

**Demand to redesign and expand the modernisation project
of Durgapur steel plant**

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN (West Bengal): Sir, it is a matter of serious concern that the Ministry of Steel and the Steel Authority of India Limited, SAIL, have drastically curtailed the modernisation programme of Durgapur Steel Plant under SAIL in West Bengal. Out of the total modernisation plan of Rs. 76000 crore for all SAIL plants, only Rs. 4000 crore was initially allotted for Durgapur Steel Plant but even that amount was subsequently reduced to Rs. 2875 crore by cancelling the earlier programme of construction for wire-rod mill, new sinter plant, reconstruction of blast furnace, power system augmentation, etc. Curtailment of modernization of Durgapur Steel Plant by such a large scale, both in finished product and processing, will incapacitate Durgapur Steel Plant even to harness full benefit of whatever being invested in modernizations—operationally, financially and commercially too. The entire approach of the Ministry and SAIL towards Durgapur Steel Plant modernisation is half-hearted and techno-economically unsound too.

I, therefore, urge upon the Government and the Ministry, in particular, to prevail upon SAIL to refrain from such half-hearted and unprofessional approach in respect of modernization of Durgapur Steel Plant, and redesign and expand the modernization project of Durgapur Steel Plant to ensure and augment its capacity to nine million tonnes with additional coke oven battery, a new sintering plant, a new wire-rod mill, a new wheel-axle plant with 100 per cent yield, revamping of raw material handling plant, a new bigger blast furnace besides reconstruction of existing blast furnace number one. I urge upon the Government to respond with a positive approach.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I associate myself with the Special Mention made by Shri Tapan Kumar Sen.

**Demand to improve efficiency and productivity of MTNL so as to avoid offering of
VRS to its employees**

SHRI ANIL DESAI (Maharashtra): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to raise the issue of MTNL offering of VRS to its employees, through this august House. It is ironical that MTNL is offering VRS to its employees as part of its efforts to turn profitable. I am not able to understand as to why MTNL has suffered a loss of Rs. 929.7 crore for the quarter ended December, 2011 when private telecom companies are making profit. In fact, MTNL should have had focused approach to improve the quality and increase the productivity per employee with such humungous customer base. We may recall that four years back, MTNL recorded profit before tax to the tune of Rs. 6000 crore. As a matter of fact, public sector undertakings contribute a large chunk

of corporate tax. If the management is serious, its employees could be turned into a great asset. The management could put them to optimum use. They should consider getting customer feed back on every day. There is a saying, “where there is a will, there is a way.” The management should listen and take the customer’s reaction seriously and that would create a very big impact on the perception of the customer about the MTNL. Consequently, it would increase the customer base and loyalty. MTNL has created a niche for itself and it has got a sizeable market share. If any regressive step is taken by MTNL, it would provide boost to the private telecom companies. This will lead to dismantling of the public sector undertaking.

In the end, I suggest to make the MTNL profitable, do it by improving efficiency, productivity and value addition through cutting edge technology, recruitment of new talent in technology and increase the market share or customer service instead of VRS.

Thank you.

Concern over prevalence of child marriage in the country

DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA (Rajasthan): Sir, unfortunately, Modern India continues to be plagued by social ills like child marriage, early motherhood and domestic violence. The latest data in the ‘State of the World’s Children Report, 2012’ released by the UNICEF on 29.2.2012, shows that almost 22 per cent women in India now aged between 20 and 24 years gave birth to a child before they turned 18. Almost 45 among every 1,000 children are born to mothers in the 15-19 age brackets. According to UNICEF, more than 40 per cent of the world’s child marriages still occur in India. World-wide, more than 60 million women between 20 and 24 years were married before they turned 18.

According to the National Family Health Survey, about 10 million girls are married each year before the age of 18 world-wide, one-third of them live in India. Child marriage is prohibited by law in India. However, the latest available Government survey found 48 per cent of women (aged 20-24) were married or are in union before the age of 18 and almost one in five was married or in union before she turned 15.

Only 35 per cent adolescent males (aged 15-19) and 19 per cent adolescent females have a comprehensive knowledge of HIV. Shockingly around 57 per cent of male adolescents (aged 15-19) and 53 per cent of female adolescents thought a husband was justified in beating up their wives under certain circumstances.

In view of the above worrying scenario, I would request the hon. Minister of Women and Child Welfare to take curative steps.