

Emphasis on drinking water, sanitation prog

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, Feb 12 - The Union Ministry for Rural Development will put more emphasis on Pure Drinking Water and Total Sanitation Programme so that the vision and objective of Nirmal Gram can truly be achieved in Assam.

This was stated by Union Minister for Rural Development Jairam Ramesh in his speech on the occasion of Gramonnayan Sannam, organised by the Ministry of Panchayat and Rural Development, Assam, at Gauhati Medical College Auditorium.

Ramesh also expressed his satisfaction over the performance of the State in the implementation of various rural development schemes including MGNREGA, PMGSY and IAY. He informed that 10 per cent of the country's total Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are from Assam.

The Union Minister further stated that since the last ten years, 11,000 kilometres of rural roads have been constructed in the State, which in itself is quite exemplary.

He called on the State Government to strengthen the Panchayati Raj institutions for expediting the development of the villages. Ramesh further stated that the State is still in need of more number of bridges for enhancing rural connectivity.

The Union Minister stressed the need for proper utilisation of the funds under

various development schemes and urged the State Government to keep close vigil on the same, so that rural development would be achieved in the true sense of the term.

Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi, speaking on the occasion, stated that without development of the rural areas, the overall growth and development is not possible. "Rural development is what we are prioritising," Gogoi pointed out.

Minister for Panchayat and Rural Development Rockybul Hussain, Principal Secretary, Panchayat and Rural Development, J P Singh, and Commissioner, Panchayat and Rural Development, K K Dwivedi were also present on the occasion, among others.

Awards were distributed to eight numbers of panchayats of the State for their exemplary performance. Two Zila Parishads were also felicitated for PRIASoft accounting. Darrang district was awarded as the best performing MGNREGA district of the State in 2010-11.

Best group and individual performance awards in livelihood and rural entrepreneurship and social service (Bharat Nirman Volunteers) by SIRD (State Institute of Rural Development), Assam, were also awarded on the occasion.

A short film projecting the rural development scenario of the State, entitled 'A Step Forward' produced by SIRD, was also screened at the venue.