

TIMES NATION

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Maha's pvt N-unit debuts next month

By Srinivas Laxman/TNN

Mumbai: Maharashtra's first nuclear unit in the private sector — and the country's second — will become critical next month at Ambarnath in Thane district.

Called A V Processors, the gamma-ray irradiation facility will handle agro and medical products. Organisation managing director Rajiv Adukia told TOI on Thursday that the Rs 5-crore project had been set up with the assistance of the department of atomic energy's Board of Radiation and Isotopes Technolo-

gy (Brit). He said it will be dedicated to the nation on November 16, 2005.

"It marks a major collaboration between the private sector and the department of atomic energy," he said, pointing out that the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) has informally given the green signal for commissioning the plant. "We are expecting its formal approval soon," Adukia added.

Brit chief executive J K Ghosh told this newspaper from Jorhat in Assam that his organisation has provided the technology and cobalt-60 radioisotope, the fuel of the facility. "We have been directly involved with the Ambarnath project," he said.



Ghosh said A V Processors and Brit had signed an MoU two years ago regarding the sharing of technical knowhow. "It

marks a major step in the privatisation of the nuclear sector," he said, adding that the first such unit was commissioned in Kolkata in August 2004.

"So far we have signed 14 MoUs with different organisations in various parts of the country, which marks the gradual entry of the private sector into the high-profile nuclear sector — hitherto an exclusive preserve of the government," he said. Similar plants were being established at Vadodara, Bangalore and New Delhi, he said.