

Schools reopen after 13 years in Naxal-hit Sukma

OUR CORRESPONDENT

RAIPUR: Deprived of educational facilities for 13 years, students in Chhattisgarh's Jagargunda area under the naxal-affected Sukma district of Bastar region have finally seen a ray of hope with commencement of a new academic session from Monday.

Jagargunda was the main commercial centre of the area before 2006, when people left their village and moved to relief camps because of violence during the Salwa Judum movement to counter naxalism.

The village wore a deserted and haunted look.

After a lot of efforts, five educational institutions and hostels have been reopened and made operational, a senior state government official said.

Local students used to



study in nearby pota cabins, or temporary schools, as no educational institutions were operational due to Salwa Judum.

"The change in the scenario was visible after the new government came into power in Chhattisgarh. Owing to the demand made by students of the area, schools and hostels

were reopened and made operational with the constant efforts made by the district administration and the state government," the official said, quoting a government statement.

Chhattisgarh Industry Minister Kawasi Lakhma inaugurated and restarted high school, higher secondary school, edu-

cational ashrams and hostels for boys and girls of that area.

The minister extended his good wishes to the students on the beginning of new academic session and reopening of educational institutes after a hiatus of 13 years.

Reopening of schools has created a positive effect on surrounding villages and people from nearby villages have also been coming forward with a request to open similar schools in their region.

District Collector Chandan Kumar said, "The administration with the help of the state government will soon start government schools in other villages. We will also work towards opening a hospital and sub-tehsil at Jagargunda. Electrification of nearby majra and tolas (hamlets) is under process."