



Steel consumption grows 1.3% in Apr-Nov

On lingering effect of the economic slowdown and slow growth in production, India's steel consumption grew by a moderate 1.3 per cent to 48.62 million tonnes during the April-November period of current fiscal. The country, the world's fourth largest steel producer, had consumed 48 MT steel in the corresponding period of the last fiscal, Joint Plant Committee (JPC), a unit under Steel Ministry, said recently. "The slow growth numbers appear to reflect the lingering effect of the economic slowdown and is further depressed by the slow growth in production for sale in April-November, 2014 as compared to the same period of last year," it said in a note sent to



the Ministry. Domestic real consumption of steel in November 2014 at 5.488 MT was down by 9 percent compared to October. Year-on-year, it increased by 8 percent, it said. Production of crude steel during April-November period of

the current fiscal was higher by 2.5 percent at 55.29 MT to which main producers SAIL, RINL, Tata Steel, Essar, JSW and JSPL together contributed 29.769 MT. The rest produced 25.52 MT during the period. The production in November at 6.81 MT was higher by 3.5 percent over the same month last year.

Export of total finished steel was down by 5.3 percent during the first eight months of the current fiscal at 3.5 MT over the same period last year. Imports, however, zoomed to 5.5 MT, a 49 percent growth during the April-November period. "India remained a net importer of total finished steel in April-November, 2014," said.

Salem Steel ties up with Flipkart to sell utensils



With the objective to expand its domestic market share, Salem Steel Plant (SSP) has tied up with online market place Flipkart. The company was, till recently, selling kitchenware and utensils in a limited way to corporates, institutional buyers and sister steel plants.

The company officials are now fine-tuning the system, and the online sale would commence soon. Initially, SSP would offer 12 products – five variants of dinner sets and casserole, travelling set and cup and saucer. These products – with a price range of Rs.600-Rs.3,750 - would be offered at a 10 per cent discount. Talking to The Hindu, a company official said: "Last year, we sold Rs.10 crore worth of 150-160 tonnes of Salem Stainless through the traditional route. To expand the market share, we conducted sales mela in six major cities and six steel plant sites during October/November 2014.

Enthused by the response, we have now decided to use e-tailer Flipkart. Later, we will expand the offerings by including kitchen equipment, furniture and other canteen accessories."

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tihar jail, educational institutions and Kerala Cooperative Milk Federation are the regular buyers of Salem Stainless. SSP is also planning to set up a strategic business unit for manufacturing kitchenware products. At present, these products are produced through outsourced conversion agents in Hyderabad.

SSP was also planning to widen the usage of stainless steel in areas such as water lines for municipalities and gated communities; plumbing, pipes and tubes for the high-rise buildings; water tanks; blanks for washing machines, sinks, gas stoves and garbage collection bins for municipalities, he said.

Govt rules out banning, limiting iron ore exports



India will not ban or limit exports of iron ore but will adopt "appropriate fiscal measures" to conserve the steel-making raw material, the junior steel and mines minister said recently. Action against illegal mining has sharply cut production of iron ore in the country at a time when international prices have halved, prompting Indian companies such as JSW Steel Ltd to import heavily. Steel companies have regularly urged the government to either ban the export of high-quality iron ore or increase the export duty from the current 30% to discourage overseas sales. But minister Vishnu Deo Sai ruled out any ban on overseas sales from what used to be the third largest iron ore exporter. "The government has decided that although conservation of iron ore resources is of paramount importance, the same may not be achieved by banning or capping export of iron ore but by taking recourse to appropriate fiscal measures," Sai said in a statement.