Bid for Afghan asset
NEW DELHI, 22 JULY: A consortium of six public and private companies, led by steel major SAIL, will bid for developing a copper deposit in war-torn Afghanistan this week. Hindustan Copper, National Aluminium Company, Jindal Steel and Power, Monnet Ispat and Energy and MECL are the other members of the consortium. “As on date, we are bidding for one copper deposit only. This will be submitted in next two-three days, and depending upon the response, we will decide on bidding for other deposits also,” Hindustan Copper’s chairman Shakeel Ahmed said. pti
एनएमडीसी पर कम मूल्य पर लोह अयस्क का निर्यात करने का आरोप

नई दिल्ली, 22 जुलाई (भाषा)। इस्पत बनाने वाली कंपनियों ने आयोजन लगाया है कि देश की सबसे बड़ी लोह अयस्क उत्पादक एनएमडीसी घरेलू कंपनियों से अयस्क के लिए क्लास मूल्य लेती है जबकि उसका निर्यात कम दर पर कर रहा है। कंपनियाँ का कहना है कि सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र को कंपनियों की वृद्धि और प्रशंसा में विसंगति से इस्पत आयात बढ़ाएगा।

इस्पत उद्योगों ने कहा कि वैश्विक रस्ते पर अयस्क की कोमतियाँ पिछले साल जुलाई के 177 डालर प्रति टन से फिर हुई तिलावर 133 डालर तन पर आ गई है लेकिन एनएमडीसी के अयस्क की मांग विसंगति के कारण घरेलू जीवनमंत्रियों की पड़ताल रही है। भारतीय आयुक्त मैनुअल एससी एसएए (एसआईएमए) के कार्यालय निदेशक धीरेंद्र कुलाने का कहना, अंतरराष्ट्रीय संपर्क पर लोह अयस्क की कमता में निर्वाह की प्रमुखता है जिसने मेलो कार्यालय में एनएमडीसी की मांग बढ़ा रही है।

सरकार प्रतिनिधित्वाधीन इस्पत संस्थान जीवनाग्रेशन कोषाधिकारियों तथा अन्य अध्यक्षों से संवाद दिया गया था। इससे रिलेक्शन आयात बढ़ रहा है जिससे कंपनियों की समस्या बढ़ रही है। इसी प्रकार का चिकित्सा एसएन, शेल्वर नैयरस्टेटल ने भी जताया। एसएन में, इस आयोजन को सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र को कंपनियों ने इकट्ठा किया है।

एनएमडीसी के कार्यालय चेयरमैन सुरेश भर्मण ने कहा, कृतियों का निर्धारण नीति से किया जाता है। इसमें अंतरराष्ट्रीय कीमत नमूना विविधता नवनिम्नलिखित न्याय में संदर्भ जताता है। बहुल गतिविधियों की एवं जिस पर निदेशक मैंडेल प्रथम निमित नीतियाँ कीला करता है।
कोयला नियामक विधेयक से जुड़े मंत्रिसमूह को बैठक इस हफ्ते

नई दिल्ली, 22 जुलाई (आपा)। कोयला क्षेत्र के लिए नियामक प्रभाविक स्थापना करने के लिए, मंत्रीय विधेयक से जुड़े मतभेद के समाधान के लिए मंत्र अंतरमंत्रालयीय समूह के पहली बैठक इस हफ्ते होने होंगी हैं ताकि इस मामले पर और संभाल हो सके। जानकार सूची ने बताया कि कोयला नियामक विधेयक से जुड़े मंत्रिसमूह की पहली बैठक हो जाएगी।

प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने भी जानकारों को आरोपित की कि मंत्री अंतरमंत्रालयीय समूह में मंत्री अंतरमंत्रालयीय समूह, मंत्रियों के संगठन व अन्य अधिकारियों के नियामक कामों के मामले पर संभाल हो सकते हैं। जानकार सूची ने बताया कि मंत्रिपरिषद को पूरी तरह से जानकारी दी जाएगी।

कोयला नियामक विधेयक से जुड़े मंत्रिसमूह को बैठक इस हफ्ते होगी।
Time to invest in platinum as long-term prospects shine

SANGEETHA G
Chennai

IT IS right time to buy platinum as the long-term investment prospects are bright in the metal. Platinum prices have fallen almost 18 per cent from its earlier levels over the year. The gold-platinum ratio also indicates an upward price movement for the metal.

Platinum is a rarer metal than gold and historically platinum prices have been higher than gold. For the past few years, the platinum-gold ratio or the ounces of platinum required to buy one ounce of gold has been at 0.7 and 0.75.

Last year, the ratio moved up in favour of gold when the yellow metal prices moved up to $1920 per ounce and the platinum prices moved down from $1870-$1400 levels. In July last year platinum saw a monthly high of $1810 and has lost 18 per cent till July this year. Platinum prices are at around $1470 levels now.

"Platinum-gold ratio is around 1.05 and 1.10 levels now. It has to move up to the earlier levels, as platinum is a rare metal. The prices will move up, if not in the medium term, definitely in the long-term," said Tapan Tripathi, senior analyst, JRG Wealth Management.

This makes platinum a best bet for a long-term investment perspective. According to Anil Rego, CEO, Right Horizons, when the demand from the automobile industry goes up with bettering of the economy, the prices of platinum will move up to earlier levels.

"Platinum prices have to move up to their earlier levels when the economy gets better and get back to the ratio prior to August 2011. This makes platinum a good metal for accumulation during these bad times," he said.

CPM Group Platinum Group Metals Yearbook 2012 points towards higher prices in the coming months. Platinum fabrication demand is projected to rise 3.5 per cent in 2012 to around 7,617,992 ounces, the strongest growth since 2006, says the yearbook. Jewellery demand, which comprises 25 per cent of total platinum demand, is expected to benefit from lower platinum prices this year, increasing 2.4 per cent. China is now the biggest consumer of platinum jewellery with roughly 75 per cent of jewelry demand coming from the country last year.

CPM also expects total platinum supply to fall 1.6 per cent this year to 7.3 million ounces. Lower mine production in South Africa and Russia is expected to tighten supply. Secondary supply also is expected to fall due to lower scrap sales amid lower prices. The lack of new projects, which are needed to offset declines in output from mines where reserves are being depleted, also is a cause of worry.

Both the demand and supply situation points towards upward price movement in platinum making it suitable for accumulation for long-term returns.

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Hindustan Zinc’s margins hit by lower metal output, prices

Hindustan Zinc Ltd’s June quarter results were not expected to sparkle, as it had earlier warned investors to expect a weak production performance in the first half of 2012-13. Falling metal prices on the London Metal Exchange (LME) only added to the strain. The bright spot was a falling rupee, but it was not enough to compensate for the other factors.

Sales declined by 12.3% sequentially to Rs 7,713 crore in the June quarter, but expenses declined only by 10.6%, causing a 92 basis point drop in operating profit margins. One basis point is one-hundredth of a percentage point. A sharp jump in other income—aided by a Rs 120 crore mark-to-market gain and lower tax liability—helped its net profit rise by 11.3%.

Hindustan Zinc’s mined metal production fell by 16% sequentially to 187,000 tonnes, due to the current phase of its mining plan. But the company’s per tonne cost of production of zinc went up (in rupee terms) by 9.8%, due to lower output and rupee depreciation.

The company expects the full-year number to stabilize to the previous year’s levels, as output recovers. On the realization front, average zinc prices in the June quarter were down by 4.8% of lead by 24.2%, and of silver by 13.2%, while a 7.7% fall in the rupee versus the dollar provided a cushion.

The outlook for 2012-13 will depend on the firm’s ability to get its output back on track and on metal prices. In a conference call, the management was confident the second half will see higher mining output recover and refined metal production. Also, its expanded mining capacities will come on stream next year.

The company is evaluating its next stage of expansion of integrated production capacity and has said it will make an announcement once it completes the feasibility studies. In the near to medium term, investors will want to see output recover to healthy levels, and its cost of production to decline. The company expects to mine better ore grades in the second half.

News on the output front should, thus, improve as the year progresses. But metal prices are a key factor, too. Zinc prices have not fallen as much as other commodities, due to relatively tighter demand-supply conditions.

Zinc prices on LME fell during July by 2.3% but recovered subsequently, while lead prices were up by 3.7% in July. But the uncertainty of global economic conditions, especially in the euro zone and China, and global liquidity conditions will influence price movements.

The share has been underperforming the metals index of BSE to July so far, reflecting its own output issues and weak sentiment for non-ferrous metal stocks. Ideal conditions for Hindustan Zinc will be if metal prices remain stable at these levels, or increase, and its output recovers as per plan.

That will see both revenue and profitability improve, and once its expansion plans crystallize, investors will get better visibility on its long-term growth prospects. The risks to the upsides are volatile metal prices and a strengthening of the rupee.

RAVI ANANTHANARAYANAN
Coal ministry invites bids to unearth reserves below mega infrastructure projects

Fearing huge reserves would go unexploited in areas where mega infrastructure projects have come up or are being planned, the coal ministry has invited applications from companies for suggesting methods to extract the dry fuel in such regions.

"The coal ministry, through Coal India Limited, has sought expressions of interest from scientific institutes and research and development bodies by July 31 for conducting a detailed study to find methods of extracting coal buried under infrastructure projects without stowing the area with sand," a senior coal ministry official said.

Coal Minister Sriprakash Jaiswal had earlier asked states not to build projects in coal-bearing areas, saying such a move would render sterile at least 20 billion tonnes of coal. "Discreet steps are needed to ensure that coal-bearing areas in the country are left unencumbered and accessible for exploitation at a future date," he had said.

The ministry has also written to the chief ministers of Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh to prevent mega projects coming up in areas with huge coal reserves, saying the dry-fuel requirement for expansion of thermal power generation was very high.

"Of the large reserves of coal blocked in developed pillars, a substantial portion is sterilised due to the prescence of structures and inhabited localities on the surface. A detailed study is required to develop an effective method to liquitdate coal," according to Coal India research arm Central Mine Planning and Design Institute Limited's notice inviting expression of interest from companies.

Sources said Jaiswal had also requested the group of ministers on coal to re-consider their decision to allow power major NTPC to proceed with its 1,980-Mw power project in Jharkhand's North Karanpura, stating it would block nearly six billion tonnes of coal reserves.
Vedanta writes to PM on Cairn
Vedanta Resources Chairman Anil Agrawal has sought Prime Minister Manmohan Singh’s intervention so that his group firm Cairn India is allowed to explore oil in the prolific Rajasthan block. Cairn India is looking to raise the Rajasthan field output from 115,000 barrels per day (bpd) to 300,000 bpd (65 mtpa) and has made an application to the oil ministry seeking permission to explore within the ring-fenced development area that contains 25 oil and gas finds.
Business Standard, Delhi
Monday, 23rd July 2012, Page: 9

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The Supreme Court has summoned the Law Secretary of Orissa in person to explain the lapse of government counsel when the case, State of Orissa vs Mesco Steel Ltd, was called. The case involved mining and was of public interest. Therefore, apart from the personal appearance of the Law Secretary, he shall also state on affidavit: “the steps that have been taken by the government for defending the matters in which the State is a party in the Supreme Court and the reasons for neglect of the counsel entrusted with such matters to appear before the court.” The court stated that it did not dismiss the government appeal only because it would prejudice public interest.
Every five days, India’s public sector mines see a death

ANIL SASI
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

While the death of 15 miners in Meghalaya last fortnight after they were trapped in a collapsed mine for seven days brought the conditions in which they worked into the spotlight, figures show that every fifth day, for the past four years, someone has died in India’s public sector coal mines.

Between 2008 and 2011, there have been 399 accidents leading to 322 deaths, with 55 seriously injured, shows data from the Coal Ministry. These include accidents at mines run by state-owned Coal India Ltd (CIL), Neyveli Lignite Corporation and Singharam Collieries.

One of the reasons why the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act was enacted in 1973, taking over private sector mines, was their poor safety records. Yet work at public sector mines remains one of the most dangerous professions in the country. Global records are far better. The fatality rate (per day) in the US, for example, for the past five years has been around 0.13.

The Coal Ministry takes comfort from the falling death rate as per the Directorate General of Mines Safety figures. The number of fatal and serious accidents has come down over the past seven years, from 96 to 76 and 1,106 to 484 respectively. This translates into fatality rate of 0.21, down from 0.36 about five years ago.

Lack of investment in coal mines is cited as one of the main reasons for the high casualties. CIL alone was sitting on cash reserves of around Rs 45,000 crore as of March 31.

The major cause of accidents is roof and side collapse. Mishaps during surface transport by heavy machinery in opencast mines, apart from the use of explosives, are other main reasons.

Though employees of state-owned coal firms are governed by the same set of rules as say those of Air India, payout rates in case of accidents are low. The compensation for injuries or death rarely crosses Rs 10 lakh.

For the 399 accidents over the past four years, action has been initiated against 687 persons. “With the introduction of mechanisation, personal exposure to risks has considerably reduced and the fatality rate and serious injuries have fallen,” a government official said.
SAIL-led consortium eyes Afghan copper

New Delhi: A consortium of six public and private companies, led by steel firm Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL), will bid for developing a copper deposit in Afghanistan this week. Hindustan Copper Ltd, National Aluminium Co. Ltd (Nalco), Jindal Steel and Power Ltd (JSPL), Monnet Ispat and Energy and Mineral Exploration Corp. Ltd (MECL) are the other members of the consortium. "As of date, we are bidding for one copper deposit only. This will be submitted in next 2-3 days and depending upon the response, we will decide on bidding for other deposits also," Hindustan Copper’s chairman Shakeel
Ahmed said, PTI
‘Allow Cairn India to explore more oil’

New Delhi: Vedanta Resources chairman Anil Agarwal has sought Prime Minister Manmohan Singh’s intervention so that his group firm Cairn India Ltd is allowed to explore oil in the prolific Rajasthan block. Cairn India aims to raise output from its Rajasthan field from current level of 175,000 barrels per day (bpd) to 300,000 bpd (15 million tonnes per annum) and has sent an application to the oil ministry seeking permission to explore within the ring-fenced development area that contains 25 oil and gas finds.

"The Rajasthan production sharing contract and the mining lease have enabling provisions that allow carrying on exploration in development area, however, we have been asked to obtain government approval," Agarwal, whose group had last year acquired Cairn India, wrote to Prime Minister on 6 July. PTI
Few takers for industrial relations at B-schools

DEVIYOT GHOSHAL

New Delhi, 22 July

In the wake of labour trouble at Maruti Suzuki India's Manesar plant, the area of industrial relations is back in focus.

Partha Bhattacharyya, former chairman of Coal India, knows the importance of good industrial relations, having led the mining company to a successful initial public offering, despite opposition from trade unions. “When you are dealing with HR (human resources), usually there’s an effort to improve managerial competence. But it’s vital the welfare of workers is considered and there is transparent communication. IR (Industrial relations) needs to get prime attention,” he says. But more often than not, IR is relegated to the back seat.

At B-schools like Jamshedpur’s XLRI, this has resulted in less than 10 per cent of all students wanting to pursue a career in IR. “About 90 per cent of our students are engineers, who come here after working for a few years. Very few want to do IR because the salaries are lower and the profiles aren’t always comfortable. Compared to banks or consulting firms, manufacturing firms often pay less. For their summer placements, too, most don’t take IR-related projects,” says Santanu Sarkar, professor of industrial relations at the institute.

The answer, feels Marcel Parker, an experienced HR hand with stints at Raymond, Voltas and Modi Xerox, is that plant management and the HR department need to be equally responsible for managing relations with employees.

Bural concurs. “You have to get line managers to handle people issues and HR managers must be there to help,” he says.
HZL Sees 10% Rise in Demand

RAKKHI MAZUMDAR
KOLKATA

Hindustan Zinc Limited (HZL), the world’s largest integrated producer of zinc, expects domestic demand for the metal to grow at 6-10% per annum, nearly twice the rate at which global demand is tipped to grow.

HZL, which has about 83% share of the market, expects demand for the metal to increase due to rusting to spur on increased economic activity.

“We expect global demand of zinc to increase at a rate of 3-4% per annum. The Indian metal demand is expected to grow more, at 6-10% per annum. India would continue to consume more metal because per capita consumption of zinc in the country is amongst the lowest in the world,” Akhilesh Joshi, CEO of Hindustan Zinc, said.

In step, by the second half of FY13, HZL has decided to expand capacity at Rampur Agucha, one of the largest zinc mines globally. Production in the first half of FY13 is likely to be marginally lower than the previous corresponding year. However, HZL plans to make up for the lower output between October-March 2012-13. This is because the company expects developmental ore from Rampur Agucha underground mine and Kayar mine in the second half of FY13.

Commercial production from both these mines will start next year. However, HZL’s cost of zinc production, excluding royalty, went up during Q1 of FY13. At ₹45,769 per tonne (9844), it was higher compared to ₹39,117 (9874) reported in Q1 of FY12 given higher prices of consumables due to rupee depreciation and lower metal production.

Significantly, in addition to zinc, its by-product, silver is set to emerge as a dominant segment in HZL’s overall revenues with the company readying plans to achieve 500-tonne mark in silver output. “HZL’s cost of production has been on the rise due to increase in royalty and higher power cost. This is likely to continue. However, the impact of higher production cost is likely to be offset by a jump in revenue due to a rise in sale of silver,” Tarun Bhanushali, research analyst at India Infoline, said in a June 2012 research report on the company.

Silver production is poised to almost double due to commissioning of silver refinery at Paninagar in Uttarakhand.
उरमा कोल ब्लॉक पर झारखंड-बिहार में टकराव

संबंधित फोटोग्राफी के उरमा कोल ब्लॉक के बाहर कोलोन्स के बाहर लेकर झारखंड और बिहार में लिंक हो गया है। बिहार ने झारखंड के इस कोल ब्लॉक को शामिल करने की मांग की है। इसके अलावा इसे झारखंड को छोड़ देने की मांग की है। झारखंड इसके बिना तैयार में नहीं है। मंदिर सरकार ने पारित किया है कि झारखंड और बिहार की संयुक्त रूप से 'उरमा कोल ब्लॉक' आवश्यक है। इसके साथ वह इस कोल ब्लॉक में कैसे झारखंड की 692 और बिहार की 375 के अनुपात में कोलोन्स निर्माण करेगा है। अब तक कोलोन्स निर्माण के लिए आवश्यक संरचनाओं का काम घुटने नहीं हुआ है। उरुक्कन का मामला तड़पात है। तीन ग्रामों के बीच निवासी निर्माण नहीं हो गया। झारखंड के अंतर्गत सरकार ने इस पर विश्वसनीय निर्णय लेने के लिए सीएम को पहला भेष दिया है। मुख्यमंत्री संविधान निर्माण के मामले पर विचार कर रहा है।