GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
(DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE)

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 45
ANSWERED ON 02/02/2024

SURGE IN COPPER IMPORT BILL

45.   SHRI NARANBHAI J. RATHWA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE & INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a)   the details of extent to which Indian industry and "Ease of Doing" journey of Government has been impacted by copper imports in the recent past;
(b)   the reasons for the surge in the copper import bill and measures being implemented to reverse this trend for the betterment of the country's economy; and
(c)   the plans for amicable solution for restoring the idle capacity of Sterlite Copper plant at Tuticorin which contributed to 40 per cent of copper requirements, employment generation, and its potential impact on the economy, while ensuring adherence to environmental norms?

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
(SMT. ANUPRIYA PATEL)

(a) to (c)   The extent to which Indian industry and the ease of doing business have been impacted by copper imports in the recent past is multifaceted and influenced by various factors including industry dynamics, regulatory environment, government policies, supply chain resilience, etc.

The surge in imports of copper into India in the last two years is attributed to increased demand in copper due to rapid economic growth, infrastructure development, and the ongoing transition to green energy e.g. renewable energy and electric vehicles. The increased demand also reflects post pandemic recovery in economy.

Government has taken various steps to boost domestic availability of copper mineral and reduce its imports. Under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2023, the exploration of critical minerals including copper is encouraged by the Government so as to bring new technology, expertise and investment in mining sector.

The matter of closure of Sterlite Copper plant at Tuticorin is presently sub-judice in Hon'ble Supreme Court.

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