

## Steel Secretary inaugurates solar plant at RINL



**S**teel Secretary Ms Aruna Sharma inaugurated a solar plant at the Visakhapatnam steel plant. The 5 MW solar plant was installed by RINL at an investment of INR 33 crore.

With this initiative, RINL joined other major corporates in harnessing solar energy through a Ground Waste Solar Power Plant in its premises. Ms Sharma said that the role of renewable energy has been assuming increasing significance in recent times with the growing concern for the country's energy security.

## Tata Steel, Thyssenkrupp looking at reducing Port Talbot's Capacity - Report



**T**ata Steel and Thyssenkrupp are looking at reducing the size of Britain's largest steel plant in Port Talbot, Wales, industry sources said, as the two firms press ahead with plans to merge their European steel operations and deal with the overcapacity afflicting the industry.

The move could see one of Port Talbot's two blast furnaces shut, halving the plant's capacity. Up to 4,000 people are employed at the site. An industry source close to Thyssenkrupp's board said the German group expected the struggling plant to be downsized in the event of a merger, without specifying by how much.

Two senior officials from the Community labour union said Tata Sons have pledged to keep the two blast furnaces at Port Talbot

running for three years, at which point one of them is due to close in the absence of further investment.

"Three years is nowhere near enough. Our line in the sand has always been keeping two blast furnaces running (long term). We want

guarantees and besides, they've given us guarantees before that haven't materialised," said a union source.

Indian-owned Tata Steel, which employs 11,000 people in Britain, said it could not comment on speculation over its merger plans, while Thyssenkrupp declined to comment.

"The most important thing for us is that by a consolidation and by the underlying plan we can address the issues of overcapacity," Thyssenkrupp's chief financial officer Guido Kerkhoff said in reference to the merger.

The fate of the Port Talbot plant has been up in the air since Tata Steel said in March it planned to sell all of its loss-making British assets. In July, however, it announced it was in talks with ThyssenKrupp about creating a

## SAIL expects higher sales on rising output



**S**teel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) is hopeful of improving its sales to 14 million tonne this year, up around 10% over last year, on the back of higher productions.

Mr. PK Singh chairman of the steel major said the company is also planning to double its exports this year and aiming to take it to 10 percent of overall production in coming years. He said that "Our sales used to be around 12-13 million tonne. This year, we will cross 14 million tonne of sales."

He added that the company will see a quantum jump in production as well as in sales in subsequent years.

joint venture for its European operations.

Port Talbot was losing 1 million pounds a day in the financial year which ended in March but has been making an operating profit since then, thanks to a weaker pound, higher steel prices and cost cutting. Separately, the union chiefs said that Tata Steel planned to start formal talks "within weeks" about closing its costly defined benefit UK pension scheme to future accruals. The Thyssenkrupp merger plan hinges on Tata striking a deal with the British government to separate itself from the deficit-laden pension scheme.

The union is seeking assurances on the long-term future of Port Talbot and is opposed to the pension scheme being spun off due to concerns that it would be taken over by the Pension Protection Fund (PPF), which would cut current employees' pension benefits.

Tata and the UK government are looking at the PPF option, and pensions experts say closing the scheme to future accruals is a necessary first step to achieving that end and plugging the scheme's deficit.