



Grand Fair of 'Lakhpati Didis' – SARAS Aajeevika Mela – begins today in Gurugram, showcasing a magnificent confluence of rural crafts and women's empowerment

Direct demonstrations by skilled artisans in crafting handicrafts, with live and captivating presentations of various artworks on display at the fair

Mesmerising and enchanting spectacle of clay pottery and embroidery work, with 900 Lakhpati Didis from 30 states participating

Special workshops being organised under the knowledge pavilion at the SARAS Fair, where women will be taught the skills of packaging, branding, preparing business proposals, and social media marketing

A 'Demo and Live Learning Area' has also been created for visitors attending the fair, where spectators will not only be able to purchase items but also witness them being made right before their eyes

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Haryana's cyber city Gurugram is once again set to be immersed and overflowing with the colors of the country's rural traditions, folk arts, and women's entrepreneurship. Starting today, a grand event titled 'SARAS Aajeevika Mela-2026' is being organised at the Leisure Valley Park Ground located in Sector-29. The inauguration of this national-level fair will be performed by the Union Minister of Rural Development, and Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan. The programme will see the participation of Ministers of State for Rural Development, Dr. Chandrashekhar Pemmasani, and Kamlesh Paswan, as distinguished guests. The fair, being held from February 10 to February 26, will offer a vibrant glimpse of a 'Mini India'.

This year's Saras Mela is being attended by over 900 women entrepreneurs from 28 states across the country, affiliated with various self-help groups. Over 450 stalls have been set up at the fair premises, offering everything from Kashmir's Pashmina in the north to Tamil Nadu's silk in the south, and from Rajasthan's embroidery in the west to Assam's bamboo crafts in the east, all under one roof.



At a press conference held during the fair, Ms. Swati Sharma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, shared important facts on the progress of self-help groups. She stated that 10 crore women in the country are currently organized under the “Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission”. She also stated that the Prime Minister had set a target of 3 crore Lakhpati Didis, of which 2.9 crore Didis have become Lakhpati Didis by December 2025, and this target will be achieved in the near future.

Swati Sharma highlighted an important financial aspect, stating that the honesty and economic progress of Self-Help Group women has increased their confidence in the banking sector. She shared that the NPA (non-performing asset) of Self-Help Groups in various states has dropped to less than 2 percent, which is a testament to the fact that rural women are repaying their loans on time and becoming skilled in financial management.

During the press conference, several successful women entrepreneurs shared their experiences and success stories. Many women recounted how they once had no source of income, but after joining self-help groups and taking advantage of government schemes, they are now not only supporting their families but also providing employment to other women. The "Lakhpati Didi Pavilion" at the fair showcases the stories of such empowered women.



Swati Sharma, Director of the Ministry of Rural Development, Dr. Moulishree, Assistant Director of the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Chiranji Lal Kataria, District Manager of the National Rural Livelihood Mission, and other dignitaries were present at the press conference. They informed that the Saras Aajeevika Mela will continue till February 26 at the Laser Valley Ground (near IFFCO Chowk Metro Station) in Gurugram. Entry to the fair is completely free. Common people can visit the fair every day from 11:00 am to 9:30 pm.

Main Attractions of the SARAS Fair

One of the main attractions of this year's SARAS fair is the 'Knowledge and Learning Pavilion.' Here, it is not just about selling products; special workshops are being held daily for women entrepreneurs. In these sessions, women will be taught the intricacies of packaging, branding, preparing business proposals, and social media marketing.

Particularly this time at the fair, intensive training sessions on 'Logistics and Transportation Management' are being organised. The objective is to teach rural women how they can transport their products to markets across the country and abroad at low cost without any damage. Additionally, awareness is being raised about the 'E-SARAS' portal through tie-ups with e-commerce companies, so that sales for these women can continue even after the fair.

For the visitors coming to the fair, the 'Demo and Live Learning Area' will prove to be a special experience. Here, people are not only buying goods but also getting to see them being made. Skilled artisans shaping clay pots on the wheel will attract children and youth towards them, while direct demonstrations of traditional needle-thread and mirror work embroidery on fabrics will also be presented. There will also be live demos of eco-friendly baskets and household items made from natural fibers and bamboo.

For food and drink enthusiasts, the SARAS fair is nothing short of paradise. A massive food court has been established at the fair, where women from various states have set up 'live food stalls' with their regional flavors. Here, one can savor dishes like Dal-Baati-Churma from Rajasthan, Makke di Roti and Sarson da Saag from Punjab, Dosa-Idli from South India, and Sandesh from Bengal. The special thing is that all these dishes are being prepared in the traditional way using pure spices.

The fair administration has also paid special attention to the convenience of visitors. A grand 'Kids Zone' has been created for young children, where they are being introduced to India's rural culture through art, activities and storytelling sessions. Areas have also been set up at various places for the elderly and women to relax. For entertainment, cultural troupes from different states are presenting folk dances and music every evening, which add an even more festive atmosphere to the fair.

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