

Union Minister Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia Interacts with Participants of Ashtalakshmi Darshan Youth Exchange Programme

**Students from Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan,
Goa and Delhi Share Experiences of Visits to North East India**

**Programme Strengthens Youth Connect, Cultural
Understanding and Spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat**

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Union Minister for Communications and Development of North Eastern Region, Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, on 22nd April virtually interacted with students of Ashtalakshmi Darshan Youth Exchange Programme, a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER). The programme was attended by Secretary, Sanjay Jaju, Joint Secretary Niraj Kumar among other dignitaries.



As part of the programme, the Union Minister, MDoNER interacted with the students of Batch-13, 14 & 15 at IIT Guwahati, Assam University and Tezpur University, respectively. The batches comprised 100 students, including 20 students each from Chhattisgarh, New Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Goa,

participating in the exchange programme scheduled from 15 March 2026 to 10 April 2026.

The interaction programme commenced with opening remarks by Shri Niraj Kumar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of DoNER, followed by a keynote address by the Union Minister, MDoNER. During the interactive session, students shared their experiences and reflections on the exposure visit:

Ms. Ragini Sahu from Durg, Chhattisgarh highlighted the unique aspects of the NER, including visits to diverse locations, and emphasized that such exposure visits are extremely valuable and should be encouraged for students across India.

Another participant from Chhattisgarh, Mr. Harish Kumar Sahu shared that after visiting the North East, he truly understood why the region is referred to as “Ashtalakshmi”, symbolizing its richness and diversity.

Sharing her experience, Ms. Ifrah Kawa from Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, appreciated the warm hospitality of the region and expressed her interest in the hospitality management and cultural richness of the NER.

Reflecting on her visit, Ms. Shaily Tiwari from Barkatullah University, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh highlighted her enriching experience, including visits to the Air Force Station, interactions with officials from the Assam Rifles, and exposure to terrace farming, bamboo houses, and the diverse tribal cultures of the region.

Reflecting on his experience, Mr. Vikas Bali from Central University of Rajasthan stated that his visit to the North Eastern Region was truly enriching. He expressed that seeing the NER firsthand gave him a deeper appreciation of its natural beauty, culture, and diversity, making the experience both insightful and memorable.



One of the most engaging interactions came from Ms. Diksha D. Gaonkar from Government Higher Secondary School Valpoi, Goa, who described her experience as memorable, appreciating the natural beauty, people, and local cuisine of the NER. She was joined by fellow students from Goa, who performed a song in Assamese language, showcasing cultural appreciation and emotional connect with the region.

The Union Minister appreciated the experiences shared by the students and encouraged them to act as ambassadors of the North Eastern Region in their respective States. He emphasized the importance of such exchange programmes in strengthening national integration, mutual respect, and a shared sense of responsibility among the youth of the country.

He reiterated that the vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister through the Ashtalakshmi Darshan Youth Exchange Programme is to enable students to experience the authentic culture, people, and traditions of Northeast India and return as ambassadors of unity and integration.

The interaction concluded with an address by Shri Sanjay Jaju, Secretary, Ministry of DoNER, expressing his sincere appreciation to all participating students, partner institutions, and stakeholders for making the initiative a success. He highlighted that the successful completion of the programme reflects the growing spirit of national integration and youth engagement. Secretary, also extended his best wishes to all the students for their future endeavours, encouraging them to carry forward the learnings and experiences gained during the programme and to act as ambassadors of the North Eastern Region across the country.

Ashtalakshmi Darshan – Youth Exchange Programme

The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) has recently launched a flagship initiative titled “Ashtalakshmi Darshan – Youth Exchange Programme” under the visionary leadership of the Hon'ble Prime Minister. The programme, implemented by the North Eastern Council (NEC), aims at fostering emotional integration, strengthening people-to-people connections, enhancing understanding of the North Eastern Region (NER), and building a stronger sense of shared responsibilities. It envisages participation from 28 States and Union Territories, promoting meaningful youth-to-youth engagement, cultural appreciation, and mutual understanding through 14-day immersive exposure visits, academic sessions, heritage tours, and local community interactions.

The programme was formally launched on 1st November 2025. The programme has been highly successful, with 530 students participating across 15 batches during FY 2025–26, visiting 8 North Eastern States and engaging with 11 Universities and Institutions.

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