SAUBHADRA CHATTERJI

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he Union Budget for 2009-
10 will, in all likelihood,
contain separate accounts
describing the allocation and
expenses of ministries for the
Schedule Castes and Tribes
(SC/ST), in line with gender
budgeting. This Dalit budget-
ing, under the special plan for
the SC/STs, will also be made
non-lapsable and non-trans-
ferable by the UPA government.
This is not all, in its grand
plan to woo back the Dalit vote
bank, especially from the Bahu-
jan Samaj Party, the Manmo-
han Singh government will
soon launch 'Pradhan Mantri
Aadardsh Gram Yojna' (Prime
Minister's ideal village scheme)
to specially develop 71,000 vil-
lages with 40 per cent or more
SC/ST population. An initial
fund of Rs 7,140 crore has been
allocated for this purpose above
the existing schemes for rural
development. The villages un-
der this scheme will have lights
in all the streets, schools, post
offices and even banks, apart
from complete sanitation fa-
cilities and all-weather roads.

In places with high SC pop-
ulation, special courts will be
set up to deal with cases of
atrocities and crime against
SC/STs. Each court will be set
up for a cluster of three-four
blocks.
The UPA government's
Committee of Ministers on
Dalit Affairs (CMDA) has ac-
cepted 132 such recommen-
dations in its first report last
night, after spending almost
three years on the issue.
Among these, 32 recommen-

dations have been marked
as "high priority" where the
government will immediately
start taking action. The CM-
DA, headed by External Af-
fairs Minister Pranab Mukher-
jee, has Ramvilas Paswan,
Sharad Pawar, Raghuvansh
Prasad Singh, Montek Singh
Ahluwalia, Arjun Singh, A R
Antulay, H R Bharadwaj, Shiv-
raj Patil, Meera Kumar, Oscar
Fernandez, Saifuddin 3Soz and
Mani Shankar Aiyar as oth-
er members.

Accepting the recommen-
dations, the government will
also provide uniforms, footwear
and stationary items to SC stu-
dents. A fund of Rs 8,800 crore
will be created for this purpose.
The government will also spend
a similar amount for pre-met-
ric scholarships.
For the educationally back-
ward districts, the government
will spend Rs 2,500 crore to
build two residential schools
for SC boys on the lines of the
Kasturba Gandhi Balika
Vidyalaya scheme, while one
additional Navodaya Vidyalaya
will be built in districts with
more than 20 per cent SC pop-
ulation. No fee will be charged
for SC students even at high-
er education levels in govern-
ment institutes.

Among the high priority
tasks, allotting land to Dalits
will be done in a time-bound
manner. The central govern-
ment will formulate a scheme
on a sharing basis with the
states to buy land from private
parties to build houses for
the SCs. The government will
also try to restore lands or
properties to the Dalits who
have been unlawfully evicted.

Govt to budget for Dalit

budgeting

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