

'Was PM Modi Directly Involved in Adani's Bangladesh Power Deal?: TMC MP Asks EAM

The Wire Staff

New Delhi: Trinamool Congress MP Jawhar Sircar has written thrice to external affairs minister S. Jaishankar, requesting that he reveal if Prime Minister Narendra Modi was “himself steering” a power purchase agreement for coal-based supply between Bangladesh and the Adani group.



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Sircar wrote the letters in the wake of reports that Bangladesh officials have [“expressed unease”](#) about the agreement. Since then, there have been recent allegations of stock manipulation and fraud against the Adani group.

Sircar has also commented in the letters on this “patently unfair PPA (power purchase agreement)” and its ability to trigger a “major anti-India groundswell” in Bangladesh.

Talking to *The Wire*, Sircar said there has been no response to any of them and that he only decided to make these public after giving the minister “a fair chance”.

MP first wrote in December following WaPo report

In his first letter on the subject, sent on December 13, 2022, Sircar had, while mentioning [a report in *The Washington Post*](#), headlined ‘How political will often favors a coal billionaire and his dirty fossil fuel,’ pointed out that it spoke of the “special efforts put in by the Prime Minister himself during his visit to Dhaka in June 2015 for a \$4.5 billion deal that was signed for India to sell electricity to Bangladesh”.

The Rajya Sabha MP had added that “the report mentions of a \$1.7 billion, 1600 MW coal powered plant of the Adani group in Godda district of Jharkhand and how the Washington Post has accessed and analysed the 163-page Power Purchase Agreement”.

He had further brought to the notice of the EAM that the report said that the PPA “mandates that Bangladesh must pay Adani approximately \$450 mn a year in capacity and maintenance charges – regardless of whether it generates any electricity. It further mentions that Bangladesh has 40% more power generation than the peak demand and that it would have to buy Adani’s electricity at more than five times the market price of bulk electricity in the country.”

‘Statements providing handle to strong anti-India elements’

The TMC MP had further raised concerns about how “these statements provide a handle to the strong anti-India elements in our neighbouring country” and pointed out that “our [India’s] relationship with Bangladesh is extremely sensitive and such adverse reports circulated in the run-up to elections are the stuff of agitations.”

He had also urged the EAM for a response. On not getting one, Sircar wrote another letter to Jaishankar on January 31, 2023. This was soon after allegations against the Adani group were levelled in the Hindenburg Research report.

As there was still no reply, Sircar in his February 13 letter to the EAM pointed out that “no reply has come. He also wrote that “Adani-related matter are now in the eye of the public storm, and this aspect of his patently unfair PPA with Bangladesh may be triggering a major anti-India groundswell”.

‘Items, documents indicate PM steered deal’

The MP said “there are items and documents to indicate that PM was himself steering this deal/project from his first post-election visit to Dhaka.”

He added that at a later stage, the EAM was “actively involved in pushing this Adani deal through”.

Urging the minister to comment on the matter, Sircar said “we need to know the official version on whether this patently-unfair deal, leading to disaffection in Bangladesh, was actively supported by India or not” and if “MEA did not intervene in Adani’s profiteering at the cost of or relations with Bangladesh”.

MEA distanced itself from deal after Bangladesh sought revision

After the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) earlier this month demanded a revision of the 2017 agreement to buy electricity from the 1600 MW plant of the Adani Power Limited located at Godda, the [Union government had distanced itself from the deal](#).

On being asked about the matter, MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi had told journalists: “I understand you are referring to a deal between a sovereign government and an Indian company.” On being pressed to state the government’s position in the matter, he had added: “I do not think we are involved in this”.