

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is going to set up two new steel plants in Himachal Pradesh for which special committee members have been selected;

(b) if so, the details of the members along with the date by which these plants would be ready and become operational;

(c) whether the original and permanent residents of Himachal Pradesh "Himachali Bonafied" would get preference while providing employment in these plants; and

(d) if so, the extent of preference to be given to them and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI A. SAI PRATHAP): (a) to (d) Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has planned to set up one TMT Bar Mill at Steel Processing Unit (SPU) at Kandrori District Kangra in Himachal Pradesh with a capacity of 1,00,000 tonnes per annum. The project is under execution and the expected date of completion is by first quarter of 2012. The possibility of setting up an additional SPU in Himachal Pradesh is being explored.

A three member Committee had been constituted comprising of representatives from SAIL, Government of Himachal Pradesh and Confederation of Indian Industry to examine *inter-alia* activities towards expanding the manufacturing base of steel products in the State of Himachal Pradesh.

As the Steel Processing Unit is at initial stage of execution, it is premature to comment upon the preference in employment to be given to any category.

Rehabilitation of indigenous and tribal people

1483. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether any concrete steps have been taken for steel capacity expansion and achieving cost effectiveness so that in the coming decade substantial reduction in operating and raw material cost is achieved when the capacity is estimated to rise 110 mtpa by 2019-20;

(b) if so, whether the rehabilitation of indigenous and tribal people, as iron ore mining is

done in economically backward States like Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Jharkhand etc., is adequately taken care of; and

(c) whether it is a fact that displaced tribals in Jharkhand mining operations had to resort to agitation to protect their rights?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI A. SAI PRATHAP): (a) Based on the progress of steel expansion capacity projects, being undertaken by the major steel investors and as per the information furnished by the respective companies, the total steel production capacity in India is expected to be 120 million tonnes by December 2012. As far as the technology, operation methods and type of products is concerned, the details of these are decided by the individual companies based upon techno-commercial considerations.

(b) and (c) The information is being collected from the respective State Governments and will be laid on the table of the House.

Depletion of iron-ore reserve

1484. DR. RAM PRAKASH: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that our mineral reserves of iron-ore are depleting day-by-day due to heavy export from the country;

(b) whether it is also a fact that there is tremendous increase seen in last ten years for export of iron-ore from the country; and

(c) the plans Government is formulating to protect reserves of iron-ore in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI A. SAI PRATHAP): (a) Yes, Sir. It is a fact that our mineral reserves of iron ore are depleting due to its heavy export from the country.

(b) Yes, Sir. The export of iron ore from the country has increased from a level of 37.49 million tonnes during 2000-01 to a level of 117.37 million tonnes during the year 2009-10.

(c) The Government has decided that conservation of iron ore resources of the country is of paramount importance and the same may be achieved by taking recourse to appropriate fiscal measures. Presently, an export duty of 5% is leviable on iron ore fines whereas 15% export duty is leviable on other varieties of iron ore.