

Village panchayats to give CA's certificate on NREGA spendings

The government has made it mandatory for village panchayats to attach a Chartered Accountant's certificate on spendings incurred under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the Rajya Sabha was informed today.

Rural Development Minister Jairam Ramesh said during Question Hour that gram panchayats get Rs 18-19 lakh annually under MGNREGA, whose spending would have to be "compulsorily certified" by a CA from the list of official auditor auditor, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

He said 10-15 per cent of these would be physically verified.

"CAG has been asked to do a performance audit of MGNREGA ... by November report (of CAG) will come," he said, adding cash payments have been started in Naxal-affected districts.

Wages paid to workers under MGNREGA in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Mizoram, Andaman and Nicobar, and West Bengal are lower than those provided under Minimum Wages Act, he said adding the government was considering amending MNREGA Act or the Mining Wages Act to bridge the divergence.

"We have not seen level of action warranted" to implement the MGNREGA in Bihar, Jharkhand and Orissa considering the level of poverty in those states, he said.

He admitted that a reason for MGNREGA not generating demand could be delayed payments but added remedial measures are being taken including cash payments in some states.

"MGNREGA will remain demand driven programme," he said. The total expenditure incurred under MGNREGA in 2011-12 was Rs 37,303.30 crore compared to Rs 39,377.30 crore in 2010-11.

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