

## India's aluminium consumption expected to rise to 20 million tonnes : Anil Agarwal

Describing aluminium as the future, Vedanta Resources Chairman Anil Agarwal said that the consumption of the metal will rise to 20 million tonnes (mt) from the present 2 mt.

"India has only 1.5 mt aluminium production and the consumption is about 2 mt. It is going to be 20 mt. everything will move to aluminium. Whether railway, construction, aerospace, automobiles," he said replying to a query on setting up small and medium firms in India's manufacturing sector.

Speaking at a CII event, Agarwal said, "Aluminium as a light metal is being considered as the future of industry and setting up a small and medium enterprise (SME) in the sector will require an investment between 25 crore and 500 crore.

Vedanta Ltd, part of the London-listed metals and mining conglomerate, through its subsidiary Balco produces aluminium in India.

On loan from banks to SMEs, he said "It is a myth. They are looking for SME proposals."

When asked about the downturn in mines and minerals sector both globally and in India, he said "This is the time to build. Who bothers about competition, we love it. Important thing is opportunity. We can grow in a slow market."



When asked about reasons behind India lagging in production of oil and gas, the mining baron said it is just a perception.

"Perception is that we have no oil. We have a habit of staying poor. India has huge reserves of oil. When we acquired Cairn India there was marginal feed. Today, if the government gives support and we go full hog, I can create four times production," he added.

## CECB faults in issuing consent : CAG

A recent report of CAG has pointed out that Chhattisgarh Environment and Conservation Board (CECB) has failed to adequately monitor the process of issuing consent to industries. It was found that 50 industries in Raipur, Durg, Korba and Raigarh districts had started their production before obtaining required consent from the board.

A major discrepancy in air quality monitoring reading was highlighted by CAG where CECB was asked to conduct a third-party monitoring to assess comprehensive environmental pollution index (CEPI) to IIT, Kharagpur during May-December in 2014.

As per the report submitted, main sources of industrial pollution were coal-based power plants, smelter plant of BALCO and coal mines of South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL).

"The report indicated discrepancy in readings between IIT and SECL online monitoring figures. In November 2014, PM10 and NO2 readings taken by IIT were 153.38 and 82.21 while SECL monitoring stations' reading was 73.99 and 2.93 respectively, which was much closer to standard values of CECB. Readings by IIT revealed that SECL had been causing severe environmental pollution and indicated that readings by SECL weren't accurate," the report revealed.

To this, government stated that difference in value obtained depends on location of sampling, period and meteorological conditions, while CAG refuted the claim saying that location and period of sampling by both entities were same.

Citing latest report, Environment Status Report (2004) and WHO report (2015) CAG stated that urban air had been getting polluted due

to rapid industrialization while carbon mono-oxide and hydrocarbon emissions were major contributors to air pollution in Raipur, Raigarh, Korba and Bilaspur.

Stating that compliance with environmental rules was not ensured by industries, CAG reports that during 2012-2014 only 1-2% of trade effluents in Raipur, 7% in Durg, 0-53% in Korba districts were tested whereas no substantive tests were conducted in Raigarh district by CECB. Moreover, no corrective action was either taken by the board over adverse test reports of effluents' ranges.

CAG elaborated that in a test on 355 industries at four industrial belts of Raipur, Durg, Korba and Raigarh, 55 of them started functioning without obtaining consent of which 31 started production six months to five years before consent from CECB while 13 had started 5-10 years without approval.

During the scrutiny, CAG also reported that despite deciding to ban new establishments of sponge iron and expansion of coal-based power plants in above districts till March 2015 due to increasing pollution, CECB had issued consent to 42 new industries in the restricted areas that leads to violating the orders of government.

This not only violated orders of state government but was also contradictory to decision taken by CECB itself, report said.

In its response, state government said that the ban on said plants in restricted areas were not accepted by state government during a meeting, while CAG rejected the claim saying that government had instead instructed CECB to take decision for cancellation of proposals which it didn't.