

point was also signed on 8.7.2014. During the 20th Steering Committee Meeting held in February, 2015, timelines were discussed for identification and selection of Consortium Leader and gas is expected to flow in pipeline within 3 years from the date of induction of Consortium Leader.

(f) Natural Gas procured through TAPI transnational pipeline project is envisaged to bridge the gap between demand and supply of natural gas to consumers in various sectors.

Expansion of capacity of NINL

290. SHRI PYARIMOHAN MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what are the plans of Metals and Mineral Trading Corporation of India (MMTC) for expansion of the capacity of Neelachal Ispat Nigam Ltd. (NINL) and the time line for achieving various targets within such plans; and

(b) whether MMTC is directly or through NINL in negotiations with any Public Sector steel company to merge itself with such company and if so, the broad contours of such negotiations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) The Board of Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited (NINL) has approved in-principle to expand plant capacity from its existing capacity of 1.1 million tonnes to 5.0 million tonnes in 2 Phases. In Phase-I, the capacity enhancement shall be made from 1.1 million tonnes to 2.2 million tonnes. In Phase-II, the capacity will be further increased from 2.2 million tonnes to 5.0 million tonnes. Phase-I is to be completed by 2020-21. M/s. MECON have been entrusted with the task for preparation of Techno Economic Feasibility Report (TEFR) for expansion of plant to 5.0 MT in 2 phases.

(b) MMTC has so far not considered any proposal to merge NINL with any Public Sector steel company.

Impact of cheaper/inferior quality steel imported from China

291. SHRI DHIRAJ PRASAD SAHU: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the indigenous steel production is facing a lot of difficulties due to import of cheaper/inferior quality steel from China;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the quantity of steel imported from China during the current year;