

Power invite for Modi, Hasina

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

Ranchi: The proposed Adani supercritical thermal power plant in Godda is likely to be inaugurated jointly by the Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh, the country to which electricity generated at this plant would be exported.

Chief minister Raghubar Das on Wednesday directed his secretary Sunil Barnwal, who also happens to be state industries secretary, to get in touch with the Bangladesh embassy in India and work out modalities for requesting Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to grace the inaugural of the upcoming 1,600 MW power plant.

The order comes in the wake of Adani Group managing director Rajesh Adani and his senior executives calling on chief minister Das in capital Ranchi on Wednesday to discuss the modalities of the inauguration.

Though no month has been set for the inauguration of the power plant, Wednesday's visit suggests the Adanis are serious about an early big-ticket ceremony.

In the course of his talks with Adani as well as company top brass — CEO Rajesh Jha, project head K.S. Nagenra, corporate affairs head (Jharkhand) Amritanshu Prasad and site head Naresh Goyal — the chief minister suggested inviting the Bangladesh Prime Minister as well, it has been learnt.

Industries secretary Barnwal later told this paper that he would request an appointment with the Bangladesh ambassador to India on October 27 and work out future action plans accordingly.

Recently, Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani is learnt to have approached Prime Minister's Office to request Narendra Modi to inaugurate the proposed Godda power plant at his earliest convenience.

The Adani Group chairman is also learnt to have written to chief minister Das requesting the latter to formally approach Prime Minister Modi to do the honours.

In the course of his Wednesday meeting with Adani Group executives, chief minister requested that maximum possible jobs generated at the power plant must go to people in Godda.

He also asked the Adani team to set up 100 Ekal Vidyalayas in remote tribal-dominated areas of Santhal Pargana, of which Godda is a part. The Ekal movement is said to be the largest grass-roots education drive in Indian villages but its detractors dub it an exercise in indoctrination of tribals.

In Godda, DC Bhuvnesh Pratap Singh maintained that after completing all mandatory formalities, the proposal to formally acquire lands has been sent to state government for approval.

This would enable the company to begin its first phase of groundwork to set up the power plant.

"We will start giving compensation amounts to land donors in Motia and Patwa villages of Godda block within a week after getting the state government's approval. Necessary formalities for the transfer of remaining lands too have nearly been completed," the DC told this paper.