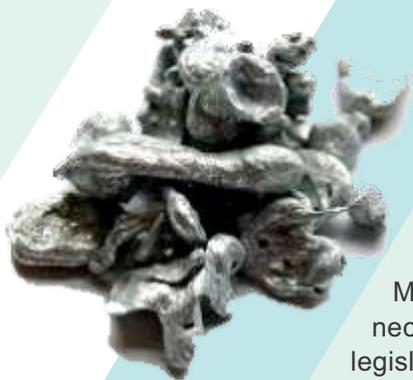


Indian Industry Scenario is Weak



L. Pugazhenty former President of The Indian Institute of Metals (IIM) is also the Executive Director, India Lead Zinc Development Association (ILZDA). Well known as “Mr. Pug” he is a Metallurgical Engg from NIT, Trichy with about 40 years experience in the metals industry and has visited industrial plants in Japan, Korea, Australia, New Zealand as well as EU countries. He was also the Chairman of the Sectional Committee of BIS drafting national standards for the Indian metals industry. Mr. Pug has served as an active member of various committees in the Ministry of Environment & Forests, Central Pollution Control Board, Ministry of Mines, etc., as well as the various Five Year Plan Subgroups on nonferrous metals. Worked very closely with Ministry of Environment & Forests in introducing the necessary environmental norms as well as legislations and creating a greater awareness for an organized collection and environment friendly recycling of used lead batteries in India.

IIM is India’s leading professional body of metallurgical engineers and material scientists. Mr. Pugazhenty received the prestigious International Lead Medal, at the Asian Battery Conference in Macau, China in September 2009, for his contributions to the lead industry. Mr. Pugazhenty was also awarded the Hindustan Zinc Ltd. Gold Medal in 2002 and Platinum Medal in 2014 by The Indian Institute of Metals during the National Metallurgists Day Celebrations for his significant contributions to the Indian metallurgical industry. He also received the Distinguished Alumni Award in 2014 from National Institute of technology, Trichy, Tamil Nadu.

“Unfortunately the current scenario in the Indian Lead & Zinc industry is not very encouraging. Following the decline in commodity prices globally, the metals prices have reached very low levels. In addition, due to the lack of investments in infrastructure as well as the declining sales of automobiles in the recent months, the demand for Lead and Zinc is subdued” says **L. Pugazhenty, Executive Director, ILZDA** in conversation with **Metalworld**. Excerpts



L. PUGAZHENTHY

What are the objectives & activities of India Lead Zinc Development Association (ILZDA)

- India Lead Zinc Development Association (ILZDA) is a 53 year old non-commercial body disseminating technical information on the various end uses of Lead & Zinc through direct contact, seminars, publications, plant visits, specialized reports etc., ILZDA has an active member base of all the stakeholders of the Lead & Zinc industry. ILZDA has three affiliated bodies; Indian Galvanizers Ass, Battery Society of India as well as Die Casting Society of India and serves on the various committees of MoEF, CPCB, Bureau of Indian Standards, Ministry of Mines, Dept. of Science & Technology. Over the years, ILZDA has developed an excellent working relationship with various international bodies, like the International Lead Zinc Study Group, International Lead Assn, International Zinc Assn, International Lead Management Centre etc.,





What is the current scenario of the Indian Lead & Zinc industry?

- Unfortunately the current scenario in the Indian Lead & Zinc industry is not very encouraging. Following the decline in commodity prices globally, the metals prices have reached very low levels.

In addition, due to the lack of investments in infrastructure as well as the declining sales of automobiles in the recent months (Dec 2015 showed some turn around), the demand for Lead and Zinc is subdued. It is high time that the public investments in infrastructure are stepped up soon, so that demand for metals pick up. All the stalled projects, new infrastructural projects etc., should be put back on a sound footing in India. We are all anxiously awaiting for those “ache din”.

How do you see the future prospect of Lead and Zinc industry in the Indian as well as global context?

- Globally, India is a significant player; we have the world’s fourth largest integrated Lead-Zinc smelter, with a capacity of 1.0 million tonnes. The well known Lead & Zinc producer, Hindustan Zinc Ltd. is able to nearly meet all the domestic demand for zinc; in Lead.

India produces a huge quantum of recycled lead from used lead batteries, lead scrap etc., whenever the demand for Zinc had slackened in the country, India used to import sizeable quantities to overseas markets, thus establishing its global presence.

Hindustan Zinc Ltd. continually looks for

new mineral resources, technology induction, new products, innovative market development etc. The lead recycling industry has to display voluntary initiative in adopting sound, eco-friendly technologies, better metal recoveries etc.

The regulatory bodies should also adopt sound monitoring & implementation of the various environmental rules, emission norms.

What are your views on technological up-gradation in lead and zinc sector?



- In the downstream sector, lead is going to make significant inroads into the electric vehicle and renewable energy sectors. 2016 could be the “electrifying year” for India with more e-rickshaws, electric scooters, electric cars etc., India has to create a very large number of charging stations and power should be made available at concessional rates for the consumers.

Solar energy is a segment where massive investments are being made now and this would continue in the coming years as well. Demand for lead from the automobile, inverter and UPS segments would also continue, as in the past.

In the case of Zinc, once steel demand picks up in the infrastructural sectors, the galvanizing activity for corrosion protection would continue. Usage of zinc in die cast builder’s hardware, decorative items, electrical & electrical fittings should see a surge.

What do you expect from the government on the policy front?

- When the metals demand is slackened with depressed prices, the Govt. of India should postpone signing of any Free Trade Agreements with overseas countries/ regions. This will strangle the Indian industry, where large scale investments have been made for capacity creations.

In addition, wherever large scale, cheap imports have taken place, India should impose tariff or non tariff barriers, as a safeguard for the Indian industry.