

State's 238-crore plan for Sunabeda under study, says Jairam

By Express News Service - NUAPADA

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Union Rural Development Minister Jairam Ramesh on Saturday said the Centre was considering State Government's proposal for developing Sunabeda sanctuary in Maoist-hit Nuapada district.

"Centre has been actively considering the State Government's Rs 238-crore plan for overall development of Sunabeda which has turned into a Maoist hub.

An amount of Rs 57 crore has been sanctioned by the Centre to strengthen 120 km of rural roads in Nuapada district, he said, while addressing a Congress workers' convention here. He said the cash benefit under Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) would be enhanced to Rs 75,000 from the existing Rs 48,000 meant for hilly and difficult areas from April this year.

"The 4,000 families who have been identified by the district administration of residing on forest land and issued land rights under the Forest Rights Act would be provided with houses under IAY," he said.

Admitting Nuapada as one of the 18 Maoist-infested districts, the Union Minister said that rural development of the district was of prime importance. Calling upon the workers to strengthen the party, he said it had been noticed that wherever political organisation is weak, Maoists have established themselves.

"The biggest enemy of Congress is Congress itself. Unity in the rank and file of the party is the need of the hour ahead of the 2014 polls," he said. Jairam went round the 11.7-km PMGSY road from Kadomeri to Kermeli village besides a community tank being dug up under MGNREGS in Salhiya village.

'I am against mining'

Addressing mediapersons later in the day, Jairam said he was against mining in tribal-dominated areas. Maoists had earlier accused the Union Minister of working for capitalists and favouring mining.

He said tribals are being displaced again and again and devoid of rightful compensation. "There was need to bring in new land acquisition act and separate governance model in tribal areas to ensure that they get proper education and health," he said.

Elaborating on the Rs 100-crore dole for the district, Jairam said that while Rs 37.50 crore will be spent on the Integrated Watershed Management Programme to provide irrigation to 25,000 hectares, Rs 22 crore for 3,000 houses to BPL families under IAY, ` 40 crore for strengthening rural connectivity and Rs 10 crore for development of women SHGs.