

Agency shift for scheme success

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Alternative agencies would be entrusted with the task of providing work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in areas where gram panchayats have failed to perform satisfactorily.

Rural development minister Nitish Mishra on Tuesday announced this on the sidelines of a meeting convened to review implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

"The department would keep a strict vigil on the performance of those gram panchayats where creation of man days is zero or less than Rs 10 lakh has been spend on it (scheme) in a year. To improve the performance of the panchayats vis-à-vis the implementation of the MGNREGA, the department has decided to carry out the work through alternative agencies such as zilla parishad, panchayat samiti and Jeevika in the areas," he said.

Letters have been written to district magistrates concerned, asking them to get the work done by alternative agencies. The decision has been taken to improve the performance of the gram panchayats instead of taking action against them, said Mishra. "We will constantly review and monitor those panchayats, which have failed to create man days and also try to know why this is happening," he added.

Sources said the decision was taken because on an average, gram panchayats have spent Rs 20 lakh in 2012-13 under the MGNREGA scheme. Thirty-three panchayats, meanwhile, reported creation of zero man days. Sources said Rs 20 lakh was in itself a very small amount for which the department decided on an alternative measure to improve expenditure on the scheme in panchayats that spend less than Rs 10 lakh.

The State Employment Guarantee Council meeting that Mishra chaired also threw up several valuable suggestions, which would be incorporated for better implementation of the scheme, he said. The council is an apex body to review the MGNREGA.

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