

Rural India holds key to enhancing per-capita steel usage: Pradhan

By TIOL News Service

EW DELHI, OCT 20, 2620: nion Minister for Steel and Petroleum & Natural Gas, Mr Dharmendra Pradhan, addressed a webinar on Â

TAtmanironar Bharat: Foste ng steel usage in Rural economy -Agriculture | Rural Development | Animal Husbandry and Dairying | Food ocessing A organized by Ministry of Steel in association with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) here today and shared his views on the le of India's steel sector in the growth and prosperity of our villages and in making our rural economy strong and self-reliant. Mr. Narendra Tomar Minister of Pural Development, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Panchayati Raj and Food Processing Industries also graced

the occasion as the Guest of Honour. Mr. Faggan Singh Kulaste, Minister of State for Steel delivered the special address at the event. Speaking on the occasion as the Chief Guest Mr. Pradhan stated that Â there are immense opportunities in the rural sector to foster steel demand. He said, â€el am glad to see stakeholders from steel, agriculture, rural development, animal husbandry and dairy coming together for this webinarâ€e. The minister informed that government has started disbursing Rs. 10,000 cr Agriculture Infrastructure Fund with many new sectors being included in the priority sector. â€eeWe are developing 5000 Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) plants across the country. Reserve Bank of India has recently included CBG in the priority sector. We are working on to make ethanol from rice. The mission to ensure housing for all, investments in rural roads, railway infra augmentation and impetus to agriculture will all create greater steel demand. Enhancing per-capita steel consumption is in the interest of all,â€e he said. Mr Pradhan mentioned that rural India holds key to enhancing per-capital steel usage in the country. It will bring greater strength to society, ensure rural development and create jobs.

In his address, Mr. Narendra Singh Tomar said that the path to realizing the clarion call of Aatmanirbhar Bharat given by Hon'ble Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi goes through Aatmanirbhar villages. He mentioned that Steel as a strength giving material has to play an important role in making our villages strong and self-reliant. Mr. Tomar said that the shift in rural demand during the last few years has been encouraging. He said that ability of rural consumers spending has improved by policy support, development efforts, farm loan waivers, higher minimum support prices, Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), and a rural development-focused budgetary process. "T here are immense opportunities available in rural sector covering rural infrastructure development projects, food processing, rural housing, food storage, agriculture equipment manufacturing etc. to foster steel usage. Rising rural economy is opening up new opportunities for greater steel usage. Key Government missions like PM Awas Yojana, Jal Jeevan Mission, MSP are improving lives and strengthening rural economy also involve greater steel usage―. He stated that Growth in other areas like energy, dairying, fisheries, food processing, agri-equipments etc. will also have a positive bearing on the steel consumption in rural areas. He also suggested formation of a working group to look into the requirement of steel in the rural sector and map it to the domestic steel production. This will enable better co-ordination, planned approach to co-creating framework for greater use of domestic steel in rural areas. Mr. Tomar expressed hope that the discussions today will provide useful insights about key growth drivers, issues, challenges and opportunities for fostering domestic steel usage in the rural sector.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Faggan Singh Kulaste said that our Government under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister. has taken several initiatives to transform the rural landscape: webinar on †Atmanirbhar Bharat: Fostering Steel Usage in Rural Economy' has been organized to tap the vast potential available for Iron and Steel sector in rural economy which is growing at a much faster rate. He said that the webinar will provide a much needed and effective platform to the industry and stakeholders to deliberate upon future need of steel in these sectors because of government focus on rural economy. He highlighted that strong rural liquidity sustained by higher minimum support price (MSP) for crops and supporting prices of agricultural produce; enhanced employment opportunities under National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) and other Government schemes; adequate credit availability; and replacement demand all are helping to improve Rural economy and consequently increasing steel demand from rural sector.

Captains of Steel industry, Senior officials of the Ministries of Steel, Rural Development, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Panchayati Raj and Food Processing Industries and Fisheries and senior officials of A State Governments of UP, Bihar, Karnataka and Maharashtra and CII participated in the webinar.