

# 'Japan Inc to invest \$1.6b in SEZs'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tokyo

INDIA has attracted investment worth \$ 1.6 billion for projects in the fields of power, steel, construction and engineering SEZs from Japanese companies.

Besides, deals worth \$1 billion are also in advanced stages of negotiations with Japanese counterparts, sources in the visiting Assocham delegation, led by its president Sajjan Jindal, said on Wednesday. The delegation is on a week-long visit to Japan as part of the Assocham efforts to promote special economic zones.

The biggest deal worth \$1 billion was brokered by JSW Steel, company sources said. The deal in the field of steel, power and heavy equipment will be formally inked in a couple of days, the sources said.

One of the Japanese partners of the deal is the Toshiba Group, the sources said refusing to give names of

other partners and details.

Raheja Developers, a real estate firm owning the biggest engineering SEZ in India, also attracted deals worth \$0.60 billion from Japanese firms, company sources said without giving details, saying formal agreements are yet to be signed.

Sources in other companies said they are in advanced stages of negotiations for deals worth \$1 billion. Besides Jindal and Raheja, the delegation includes SEZ developers Sri City, Maharashtra Airport Development Company, Assam Company, Oil Field Warehouse and Services, AEZ Infratech, SKIL Infrastructure, JVL Agro Industries and Bengal Integrated Auto Industrial Park.

At a Tokyo conference, Japan-India Business Cooperation Committee chairman Yoshihiro Watanabe expressed concern that land acquisition in India can take a long time.

L B Singhal, director gen-



## Big deal

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eral of the export promotion council of EOUs and SEZs, said land has been acquired in 568 SEZs that have been approved in India.

Of this, 315 zones have been notified also, Singhal said. "Notified means that after acquisition of land, the developers have completed all formalities required to

make these SEZs operational," he added. In fact, 91 SEZs have started operations as well, Singhal said.

Investment of over \$22 billion have been made in these SEZs in the past three years, he said, adding that exports from these zones have gone up from \$7.2 billion to approximately \$21 billion in the last three years. Trying to remove misconception that SEZs are only exports zones, Navin Raheja of Raheja Developers said Japanese investors can invest in these zones hassle-free and cater to domestic demand as well.

Minister (economic & commercial) in Indian embassy R Ramanujam said, "When we talk of investment in India, I hear about lack of infrastructure, I hear about labour policies, I hear about bureaucracy, I hear about taxation, land. All these issues are addressed in one policy — SEZ policy," he added.