

PRESIDENT OF INDIA GRACES 9TH INTERNATIONAL SANTAL CONFERENCE

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The President of India Smt Droupadi Murmu graced the 9th International Santal Conference at Darjeeling, West Bengal today (March 7, 2026).

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that it is a matter of pride for the Santal community that our ancestor, Tilka Majhi, raised the banner of revolt against exploitation nearly 240 years ago. Nearly 60 years after his revolt, the brave brothers Sido-Kanhu and Chand-Bhairav, along with the brave sisters Phoolo-Jhano, led the Santal Hul in 1855.



The President said that the year 2003 will always be remembered in the history of the Santali community. That year, the Santali language was included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. Last year, on the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Constitution of India, written in the Santali language in the Ol Chiki script, was released.

The President said that in 1925, Pandit Raghunath Murmu invented the Ol Chiki script. Recently, we have celebrated the centenary of this invention. His contributions provided Santali speakers with a new opening for expression. He also composed plays such as "Bidu Chandan," "Kherwal Veer," "Dalege Dhan," and "Sido Kanhu - Santal Hul." In this way, he spread the light of literature and social consciousness within the Santali community. She said that members of Santal community should read other languages and scripts, but be connected with their own language.



The President said that tribal communities have preserved their folk music, dances and traditions for centuries. They have maintained a sensitivity to nature, passed down from generation to generation. She emphasised that the lesson of nature conservation must be passed to future generations. She underlined that along with preserving folk traditions and the environment, our tribal communities must embrace modern development and move forward on the journey of progress. She expressed confidence that members of tribal communities, including the Santal community, will set an example of the harmony between progress and nature.

The President said that the need of the hour is to focus on education, health and economic empowerment. Tribal youth must progress through education and skill development. But in all these efforts, they should not forget their roots. She said that we should resolve to preserve our language and culture, prioritize education and maintain unity and fraternity in society. This will help us in building an empowered society and a strong India.



MJPS/ST

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