

# PM talks to Kashipur tribals, allots more foodgrains

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under the old age pension scheme and distribution of more BPL cards. The people wanted launching of food for work (FFW) programme in all the villages and increased allocation under the National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) and Indira Awas Yojana (IAY).

Several women who also participated in the discussion demanded empowerment of Mahila Mandals for enforcing prohibition. The villagers demanded establishment of grain banks and promotion of industrial activities for utilising bauxite and graphite reserves.

According to sources, Vajpayee wanted to talk to the people of Kashipur through GRAMSAT which was launched a year back by him in the State. However, after a review the Chief Minister found that most of the DRS (direct reception system) installed in block headquarters of the Kalahandi, Balangir and Koraput (KBK) region under the GRAMSAT programme were not functioning. At last, video conferencing was arranged through the National Informatics Centre (NIC) which installed a reception system

at Kashipur block for this purpose.

Vajpayee is reported to have agreed with Patnaik's request to allow the State government to increase the number of BPL families to around 48 lakhs on the basis of 1997 BPL census as against 32 lakhs on the basis of 1992 census.

Patnaik drew Vajpayee's attention to the reduced allocation under the NFBS. Last year the allocation under the scheme was Rs 13 crore.

It has now come down to Rs 3 crore. He requested that additional allocation be provided to cover at least 20,000 beneficiaries during the current year.

About prohibition, the Chief Minister assured that no liquor shops will be opened in the scheduled areas unless the Gramsabha approves it.

Patnaik agreed to consider the demand for giving special police powers to the leaders of the Mahila Mandals.

Vajpayee assured the villagers and the State Government that there would be no shortage of rice under the FFW. He said that emergency feeding will continue and agreed to look into the question of allocation of more funds under the NFBS.