

Jairam Bengal plea to Sibal

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Jan. 28: Jairam Ramesh has approached Kapil Sibal, who holds the telecom portfolio, to sort out problems of poor broadband connectivity and postal network in Purulia and Bankura districts in Bengal.

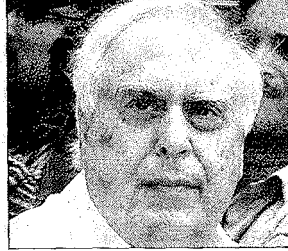
The Union rural development minister, who toured the two districts this week, has written to Sibal for speedy redress of the problems.

"In Purulia district, broadband connectivity in five blocks is poor, namely — Santuri, Para, Purulia-I, Purulia-II and Arsha. There are delays in payment of MGNREGA (wages) and pension scheme by the postal department," Ramesh wrote. "I request you to direct the authorities concerned to address the above issues at the earliest."

Sources said people had sought Ramesh's intervention when he was touring areas in the two districts.

Ramesh has requested for improving mobile networks in the interior areas of both districts.

Two years back, the ministry of communication and information technology had star-



Ramesh, (bottom) Sibal

ted an e-gram panchayat scheme in the country with the aim to provide broadband connectivity to all 2.3 lakh gram panchayats across the country within three years. But in panchayats in Bankura and Purulia, the scheme is yet to take off.

The people also complained to Ramesh about the hassles involved in getting their MGNREGA wages through the postal department. As the postal network is poor in the two districts, rural scheme workers need to travel long distances to get their payments from banks.

Purulia and Bankura, both plagued by Maoist violence, were recently included in the Integrated Action Plan scheme under which the government gives additional grants of around Rs 30 crore a year to a district for development activities.