

Cabinet Secy-led team to take stock in State today

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Union Cabinet Secretary Ajit Seth, along with another 12 senior officials, is visiting Jharkhand on Friday to take stock of security concerns and development activities, and prescribe pills to bring the State back on track.

The team will be arriving by a defence/MHA aircraft at 8.30 am and will return at 7 pm after a brainstorming session at IICM auditorium.

The delegation includes Secretaries of key Central Ministries, including Home Secretary RK Singh, and is expected to discuss various crucial issues with the State and police officials, as well as Governor Syed Ahmed's advisors Madhukar Gupta and K Vijay Kumar.

This is the third time that top Central officials, directly accountable to the Prime Minister, will visit Jharkhand to do some tough talking. All officials from the Centre have been declared State guests by the Cabinet Secretariat and coordination department. The Cabinet Secretary had visited Jharkhand in September 2007 and again in June 2009.

This visit assumes significance in view of President's Rule. The Congress, which leads the Centre, is keen to demonstrate to the people that it can provide good governance. There is a possibility of midterm polls, while this year is anyway the run-up to general elections 2014.

Chief Secretary SK Choudhary said, "It is a very common practice which is done time to time between the Centre and States," he added.

Governor's Advisor K Vijay Kumar said, "We will make our demands, while they (Centre) will place their demands. That is what it is to be coordinated."

According to sources, the Centre's team will be focussing on review of the Centrally-sponsored schemes like Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, PMGSY, MGNREGS, Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF) and those under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (regulation of forest rights) Act, 2006. The concern of the advisors will be to press for allocation of more funds for Railways and other basic needs of the people.

The feedback received by the review meeting would further help the Centre in allocating budget during President's rule. Moreover, it would also help in giving an estimate to the Union Home Ministry for the deployment of additional security forces following increased anti-Maoist operations.