

Chhattisgarh ministers to reach out to rural people

Political leaders from the chief minister to village representatives and officials from the chief secretary to panchayat officers will all brave the scorching sun in Chhattisgarh for 10 days from Monday to reach out to rural masses and assess civic facilities.

The state's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government said Sunday that Chief Minister Raman Singh, his 12 cabinet colleagues, the chief secretary and hundreds of officials will hit roads in 20,000 villages under 9,820 panchayats under a 'village contact drive' April 21-30 to collect people's views and complaints.

The leaders and officials will hold meetings in villages to collect inputs about various welfare schemes launched by the Raman Singh government since he came to power in December 2003.

Observers say the drive is aimed at wooing rural voters, as the BJP is desperate to retain power in the 90-member assembly polls due by November.

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

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