

(b) and (c) Some representations have been received in the Ministry of Steel regarding pricing mechanism of NMDC Limited. Being a Navratna Public Sector Enterprise, the commercial and financial decisions of the company are taken by the Board of Directors of NMDC Limited. The issue of pricing of iron ore is decided by the Board of NMDC Limited based on various factors including prevailing general market conditions. The Government generally does not interfere in commercial decisions of the company. However, to improve availability of iron ore to domestic iron and steel industry at affordable price, the Government has increased the export duty on iron ore from 20% ad valorem to 30% ad valorem on all grades of iron ore (except pellets) with effect from 30.12.2011.

Joint venture under the private and public sector collaboration by SAIL

†2127. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Steel Authority of India Ltd. has set up a joint venture under the private and public sector collaboration;

(b) if so, whether this venture has undertaken the mining from iron ore mines in Afghanistan;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the quantum of capital invested in this venture and the quantum of share of public and private sector separately in this capital;

(d) whether it is also a fact that any mutual agreement is in place to carry out the responsibility of managing this project; and

(e) if so, the details of this agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA): (a) to (c) The Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) led consortium of seven Indian steel and mining companies namely Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), NMDC Ltd., Jindal Steel and Power Limited (JSPL), JSW Steel Ltd. JSW Ispat Steel Ltd. and Monnet Ispat and Energy Ltd. has been declared as preferred bidder for the iron ore blocks B, C and D of the Hajigak iron ore deposit, Afghanistan. The consortium is presently engaged in negotiations to finalise the Hajigak mining contract with Ministry of Mines, Government of Afghanistan. Any project related activity can be taken up only after the signing of the contract.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) and (e) The consortium members are presently finalizing Joint Venture Agreement for incorporation of joint venture company to manage and execute the project.

Financial loss to SAIL

†2128. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Steel Authority of India Limited has suffered financial losses in recent months during the financial year 2012-13;

(b) if so, the main reasons thereof;

(c) whether it also a fact that a part of this loss has been recovered due to high prices of products in the country; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Arrival of foreign tourists to India

2129. SHRI N. BALAGANGA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether global economic scenario has affected foreign tourists arrival into this country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, along with the number of foreign tourists visited India during the last two years and this year, year-wise, country-wise and the total foreign exchange earned; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to attract foreign tourists to India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI SULTAN AHMED): (a) and (b) The number of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India during January-July, 2012 registered a growth of 6.6% over the corresponding period of 2011.

The number of FTAs in India during 2010, 2011 and January-July, 2012 were 5.78 million, 6.29 million and 3.76 million, respectively.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.