

# CM plants agro biz dream

OUR SPECIAL  
CORRESPONDENT

**Ranchi, March 7:** Chief Minister Raghuraj Das today inaugurated a food and vegetable processing unit set up by National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) in Nagri block, dedicating it to farmers of the state and hoping that the first-of-its-kind plant in Jharkhand speeds up rural economy and creates jobs.

Set up by Mother Dairy Fruits and Vegetables, a wholly-owned NDDB subsidiary, at a cost of Rs 82.77 crore, the plant has come up on a 27-acre plot 40km from the capital.

Processed products would be sold under the well-known Mother Dairy brand Safal.

Union minister of state for agriculture and Lohardaga MP Sudarshan Bhagat, state agriculture minister Randhir Kumar Singh, NDDB chairman Dilip Rath, chief secretary Rajbala Verma and Nagri farmers were also present.

In his address, the chief minister said this plant was in line with their mission to make Jharkhand self-sufficient in the agro sector. In the coming days more such units would be set up.

## Nagri NDDB unit to push rural economy



State agriculture minister Randhir Kumar Singh (from left), Union minister of state Sudarshan Bhagat, CM Raghuraj Das, NDDB chairman Dilip Rath, chief secretary Rajbala Verma and state IT secretary Sunil Kumar Barnwal in Nagri on Tuesday. Telegraph picture

“This plant won’t just directly procure fruits and vegetables locally to process them and sell within and outside the state, but will also generate lots of employment,” he said to a crowd of around 500.

“Around 70 per cent of total jobs generated by the plant will get jobs immediately when the first phase of the plant starts now. When the second phase is ready for launch and operations by this year-

end, more jobs will get created,” he added but did not specify how many direct and indirect jobs would be generated.

Asked for an idea of the kind of numbers they were looking at, B.S. Khanna, managing director of Jharkhand Milk Federation, which NDDB runs, said they estimated “500 direct jobs” when the plant operates fully, while indirect jobs would be “at least double”.

Set up in two phases, the

first phase of the plant comprises an IQF (individual quick freezer) with an annual capacity of 5,650 tonne which will start immediately while the second will have a pulp processing unit of 17,700 tonne annual capacity, civil works for which are also underway.

In the first phase, freezing of vegetables, particularly green peas, would be the focus. The second phase would be geared mainly around tomato

processing.

The total annual turnover of the plant in its full capacity is pegged at Rs 150 crore with around 45 per cent likely to be transferred to farmers, said state agriculture department officials.

The chief minister maintained that the government was working out plans to make farmers adapt progressive and organic farming.

“We have signed a few MoUs for skill-building centres in agriculture sector during the Global Investors’ Summit which will soon see the light of day,” he said.

Advising farmers to take up flower cultivation, Das said if the floriculture sector started blooming, the government would start planning units to convert flowers into various end products.

“We earmarked Rs 700 crore in 2017-18 budget only for skill mission and there is lot of potential in agriculture and animal husbandry,” he said.

Union minister Bhagat on his part hailed Das for his efforts to boost agriculture and farmers in this part of the country. “Jharkhand has the potential to become the agriculture hub of eastern India,” he said.