

State govt taking steps to solve steel producers' problems

PBD BUREAU/PTI

BHUBANESWAR, DEC 9

TO meet the demand of steel producers, State government today said it is taking steps for extension of lease validity of more mines, besides preparing for more iron ore blocks to put up for auction.

"Validity of lease period has already been extended in case of 82 mining leases including 55 iron ore producing leases," state Steel and Mines Minister Prafulla Kumar Mallik said while inaugurating Assocham India Steel Summit here.

"We are taking expeditious steps for considering other cases for extension of lease validity as per legal provisions," he said.

The state government is also taking steps to prepare three more iron ore blocks to put up for auction during the current year and seven to eight more iron ore



blocks to auction in 2017-18, the minister said.

Further, the government has also introduced various policies on supply of iron ore in more of pre-emption and long term linkage to encourage both small and large players in the steel sector by meeting their demand, he said.

Describing coaking coal as another area of concern for steel industry, Mallik said coking coal reserves in India have high ash content and are thus not fully suitable for making iron. "Efforts should be made to

use indigenous wash coal to bring down cost of production," he said.

Issues relating to logistics and infrastructure support must be addressed through mechanisation of mining and railway network in mines area, Mallik said.

Concerned over poor per-capita steel consumption in rural sector, Mallik said there was a need to thrust upon infrastructure and automobile sectors.

"Rise in demand from these sectors will help in augmentation of steel pro-

duction which will help in capacity utilisation of existing facilities and bring down cost of production," he said.

Secretary General of Assocham, DS Rawat said there was a need to ensure availability of raw material at a competitive price to realise the advantage of Indian steel sector.

"Logistics costs remain the concern for transporting raw material and finished products. Accordingly, there is a need to develop required logistics support for transportation at a reduced cost," said Rawat.

Posco plant hope still persists

SUBHASHISH MOHANTY

Bhubaneswar, Dec. 9: The state government continues to be hopeful that the South Korean steel giant Posco will set up its the eight-million-tonne plant in Paradip.

Steel and mines minister Prafulla Mallick today told the Assembly: "The Posco authority has not yet informed the government about its decision to withdraw from the project. We have not even thought of handing over the land already acquired for the Posco project in Jagatsinghpur district to any other industrial house."

The company had sought 2,700 acres for the project. "Idco has handed over 1,880.110 acres, and the process is on to hand it over the remaining land," he said.

The steel major lost its interest in the project after the Centre had brought in the new mining policy, under which mines would be allocated through auctions and not be allocated.

When Posco entered into an MoU with the state government in June 2005, the state had a say in mine allocation although the Centre used to formally allocate mines to the industries.

Though the state government had initially allocated the Khandadhar mines to Posco, the allocation got embroiled in the legal dispute. With change in the Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation Act, 1957, being changed in 2015, the steel major developed cold feet.

In a related development,

the minister, attending the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India's steel summit held here, said the state was taking steps to extend the lease validity of more mines according to legal provisions.

Mallick said: "The validity of lease period has already been extended in case of 82 mining cases, including 55 iron ore producing leases, according to the amended provisions of sections 8A (5) and 8A (6) of the act," said Mallick.

The state is worried about loss of revenue from the mining sector and wants more mines to start operating with lease renewal. While in 2013-14, the state had targeted to collect revenue of Rs 6,600 crore, it managed to mop up Rs 5,518.80 crore. In 2014-15, it had

collected Rs 5,310 crore and fell short of the target of Rs 6,346.98 crore. In 2015-16, the state had aimed to collect Rs 6,626 crore, but collected only Rs 5,797.80 crore.

The minister also said coking coal reserves available in the country had high ash content and were thus not fully suitable for making iron. "Efforts should be made to use indigenous wash coal to bring down the costs of production as well as research and development support without compromising with quality," he said.

Highlighting the poor per capita steel consumption in the rural sector, Mallick said there was a need to thrust upon infrastructure and automobile sectors that were amid largest consumers of steel.

"Rise in demand from these sectors will help in augmentation of steel production which will help in capacity utilisation of the existing facilities and bring down the production cost," he said.

The minister also said efforts should be made to encourage small and medium scale steel manufacturing in India. Mallick said training should be imparted to the rural populace to work in the steel sector, besides a referral and development initiative should be undertaken to provide machinery in these areas at affordable costs. "There is a need to ensure availability of raw material at a competitive price to realise the advantage of Indian steel sector," said D.S. Rawat, secretary general, Assocham.

Lease extension of more mines on cards: Min

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Government of Odisha is taking expeditious steps for extension of lease validity of more mines as per legal provisions, said Steel and Mines Minister Prafulla Kumar Mallik at an Assocham event held here on Friday.

The validity period has already been extended in case of 82 mining leases, including 55 iron ore producing leases, as per the amended provisions of Section 8A (5) and 8A (6) of Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Act, 1957, said Mallik while inaugurating an Assocham India Steel Summit.

He said that coking coal reserves available in India have high ash content and are thus not fully suitable for making

iron. "Efforts should be made to use indigenous wash coal to bring down cost of production," he said.

The Minister also said that focus should be made to maximise use of iron ore fines by enriching iron concentration through ore beneficiation and utilisation of iron ore in form of pellets which will not only bring down cost of steel but also promote a friendly environment.

He added that issues pertaining to logistics and infrastructure support must be addressed through mechanisation of mining and railway network in mines area. "This will help in handling bulk quantity of iron ore raw materials and hence, reduce transportation costs," he said.

Highlighting the poor per-

capita steel consumption in rural sector, Mallik said there is a need to thrust upon infrastructure and automobile sectors that are amid largest consumers of steel.

"Rise in demand from these sectors will help in augmentation of steel production which will help in capacity utilisation of existing facilities and bring down cost of production," he said.

The Minister also said that efforts should be made to encourage small and medium scale steel manufacturing in India. "Manufacture of household items like utensils and furniture in villages would lead to reduction in prices and lead to greater acceptability."

He said that there is a need to bolster rural infrastructure

to encourage village level entrepreneurs to take up such businesses by providing them easy credit through microfinance schemes.

Mallik said that training should be imparted to rural populace to work in steel sector, besides a R&D initiative should be undertaken to provide machinery in these areas at affordable costs.

"There is a need to ensure availability of raw material at a competitive price to realise the advantage of Indian steel sector," said Assocham secretary general DS Rawat.

"Logistic costs remain the concern for transporting raw material and finished products, accordingly there is a need to develop required logistics support for transportation at a reduced cost," said Rawat.

ASSOCHAM lists Wisdomjobs.com in the India Top SME 50 Index

Bhubaneswar: Wisdomjobs.com, one of India's leading end-to-end online recruitment and career solutions portals, today announced that it has been declared as one of the top 50 SMEs in India, 2016, by 'ASSOCHAM India'. ASSOCHAM is a non-profit organization that combines the entrepreneurial spirit and business acumen of owners with management skills and expertise of professionals to set itself apart as a Chamber with a difference. Wisdomjobs.com is India's 1st job portal with an integrated online skill testing & rating system with a database of over 30 million pro-



files and 3,500 clients.

The Award was presented to Mr. Ajay Kolla, Founder and CEO of Wisdomjobs.com by Mr. Arun Jain, Senior Managing Committee Member, ASSOCHAM. The Award Ceremony witnessed the presence of several eminent

dignitaries including Mr. Haribhai Parathibhai Chaudhary, Minister of State for MSME, Government of India; Mr. U.K. Joshi, Director, ASSOCHAM; Mr. S.C. Aggarwal, Chairman, Micro Finance Council, ASSOCHAM and Mr. S.N.

Tripathi, IAS, Additional Secretary & Development Commissioner (MSME), Ministry of MSME, Government of India, among others.

Wisdomjobs.com was chosen as one of the top 50 SMEs in the country out of more than 1,000 nominations that ASSOCHAM received from all across the Nation.

Upon receiving this prestigious recognition, Mr. Ajay Kolla, Founder & CEO of Wisdomjobs.com said, "We have always thrived at making Wisdomjobs.com one of the best players in the industry and achieving this recognition reflects our steadfast determination in achiev-

