

## Minister lauds Sonia, Rahul for interest in rural job schemes

New Delhi, May 21 (2008) Lauding Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi for taking keen interest in the government's rural job schemes, Rural Development Minister Raghuvansh Prasad Singh Wednesday said that he expected similar participation from other leaders for effective implementation of the schemes.

'I appreciate the interest Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi have shown in the National Rural Employment Guarantee (NREG) Scheme. Their assessment of the scheme is based on the ground realities, while others criticise it without visiting,' Singh said.

'It would be much better for various rural development schemes if all leaders visited the spot to take stock of the ground realities and then criticised or lauded the government efforts. None of them, however, does that,' Singh told reporters here.

Singh Wednesday released 'Report To The People' detailing the funds released to the states for various rural development schemes and their achievements. The report marks the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government's four years in office.

Rahul Gandhi, MP and Congress general secretary, May 16 in Amethi urged the people to take on government officials if they did not implement the rural employment scheme.

Earlier May 14, Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, visiting her Lok Sabha constituency Rae Bareli in Uttar Pradesh, enquired from the locals about the state of water supply, crops and the centrally sponsored scheme, particularly the NREG.

Singh bemoaned that despite his writing to all members of parliament, leaders of different parties, including his own Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), did not show encouraging response.

Listing some of the key achievements of his ministry, Singh said that 5.6 million people were assisted during 2004-08 under the self-employment generation scheme of Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY).

'Rural job scheme provided 4.97 billion days of employment to the poor,' Singh said.

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