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RPG retail chain to drop anchor

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Bhubaneswar, May 2: RPG Group today announced its plan to start a chain of hyper-marts, supermarkets and convenience stores in Orissa, with an investment of Rs 200 crore, to expand RPG Retail, the group's retail arm.

Group's vice-chairman Sanjeev Goenka, who met chief minister Naveen Patnaik this morning at Patnaik's office in the state secretariat, said Spencer's hyper-marts, supermarkets and food stores (as RPG Retail is known) would start 25 to 35 stores in the leading cities of the state, including Bhubaneswar, by the next 18 months.

For now, Spencer's retail chains are to be found in Chennai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Mumbai, Aurangabad, Pune, Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Delhi, Cochin and Trivandrum.

"We would like to start soon," said Goenka, after the meeting the chief minister. When asked about how the group plans to tackle land-acquisition problems being faced by the several industries, Goenka admitted that it is a "process" that every industrialist has to bear. "But as long as it is done with fair means it turns out okay," he added.

Goenka also held talks with the chief minister on facilitating land-acquisition process before establishing a 1,000 MW power-plant at a cost of Rs 4,042.61 crore in Neulapuri area of Dhenkanal.

The private sector power utility, CESC Ltd., is now a part of the RPG Group, had signed an MoU in this regard in September last year.

Goenka said the company has applied for coal block in Talcher for the coal-fired plant. "We are waiting for the allocation of a coal block," he said. Orissa with 51,571 million-tonne coal reserve contains about 24 per cent of the country's total reserve of 2,11,594 million tonne. Experts believe, the state has the resources to generate 1,00,000 MW power for the next 100 years. "Orissa could be the Rhur of India as far as the power sector is concerned," said the state energy minister, Surya Narayan Patra.

After steel, it is now the power sector, which is attracting heavy investments in Orissa, he adds. Goenka, who is also the chairman of the board of governors of IIT-Kharagpur, said the construction for an off-campus branch of the IIT would start this year. The state has already offered 300 acres of land near Bhubaneswar for the campus and is committed to provide all the necessary assistance for this purpose. The Rs 800-crore project would house nearly 5,000 students annually. The institute will impart technical education to around 5,000 students.

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 She's writing a cookbook.
 She hates Mondays.
 And yes, she'd love a pet turtle!

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