

## Chhattisgarh to launch rural drive, assess civic facilities

Chhattisgarh's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government is set to launch a mega 'village contact drive' this month to assess the civic facilities in about 20,000 villages and speed up implementation of welfare schemes ahead of the assembly polls due later this year.

The 13-member council of ministers, including Chief Minister Raman Singh, district collectors and village-level officials will hit the road in 9,820 panchayats during the drive April 21-30, a government statement said Friday.

The officials will make on-the-spot assessment of the quality of people's lives and the state of infrastructure.

Analysts say the drive is aimed at wooing rural voters and expand the BJP's base in traditionally Congress stronghold regions as the party is desperate to retain power in the 90-member assembly polls to be in November.

Around 85 percent of the state's 20.08 million population lives in rural hamlets.

The ministers and officials will hold direct discussions with villagers during the drive and make all efforts to address their grievances.

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