



Aluminium demand to grow with India's modernisation

Ajay Kapur is the CEO of Aluminium & Power at Vedanta. Before joining Vedanta, he had extensive experience for over two and half decades in the cement industry.

Ajay has been instrumental in leading several excellence programs during his tenure, mainly the transformation journey of Ambuja Cement in the field of cost leadership and customer excellence.

Kapur is expected to provide leadership to unlock the full potential of Aluminium and Power business which is a USD 10 billion asset with a revenue of USD 6 billion.

Kapur brings with him an experience of 31 years across business verticals.

In a interview to **Sanjay Singh**, Assistant Editor of Metalworld, **Kapur** outlined the priorities to drive Vedanta forward. Excerpts

- Ajay Kapur

CEO - Aluminium & Power
Vedanta

As you have taken charge of Vedanta Aluminium recently, what will be your priorities to drive Vedanta forward in the aluminium sector?

Vedanta is a major aluminium supplier in the world market. Our target is to become a first quartile cost producer of aluminium which we intend to achieve through improving our raw material security, specifically bauxite and coal. We want to



cater to changing customer needs by improving our value-added product portfolio that will make us more relevant.

Safety and sustainability will be at the core of our operations and our commitment to Vedanta's Zero Harm, Zero Waste, and Zero Discharge culture will continue to remain of prime importance. Finally, our obligation to people, planet and prosperity remains steadfast and will reflect in all our endeavours.

What are the new business areas which Vedanta will unlock so to maintain sustainability in the long-term?

In all essence, Vedanta is a metals and mining player. Our full focus will be on our aluminium & power business. We are trying to unlock the full potential of our facilities in Lanjigarh, Jharsuguda, BALCO & TSPL. We will operationalise our entire installed capacity soon and aim to do so at an optimum cost.

To achieve long-term sustainability, we will continue to partner very strongly with all our stakeholders. Community, especially, is our most important partner. It goes without saying that our commitment to the community and intent to engage with them on a daily basis will be at the forefront.

Import of aluminium is a major factor affecting the domestic industry. What plans you have lined up to make Vedanta more cost effective and competitive?

Vedanta is leveraging its technical expertise, enhancing efficiency to remain cost competitive, reducing power cost, optimised sourcing of raw materials - both coal and bauxite - to serve the growing customer demand in India. Moreover, we are exploring ways to increase the production of value-added products and expand our portfolio that will allow us to get a better price premium.

However, from the policy point of view, we have to take steps to address the issue of increasing aluminium import if we want to build our domestic aluminium potential and make India one of the leaders in the international aluminium sector. Currently, 60% of our aluminium consumption is being met with imported products.

After leaving Ambuja Cement and joining Vedanta, what synergy or growth you see in the infrastructure sector?

India is the world's second largest producer and consumer of cement due to robust demand from the country's infrastructure sector. The same scope lies for aluminium. As India's GDP grows at 7%, demand for aluminium will witness a commensurate increase with growth rate expected to be in single-to-double digits over the next 5 to 7 years. Vedanta has invested in world-class assets in India and we are poised to supply to India's growing aluminium demand while making the country a global leader.

“To achieve long-term sustainability, we will continue to partner very strongly with all our stakeholders.”

Lastly, what future you see in the aluminium sector in the next five years in terms of growth?

India is the third largest aluminium producer globally, after China and Russia. The growth in global aluminium consumption is being driven by China and India. For the leading countries, the modernisation of an economy is rapidly getting linked to its per capita aluminium consumption. With India modernising, the aluminium demand will grow. As a country poised to become a US\$5 trillion economy in the next 5 years, the current GDP growth rate is anticipated to drive the demand for aluminium, estimated to double to 7 million tonnes in the next 5 to 7 years.

Increasing urbanization and growing infrastructure, automotive, aviation and power sector will contribute to the growth. If you will look at the Niti Aayog report on aluminium, the most important takeaway is that aluminium is expected to play a key role in India's growth story in the future. For all this to happen, however, the domestic aluminium industry should have the required support in the form of adequate availability of coal and bauxite for self-sufficiency. The biggest need of the hour is a level playing field, and to achieve that, India will have to reduce its dependence on imported aluminium.