

NCM NEWSLETTER

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April, 2025 (Edition 7)



Navroz Mubarak!

May this special day bring an abundance of happiness, prosperity and good health to all. May the coming year be marked by success and progress, and may the bonds of harmony be strengthened. Wishing a joyful and fulfilling year ahead,

— श्रीमद् नरेन्द्र मोदी
Prime Minister

Chairman Shri Iqbal Singh Lalpura delivered the Presidential Address at the National Christian Leaders' Conclave held at Vimalagiri Pastoral Centre, Kottayam.



To aid in the preservation of Cultural Heritage and language of Parsis, Ministry of Minority Affairs has sanctioned 'The Centre for Avesta Pahlavi Studies' at Mumbai University amounting to Rs. 11.17 crore.



01/16

SAMTA SURAKSHA SAUHARD

National Conference of State Minority Commissions Held in New Delhi

March 25, 2025 | New Delhi

The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) successfully organized a landmark National Conference of State Minorities Commissions in New Delhi, bringing together policymakers, experts, and community representatives to deliberate on strategies for education, inclusion, and the empowerment of minority communities in India.



Inaugural Ceremony

The conference was inaugurated by Hon'ble Minister of State for Minority Affairs, Shri George Kurian, who lit the ceremonial lamp and delivered the keynote address. He highlighted the government's commitment to uplifting minority communities through various targeted schemes and welfare initiatives. Shri Kurian also emphasized that and opportunity compared to some neighboring nations.





NCM Chairman Shri Iqbal Singh Lalpura welcomed participants and set the tone for the event with his inaugural remarks. He reflected on the significant contributions of minorities to nation-building and reiterated the Commission's role as a platform for meaningful dialogue and policy recommendations.

Key Technical Sessions

Two focused technical sessions were conducted, addressing core themes:

Education: Ensuring Access and Support to Minorities

The session highlighted the educational contributions of minority communities and examined the barriers faced by students and institutions. The panel proposed actionable solutions to promote inclusive and equitable education.



Minority Inclusion and Welfare



Panelists underscored the need for proactive government policies and welfare programs that ensure inclusive development. The session focused on sustainable models for economic and social empowerment of minority communities.

Special Address by Union Minister Shri Kiren Rijiju

Hon'ble Union Minister of Minority Affairs, **Shri Kiren Rijiju**, attended as the Chief Guest and delivered a powerful address reaffirming the government's dedication to minority welfare. He highlighted the role of the National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC) in promoting entrepreneurship, citing successful initiatives in states like Kerala.



Shri Rijiju proposed holding similar conferences across India and committed to convening a meeting of state minority affairs ministers to streamline support mechanisms. He also assured that requests for gap funding from state governments would be reviewed to strengthen on-ground implementation of minority welfare schemes.

The Minister concluded by reiterating the guiding principle of the government: "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas." He emphasized that minorities in India are safe and have equal opportunities to prosper and succeed in all walks of life.

Open House: Dialogue and Collaboration



An open-house discussion provided State Minorities Commissions the opportunity to share ground realities, challenges, and innovative practices. The exchange fostered a spirit of collaboration and mutual learning.



Chairman **Shri Iqbal Singh Lalpura** reaffirmed NCM's dedication to nurturing inclusive policy dialogue and supporting initiatives that enable the socio-economic upliftment of minority communities.

Looking Ahead

The conference marked a significant step toward building stronger institutional linkages and shared strategies for the welfare of minorities. The National Commission for Minorities continues its mission to ensure equity, dignity, and opportunity for all minority communities across India.



05/16

SAMTA SURAKSHA SAUHARD

Technical Session I: Education — Ensuring Access and Support to Minorities

The session opened with a warm welcome from Moderator **Dr. Jaswinder Singh Dhillon**, Former Vice-Chancellor, Guru Kashi University, Bathinda. Dr. Dhillon emphasized the importance of inclusive education for minorities, linking it to India's constitutional values of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. He acknowledged the legacy of Nalanda and praised the organizing team led by Dr. Iqbal Singh. Reflecting on India's historical journey of educational reforms, he cited the UNESCO report "Learning: The Treasure Within," calling for its rediscovery in today's context.



Dr. Michael Williams, Director, Mount Carmel School, highlighted the Christian community's vital role in education, managing over 55,000 institutions despite being only 2.3% of the population. He noted that over 90% of students in Christian schools come from the majority community. He stressed the need to safeguard the autonomy of minority institutions and called for education rooted in unity, compassion, and humanity.



Technical Session I: Education — Ensuring Access and Support to Minorities

Dr. Indu Jain, Founder, Jain Dharma Rakshak Foundation, spoke of the Jain community's historical contributions to education. She emphasized reviving Jain values like Ahimsa and Satya within modern curricula, and encouraged Sanskrit and Prakrit studies to spiritually enrich young minds.



Dr. Indu Jain

Founder, Jain Dharma Rakshak Foundation

Col. Jaibans Singh (Retd.), Sikh community representative, outlined challenges faced by rural Sikh youth, such as declining interest in higher education and migration. He advocated for vocational training, promotion of Punjabi digital platforms, and integration of Sikh history into national curricula, urging collaboration between SGPC and the Commission.



Col. Jaibans Singh (Retd.)

Sikh community representative

Technical Session I: Education — Ensuring Access and Support to Minorities

Shri Sirajuddin Qureshi, Former President of India Islamic Culture Centre, discussed the educational progress and challenges within the Muslim community. He welcomed the increasing participation of Muslim girls in higher education but raised concerns about limited Urdu-based career opportunities, procedural hurdles in establishing educational institutions, and lack of awareness regarding welfare schemes. He stressed the need for modernizing Madrasas and reviving the Maulana Azad Education Foundation.



The session moderator **Dr. Dhillon**, in his concluding remarks, reflected on the collective aspiration for quality education, equal opportunity, and national belonging. He called for continued collaboration to transform this vision into reality, thanking the panelists and audience for their valuable contributions.



Technical Session II: Minority Inclusion and Welfare — Role of Government for Empowerment and Development

The second technical session began with a welcome address by **Shri Deepak Mukarjee**, Governing Body Member of St. Stephen's College. Highlighting constitutional safeguards (Articles 14–16, 25–30), he called for stronger implementation of key welfare schemes like the new 15-Point Programme, PMJVK, and minority scholarship programs. Applauding the open-door policy of NCM Chairman Shri Iqbal Singh Lalpura, he urged for inclusion of minority women, robust monitoring, and faster implementation.



Shri Deepak Mukarjee

Governing Body Member of St. Stephen's College

Brig. P.S. Gothra (Retd.) emphasized India's rich diversity and constitutional guarantees for minorities. He praised government initiatives like erstwhile schemes **Nai Manzil** and **USTTAD** but raised concerns about the digital literacy gap hindering scholarship applications. He recommended simplifying processes, enhancing digital access, and promoting regional languages like Gurmukhi to preserve minority identities.



Brig. P.S. Gothra (Retd.)

Former Vice-Chancellor,
Guru Kashi University, Bathinda

09/16

SAMTA SURAKSHA SAUHARD

Technical Session II: Minority Inclusion and Welfare — Role of Government for Empowerment and Development

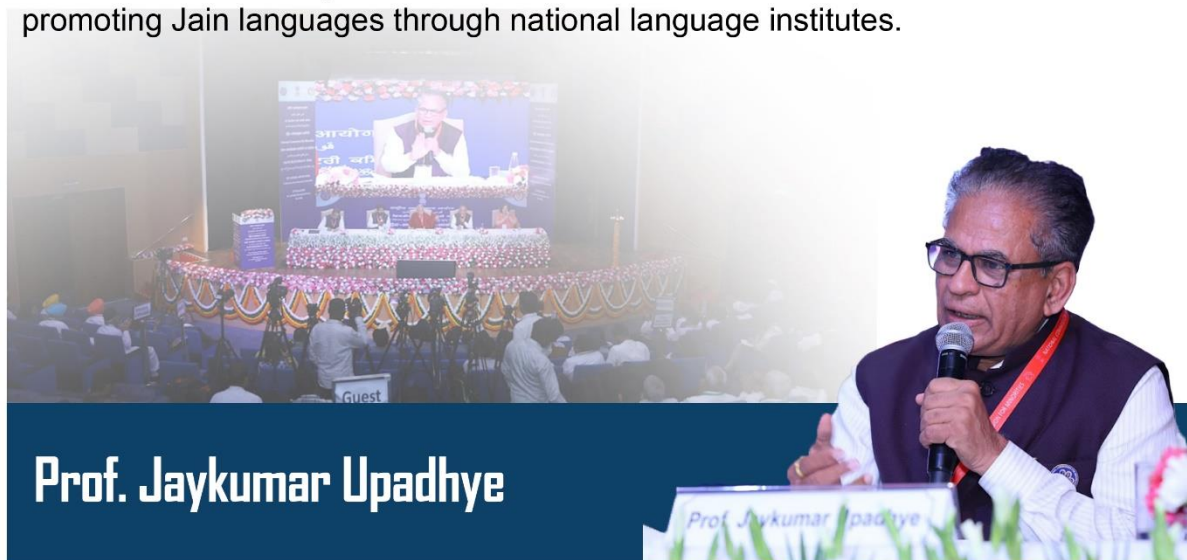
Acharya Yeshi La spoke about the challenges facing the Buddhist community. Stressing the need for Minority Commissions at the state level, he urged faster fund disbursement to monasteries, an increase in scholarships, and greater cultural preservation efforts. He also recommended establishing Kartik Purnima as an official holiday.



Acharya Yeshi La

Buddhist community

Prof. Jaykumar Upadhye highlighted the importance of preserving Jain identity and culture through initiatives like the Classical Language status for Prakrit. He credited the leadership of the NCM Chairman for this achievement and called for promoting Jain languages through national language institutes.



Prof. Jaykumar Upadhye

Technical Session II: Minority Inclusion and Welfare — Role of Government for Empowerment and Development

Dr. Shernaz Cama voiced concerns about the declining Parsi population. She called for the revival of the GeoParsi program and proposed setting up a physical center for Parsi Cultural Studies at Tata Institute, Mumbai. She stressed supporting Parsi youth and safeguarding their unique heritage and traditions.



The session moderator, **Mr. Mukarjee** stressed that education and cultural identity are vital for true inclusion. Quoting Late President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam — “Nation is bigger than any other aspect in my country” — he urged continued government focus on minority empowerment.



The session concluded with Chairperson **Shri Iqbal Singh Lalpura** presenting mementos to the moderator and speakers, recognizing their valuable contributions.



As a gesture of appreciation, office bearers from various State Minorities Commissions were felicitated by Hon'ble Chairman **Shri Iqbal Singh Lalpura**. Each representative was presented with a shawl and memento, acknowledging their dedicated efforts toward minority welfare and grassroots inclusion.



Tour Report of Shri Iqbal Singh Lalpura, Hon'ble Chairman, National Commission for Minorities _____12th March 2025

Visit to Chandigarh – 29th January 2025

Recommendations:

1. Request to start a Train route from Chandigarh (UT) to Takht Sri Damdama Sahib (Bhatinda) Via Sirhind Rajpura.
2. Teaching of Punjabi Language in Schools/Colleges of Chandigarh.

Decision: (1): It was decided to write to Railway Board.

(2): It was decided to write to Chief Secretary, Chandigarh.

Visit to Sambhal District, Uttar Pradesh – 6th February 2025

Recommendations:

The Sikh Community requested for allotment of land to construct the Gurdwara and School to teach Punjabi to their children. They also demanded security during religious processions on Gurupurab days.

Christians demanded safety for their Church as there is a dispute on the Church land. Jain community was earlier getting some financial help from Jeevadhara bonds which has been stopped.

The Jain community reported that financial assistance previously provided through Jeevadhara Bonds has been discontinued, and requested that it be reinstated.

Decision: It was decided to write to Chief Secretary, Uttar Pradesh on all three above recommendations..

Visit to Amritsar & Gurdaspur, Punjab – 11th February 2025

Decision: It was decided to write to Chief Secretary, Punjab to take necessary action to protect Sikh historical monuments of Khalsa Raj

Visit to Meerut, Uttar Pradesh – 22nd February 2025

Recommendations:

The Sikh Community requested for allotment of land to construct the Gurdwara and School to teach Punjabi to their children. They also demanded security during religious processions on Gurupurab days.

Decision: It was decided to write to Chief Secretary, Uttar Pradesh..

Activities

March 28, 2025

Chairman **Shri Iqbal Singh Lalpura** hosted a splendid Iftar, epitomizing the syncretic tapestry of India where cultures converge, hearts unite, and the spirit of fraternity transcends



March 19, 2025

Monthly Gathering of Sikh Community Leaders at NCM. A platform for dialogue, unity, and progress! Sikh leaders come together at the National Commission for Minorities (NCM).



March 19, 2025

Meeting with Buddhist Community Leaders at NCM. Discussions held on land allocation for Buddh Vihars, promotion of Pali language, protection of Buddhist sites, and educational & economic empowerment.



March 03, 2025

Chairman **Shri Iqbal Singh Lalpura** delivered the Presidential Address at the National Christian Leaders' Conclave held at Vimalagiri Pastoral Centre, Kottayam.



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