

BHEL builds Korba thermal project's first phase

Engineering major Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) has finished constructing phase one of the Korba East thermal power project that is set to start commercial production by March-April in Chhattisgarh.

The construction work of the first phase was completed this week while the second phase will be completed by August, officials here said. The second unit is scheduled to begin generation by November-December.

'Though Chhattisgarh came into existence in 2000, it has signed deals worth Rs.400 billion with various public and private companies to construct 10,000 mw thermal plants in the state's coal-abundant northern region,' Chief Minister Raman Singh told IANS Thursday.

'However, Korba East is the first plant that is ready for commercial production,' he added.

The state government awarded the Rs.22-billion Korba East contract to public sector BHEL in April 2004 to install a 500 MW (250X2) coal fired power plant during a three-year period.

'A majority of the projects are at the feasibility-report stage. The government is acting fast to allot land, water and ask the central government for coal block allocation to companies with MoU deals,' Singh said.

Last week, seven private firms, including Essar Power, signed MoUs with Chhattisgarh for investing Rs.218 billion to install 4,990 MW thermal power plants.

Chhattisgarh, which holds 20 percent of India's coal reserves, currently generates 1,405 MW of power, including 1,280 MW from thermal plants and 125 MW from hydel plants. The state has 2.5 million low tension and high tension power consumers.

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