



- Arvind Mayaram, Economic Affairs Secretary



Hindustan Zinc

Vedanta Group is Open to All Routes for Buying Remaining Stakes in Hindustan Zinc, BALCO

Vedanta group is open to any method for acquiring remaining stakes in Hindustan Zinc and Balco and would participate in the auction if the government takes that route to divest its residual stakes in the two erstwhile PSUs, a top official of the mining major has said.

The London-listed mining company is also open to the idea of having another investor with a large number of shares in the two companies, provided that they are acquired through the proposed auction route, Vedanta Chairman Anil Agarwal.

"I am open to the idea. It will be pleasure to have the stock (remaining shares of Hindustan Zinc and Balco) but even if government goes to the stock market and some body is there to acquire the shares, it is fine and that is how it should be," he said.

"If I can acquire 15 per cent or 5 per cent, that's fine, 2 per cent is fine, wholesome is fine," he said, adding that he and his officials have been talking to the government consistently and have held 2-3 meetings in last few months on the matter.

"They are in process but I don't know what the process is. We had two or three meetings and they have conveyed that they are looking seriously to divest these stocks (shares of Hindustan Zinc and Balco),"



BALCO

Agarwal said, adding "Whenever they are ready, we are ready to talk and we are ready to give right price".

Meanwhile, Mines Minister Dinsha Patel said that his department is not in a tearing hurry and would send the requisite report to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on the matter after going through all pros and cons minutely.

"The PMO has asked us to prepare the report. We have to discuss with the Law Department. We already have two rounds of meeting. We will try to send the report to the PMO as soon as possible," Patel said today.

The government has set an ambitious target of raising Rs 55,000 crore in this fiscal through disinvesting shares in public sector companies PSUs. This includes Rs 15,000 crore from residual stake sale in some

companies, including Hindustan Zinc and Balco.

Economic Affairs Secretary Arvind Mayaram had said that there is "no legal impediment" in divesting residual stakes of Hindustan Zinc and Balco.

Attorney General G E Vahanvati, in his opinion given recently, had said that the government can divest its shares in the two firms by selling them in the open market, but the prevailing price should be considered "fair".

Government had sold majority stakes in both, Hindustan Zinc and Bharat Aluminium Company (Balco) to Vedanta's subsidiary Sterlite Industries (now Sesa Sterlite) during 2001-2003. Now it holds residual stake of 29.5 per cent in Hindustan Zinc and 49 per cent in Balco.

○○○