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PepsiCo's State Plant to Soon be Hub of Global Activities

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PepsiCo India plans to turn its food plant in West Bengal as a global benchmark operation for manufacturing food products. The company has decided to make this as the hub unit for manufacturing newer food products in India as it expands its portfolio of health and nutritious food, says PepsiCo India Holdings CEO (foods) Varun Berry.

The company has just completed fresh investment of ₹170 crore in this unit at Sankrail, some 30 km away from Kolkata, and is now in the drawing board for further investment. It is in the process of receiving additional 1.7 acre from the state government to invest on newer lines.

"The Bengal plant is not just the largest in India but is also a real gold standard of operations in the entire Asia, Middle-East and Africa," said Berry.

"We plan to make this plant as a global benchmark. We have already invested more than ₹450 crore in the state, including the plant, cold storage and distribution infrastructure," he said.

PepsiCo has doubled the installed capacity in the plant from 24,000 tonnes per annum last year to 51,000 tonnes per annum. It manufactures Lay's, Kurkure and Cheetos in this plant and has also started manufacturing of the latest crunchy triangular snack, Kurkure Desi Beats.

PepsiCo plans to source almost 30% of its

Expansion Plan

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products from this plant.

At the sametime, PepsiCo plans to expand its farming footprint in West Bengal. It currently works with 8,500 farmers to grow potatoes in the state. West Bengal is also the largest sourcing hub of potatoes for the company, followed by Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Gujarat, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

"We will soon expand our farming operation to more than 10,000 farmers. We are developing special potato seeds in the US which will be brought to West Bengal. This special variety will increase the life of the potato," said PepsiCo India executive director (agriculture) Vivek Bharati.

While PepsiCo employs some 1,100 people directly in the Bengal facility, the indirect employment in the state is almost 12,000 people. This apart, the company also runs two more food plants in Ranjangaon and Jalandhar.