

Madhya Pradesh: Amit Shah leads BJP tribal outreach, says committed to their welfare

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Union home minister Amit Shah, CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan and state BJP chief VD Sharma pay tribute to Cond king Shankar Shah and his son Raghunath Shah, martyrs of 1857, in Jabalpur on Saturday

BHOPAL: Union home minister [Amit Shah](#) set the tone for BJP's tribal outreach in [Madhya Pradesh](#) on Saturday by paying tribute to tribal legends, King Shankar Shah and Kunwar Raghunath Shah, in Jabalpur and saying that the BJP governments in the Centre and states have done more for tribals than any other.

"BJP is committed to the development of tribals," Shah said at Gaurav Samaroh as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav on Saturday. Under the Narendra Modi government, the tribal welfare budget has risen from Rs 4,200 crore (in the Congress-led UPA government) to Rs 7,900 crore, the home minister said, outlining the development initiatives taken by BJP governments for tribals, including tribal research institutes, widening the base of forest produce, setting up of tribal development fund and the chain of Eklavya Model Residential Schools.

Shah said the Centre will open nine museums dedicated to tribal freedom fighters at a cost of Rs 200 crore, including one in Chhindwara.

Chief minister [Shivraj Singh Chouhan](#) said his government will give the right of community forest management to tribals. "PESA Act will be implemented in the state in a phased manner. It empowers gram sabhas to protect and conserve community resources. We are going to give the responsibility of setting up Community Forest Management Committees to gram sabhas," the CM announced.

Chouhan launched the 'ration aapke dwar' (ration at your doorstep) scheme for tribals. "It will start from November 1. In 89 tribal dominated blocks of the state, no tribal will have to make rounds of shops to get ration. The government will send the ration to their homes. It will benefit 23.8 lakh families," the CM said.

Shah laid the foundation stone of a memorial to the brave father and son, who were martyred in 1857. "When I came to know about martyrs King Shankar Shah and Kunwar Raghunath Shah, I came to Jabalpur and stayed in a dharamshala for 16 days and was surprised to know how the two were tied to a cannon and blown up, simply over a poem," Shah said.

'Congress only used tribals to divide votes'

Their supreme sacrifice was not mentioned in history. How can we forget the sacrifice of freedom fighters?", Shah asked.

The Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav started by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to remember everyone who fought for the country's independence and gave their life for it. It is also to introduce them to the youth of the country so that their contribution to freedom always remains alive in everyone's hearts," Shah said.

"Congress never recognised their sacrifice and used tribals to divide votes. Congress did nothing for tribal people," the home minister said, accusing Congress of undermining the contribution of tribals in the freedom struggle.

Chhindwara University will soon be renamed as 'Raja Shankar Shah Vishwavidyalaya', chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced. tnn