

Indian Steel Industry performs well in 2016 : Minister



Steel Minister Chaudhary Birender Singh's said that in financial year 2016-17, Indian Steel industry has performed exceedingly well. We doubled our exports of steel products. In fact, India became a net exporter of steel after a gap of three years. We reduced our steel imports by 1/3rd and increased production of crude steel by around 9 percent during the last financial year, and consumption of steel in India increased by 3 %.

In his inaugural Speech at the India Steel 2017 International Conference and Exhibition in Mumbai, he said that the Reverse Buyer-Seller Meet being held during the event is first-of-its-kind exclusive meet for steel sector. This is a welcome initiative and I compliment Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Steel, FICCI and all those involved in this initiative. It will prove to be a landmark step for taking Indian steel to far corners of the world.

He also commended the organising team for implementing his suggestion of having a session for women in steel sector. Constituting half the population, women are the joint decision makers in purchase decisions for home. Women can be perfect brand ambassadors for steel, as also

influencers and opinion makers. He hoped that these two will become regular features in forthcoming events.

Singh said in terms of tonnes produced, steel is 15 times larger than other metal industries. In terms of importance, steel is second only to oil as an essential segment for economic development. It is a matter of pride that all of us are a part of such a huge and important sector of the economy.

"As we all know, the past three years have been quite challenging for the steel industry. Government of India intervened strategically at regular intervals to provide policy and regulatory support as and when required. MIP, Safeguard duties, anti-dumping duties, construction & infrastructure investment etc. were brought in to provide a level playing field." said Singh.

Singh mentioned that he took charge of the Ministry of Steel in July 2016, and since then have been focussing on five thrust areas, which can be summed up as PRIDE. These were: Production and productivity increase, research & development, Indian-made steel concept, demand boost for steel, and excellence in quality and efficiency "The focussed strategy of PRIDE has given desired

results. India has emerged as a leading country among the steel producing nations. It is heartening to note that we are among the few countries to have a positive demand growth for steel," said Singh. He hoped that 2017-18 will also be a record-breaking year, with India leading the growth trend among major steel producing countries.

"I want the industry to give as much growth as in last financial year and in fact one percent more. Let our mission for 2017-18 be plus one percent growth rate.

"We increased exports by 102%, let us at least increase exports by 103 % this year. We increased steel production by 9 %, let us increase production by at least 10%, and we reduced imports by 36%, let us see if we can further reduce imports by 37 %," he said.

Singh commented that steel consumption increased by 3%, let us ensure that it increases by 4%. With Rs. 4 lakh crore of investments planned in infrastructure sector, there is a huge opportunity for increasing consumption. World Steel Association has projected Indian steel demand to grow by 5.7 % in 2017, while globally steel demand has been projected to grow by 0.5 % in 2017. So demand in India will grow at 10 times the world levels in 2017.

Speaking on Draft National Steel Policy 2017 in public domain, he said he was happy to see that we have received very good suggestions and ideas. The draft National Steel Policy, which is scheduled to be released soon, will give concrete shape to the vision and plans for the steel industry.

Singh said that another breakthrough that we have achieved is that Railways have agreed to our demand for allowing slurry pipeline across railway lines. This will bring down cost of transportation. We need to have more slurry pipelines as logistics costs account for around 15 % of the total cost of steel India.

He suggested that primary and secondary steel producers must come together to establish a "Big-data Analytics & Application Centre for Steel". The objective should be to pool resources and information available with all steel companies and analyse the collated data.

Steelworld was the media partner of India Steel 2017.