



SUSHILL KHAITAN
Chairman-cum-Managing Director
Meta Copper & Alloys Ltd.

“We are committed to understand customer requirements and deliver products in totality”

Meta Copper and Alloys Limited is a modern Mill manufacturing Copper And Copper Alloy (Brass) rolled flat products. Located at the Port town of Mormugao on the Western Coast of India, Meta is effectively connected to all the major Seaports in the World. As an Export Oriented Unit, Meta enjoys a tax-free working environment, which adds to its competitive advantage. Accredited with ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certifications, META currently serve customers from over 37 countries around the world. Meta is focused on creating and delivering sustainable competitive advantage to its customers. “This is achieved through our five point Quality Excellence Program and is embodied in MetaStar – the corporate logo; to understand customer's requirements in its entirety, to be cost effective, to deliver according to customer's ability to receive, to invest in man and machines consistently and to add exceptional overall value to society,” says Sushill Khaitan, Chairman-cum-Managing Director, in an interview to Balakrishnan Nair. Excerpts:

The domestic demand for various goods is rising as the robust economic growth increases disposable incomes, aspirations and affordability, which, in turn, is benefiting the manufacturing sector. How do you find the market outlook for copper-related products in India and across the world?

- Growing disposable incomes and aspirations increase demand for housing, automobiles, white goods and appliances, all of which consume copper and copper based alloys. The outlook for copper related products in India and across the world is bright which is evident from the fact that prices of base metal i.e. copper has been increasing. We see demand for copper far is in excess of supply. Needless to say that there would be a point in time when alternative would be explored by market players but that would also necessitate correction in prices which would be good for all.

What is the current scenario of copper industry in India and around the

globe with respect to shooting prices of copper in the international market?

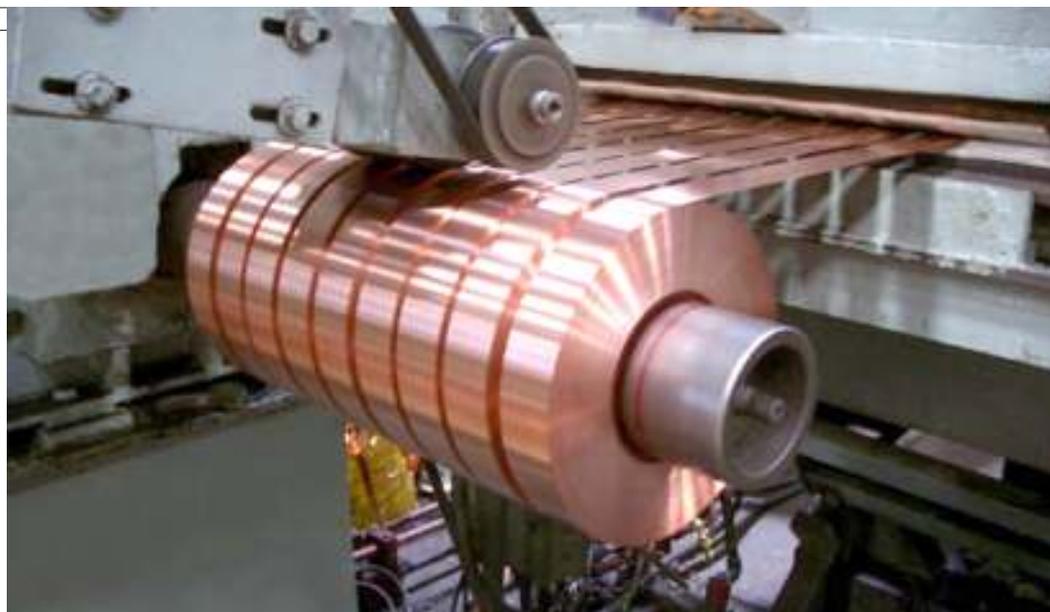
Over a period of last five years i.e. post-2005 customers have seen huge volatility in prices of copper and as a result have reconciled to the fact that they have to live with it. The challenge before all users is how to mitigate this risk of volatility in business working. Various options such as hedging, back to back order booking etc. are being worked out. Avenues like MCX and NCDEX have provided much needed help. Easing of norms by the RBI on hedging in overseas market like LME has also helped the industry. Internationally, the demand has remained relatively subdued in last two years on account of not so favorable condition in USA and Europe but demand in defence sector has been growing which consumes sizable amount of copper and copper related products.

What have been technological advances in the company and the industry with respect to copper-related products?

- Meta Copper & Alloys has gone in for production of copper foil upto 40 microns. Moreover, it has entered into a technical joint venture with a leading USA defence company for manufacture of cups for Ammunition production. For better surface control and detecting sub-surface defects, we have installed the world renowned Cognex surface online inspection system. As far as industry is concerned capacities have come up in conform extrusion to meet the growing rural demand for consumer goods. Some of the closed plants have reopened.

Can you brief about the present R&D developments in the company?

- R&D has been constant endeavour for the company. Meta Copper & Alloys has worked immensely on copper foil and has developed products upto 40 micron thickness and new alloys such as Tellerium Copper. It has obtained TS certification for its products which has placed us much ahead of other players in the industry in global arena. Through



constant focus on improvements, Meta has been able to offer the largest coil weights in the Indian industry which mean higher productivity and reduced machine stoppages for its customers.

What the financial highlights and targets for the next year? What percent does copper and brass individually contribute to your total revenue?

- Meta Copper & Alloys has notched turnover in excess of Rs 300 crore in current fiscal. The copper comprises close to 30 percent of the company sales and rest is brass.

What are the plans of the company with respect to your existing EOU located at Mormugao?

Meta realizes the fact that domestic demand for copper and copper related product is rising and hence cannot afford to neglect the market. Moreover, domestic market is always profitable compared to export. With no benefit forthcoming for secondary industry, Meta plans to convert its status from 100 percent EOU to become a domestic unit. This does not mean that Meta will not concentrate on export market but major emphasize would be on gaining larger shares in growing market.

Are there any plans for expansion in terms of capacity building or setting up Greenfield plant?

- Since Meta has not yet used its plant to full capacity due to paucity of funds on account of rising base metal prices but would definitely look at expanding its product portfolio. Setting-up of Greenfield plant in near

future is not in agenda but there could be possibility of acquiring or setting up distribution centers.

META is currently serving customers from over 37 countries around the world. Can you tell about the company's export activities?

- Export has been major thrust area for the company since beginning but penetration in export market has remained very challenging. Coupled with this rising raw material prices have created some resistance although overseas market has been very large compared to India. We have been able to successfully create market for our products in overseas market due to sheer consistency in quality and have become an approved vendor for many large companies.

Can you throw light on company's CSR activities?

- Meta has been very pro active in CSR activities. We hold medical camps and provide free medicines to nearby villagers. Provide round the clock ambulance services in handling trauma cases.

What is your vision for the company? Where would you like Meta Copper to be five years down the line?

- I would like to see Meta to continue to be recognized as dependable vendor and maintain consistency in quality. Over period of time, emerge as product-based company than as commodity-based company and achieve 100 percent capacity and engage into High Performance Alloys as natural progression. □□□