

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2169
ANSWERED ON 06/08/2026
SHAASTRAARTH INITIATIVE

2169. SHRI SUJEET KUMAR

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) the key features and outcomes of the Shaastraarth initiative introduced at Nalanda University's convocation and its role in promoting India's ancient knowledge traditions;
- (b) the number of students, including international students and their countries of origin, who participated in the initiative;
- (c) the measures taken and the roadmap envisaged to encourage similar debate and dialogue-based pedagogic traditions in Central Universities and other higher educational institutions; and
- (d) the financial and institutional support extended to Nalanda University for implementing this initiative and promoting India's civilisational heritage in higher education?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI PABITRA MARGHERITA)

(a to d) *Shaastraarth* method was introduced at the Third Convocation of Nalanda University in May 2026 with the objective of promoting structured scholarly dialogue, debate and critical inquiry, drawing inspiration from the intellectual legacy of the ancient Nalanda Mahavihara. The initiative is integrated with the University's academic credit system.

Graduating students were made to publicly present and defend their Master's dissertations through structured academic dialogue before faculty members and peers. The inaugural *Shaastraarth* session witnessed participation of 139 students from 14 countries including Argentina, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Turkiye, Vietnam and India.

Under the Nalanda University Act 2010 enacted by Parliament, the University has been set up as an international, autonomous multidisciplinary institution of higher learning for pursuit of intellectual, philosophical, historical and spiritual studies. Government of India provides budgetary support for the building of the Nalanda University Campus and is presently supporting its operational and program budget.

Several prominent Indian Universities are also encouraging the pedagogical method of debate and dialogue based on the spirit of Nalanda University's *Shaastraarth* tradition through seminars, student debates, research colloquia and academic traditions.
