

Centre aims to counter Maoists through development

Jairam battles Naxals

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Union minister for rural development Jairam Ramesh on Saturday said that the government is focusing on 78 Maoist-affected districts, including eight in Andhra Pradesh, to prevent the youth and children from being enrolled as Maoist cadres.

He admitted that "in the last 50 years, the government has been totally insensitive to the needs of the tribals." Also, a change in approach to mining, irrigation and power projects is needed to stop repeated displacement of tribal people.

Mr Ramesh was speaking at the alumni meet of MV Foundation, a non-government and non-profit organisation working towards eradicating child labour and focusing on

TACKLING NAXALISM

Union minister lists Centre's concerns

Centre aims to win battle through political mobilisation, developmental intervention, intelligence gathering and police action and denting the attractiveness of Maoists ideology

education of children.

The Union minister said that the government is willing to partner with MV Foundation for the uplift of children especially in Maoist-affected districts.

"There are 78 such districts. Instead of placing our faith only in the Central Reserve Police Force, we also need to put

our faith in a child rights protection force. It's psychological warfare we're involved in with the Maoists. We have to win the battle through political mobilisation, developmental intervention, intelligence gathering and police action. It is cause for concern that the Maoists are recruiting more and more young persons aged 12-15, as Naxal cadres. There's a need to dent the attractiveness of Maoist ideology," he said.

Elaborating on why Maoist ideology has spread throughout Central India, Mr Ramesh said, "In the last 50 years, the government has been totally insensitive to the needs of the tribals. Around 20 million tribals have been repeatedly displaced due to mining, irrigation and power projects. A change in approach to these proj-

ects is needed to prevent socio-economic havoc. We need to ensure a life of dignity for the tribal communities and not subject them to harassment by the local administration. Rehabilitation of the displaced tribals and enrolment and retention in schools is urgently required."

Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy said that the government is constructing 737 model schools at a cost of ₹3 crore per school. "Also, 355 girls' hostels are coming up in the state and these will benefit SC/ST/OBC and BC students. Qualitative education and skill training are the need of the hour. Government has been mobilising lakhs of people to get into schools. Five lakh jobs will be generated each year under the Rajiv Yuva Kiranlu," the Chief Minister said.