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## CM gets his way

Statesman News service

BHUBNAESWAR, Aug. 30. – Deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, Dr Montek Singh Ahluwalia, today agreed to consider the possibility of funding the Vijayawada-Ranchi national highway under the Rashtriya Sam Vikash Yojana (RSVY) as a special inter-state project.

The assurance came during his meeting with chief minister, Mr Naveen Patnaik, who made the demand for upgrading the road between Vijayawada and Ranchi, which passes through 12 naxal-prone districts of Orissa, to national highway standard.

It may be noted that chief minister had earlier put forth the demand at several fora like the National Development Council meeting and the regional conference of chief ministers of naxal-affected states etc. Dr Ahluwalia informed the chief minister that 13 more districts of the state were likely to be covered under the Rashtriya Sam Vikash Yojana. They include eight KBK districts and a few other backward districts like Kondhmal. This would be in addition to to the special central assistance being provided to the state under the Revised Long Term Action Plan for KBK region. He suggested that some of the additional fund requirement for the KBK rural connectivity programme could be met from the RSVY support that would be provided to 13 new districts.

During the discussion with the deputy chairman, the chief minister demanded an additional allocation of Rs 435 crore towards phase-I rural connectivity programme in the KBK districts. He also sought additional financial support for strengthening the rail infrastructure in the state through General Budgetary Support Mechanism in view of huge investments coming into state.

Mr Patnaik had also met Union health minister, Dr Ambumani Ramdoss and urged him for the speedy implementation of Regional AIIMS Hospital-cum-Medical College project at

## 8TH DAY





Bhubaneswar, upgradation of facilities at the district headquarter hospital as well as three medical college hospitals, extension of World Bank-assisted Orissa Health System Development Project up to March 2007 and the increasing of MBBS seats in three government medical colleges.

Dr Ramdoss said that the Regional AIIMS project was their one of immediate priorities and the budget allocation for construction of main building could be made available within a few months. Responding to the request for upgrading the district headquarter hospitals and government medical colleges, he said most of the block level hospitals would be upgraded under the National Rural Health Mission and agreed to look into the possibility of covering a few important district headquarter hospitals under this programme. The Union minister also informed that there was a proposal to introduce a new scheme to provide central assistance to government medical college for infrastructure development and assured to consider the state government's request at that time.

Dr Ramdoss also assured his full support for increasing MBBS seats in three government medical colleges in the next academic year and asked the state government to ensure requisite facilities in the colleges. The chief minister also met Union agriculture minister, Mr Sarad Pawar and apprised him of various steps being taken by the state government to implement the National Horticulture Mission programme.

Mr Pawar informed that two initiatives for fisheries and dairy development would be launched by his ministry soon and Orissa could be a major beneficiary under the scheme, given its immense potential for both. Mr Patnaik stated that Orissa was eagerly looking forward to receive central assistance in these two sectors. He also called on former Prime Minister Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and Leader of Opposition Mr LK Advani.

#### **Discussion on this Orissa Plus item**

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