

FIRST ANNUAL ACADEMIC CONFERENCE ON INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS (IKS)

*The Resurgence of IKS:
Finding what we have, learning what we learnt*



10-12 JULY 2025



JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY, DELHI



Srimanta
Sankaradeva
Special Centre
of Indic Studies

About IKSHA

IKS and Heritage Association (IKSHA) is a non-profit organization (section-8 company) dedicated to preserving and promoting India's rich cultural heritage and knowledge systems.



Purpose	To establish a platform for excellence aimed at positioning Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) as an alternative to the dominant paradigm across multiple domains
Approach	A concerted effort to create a more diverse and inclusive academic environment and an attempt to address historical oversights

In pursuit of these goals, IKSHA has launched several key initiatives. DIKSHA supports doctoral and postdoctoral research to cultivate a new generation of IKS scholars, while a forthcoming peer-reviewed journal will serve as a platform for high-quality academic discourse. We have also launched the 'Journal of Indian Knowledge Systems' in association with Brill, which seeks to mainstream Indian conceptual vocabulary across disciplines and interdisciplinary fields to better understand the Indian experience. The Annual IKS Sangama convenes practitioners, scholars, policymakers, and spiritual leaders to address pressing issues in the field, while broader engagement and networking efforts help build collaborative ecosystems and preserve India's rich intellectual traditions through active documentation and exchange.

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About Jawaharlal Nehru University

Jawaharlal Nehru University, established in 1969, is a vibrant campus. The university has an area of about 1,000 acres, and currently, more than 8,000 students reside in 20 hostels and study under around 700 reputed faculty members. JNU is a university that believes in creating new heights in every field of education and in nurturing social awareness in society. JNU has 14 different schools and 10 special centres to provide quality education and social awareness, including the Srimanta Sankardev Special Centre of Indic Studies which is organising this conference.

JNU secured the second position in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2024, released by the Ministry of Education. It holds the highest NAAC accreditation grade of A++. Internationally, JNU is ranked #601–800 in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2024 and #201–250 in the Asia University Rankings 2024. The QS World University Rankings reflect JNU's strong performance in education quality, impactful research, faculty expertise, and institutional management.

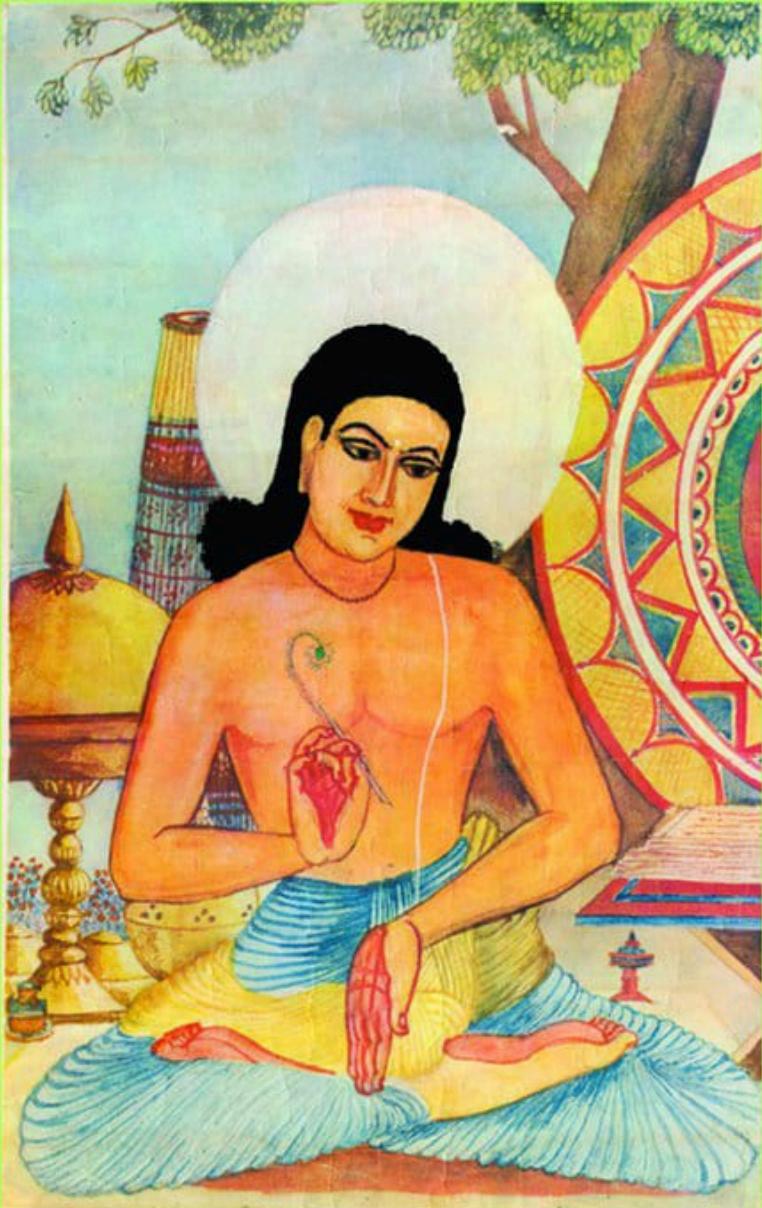
As per India Today 2024 rankings, JNU secured the #1 position in the 'University (Government)' category. Over the years, JNU has consistently been recognised as a top-ranking institution across various categories by India Today, excelling in areas such as Teaching, Graduation Outcome, Inclusivity, Research, and more. JNU has also been awarded a Partnerships for Accelerated Innovation and Research (PAIR) grant by the



Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), and has been selected as a hub to mentor TIER-I and TIER-II institutions in conducting advanced and foundational research in emerging and priority areas.

JNU has a vast alumni network. Presently, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar—both JNU alumni—hold key positions in the Narendra Modi cabinet. Amitabh Kant, India's G20 Sherpa and former CEO of NITI Aayog (2016–2022), is also an alumnus. The university's distinguished alumni include 2019 Nobel Laureate in Economics Prof. Abhijit Banerjee, former Prime Minister of Libya Ali Zeidan, and former Prime Minister of Nepal Baburam Bhattarai, along with many prominent politicians, diplomats, artists, academics, and scientists.

JNU is committed to promoting national integration, social justice, secularism, democratic values, international understanding, and a scientific approach to societal issues. It focuses on attracting students from across the country, especially from marginalized and deprived sections of society.



Srimanta Sankaradeva Special Centre of Indic Studies in Jawaharlal Nehru University is established by the Government of Assam with an aim to disseminate the vision and contributions of the 15th-century great Bhakti poet and social reformer Śrimanta Śankaradeva.

Srimanta Sankaradeva Special Centre of Indic Studies, JNU

The objective of the Centre is to identify, encourage, and extend the study and research on Śrimanta Śankaradeva and his works, especially in the historical context of the Bhakti Movement.

The goal is to study Śrimanta Śankaradeva and the cultural traditions of Assam globally. The study and research in this regard encompasses the larger dimensions of language, literature, philosophy, performing arts, and crafts that have been existing in the living traditions of the Satras. The Vaiṣṇava paramparā as envisioned by Śrimanta Śankaradeva and his disciples foregrounds social equality, justice, and non-duality.

As part of the upcoming Conference, the Centre will convene two dedicated sessions focusing on the Bhakti movement and the Satra tradition of Assam.

About the Conference

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) encompass a vast knowledge inventory of intellectual traditions of and from India. These traditions encompass diverse fields ranging from epistemic inquiries to engineering sciences. These knowledge frameworks, tools, and systems, evolved and developed over several millennia, offer unique insights into the human condition, the natural world, and the pursuit of knowledge itself. However, due to the historical dominance of European cultural experiences shaping the contemporary knowledge systems, IKS has often been undermined, its value and legitimacy downplayed or questioned, and its contributions have been dismissed or seen as inferior. Young academic minds are discouraged from taking IKS up as a promising field of inquiry. The little work that exists is misunderstood, distorted, and often relegated to the margins. Indeed, this academic apathy, and sometimes even willful ignorance, is a colossal intellectual loss for humanity. The world remains deprived of an entire body of elegant literature, which could potentially build powerful sets of theoretical as well as applied knowledge systems.

This is now beginning to change. Given India's position in global geopolitics today, we are now witnessing a range of efforts to delve deeper into the IKS by people at large. There are considerable scholarly and practitioners' efforts to build a repertoire of knowledge that illuminates and engages with IKS. This resurgence is indeed welcome, but it is also leading to a newfound anxiety, namely, the ongoing casting of IKS into

powerful Western frameworks that have dominated the intellectual ecosystem globally. In the epistemic absence of our civilizational knowledge, we are force-fitting our cultural experiences within the Western theories and frameworks in the academe, which are born out of alien Western experiences.

Indeed, there can be no greater need for decolonial pursuit. With the resurgence of IKS in the present socio-political context, there is now a need to construct a future which is true to the motive of this resurgence. And over time, build a strong body of knowledge that the world can benefit from. As India's position in the global order rises, the intellectual strength in its knowledge systems must also develop systematically.

This is the context in which the Annual Academic Conference on IKS is located. It stems from the need to encourage serious scholarship (and scholars) in the IKS domain. The vision is to develop an international scholarly platform, an annual affair, where cutting-edge research in IKS is shared, presented, and disseminated. Over time, these conferences will help develop a significant body of rigorous literature and create a community of scholars who share their passion and intellectual bandwidth for engaging with IKS and taking the learnings to their respective institutions. The Conference aims to be an academic affair, where we hope to promote genuine, peer-review-worthy research scholarship in IKS and cultivate the next generation of scholars in this domain.

Conference Objectives

In addition, we would like to celebrate and recognize the senior, established scholars in the IKS domain and help generate greater engagement with their work. We also hope to build diverse networks for many IKS scholars who may often be working in unfavorable environments and departments. The Conference will provide a fertile space for meaningful discourses in IKS to begin and flourish.

The Conference will facilitate research interactions amongst global academics, senior scholars, young career academics, journal editors, and reviewers. The stakeholders from industry, government, and civil society organizations will also be presenting their papers to foster greater collaborations and offer ideas for potential joint projects that may have direct relevance.

- Recognize rich and rigorous scholarship in the IKS domain
- Provide a forum to present scholarship and engage in intellectual dialogue surrounding IKS
- Encourage academic research and publication in the field of IKS
- Help develop new frameworks, theories, and creative applications in the IKS domain to address contemporary challenges
- Encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration to bridge the gap between traditional IKS and contemporary fields
- Offer a platform for collaborations and joint research projects in IKS from a range of stakeholders
- Cultivate a new generation of scholars in IKS and develop their networks with senior mentors



Conference Theme

The overarching aim of the Conference is to deliberate on the sensitive and crucial task of strategically managing the resurgence of IKS, and pave way for its meaningful rise. Said differently, the focus is on how we must imagine and create the early childhood of the IKS ecosystem that is now being reborn.

This is an opportunity that comes once in hundreds of lifetimes. Knowledge systems once dead, rarely come back to life. Civilizations that are finished globally, have not resurfaced. Bharatiya civilizational knowledge has however, suffered slightly different fate; it has withstood the millennia of distortions, tortures and replacements. Arguably, it has been kept alive, through unbroken traditions of practice over millennia.

Many consider the worst epistemic violence is now over. The socio-political environment is now beginning to be favourable after a long, long time. The excitement for this resurgence is plenty; reflected in the increasing confidence of popular media's portrayal of IKS, the rise in open fora on IKS related themes in disparate settings from gated communities' parks to schools and colleges, and even political choices that people of India are making.

As society begins to find its long-lost confidence and pride in its heritage, it is the role of scholars and thinkers to lay out plans for the desirable cultural futures. The force of markets and that of the Western intellectual order is significant. In the last several hundred years, European political thought has become the staple framework of understanding society and science. It is the

only modernity the world knows, and therefore dictates every aspect of modern-day scholarship. Intellectual elites in India, for a variety of reasons and often helplessly, have adopted and disseminated Western philosophies and sciences to explain Indian experiences and the Indian past, and are even casting Indian futures in them. In fact, the Western idea of the Self is a prominent intellectual force that has begun reshaping societies, and younger generations in India who go to English-medium schools.

We are therefore inheriting a complex churning of civilizational confidence but without appropriately recognizing the civilizational knowledge frameworks. The next few years will be crucial in this churning.

How do we locate IKS through these exuberant times, where accessibility must be differentiated from dumbing down? How do we meaningfully engage with both intellectual elites steeped in European frameworks on one side and those beating loud trumpets of ancient India's glory on the other? How do we develop rigorous scholarship in IKS—one that responds to prevailing mental models, and allows sustainable flourishing of IKS-based frameworks across the world?

How do we make sense of the forest of IKS amid manicured gardens of western sciences and social sciences? How do we find what we have not found, and un-find what has been found? How do we learn what we didn't, and relearn what we did? More importantly, how do we relearn what we learnt, and unlearn what we unlearnt? How do we strategize for knowledge, and plan for an IKS-future? What should we do at this juncture? And finally, what should we not do?

Conference Sub-Themes

While not at all exhaustive, we divide the overarching theme into various aspects/topics under three broad heads:

Theory and (Re)building Frameworks

- Ancient Indian “Textual” tradition
- Performative Traditions of India and their Contemporaneity
- Intellectual Traditions of Literature
- Aadhyatmic Traditions and their Contemporaneity.
- Epistemology in the Indic Intellectual Tradition
- Databases and Compilations of Indian Intellectual Thought
- Practices in Indian Science & Technology
- Pedagogical approaches for modern universities

Everyday Practices and Intellectual Traditions

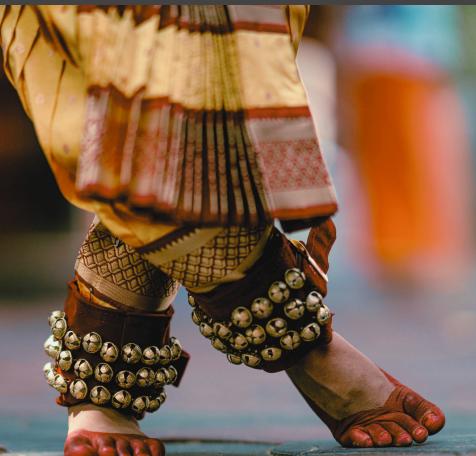
- History v. Itihas
- Theorizing Economics, Management & Finance
- IKS Frameworks for Sociology & Political Science debates
- Recasting Management Theories through IKS
- A New Framework for Sustainability
- How to think about Heritage Science
- Western Religious Thought and Indic Cultures
- Alternative Frameworks for Doing Comparative Studies
- Policy Frameworks (Is there an Indian public policy?)
- Schools of Thought in Indian Philosophy and Western Political Philosophy
- Mapping Cultural Differences through Theory

Multidisciplinary Studies of IKS

- Vedic Philosophy & Epistemology (Darshanas, Upanishads, Prasthana Trayi, Yoga)
- Linguistics & NLP (Siksha, Vyakaranam, Chandas, Nirukta, Mimamsa, Mantra Shastra)
- Culinary Sciences (Paka sastra, Vrikshaayurveda, Dravya Vijnana, Ayurvediya Kalas, Siddha)
- Agricultural Science (Krushi Vijnana, Vriksha-Ayurveda)
- Performing Arts (Natya Sastra, Gandharva Kalas, Alankara Sastra, Sahitya/Kavya, Itihasa, Purana, Alankaara sastra, Alankaara kala, Yoga, Tantra)
- Engineering Sciences (Yantra Kala, Rasa shastra, Dhaatu Shastra, Vaastu Shastra, Shilpa sastra, Tantra, Shulba Sutras, Rasayana sastra, Dhaatu Sastra)
- Srimanta Sankaradeva and the Satra Tradition: Bhakti Philosophy and Practice in Assam

Conference Highlights

- Plenary Talks



- Collaborative Opportunities



- Panel Discussions



- Dialogue with Journal Editors



- Research Methods Workshop

- Paper Presentations



Research Methods Workshop

The workshop aims to support early-career scholars and researchers who are eager to explore IKS and refine their academic skills in this emerging field.

09 July 2025 | Jawaharlal Nehru University



Instructors

Prof. Arnab Bhattacharya

- Professor, Computer Science and Engineering,
Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur

Prof. Jyotirmaya Tripathy

- Professor, Department of Humanities and
Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology
Madras

Prof. M. S. Chaitra

- Founding Director,
Foundation for Study of Indian Culture,
Bangalore

Dr. Pravina Rodrigues

- Adjunct Faculty, Starr King School for the
Ministry & GTU's Center for Dharma Studies;
Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Dharma Studies
(Springer)

Dr. V. Ramanathan

- Assistant Professor
Department of Chemistry, IIT-BHU

Prof. Yugank Goyal

- Professor and Director, Centre for Knowledge
Alternatives, FLAME University, Pune

Eligibility

- PhD/Post-Doctoral Students
- Assistant Professors

Preference to candidates who are actively engaged in writing or are in the process of publishing their research. Limited seats on a first-come, first-served payment basis.

Format and Focus

- Lecture sessions followed by workshops
- Key aspects of research methodology, effective research writing techniques, and practical guidance for publishing your work in IKS-related areas.

Workshop Registration



Inaugural & Valedictory Ceremony



Hon'ble Vice President of India

Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar

Chief Guest, Inaugural Ceremony

Hon'ble Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways

Shri Sarbananda Sonowal

Guest of Honour, Inaugural Ceremony



Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam

Shri Himanta Biswa Sarma

Chief Guest, Valedictory Ceremony

Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Prof. Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit



Distinguished Speakers

Prof. Arvind Sharma

Birks Professor of Comparative Religion,
The School of Religious Studies,
McGill University, Montreal, Canada

Dr. B. B. Mohanty

Professor Department of Sociology
Pondicherry University, Puducherry

Prof. C. S. Yogananda

Visiting Professor, Mathematics,
KREA University

Prof. Dhananjay Singh

Member Secretary,
Indian Council of Social Science Research

Prof. Ganti S. Murthy

Professor, IIT Indore
National Coordinator, IKS Division,
Ministry of Education, Government of India

Prof. Kapil Kapoor

(formerly) Chairman, IIAS Shimla, and
Dean and Pro Vice Chancellor, JNU

Dr. Lavanya Vemsani

Distinguished Professor,
History and Religious Studies,
Shawnee State University, USA

Prof. Manjul Bhargava

Robert C. Gunning *55 and R. Brandon Fradd '83
Professor in Mathematics, Princeton University

Prof. Amitabh Mattoo

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Professor and Chair, Centre for International
Politics, Organization and Disarmament, JNU

Prof. B. Mahadevan

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Management, IIM Bangalore

Dr. Darshan Shankar

Vice Chancellor, The University of Trans-
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Prof. Diwakar Acharya

Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and
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Institute Chair Professor, Cell for Indian
Science and Technology in Sanskrit,
IIT Bombay

Sh. Krishna Maheshwari

Founder and CEO,
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*Member Secretary,
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Prof Sacchidananda Mishra

*Member Secretary,
Indian Council of Philosophical Research*

Prof. Satish Deodhar

*Professor and Dean,
IIM Ahmedabad*

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*Vice Chancellor
Central Sanskrit University*

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*Professor, International Finance,
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England*

Organising Team

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*National Coordinator,
IKS & Heritage Association(IKSHA),
Bangalore*

Prof. M. S. Chaitra

*Founding Director, Foundation for
Study of Indian Culture,
Bangalore*

Paper Submission & Review Process

The First Annual Academic Conference on Indian Knowledge Systems invited original and scholarly contributions. The selection was done through a two-stage submission process. In the first stage, prospective authors were required to submit an extended abstract. Upon acceptance, they were invited to submit the draft of the full paper for final review.

All paper submissions underwent a single-blind peer review conducted by a panel of experts to ensure academic integrity and quality.

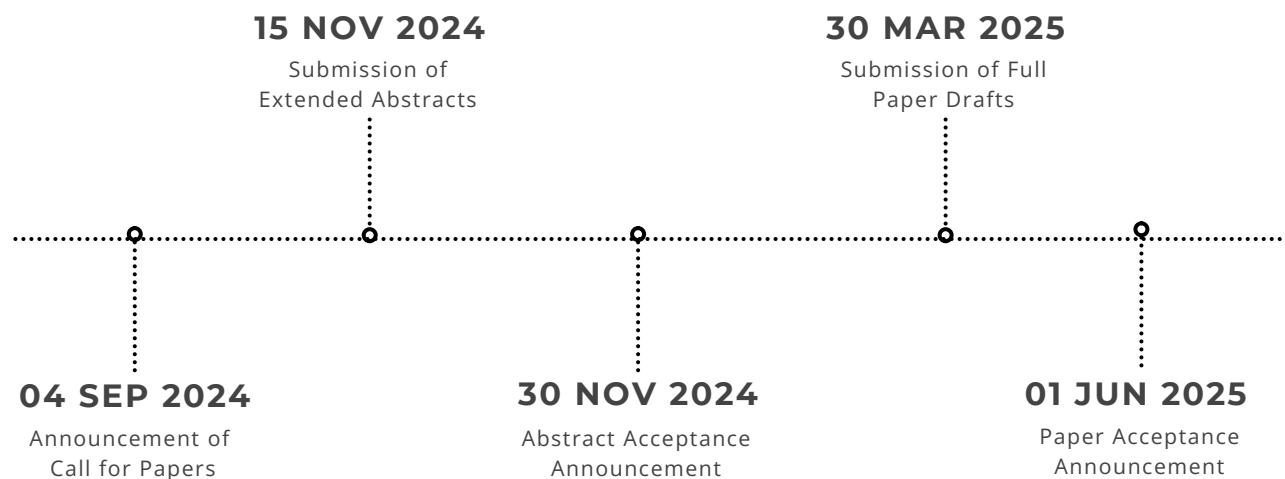
We received over 600 extended abstracts from 120+ institutions, of which around 200 were accepted. Over 160 full paper drafts from over 100 institutions were received in the second round.

Following review by over 50 distinguished scholars across various disciplinary domains, around best 85 papers were selected for presentation, based on originality, relevance, academic rigor, and contribution to the field of Indian Knowledge Systems.

An Abstract Book with an ISBN is being published featuring all selected abstracts, providing formal recognition to contributors. The conference will highlight, in addition to Plenaries, Panel Discussions, Dialogues with Journal Editors for emerging scholars in IKS.

Travels and accommodations of authors of selected papers are being covered. The idea is to ensure a rich intergenerational dialogue and peer engagement for IKS scholars.

Timeline



Participant Registration

Registration is mandatory for all attendees who are not presenting at the conference.

Limited seats available, on a first-come, first-served basis.

Registration fees are as follows:

- Students: ₹500
- Faculty: ₹1000
- Others: ₹750

Travel and Lodging: Based on expressions of interest or recommendations, select travel bursaries will be available for attendees (non-presenters).



First Annual Academic Conference on Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)

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Supported by



भारतीय सामाजिक विज्ञान अनुसंधान परिषद्
Indian Council of Social Science Research
शिक्षा मंत्रालय | Ministry of Education

भारतीय इतिहास अनुसंधान परिषद
(राष्ट्रीय मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार के अधीन एक स्वायत्तशासी संस्था)

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