

# 'Bapu' bio-toilets set to be the new frontier in rural sanitation

## DRDO applauded for developing the toilets

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**DHAMRA (ODISHA):** Union Rural Development Minister Jairam Ramesh on Sunday announced that his Ministry would soon sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Defence for installation of bio-toilets in 1000 gram panchayats across the country. It would go a long way in improving sanitation in rural India, Mr. Ramesh said.

The project will be implemented in coordination with the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) at a cost of Rs. 400 crore, which will be provided by the Union Rural Development Ministry, Mr. Ramesh said.

Speaking at a function organised for launching of the bio-digester technology pilot project at a village here, Mr. Ramesh applauded the role of DRDO scientists in developing the bio-toilets, which are based upon bio-digester technology. He suggested that the bio-toilets could be named 'Bapu', as the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi had always stressed on sanitation in rural areas of the country.

- The Bio-Digester technology used in the eco-friendly toilets has been developed by DRDO
- Union Minister Jairam Ramesh has sought the help of gram panchayats and women's self-help groups to help set up these toilets

The Union Minister also underlined the need for involving gram panchayats, women's self-help groups, and non-government organisations in helping people to set up these toilets in their homes, and maintain them.

Speaking about the Central government's Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan total sanitation programme, Mr. Ramesh expressed hope that all gram panchayats in the country will be able to achieve total sanitation in 10 years.

The function was jointly organised by DRDO and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) where Union Minister of Statistics and Programme Implementation Srikant Jena inaugurated the pilot project in the presence of Mr. Ramesh.

Mr. Jena thanked DRDO and FICCI for launching the project under which six such

bio-toilets have been set up in the 60-km stretch of the Jhamjhadi-Dhamra Road. Thousand such bio-toilets will be set up in villages on both sides of the road as part of DRDO's Corporate Social Responsibility initiative to prevent open defecation.

V.K. Saraswat, Director-General of DRDO and Scientific Advisor to the Defence Minister said that national security and the country's prosperity were like two sides of a coin and DRDO will do its best in both fronts as both were equally important. DRDO was engaged in identifying relevant technologies for national security and adapt the same to solve the problems faced by the common man, he said.

Both Mr. Ramesh and Mr. Jena also visited Wheeler Island off the Dhamra coast, where DRDO conducts test-fires of long range missiles from time to time.



Union Minister Jairam Ramesh inaugurating the bio-toilets in Dhamra, Odisha, on Sunday. PHOTO: PTI