



## US, Canada discussion remains inconclusive

The United States and Canadian heads of government talks on the subject of relief for Section 232 aluminium and steel tariffs last week remained inconclusive, according to media reports.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's office said that the P.M. spoke to U.S. President Donald Trump, though the official release did not specify whether any progress on the subject had been made.

"The Prime Minister raised the issue of steel and aluminum tariffs and expressed the need for the removal of tariffs," read the statement.

Though the Canadian government seeks free and clear access to U.S. markets for the dominion's smelters, Trump Administration officials continue to push for quotas as a replacement for tariffs.

It also saw U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue informing the media that he is lobbying President Trump to accede to the imposition of tariff rate quotas for the steel industry as a replacement for the Section 232



tariffs on imports from both Canada and Mexico.

The entire debate continues before the backdrop of negotiations over ratification of the newly-negotiated U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement. Transport Minister Marc Garneau has already gone on record as stating that Canadian assent to the accord may well hinge on the end to restrictions on aluminium and steel imports.

Reports last week indicated a possible light at the end of the tunnel on the issue of aluminium and steel tariffs, but an unnamed insider who spoke to Canadian media challenged that assertion.

"There are no talks planned on this right now," the insider source was quoted as saying to The Globe And Mail late last week. Ultimately the decision rests with President Trump himself, which, according to another Canadian official, makes it difficult to forecast an outcome.

"We're starting to see that there's an understanding in the United States, that this is something that is a really difficult sticking point with Canada," explained the source. ■

## Hindalco scouting for copper mines



Hindalco is scouting for copper mines abroad for backward integration of its copper business with concentrates.

In a press report, Satish Pai, Managing Director said that 'We won't run them, but we may take an equity interest, and based on that equity interest we will get our

share of production."

The company, a subsidiary of Aditya Birla Group, has 10-year term import contracts for copper concentrates that fulfil 80-90% of its requirement but these are more expensive. It plans to acquire stake in a mine as part of the next phase of expansion of its copper business.

Copper concentrates are raw material used for copper smelting; and captive sources for the material will help the company reduce dependence on the international market.

The company had two copper mines in Australia that were run by a subsidiary called Aditya Birla

Minerals, but these were sold off two years ago. For its next phase of copper expansion, Hindalco may choose US or Canada as its preferred destination.

Pai said that "We prefer the more developed places because it's easier to manage - that will be US, Canada."

Other countries where copper is found are Peru, Chile, Australia, Indonesia and Africa.

Pai further said the company, via its parent's in-house mining arm, Essel Mining, is also looking at lithium possibilities in India since lithium is one of the most common alloys used with aluminium. ■