

INDIA

Centre to extend tribal welfare scheme to 2027 amid delays and unspent funds



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Tribal artists in traditional attire during the 'Janjatiya Gaurav Divas 2025' (Tribal Pride Day) celebrations in Ambikapur, Surguja district, Chhattisgarh

By [Nidhi Sharma](#), ET Bureau

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Centre's flagship programme — **PM-JANMAN** — that provides basic amenities, including housing, safe drinking water, electricity and roads to 75 particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs), is set to be extended by a year till March 2027 as works under the scheme remain incomplete.

Launched in November 2023, **Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan** (PM-JANMAN) was slated to end in March 2026 but now the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** has recommended the term be extended.

The scheme requires convergence of 11 targeted programmes across nine ministries. According to the latest scheme review, the road works have not been completed and will need another year till March 2027. The scheme, which has an outlay of Rs 24,000 crore, aims to saturate **PVTG** habitations with 10 basic facilities, including safe housing, sanitation, healthcare and education, road, mobile connectivity and electricity.

Apart from incomplete targets of road construction to PVTG habitations, another challenge before the Centre is the unspent funds. According to sources, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy could not spend about Rs 500 crore as it did not find suitable interventions. The tribal affairs ministry has proposed that rather than allowing these funds to lapse, they should be transferred to it for a targeted scheme suited for PVTGs.

A senior official, who did not wish to be identified, told ET, “When we started discussions on one-year extension, we found that funds to the tune of Rs 500 crore remained unspent because a ministry did not find many takers for solar panels in tribal hamlets. Our analysis of the scheme also found that this may not be conducive to the traditional tribal way of living in these habitations. Now we have proposed certain interventions to ensure this fund is utilised.”

The tribal affairs ministry, which is the nodal ministry for scheme implementation, has proposed a tribal health observatory, creche for children above 5 years of age, development of homestays and sample homes for PVTGs suited for their traditional lifestyle. Under the tribal health observatory, the Centre has proposed region-wise mapping of diseases in terms of incidence and severity. The tribal affairs ministry has proposed to build sample tribal homes by sending over Rs 2 lakh per tenement. The official, quoted above, said, “Under the housing scheme, the amount provided for building of a tenement is pushing the tribals towards smaller homes, which they do not like as they are not used to that style of living. We have proposed a different style which is suitable for tribal living.”

The state governments will now propose which habitations should be saturated for this intervention.