



Chief Minister's Secretariat

PRESS RELEASE

Ranchi, Date: 25/01/2026

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Press Release- 65/2026

25 January 2026

London/Ranchi

Chief Minister of Jharkhand visits Somerville College, University of Oxford

Oxford/United Kingdom/Ranchi

The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Jharkhand visited Somerville College, University of Oxford, as part of his academic engagements in the United Kingdom.

Founded in 1879, Somerville College is recognised as a pioneer in global education and was among the first institutions at the University of Oxford to admit women at a time when they were otherwise excluded from the University. Somerville counts among its distinguished alumni Margaret Thatcher, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom; Indira Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India (honorary degree recipient); and Cornelia Sorabji, the first Indian woman to study law abroad.

The Chief Minister was formally received at a high-level reception hosted by the Principal of Somerville College, Catherine Royle, who assumed office in September 2025. A Somerville alumna, she is a former British diplomat and senior NATO official. The reception acknowledged the Chief Minister's leadership and work in the areas of indigenous welfare, sustainability, climate action, just transition, and equitable access to higher education.

Somerville College also hosts the Oxford India Centre for Sustainable Development, which was established in 2013 with support from the Government of India. The Centre anchors a strong community of Indian and international scholars working on sustainable development, climate action, social justice, governance, and public policy. Over forty Indian scholars are currently associated with the Centre and based at Somerville College.

The reception was attended by students and scholars from across Oxford, including Indian scholars, civil servants, and researchers. Among those present was Shri Ravi Shankar Shukla, IAS, an officer of the Government of Jharkhand, who is currently pursuing advanced studies at the University of Oxford as an Oxford India Centre for Sustainable Development Scholar, with a research focus on urban water policy and management.

The Chief Minister was also welcomed by Radhika Khosla, Research Director, Oxford India Centre for Sustainable Development; Associate Professor at the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment; and Senior Research Fellow. Interactions during the reception highlighted the scope for deeper engagement between Oxford's research community and Jharkhand's governance priorities, particularly in the areas of environmental policy, climate action, and sustainable development.

During informal interactions within the college precincts, students and scholars expressed a strong interest in engaging further with the Government of Jharkhand. They conveyed their wish to organise a dedicated workshop with the Chief Minister on government programmes and public policy initiatives, and invited him to address students and scholars on governance, policy design, and implementation experiences from Jharkhand.

The reception reflected the warmth and respect extended by the Somerville College administration and the Indian student community, reinforcing the historic academic and intellectual bridge between Oxford and India. The visit reaffirmed Somerville College's long-standing engagement with India and underscored the alignment between the work of the Oxford India Centre for Sustainable Development and the developmental, environmental, and governance priorities of the State of Jharkhand.

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