

Ramesh suggests 3-fold strategy to fight Maoists

RAIPUR, 12 NOV: Pointing out that lack of proper enforcement of Panchayat (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act contributed to the rise of Maoist menace in Chhattisgarh and other places, rural development minister Mr Jairam Ramesh today suggested a three-fold strategy to deal with it.

Talking to reporters after his tour of the Maoist-hit areas, Mr Ramesh said PESA was brought in 1996 to strengthen panchayats of scheduled areas but it was not enforced in the right manner.

He said Maoists are dominant in areas which have large deposits of minerals, forests and which are inhabited by tribal communities. Therefore, it was necessary to strengthen the panchayats in these areas.

For dealing with Maoists, he said a three-fold strategy is necessary: to reassure the locals that government is there to address their problems, to have organised political parties in Maoist-hit areas and to deploy enough para-military forces.

Mr Ramesh said it was necessary to build good roads in such areas but private contractors are reluctant to take up work there and so a proposal is that the state government itself should build roads with the help of forest department and the police.

The idea would be tried out in the Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh, he said. To a question, he said industrialisation is necessary for development and land would have to be found for that. **pti**