

exempting several Union Ministries from making financial provision for the SCSP/TSP;

- (b) whether the Ministry has taken up the matter to the Planning Commission;
- (c) if so, the response of the Planning Commission; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI MUKUL WASNIK) : (a) to (d) Planning Commission has accepted the recommendation of the Task Force set up by it to the effect that obligation of various Central Ministries under Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan (SCSP)/Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) should be fixed in a differentiated manner, looking to the nature of their work.

It is quite appropriate to fix Ministry-wise obligation to earmark less or more than population-proportionate outlay under SCSP such that, over-all outlay under SCSP is population-proportionate.

#### **Steel Production in Plants**

\*127. SHRI R.C. SINGH :

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

- (a) whether even after six years of MoU for setting up of steel plants in the country, production has not started in any of the plants;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Ministry has stipulated any time-frame for starting the production;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the role of the Ministry with regard to the MoU and commencement of production?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA) : (a) No, Sir. As per the available information, a number of new steel capacities have come into operation. The steel capacity in the country has increased from 56.84 MTPA (March, 2007) to about 88 MTPA presently.

(b) Question does not arise.

(c) to (e) Steel is a de-regulated sector. Ministry of Steel does not stipulate any time frame for starting production in the individual steel units. It is purely project specific outcome which depends on many factors like availability of finance, conditions of the market and other techno-commercial parameters in addition to progress on the fronts of land acquisition, raw material linkages, forest and environment clearances etc.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is purely an understanding between the concerned State Government and the respective steel investors. Government of India has no role to play in it.

However, an Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) has been set up in the Ministry which is vested with the job of monitoring and co-coordinating the issues concerning major steel investments.

#### **Connectivity of Domestic and International Flights from Punjab**

\*128. SARDAR SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether any request has been received from the State Government of Punjab to start direct domestic flights from Amritsar and Chandigarh to Nanded in Maharashtra and international flights from the upcoming airport at Mohali to provide better air connectivity for the Punjab diaspora visiting their home State; and

(b) if so, the action taking by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI AJIT SINGH) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Punjab Government has requested to start flights to Nanded from Amritsar and Chandigarh.

At present, no scheduled domestic airline is operating air service from Amritsar/ Chandigarh to Nanded. However, the request of Punjab Government is under examination. Presently Mohali is not designated as an international airport.

Operations in domestic sector have been deregulated and flights are being operated by concerned airlines on the basis of commercial viability subject to adherence of Route Dispersal Guidelines. Government has laid down Route Dispersal Guidelines with a view to achieve better regulation of air transport services taking into account the need for air connectivity of different regions of the country including North-East region. It is, however, up to the airlines to provide air services to specific places depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability while complying with Route Dispersal Guidelines.

#### **Reform in Institution of Lokayukta**

\*129. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the institution of Lokayukta is sorely in need of reform;

(b) whether it is a fact that there is a need for a uniform law in order to make the institution more effective and strong in all the States;