

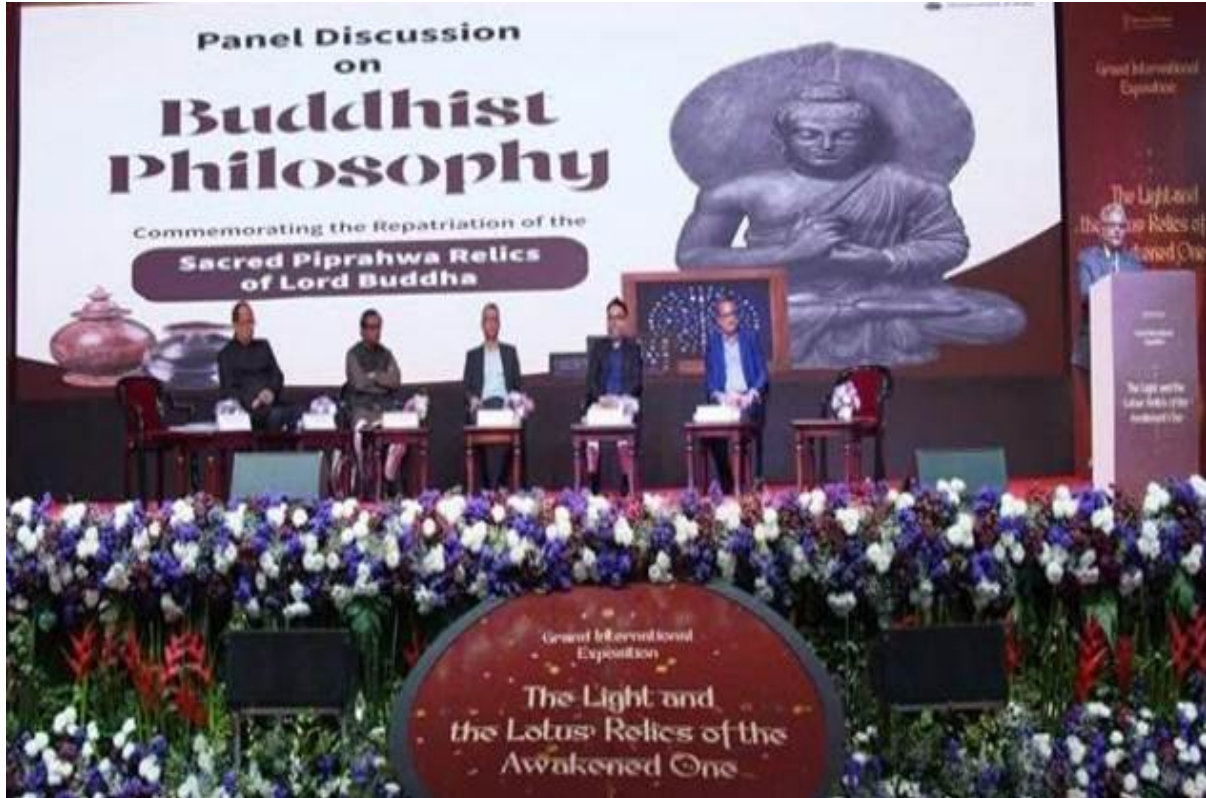
Repatriation of the Piprahwa Relics represents an act of shared stewardship rather than ownership

Buddha's teachings spread across the world not through force or coercion, but through dialogue and ethical conduct

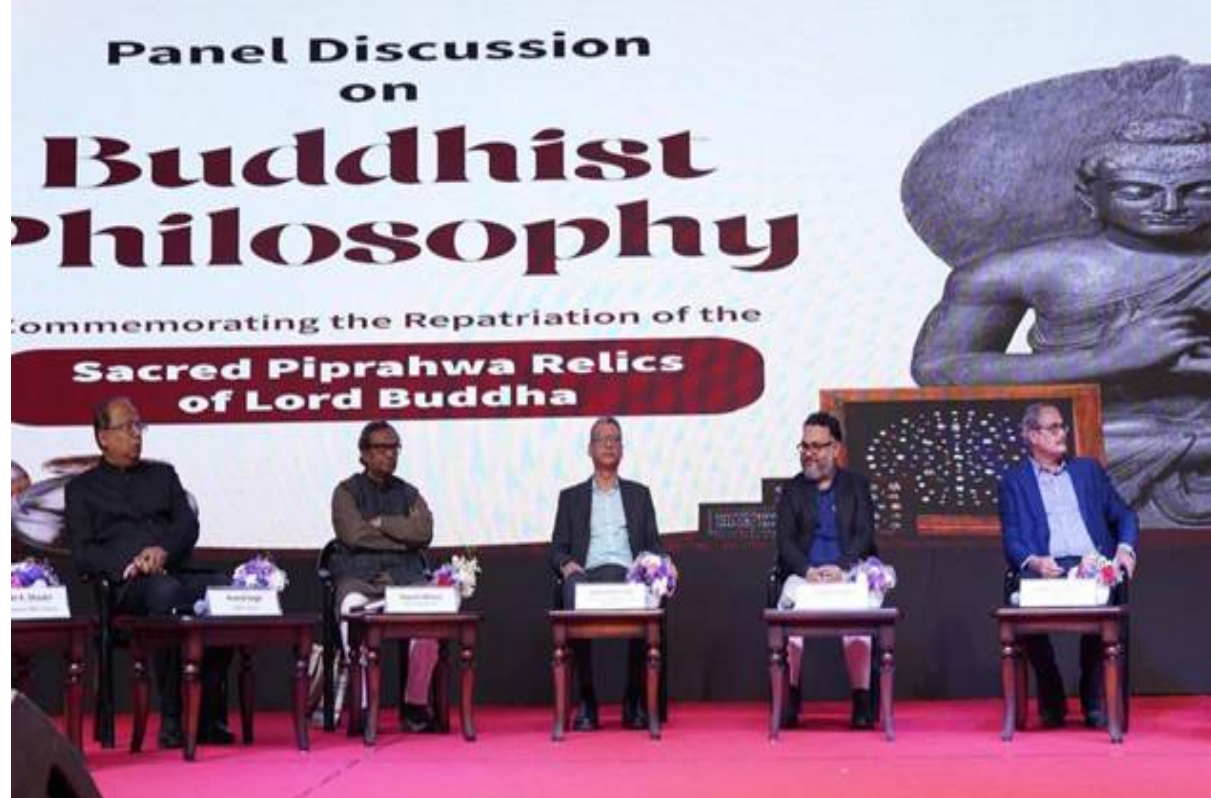
Panel Discussion on Buddhist Philosophy held at Rai Pithora Cultural Complex

प्रविष्टि तिथि: 05 JAN 2026 9:43AM by PIB Delhi

On the occasion of the inauguration of the Grand International Exhibition of the Sacred Piprahwa Relics by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, a panel discussion on “Buddhist Philosophy” was organised at the Rai Pithora Cultural Complex, New Delhi.



The session was chaired by Prof. Siddharth Singh, Vice-Chancellor, Nava Nalanda Mahavihara (Deemed University), Nalanda. The panel brought together eminent scholars, including Prof. Nalin Kumar Shastri, Former Registrar, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow; Prof. Bala Ganpathi, Department of Philosophy, University of Delhi; Prof. Anand Singh, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow; Prof. Rajnish Mishra, Department of Sanskrit, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; and Prof. Ujjwal Kumar, Former Head, Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Calcutta.



In his presidential address, Prof. Siddharth Singh observed that the Buddha's teachings spread across the world not through force or coercion, but through dialogue, ethical conduct, and personal example. He emphasized that Buddhism, like other Dharma-based traditions, seeks the purification of the human mind and the alleviation of suffering rather than proselytisation. He further noted that the Buddha's relics continue to sustain living traditions by connecting contemporary practitioners with the historical Buddha, and that the repatriation of the Piprahwa relics represents an act of shared stewardship rather than ownership.



Prof. Nalin Kumar Shastri stated that the repatriation of the Piprahwa relics reflects the renewed relevance of Buddhist philosophy as a guide for peace and integrated national development. He highlighted that Buddhist thought bridges ancient wisdom with contemporary concerns such as ethical governance,

environmental sustainability, and mental well-being, and underscored the teachings of Anattā, the Brahmavihāras, and Pratītyasamutpāda as essential for social harmony, ecological responsibility, and global well-being, reaffirming India's role as the Motherland of Dhamma.



Prof. Anand Singh highlighted that the relics of the Buddha and his disciples function as symbolic embodiments of the Dhamma, integrating both the living presence of the Buddha and his teachings. He noted that relic veneration played a crucial role in expanding Buddhist sacred geography through stūpas and caityas, while accommodating local cultural elements such as Ādibuddha concepts and mother-goddess motifs without compromising core philosophical values.



Prof. Bala Ganpathi emphasized that Buddhism's global acceptance is rooted in its philosophical depth and ethical universality. Describing the Piprahwa relics as living reminders of the Buddha's message, he reaffirmed India's civilizational role as the Motherland of Dhamma and observed that Buddhist

philosophy offers a practical and humane framework for peace, coexistence, and moral clarity in an increasingly fragmented world.

Prof. Rajnish Mishra underscored the deep philosophical and textual continuities between Buddhist and classical Indian thought, highlighting the shared intellectual milieu of Śramaṇic and Brāhmaṇical traditions. He noted that centres such as Varanasi historically fostered dialogue, debate, and philosophical refinement.

Prof. Ujjwal Kumar underlined the Buddha’s deliberate choice of Sarnath for delivering his first sermon and explained key doctrinal concepts, including the distinction between stūpa and cetiya. He noted that while a stūpa contains relics, a cetiya serves as a sacred reminder of the Buddha, with both occupying a central place in Buddhist ethical and devotional life.

The panel collectively acknowledged the concerted efforts of the Hon’ble Prime Minister of India and the Hon’ble Minister of Culture in facilitating the repatriation of the Piprahwa relics, describing it as a gesture of cultural stewardship, global goodwill, and India’s enduring commitment to peace and shared human values.

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