

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) Open market prices of iron and steel are governed by demand and supply conditions. There has been some increase in the open market prices of several iron and steel items in some areas. There could be various factors for this including the restricted availability of imported materials, e.g. pig iron, steel melting scrap, etc.

There is no formal control on the prices of steel. However, there has been no recent increase in the prices of iron and steel produced by the main producers and administered by the Joint Plant Committee, except for a small increase from 24/25th July, 1991 following increase in the special excise duty.

(c) Reduction in import duty by 10% each on steel melting scrap

and pig iron in the Union Budget may provide some relief to the industry.

Imports of Iron and Steel

1299. SHRI BHAGEY GOBAR-DHAN: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the value and quantity of iron and steel imported respectively during the last three years;

(b) the reasons for their import; and

(c) the steps being taken to meet the requirement through indigenous production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Quantity and value of imports of iron & steel respectively during the last three years is given below:

Quantity : in million tonnes

Value : in Rs. Crores

Year	Iron (including Pig iron, Sponge iron & Hot Briquetted iron) Saleable Steel			
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
1988-89	0.32	76	1.72	1420
1989-90	0.52	161	1.47	1572
1990-91	0.23	74	1.28	1397

NB : Imports from 4 major Indian Ports only; authoritative figures are not yet available from the Directorate General of commercial Intelligence and Statistics.

(b) Imports are resorted to supplement the indigenous production, to the extent possible within the overall constraints of availability of foreign exchange.

(c) Indigenous production of iron and steel is sought to be increased through inter-alia, the following measures:

Modernisation of steel plants and improved maintenance of plant and equipment for achieving increased productivity.

Monitoring of supply of inputs, particularly coal and power, to the steel plants for ensuring uninterrupted production.

Increase in captive power generation.

Adoption of better technological and manpower discipline in SAIL plants.

Delicensing of the steel sector, with certain conditions where substantial foreign exchange is involved, so as to allow establishment of new plants in the private sector.

Production of Telecommunication Equipments

1300. SHRI BHAGEY GOBARDHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of production of telecommunication equipments within the country during 1990-91;

(b) the scope for export of such equipments; and

(c) whether equipments produced in the country are competitive in the international market quality-wise and price-wise?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) The details of production of major telecom equipment in the country during 1990-91 is given below:—

<i>Type of Equipment</i>	<i>Production during 1990-91</i>	
	<i>Qty.</i>	<i>Value (Rs. in Crores)</i>
1. Telecom Switching equipment	12.5 lakh lines	825
2. Telecom Transmission equipment	4450 terminals	373
3. Telephone Instruments	18.80 lakh numbers	171

(b) and (c) The scope for export of telecom equipment like telephone instruments appear to be promising, with further improvements in quality and price-competitiveness.

Impact of Delayed Monsoon on Agriculture

1301. SHRI BHAGEY GOBARDHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the impact of the delayed monsoon on the kharif crops, especially paddy and other important cereals;

(b) the steps taken to ensure that agriculturists get the necessary inputs in areas where delayed monsoon has affected crops;

(c) whether the monsoon this year is going to be normal; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) It is early to assess the overall impact of the delayed monsoon on the kharif crops as planting is still going on. However, due to the late arrival of monsoon in north-west India and Gujarat and also inadequate rains in some parts of the country the planting of kharif crops especially that of paddy has been delayed. The delay in planting of the kharif crops may affect the production.

(b) As advised by the Union Ministry of Agriculture the Contingency Crops Plans have been prepared and are being implemented by the States in affected areas. Arrangements are also being made by the State for the supply of planting material of alternative crops & Crop varieties to the farmers and for the supply of diesel and power for irrigation.