



Nitish Mishra at the news meet on Monday. Picture by Nagendra Kumar Singh

Minister refutes report

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Patna, Aug. 5: Rural development minister Nitish Mishra today asserted that the state has not been deprived of over Rs 9,500 crore in implementation of MGNREGA scheme, as pointed out in the comptroller and auditor general report.

The report for 2011-12 was tabled in the state legislature on August 1. "The CAG's calculations are exaggerated and misleading. It is not that the state could not get Rs 9,500 crore under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). It is a demand-based and not allocation-based programme. When the fund hasn't been allocated, how could the state be deprived of it?" Mishra asked.

The report said absence or delay in preparing labour budget deprived Bihar of over Rs 9,684 crore from central share.

On the observation that only 35 per cent got jobs against 1.33 crore registered households, Mishra said 40 lakh job cards are regularly used against 1.33 crore families issued cards. "Anyone can get a job card prepared irrespective APL or BPL category. But, we can't force them to work."

On why jobs dropped from 75 per cent in 2007-08 to 20 per cent in 2011-12, he said across India there has been a decline in job-seekers in the past three years, probably because of opportunities better than the Rs 162 a day under MGNREGA.