

Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia interacts with 11th batch of Ashtalakshmi Darshan Youth Exchange Programme students

Students from Tamil Nadu and Chandigarh explore Sikkim under the programme, till now 471 students have participated from across the country

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 urged the participating students to uphold and carry forward the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'

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Union Minister of Communications and Development of North Eastern Region Jyotiraditya Scindia today virtually interacted with the 11th batch of students participating in the Ashtalakshmi Darshan Youth Exchange Programme. The batch is being conducted at Sikkim University from 9th to 22nd February, 2026 with the participation of 22 students from Chandigarh and 15 students from Tamil Nadu. The session was also attended by the Secretary, MDoNER, Joint Secretary, MDoNER, Registrar (I/C), Sikkim University, Gangtok, and other officials of North Eastern Council (NEC).



The Ashtalakshmi Darshan programme, a Youth Exchange Programme organized and funded by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region through NEC, has been designed to deepen national integration and strengthen bonds between young people from different regions of the country. The programme envisages mutual understanding and cementing the cooperative spirit. It promotes meaningful youth-to-youth engagement, cultural appreciation, and mutual understanding through 14-day immersive exposure visits, academic sessions, heritage tours, and local community interactions. Overall, participation of 1280 students in 32 batches from 28 states/UTs is envisaged under the programme, for visiting and experiencing North Eastern States. So far, 390 students from different states have participated in the programme across the earlier ten batches. Currently 81 students are taking part in the two batches underway. (See Annexure.)

Union Minister mentioned how the programme was designed to promote equal participation of boys and girls, reflecting a clear commitment to inclusivity and empowerment. He described Ashtalakshmi Darshan as a unique cultural and educational exchange under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative, that connects youth from rest of India with the eight Northeastern states, helping them experience the region's languages, traditions, and way of life while deepening a sense of unity in diversity. Speaking about tourism in Northeast India, he added that the sector holds immense potential and can create opportunities for people across the region. He also pointed to the vast tourism prospects in Sikkim.



During the interaction, Union Minister asked several students about their experiences and learnings. Ms. Keerthana P from Tamil Nadu said it was wonderful opportunity and offered meaningful real-life learning. Mr. Ansari A, a differently abled student from Tamil Nadu, expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region for the opportunity. About her overall experience of this programme, Ms. Rajanpreet Kaur, from Chandigarh said that she feels deeply honoured to be a part of this programme and underlined that environment and development goes hand in hand in Sikkim.

In his closing remarks, Union Minister praised the students' enthusiasm and urged them to share their experiences widely with their family and friends about the people, traditions, and natural beauty of Sikkim, and carry forward the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'. He expressed hope that they would

return home with many stories about the State's rich culture and heritage. The vision of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi through the Ashtalakshmi Darshan Youth Exchange Programme is to help students experience the authentic culture, people, and traditions of Northeast India.



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 co-prosperous Viksit Bharat 2047.

A riveting interaction with the bright young minds of Batch 11 of the Asthalakshmi Darshan Youth Exchange Program at Sikkim University, bringing together students from Tamil Nadu and Chandigarh in the beautiful state of Sikkim.

With nearly 400 young participants already part of... pic.twitter.com/zvxx8GphN0

— Jyotiraditya M. Scindia (@JM_Scindia) February 20, 2026

Union Minister for Communications and Development of North Eastern Region, Shri @JM_Scindia, today virtually interacted with the Batch 11 of the Asthalakshmi Darshan Youth Exchange Program at Sikkim University, bringing together students from Tamil Nadu and Chandigarh in the... pic.twitter.com/B7zV9fDnUC

— MDoNER India (@MDoNER_India) February 20, 2026

Annexure:

Ashtalakshmi Darshan Youth Exchange Program at a Glance

Batches Completed-(total participants:390)

Batch	From	To	Host Institute	Host State	Visiting State(s)	Students	Guides
1	1-Nov-25	14-Nov-25	Rajiv Gandhi University	Arunachal Pradesh	Goa(19), Uttarakhand(20)	39	4
2	15-Dec-25	28-Dec-25	IIT Guwahati	Assam	Andhra Pradesh(20), Himachal Pradesh(20)	40	4
3	17-Dec-25	30-Dec-25	NIT Nagaland	Nagaland	Jammu&Kashmir(21)	21	2
4	03-Jan-26	16-Jan-26	NIT Nagaland	Nagaland	Punjab(19), Daman&Diu& Dadra Haveli(20)	39	4
5	04-Jan-26	17-Jan-26	TripuraUniversity	Tripura	Andhra Pradesh(20), Karnataka (20)	40	4
6	05-Jan-26	18-Jan-26	NIT Manipur	Manipur	Uttar Pradesh(19)	19	2
7	15-Jan-26	29-Jan-26	Mizoram University	Mizoram	Andaman& Nicobar Island(20), Lakshadweep(20)	40	4
8	20-Jan-26	03-Feb-26	NIT Agartala	Tripura	Bihar(17),Gujarat(20)	37	3
9	01-Feb-26	14-Feb-26	IIM Shillong	Meghalaya	Odisha(20),Delhi(20)	40	4

10	01-Feb-26	14-Feb-26	Nagaland University	Nagaland	Kerala(20),Ladakh (20)	40	4
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Ongoing Batches(totalparticipants:81)

11	09-Feb-26	22-Feb-26	Sikkim University	Sikkim	Chandigarh(20), Tamil Nadu(15)	35	2
12	15-Feb-26	28-Feb-26	Rajiv Gandhi University	Arunachal Pradesh	Pondicherry(20), Jharkhand(20)	40	4

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