



No Great Wall, yet home no less

DIM SUM IN TANDOOR Not the ones to miss out on home, 130 Chinese experts at the thermal project in Punjab have created a little world all their own



Work is in full swing to complete the first phase of the thermal power plant in Banwala village.

RAJNISH KATYAL/HT

Manpreet Randhawa

manpreet.randhawa@hindustantimes.com

BANWALA (MANSA): There's a little China in Punjab's southern most district.

Around 130 Chinese nationals, employees of the Shandong Electric Power Construction Corporation (SAPCO), are working hard to complete the first phase of the Rs 13,000 crore thermal power plant at Banwala village in Mansa district.

The first batch of 10 experts from

China landed in Punjab in December 2009. It was not easy to adjust in an alien culture initially. "But gradually we settled down and decided to set up our own mini-China here to tackle homesickness," said SAPCO executive project manager Wang Hong.

"We grow our own vegetables and have brought our own chefs from China," he said. "We also get 30 Chinese satellite television channels to keep us going." To get their daily dose of non-vegetarian food, an integral part of Chinese

diet, they prefer outsourcing pork, fish and ham from Delhi.

The Vedanta group, which signed an agreement with the Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) to build the 2,640 MW power project in four phases, has engaged SAPCO.

The first 690 MW phase will get commissioned in November 2012; the subsequent phases are expected to be completed after a gap of three months each.

A senior official of Vedanta was all praise for the work culture of the

POWER POINTS

2,113

the area in acres the plant occupies

₹13,000

the cost in crores of the project

58

the power in million units per day the plant will generate after all four phases are complete

₹2.86

rate at which power per unit will be sold to PSPCL for 25 years

700

the number of Chinese workers who might eventually work here



(top to bottom): Chinese employees of Shandong Electric Power Construction Corporation busy on their laptops in Banwala village in Punjab's Mansa district; residents putting clothes out to dry in the winter sun; and queuing up for food prepared by chefs specially brought from China.

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Chinese. "We need to learn a lot from them," he said.

The SAPCO site office has all signs, marks and indicators in Chinese. For the benefit of their Indian counterparts, five interpreters translate all paper work from Chinese to English.

One of the interpreters, Gao RongBin, said that to facilitate communication some Chinese executives had kept English nicknames. "Now the Indians call me Sam, which is easy for them," he said with a smile.