

Arun Jaitley Inaugurates Conference with Secondary Steel Producers



The maiden conference of secondary steel makers from across India, along with representatives of the government, was organized at Vigyan Bhawan by the Ministry of Steel, in collaboration with Joint Plant Committee and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). Union Minister of Finance, Corporate Affairs and Information and Broadcasting, Shri Arun Jaitley presided the inaugural session as the Chief Guest. Shri Tomar, Minister of State of Steel & Mines Shri Vishnu Deo Sai and Secretary (Steel) Shri Rakesh Singh and other senior dignitaries were also present on this occasion.

Lauding the Ministry's initiative to have an interaction with secondary steel producers with a problem-solving approach, Shri Jaitley exuded enthusiasm with the growth prospect of steel in the country. "Steel is integrated with the quality of life," he reiterated, saying that it was 'no rocket science' to predict that the steel sector is bound to grow. Outlining the challenges faced by Indian steelmakers owing to large scale dumping and uncertainty in the global market, Shri Jaitley urged Indian steel producers to overcome such 'transient challenges' by strengthening their own competitiveness.

"Where economies exist on strong and solid foundation, it is not very challenging to withstand transient changes," he averred. Expressing concern over the spiral effect of stress in steel sector, which upsets the financial performance of banks, in turn affecting the loan available to other sectors, Shri Jaitley said that steel makers must address the root-cause and improve their competitiveness, and not resort to band-aid approach.

The Finance Minister congratulated Shri Tomar and Ministry of Mines, by stating the MMDR Amendment Act 2015 was a "landmark initiative in amending the law." He exhorted all participants to make use of business friendly policy of the current government and

expressed faith in the able leadership of Shri Tomar.

Shri Tomar underlined the employment generating and growth causing potential of the steel industry, and expressed that the vision to take Indian steel production from the present level of 110 MT to 300 MT cannot be realised without the active and equal participation of secondary steel makers, along with major steel producing companies.

"The recent visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister to steel plants in Burnpur and Rourkela, his presence at the signing of MoUs in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand for setting up of integrated steel plants through Special Purpose Vehicle route, and the presence of Finance Minister in All-India conference for secondary steel makers validate that this government is whole-heartedly committed to the 'Make in India' initiative," Shri Tomar said. He assured government's support to secondary steel makers, and encouraged participants to convey their concerns with clarity, find ways and means to increase production, generate employment opportunities and find sustainable solutions.

Minister of State Shri Vishnu Deo Sai reiterated that secondary steel producers will play an important role in achieving the 300 MT vision of the government of India. Secretary Shri Rakesh Singh pointed out that India offers immense scope for both primary and secondary producers of steel, as the country is growing at an appreciable rate, the availability of raw materials have been eased through the new MMDR law and access to power & logistics have improved over time.

Secondary steel producers in India together produce 55% of steel in the country through different technologies. While they cater to a wide geographical area at low capital cost, the sector is fraught with challenges in quality, environmental conformance, old technology, operational efficiency, under presence in flat steel segment etc.