

# Pact with Dunlop union soon

Press Trust of India

KOLKATA, Dec. 18. — The re-opening process of ailing Dunlop India Limited, taken over by Mr Pawan Kumar Ruia recently, is to be expedited as major headway has been made in reaching an agreement with the workers unions.

"We have made major headway in negotiations with the workers unions and we hope to finalise the agreement with them by 31 December," Mr Ruia said here today.

He said that agreement with the workers unions has been one of the most important issues to be sorted out before planning the re-opening the two plants at Sahagunj in West Bengal and Ambattur in Tamil Nadu.

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Mr Ruia had earlier this month bought the entire tyre business of Chhabria family controlled Jumbo Group, including the sick Dunlop India and had immediately initiated talks with the CITU-affiliated Dunlop workers' union and Dunlop Rubber Factory labour union of Intuc at the Sahagunj plant which employs nearly 2,600 workers.

Talks with the workers' union at Ambattur plant is also in an advanced stage and Mr Ruia expressed confidence that an agreement would be finalised very soon.

Responding to a query he said that once the agreement with the workers was in place the process of re-opening the two plants would definitely be expedited.

Mr Ruia had earlier

announced that the Ambattur plant would be re-opened in six months and Sahagunj in nine months.

Mr Ruia said that he had plans for starting the industrial products division first and that was why he had made it clear to the workers' union that there would be phased deployment of workers in the re-opened plant.

Mr Ruia said that the task of putting together a management team was already on, with experts for various departments being recruited so that they could start working on the plants closed for the past few years.

"We are yet to thoroughly examine the machinery in the two plants and if they are found to be in working condition then the re-

opening process will be further expedited," Mr Ruia said.

Asked whether there was a possibility of him advancing the targeted re-opening date already announced, Mr Ruia said that he would not like to commit anything at this stage, but clarified that, "everything will be clear in a couple of months."

Mr Ruia, who had earlier taken over the public sector engineering giant, Jessop & Co, however, expressed confidence that he would be able to turn-around Dunlop India.

Apart from Dunlop, Mr Ruia had taken over two other tyre companies of Jumbo Group, Falcon Tyres and India Tyres, at a total cost of Rs 200 crore. The other two companies, however, were profit-making.