls for effective implementation at grassroots level

Launch of the PESA Portal, PESA Indicators, training modules on PESA in tribal languages, and unveiling of E-book on Kinnaur District in Himachal Pradesh mark the observance of PESA Day

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Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj, Prof. S. P. Singh Baghel, addressed the participants of the two-day PESA Mahotsav (23–24 December 2025) at Visakhapatnam through a video message on the occasion of PESA Day (24 December 2025). He emphasised that the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA) provides strong constitutional backing for tribal rights over water, forests, land and natural resources, and called for its effective implementation at the grassroots level.

The Mahotsav witnessed enthusiastic participation of Panchayat representatives, sportspersons, artisans, craftsmen and cultural artists from tribal communities across all ten PESA States, namely Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan and Telangana. Participants showcased their talents in sports events such as Kabaddi, Archery, PESA Run and tribal demo games, along with exhibitions of tribal food, crafts, art, culture, dance and traditions, providing a vibrant national platform to tribal heritage.



Prof. Baghel highlighted that the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has undertaken structured training programmes for elected representatives and officials to strengthen grassroots governance in PESA areas, while also documenting best practices for replication across States. He noted that participatory development plans prepared at the village level, aligned with local needs and traditions, are critical for the progress of tribal society and for achieving the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. The PESA Mahotsav, he added, aims to connect tribal youth, promote leadership skills, provide national recognition to tribal culture and strengthen the spirit of “Meri Parampara, Meri Pehchaan” (My Tradition, My Identity).



Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Shri Vivek Bharadwaj, underscored the significance of the PESA Act as a key framework for protecting water, forests and land, while strengthening grassroots governance in Scheduled Areas. He stated that the Act empowers local institutions, ensures community-led decision-making, and places the Gram Sabha at the centre of democratic participation. Decisions taken by Gram Sabhas in PESA areas, he said, reflect the true strength of India's democratic framework by enabling tribal communities to manage their resources and guide their own development.

Highlighting a significant milestone on the occasion, Shri Bharadwaj informed that the Government of Jharkhand has approved the draft PESA Rules, making it the ninth of ten PESA States to move towards notification of PESA Rules.

Principal Secretary, Panchayat Raj & Rural Development Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Shri Shashi Bhushan Kumar, welcomed all participants to Visakhapatnam and extended greetings on the occasion of PESA Day. He reiterated the State Government's commitment to empowering citizens through Panchayati Raj Institutions, with special focus on PESA Districts and Scheduled Areas.



The second day of the Mahotsav, coinciding with PESA Day, witnessed the launch of several key initiatives, including the PESA Portal, PESA Indicators, training modules on PESA in tribal languages, and the E-book on Kinnaur District of Himachal Pradesh. These were jointly unveiled by Shri Vivek Bharadwaj and Shri Shashi Bhushan Kumar in the presence of senior officials of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the Government of Andhra Pradesh. These initiatives mark an important step towards institutional strengthening, monitoring and capacity building for effective PESA implementation across States.

A rich cultural programme showcased India's diverse tribal and folk heritage, including Kuchipudi classical dance of Andhra Pradesh and State-wise performances such as Gussadi (Telangana), Gavari (Rajasthan), Dhemsā (Odisha) and folk dances from Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh. Selected tribal demo games were also presented, followed by felicitation of participating teams.

The valedictory session saw the distribution of prizes to winners of the PESA Run, Kabaddi and Archery competitions, along with certificates and mementos to participants of tribal demo games. In a symbolic gesture, the PESA Mahotsav Baton was handed over to Chhattisgarh, marking it as the next host State.

In the PESA Run (Men's category), Shri Atul Chidhade (Maharashtra) secured first place, followed by Shri Suraj Mashi and Shri Manoj Hillin (both from Maharashtra). In the Women's category, Ms. Raj Kumari (Rajasthan) won first place, followed by Ms. Hira Sanga (Jharkhand) and Ms. Priya (Himachal Pradesh).

In Women's Archery, Ms. Khushi Nanoma (Rajasthan) won the Gold Medal, Ms. Anuradha Kumari (Jharkhand) the Silver, and Ms. Ambika (Odisha) the Bronze.

In Men's Archery, Shri Krishna Pingua (Jharkhand) won Gold, Shri Badrilal Meena (Rajasthan) Silver, and Shri Dinesh Murmu (Jharkhand) Bronze.

In the Kabaddi competitions held on 23 December 2025, Madhya Pradesh emerged victory in the Men's category, while Jharkhand secured victory in the Women's category at the Visakhapatnam Port Authority Indoor Stadium.

PESA Day is being observed across all ten PESA States with people's participation through Gram Sabhas, in accordance with the constitutional mandate of the PESA Act. On the occasion, the Chief Ministers of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Odisha conveyed their greetings through video messages. Members of Parliament from the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, along with Panchayat representatives, also appreciated the PESA Mahotsav as an initiative that deepens people's participation, reinforces grassroots self-governance and celebrates the occasion as a lok utsav rooted in lok sanskriti.



The two-day PESA Mahotsav, organised on 23–24 December 2025 at Visakhapatnam Port Authority Stadium, concluded today on the occasion of PESA Diwas, reaffirming the commitment towards effective implementation of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, and strengthening grassroots self-governance in Scheduled Areas.

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