

Australian PM backs Adani mine, says sabotaging of projects dangerous

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Melbourne: Backing controversy-hit Indian mining giant Adani's coal mine venture in Australia, Prime Minister Tony Abbott has said the 16.5 billion dollar project was "vitaly important" and "sabotaging" of such developmental plans using legal means was "dangerous" for the country.

"If the courts can be turned into a means of sabotaging projects which are striving to meet the highest environmental standards, then we have a real problem as a nation," he said.

"We can't become a nation of naysayers; we have to remain a nation that gives people a fair go if they play by the rules," Abbott said.

His remarks came after a court this week revoked the environmental approval for the Adani project, which aims to build one of the world's largest coal mine in Queensland, opposed by green groups and local residents.

In his strongest defence yet of coal production in Australia, Abbott stated that the overturning of the proposed Queensland Carmichael mega coal mine project means courts can be used to "sabotage" worthy projects.

"As a country we must, in principle, favour projects like this," he told The Australian yesterday.

"This is a vitaly important project for the economic development of Queensland and it's absolutely critical for the human welfare literally of tens of millions of people in India," the Prime Minister said.

Abbott said he is "frustrated" at the court's decision and asserted that the projects like Adani mine were too vital to be hindered by red tape.

"If we get to the stage where the rules are such that projects like this can be endlessly frustrated, that's dangerous for our country and it's tragic for the wider world," Abbott said.

"So we've got to get these projects right...but once they are fully complying with high environmental standards, let them go ahead. While it's absolutely true that we want the highest environmental standards to apply to projects in Australia, and while it's absolutely true that people have a right to go to court, this is a USD 21 billion investment, it will create 10,000 jobs in Queensland and elsewhere in our country," he said.

Abbott also said the mine would have a positive impact in India, where Adani is headquartered.

"Let them go ahead for the workers of Australia and for the people of countries like India who right at the moment have no electricity. Imagine what it's like to live in the modern world with no electricity," the Prime Minister said.

"Australian resources can give them electricity and the interesting thing about Australian resources is that invariably they're much better for the environment than the alternative," he added.

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