

# MP plans to impose cess to fund cow welfare, says CM

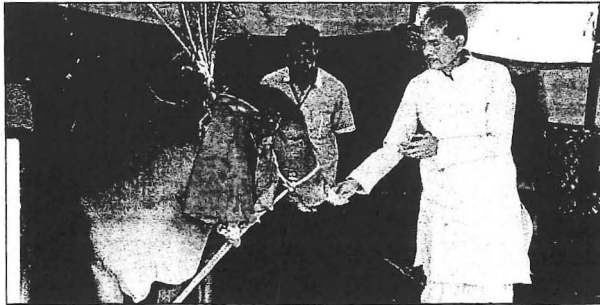
## Malnourished Kids Will Be Given Milk, Not Eggs: Shivraj

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Bhopal/Ujjain:** Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan held the first cow cabinet meeting on Sunday in Bhopal, and said he was mulling a cess to mop up funds for cow welfare. Malnourished children will be given milk, not eggs, in midday meals, he said.

The CM had earlier announced that the 'gau cabinet' would have its first meeting in the cow sanctuary in Agar-Malwa's Salaria village, some 220km from Bhopal, but eventually held it via video-conference. He visited the sanctuary later in the day, and said it would be turned into a model for the country.

During his visit to the cow sanctuary in Salaria village, Chouhan said, "I am thinking of



Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan celebrates 'Gopashtami' festival at his residence in Bhopal on Sunday

imposing a minor tax on the public to raise money that can be used for the upkeep of gaushalas (cowsheds)."

He recalled how it was practice earlier to "take out the first roti for cows and half a roti for dogs". "But this culture is vanishing... So we are thinking of levying a small cess on the public to use the money for maintaining cow sheds."

The government will draft a policy for cow protection and welfare, and has sought suggest-

ions from social organisations, institutes and cow experts, Chouhan said. A 'cow tourism' policy will be rolled out to connect today's generation with gau seva.

As part of the scheme, milk will be given to kids in anganwadis, he said, adding: "This will not only improve children's health but also increase the earning of farmers."

At the virtual meeting earlier in the day, Chouhan called for 'maximum productive utiliza-

tion' of cow urine (gaumutra) for medicinal purposes, and cow-dung as fertilizer and eco-friendly fuel. At the meeting in Salaria, the Sant Samaj from Gujarat said there is need to promote 'gau-seva tourism'. The CM suggested that pesticides be made from gau-mutra to "free us from poisonous chemicals".

Six departments are part of the cow cabinet — animal husbandry, agriculture, panchayat, forests, home and revenue — and they will all work with synergy, he said.

At the cow sanctuary, the CM spoke with sadhus and presented a proposal for voluntary organizations to run gaushalas. "On the auspicious occasion of Gopashtami today, there is a feeling that a policy regarding gau-seva should be made in Madhya Pradesh," he said, adding: "Instead of gaushalas being run by the government alone, it would be better to connect with voluntary organizations that believe in this and have respect for it."