

## Mines Ministry expects duty hike on primary aluminium products

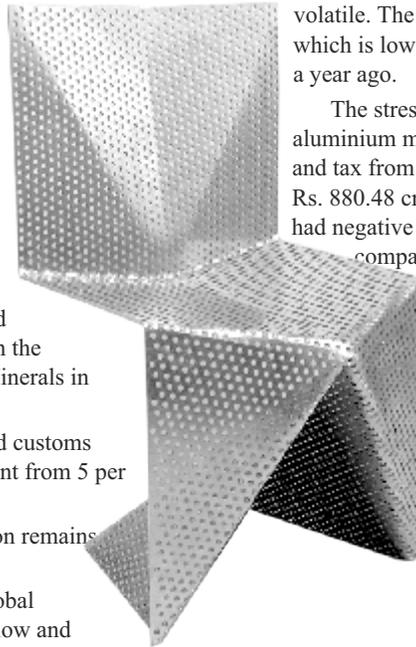
The Ministry of Mines is expected to consider pushing for a hike in the customs duty on primary aluminium products to provide relief to an industry suffering from low prices and under utilised manufacturing capacity.

"We have asked the industry to make a representation to push their case before we take up the matter with the concerned departments of the government. The aluminium manufacturers are expected to meet me as early as possible," said Balvinder Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Mines on the sidelines of the National Conclave on Mines & Minerals in Raipur, Chhattisgarh.

In Budget 2016-17, the government had raised customs duty on primary aluminium products to 7.5 per cent from 5 per cent earlier.

However, the industry-wide capacity utilisation remains low at around 50 per cent.

Prices on the London Metal Exchange, the global benchmark for aluminium prices, have remained low and



volatile. The LME price of aluminium was \$1,652 per tonne which is lower than roughly \$1,700 per tonne on the same date a year ago.

The stress is reflected in the profit and loss accounts of the aluminium manufacturers. Hindalco's earnings before interest and tax from its aluminium business dropped 34.7 per cent to Rs. 880.48 crore in 2015-16. Vedanta Ltd's aluminium business had negative earnings before interest and tax of Rs.113.72 as compared to positive earnings before interest and tax of Rs. 1,867.28.

Despite the challenges, the industry was unsuccessful in proving a case for the levy of a safeguard duty.

Kumar also added that unlike the steel sector which got relief in the form of the minimum import price, similar measures are not on the anvil for the aluminium sector.

"We are not considering any minimum import price or any other kind of duty relief as of now for the aluminium sector," Kumar added.

## Norsk Titanium shakes up Aerospace industry with latest announcement

Norsk Titanium (NTi) has recently made, a major announcement. The Norwegian additive manufacturing company has officially announced New York State's and SUNY Polytechnic University's funding of the initial lot of 20 patented MERKE IV Rapid Plasma Deposition (RPD) machines. NTi pride themselves on the belief that titanium is the metal of the future. This belief, along with years of dedicated research and development, has lead them to become the world's only qualified supplier of aerospace-grade, additive manufacturing, structural titanium 3D manufactured components.

Having developed an innovative additive manufacturing technology that cuts both time and cost of production, NTi has enabled engineers to work at a speed that matches the growing demand of new technologies.

The funding of these innovative machines is a part of an approved state budget allocation meant to ultimately facilitate the company's US subsidiary in building and operating the world's first industrial-scale metal additive manufacturing plant. Located in Plattsburgh, New York, the factory is set to be operational in late 2017.

Chairman of the Board John Anderson, Jr., NTi hails the new investment as part of an unwavering vision, citing researchers' decade-long development of the Rapid Plasma Deposition process, which will cut millions of dollars in cost from the world's premier



commercial and military aircraft in the coming years. The novel RPD process developed by NTi researchers and engineers works by fusing titanium wire with computer-controlled plasma torches protected by an atmosphere of cool argon, which significantly reduces development and production, and eliminates the need for time consuming legacy forged parts. This groundbreaking process has caught the attention of many top tier aerospace manufacturers and suppliers who have already entered into numerous contracts with NTi. "The new technology and partnership represents a new phase on-demand, near-net-shape manufacturing that sets a new benchmark of efficiency and customer responsiveness," according to NTi President & CEO Warren M. Boley.