

We are finalising a policy for auto sector to provide jobs: Jharkhand CM

Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das is in the midst of a fresh campaign to attract investments into the State that will culminate with a global investor summit in February 2017.

Mr. Das spoke to Vikas Dhoot and Nistula Hebbar on his plans to transform the State's economy so that it surpasses more industrialised States like Gujarat and Maharashtra.

What's the idea behind these investment roadshows you are holding?

Apart from Indian cities, I am also going to Japan, Singapore and South Korea. Jharkhand is a State where God has given it all. It's the country's richest State and there are so many possibilities in every sector. Jharkhand is called a rich State but poverty thrives in its lap. We want to finish that poverty.

A large number of our children go to Bombay, Delhi and other places working for just Rs.5,000 to Rs.7,000 a month, where they face physical and mental exploitation. We want to free Jharkhand from this, so we will have to provide jobs for them.

What are you telling investors about reforms in the State?

We are bringing reforms in all sectors. We have come out with a food processing policy for cashing in on our rich horticultural output. We have come up with ten new policies since I took charge, to encourage industry, exports, solar energy and medical education. We are finalising a policy for the IT and automobile sectors as well as startups, over the next month and a half. The automobile policy is about to be taken to the cabinet. We have Asia's largest cluster of 400 auto component industries. I have spoken to Tata group chairman Cyrus Mistry that they should start automobile units in the State. He agreed, but these things take time. The State can only progress if we have a long-term strategy. We want to go ahead of Maharashtra and Gujarat.

In the ease of doing business ranking of States, we are number 3, but in labour reforms, we are already ahead of Gujarat and are ranked first in the country. We got a 100 per cent score as we made everything online and removed inspections in many cases. The emphasis is on self-certification. If a boiler is not safe in a factory, we will hold them responsible but can't subject everyone to inspectors.

Could we expect the State assembly to ratify the Constitutional amendments for the Goods and Services Tax regime soon?

GST is good for the country and the State. We will take a call on when to introduce the Bill after we speak to the Centre. If they want it to be done early, we will call for it in the next session. If they say, we have three-four months, we can get it passed in the Winter session.

You have agreed to be the first State to launch direct benefits transfer in kerosene?

Yes, from October 2, we are starting it by linking it to Aadhaar. We plan to link everything to Aadhaar and give money straight to the people to buy kerosene, rice, etc. We are one of the few States with 92 per cent Aadhaar coverage and are now focusing on children up to the age of six years.

We have started a pilot project in Ranchi where we are paying them to buy rice directly under the food security program, and for kerosene, we are starting with five districts. Some officers said people will drink alcohol with the cash. I said: 'If someone wanted to drink, he could still do that by selling the 30 kg rice we give him. But the corruption and siphoning off would stop.'

It's a good idea to issue the benefits to the woman in the household. At the time of school admission, we only ask for father's name. We should make it mandatory to give mother's name and make the father's name optional.

What are your plans to tap the State's mineral wealth?

Eighteen auctions have been conducted for coal mines by the Centre. We have auctioned two limestone mines and two gold mines are being opened up for auctions with a request for proposals being issued on August 8.