

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether India has also agreed to participate jointly with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the exploration and production activities in two countries; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Saudi Arabia is one of India's largest sources of crude oil. Nearly 20% of India's crude oil import is from Saudi Arabia.

(c) and (d) Presently, our Central Public Sector Oil and Gas Enterprises (CPSEs) do not have exploration and production assets or operations in Saudi Arabia. However, in order to ensure energy security, they seek collaboration with Saudi Arabian National Petroleum and Natural Gas Company Saudi Aramco for joint participation in development of oil and gas assets in Saudi Arabia where International Oil Companies are allowed to bid.

LPG connection under Deepam Scheme in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana

1405. DR. K. V. P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) how many LPG connections have been released under Deepam Scheme in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana;

(b) whether it is a fact that the oil and gas marketing companies in the public sector are barred from extending help to Deepam Scheme as a part of their social responsibility in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether Government will redirect these companies to continue with the old practice in order to avoid additional burden on the cash strapped Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN): (a) Total 53,71,455 LPG connections have been released to BPL families under Deepam Scheme in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

(b) to (d) No, Sir. Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are extending necessary help with reference to implementation of Deepam Scheme in the State of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Deepam Scheme is a State Government sponsored Scheme. Under this Scheme, new LPG connection is released to BPL households and security deposit of one 14.2 kg. cylinder and Pressure Regulator is borne by the State Governments. The amount for security is given in advance by State Government to Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs). State Government uploads the list in their website and gives access to the concerned distributors for release of connection and updation of release status. Cost of refill, hotplate and other additional expenses are borne by the beneficiary.

In addition to LPG connections released under Deepam Scheme, OMCs have released total of 12,08,614 security deposit free new LPG connections in the State of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana under CSR Scheme.

Quantum and value of steel imported from abroad

1406. SHRI AJAY SANCHETI: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

- (a) the country-wise and year-wise details of quantum and value including per unit value of steel imported from abroad during the last three years;
- (b) the rate at which steel is available in the country;
- (c) the reasons for import of steel;
- (d) whether Government proposes to impose levy on imported steel to safeguard domestic steel industry from cheap imports; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR): (a) and (b) Details are given in the Statement-I and II respectively (*See* below).

(c) India has witnessed about 75.5% increase (year-on-year) in imports of total steel (Alloy + Non-Alloy) in 2014-15 and about 24% increase during April'15 to Jan.'16. Steel is a deregulated sector and imports depend on various market factors such as price, quality, availability etc. Further, a small quantity of high quality steel, not manufactured locally, is also imported. The jump in imports is however largely on account of global steel glut. Due to this reason, steel is being exported by China and other countries, often at below cost of production.

(d) and (e) In order to protect domestic steel sector, the Government has taken various measures which have reduced the pace of growth of imports. While imports grew by about 75% in the Financial Year 2014-15, compared to the Financial Year 2013-14, the import growth has slowed to about 24% in the period April' 15-Jan.'16,