

SARAS Mela 2026

PIB Analysis

Taking Rural Women's Enterprises to National Markets

The National SARAS Mela 2026 is being organised at Punnami Ghat, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, from 13-31 October 2026.

It is the first National SARAS Mela held outside Delhi-NCR, bringing together women entrepreneurs from 34 States and Union Territories.

SARAS Mela

- Organised under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), SARAS Melas connect rural women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs) with consumers, buyers and institutional markets.
- Started in 1999 with around 65 beneficiaries, the platform has expanded to national, state, regional and district levels.
- So far, 117 National SARAS Melas have recorded annual sales exceeding ₹200 crore, while around 50 SARAS events are organised nationally each year.

Key Highlights of Vijayawada SARAS Mela 2026

- Around 1,500 women SHG entrepreneurs and Lakhpati Didis from 34 States and UTs are showcasing products through over 650 stalls.
- Products include handlooms, handicrafts, processed foods, traditional textiles and regional art forms.
- The 16-foot installation "SHAKTI - The Spirit of Lakhpati Didi" symbolises women's empowerment through entrepreneurship.
- The event promotes Vocal for Local, Atmanirbhar Bharat and the decentralisation of national-level events.

Major Initiatives and Features

1. Lakhpati Didi Pavilion

- Showcases successful women entrepreneurs, including those earning over ₹10 lakh annually and some earning more than ₹1 crore.
- Promotes peer learning and sharing of business models and market strategies.

2. Learning and Knowledge Pavilion

- Conducts workshops and masterclasses on packaging, branding, business proposals, e-commerce and social media marketing.
- Facilitates engagement with institutions and private-sector organisations, including NABARD, FICCI, CII and online marketplaces.

3. Convergence Pavilion

- Connects entrepreneurs with financial institutions, government departments and technical agencies for credit, skills, technology and market support.
- Facilitates access to platforms such as the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) and Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC).

4. Demonstration Pavilion

- Enables live demonstrations of traditional and contemporary crafts, including pottery, needlework and mirror-work embroidery.

5. India Food Court

- Features 50 food stalls and over 200 first-generation women food-service entrepreneurs from more than 28 States and UTs.
- Showcases regional cuisines and creates market opportunities for women-led food businesses.

6. Digital Market Access

- eSARAS and the SARAS Gallery connect SHG products with online consumers beyond physical exhibitions.
- A dedicated SARAS Mela Digital App, introduced in 2025, supports nominations, attendance and event information.
- UPI payments facilitate convenient and transparent transactions.

Lakhpati Didi Initiative

- A Lakhpati Didi is an SHG member whose household earns at least ₹1 lakh annually on a sustainable basis, assessed over at least four agricultural seasons and/or business cycles.
- The target increased from two crore in 2023 to three crore in the Interim Budget 2024-25, achieving the three-crore milestone by December 2025.
- In February 2026, the government announced an enhanced target of six crore Lakhpati Didis.

Significance

- SARAS Melas strengthen rural livelihoods, preserve traditional crafts, promote women's financial independence and expand market access.
- By combining physical sales, digital platforms, business training and institutional support, they help rural women transition from subsistence livelihoods to sustainable enterprises.

Reference

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