

# Times impact: Sans power since independence, UP village to light up for first time in 75 years

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AGRA: The darkness of village Tulai Ka Nagla in UP's Etah will finally, after 75 years, dissolve into oblivion. The state government has now announced that it will be electrified within the next two months. The declaration came two days after TOI reported about Tulai Ka Nagla's umpteenth "dark Diwali", with villagers complaining to this correspondent that their petition for power has been pending for over 60 years.



UP power minister Shrikant Sharma said that the village has been included in the newly launched 'Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme' of the Centre and that action is being taken to light it up.



Managing director of state government-owned discom Dakshinanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited (DVVNL) conducted a meeting with the district magistrate and electricity department officials to work out a plan to bring power supply to perhaps one of India's last dark patches. The Centre had claimed total electrification and last-mile delivery of electricity in every nook and corner of the country back in 2018.

Electricity department officials said each house in the village will be lit within the next two months. The process of setting up electricity poles will begin after Diwali. Meanwhile, the local administration made arrangements to light up the village during Diwali so that residents do not have to celebrate a "black festival" ever again.

DVVNL MD Amit Kishore said, "Work for electrification of Tulai ka Nagla has begun. The superintendent engineer of Etah has been asked to prepare a work plan. We will ensure that it is completed in a time-bound manner."

District magistrate of Etah, Ankit Kumar Agrawal, told TOI: "A team, led by the sub-divisional magistrate of Aliganj and consisting of electricity department officials, was sent to the village to assess the on-ground situation. Electrification will be done on a priority basis. I have also ordered temporary arrangements for illumination so that villagers can celebrate the festival of lights."

Sub-divisional magistrate of Aliganj, Manvendra Singh, said that a generator was brought in and lights installed on the main road of the village. He added that the generator can, for now, also be used by residents to illuminate their homes. This arrangement will remain in place for a week. He said that the state's non-conventional energy development agency has been asked to provide solar lights for the villagers.

The village, with a population of about 300, has over 30 houses without an electric bulb. Residents have to travel a distance of 2 km to Raja Ka Rampur just to do basic tasks such as charging mobile phones. Students are unable to attend online classes and use candles to study in the evening, and women, every single day, prepare dinner before the sun sets.

Thanking TOI for highlighting the decades-old plight of the village, Rajaram, a resident who claims to be 100 years old, said, "Since the past several decades, we have been trying to reach out to public representatives and local authorities. Years passed and governments changed, but we remained in darkness. Today (Wednesday), senior officials came to the village for the first time and assured us that each home will be electrified. We have no words to express our happiness. It will be a very happy Diwali for us this time."

Resident Ranjana Shakya said, "We have got our biggest Diwali gift in 60 years, maybe more. Village roads are being illuminated for the first time. The SDM has informed us that we will be getting electricity within the next two months. This will help students. After sunset, we will not have to survive on candles, diyas, and torches. We have made plans to celebrate big this year. Residents who had migrated out of the village because of the lack of power supply are also willing to return."