Prospects

HCL has expressed "keen interest" in foreign collaboration, not only in India but in other Third World Countries. HCL has put forward the following proposals for collaboration in a recent corporate publication:

1) expansion of the Khetri smelter and refinery complex at an estimated cost of $US90 million;
2) underground mine development in Madhya Pradesh at an estimated cost of $US330 million;
3) extension of existing Khetri mines at an estimated cost of $US 16 million; and
4) development of the Chapri-Sidheswar underground mine in Bihar at an estimated cost of $US93 million.

The Ministry of Mines also cites potential for exploration, hydro-metallurgy, and bioleaching technology.

Lead/Zinc

Major Producers

Hindustan Zinc Ltd. (HZL) (Government of India)
Sikkim Mining Corp. (Government of India)
Binani Zinc Ltd. (Private)
Indian Lead Ltd. (Private)

Output Trade

Occurrences of lead/zinc have been identified in Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, and Gujarat, but almost 90 per cent of resources are found in the Precambrian rocks of Rajasthan, specifically the Zawar-Rajpura-Dariba-Bamnikalan-Rampura-Agucha belt. Total estimated resources of lead/zinc are 383 million tonnes, of which 167 million tonnes are mineable reserves.

Lead-zinc mining and smelting is dominated by Hindustan Zinc Ltd. which currently operates five lead/zinc mines and four smelters. Total capacity of the smelters is 149,000 TPA zinc metal, and 65,000 TPA lead metal. Indian production during 1992/93 was 293,000 tonnes zinc concentrate and 60,000 tonnes lead concentrate.

Binani Zinc, which was originally established as an investment of Cominco Ltd. in the 1940's, operates a 20,000 TPA zinc smelter in Kerala using entirely imported concentrate.

India is almost self-sufficient in zinc, and meets an estimated 84 per cent of domestic demand for lead indigenously. Over the period 1992-97, Indian demand for zinc is expected to grow by 4 per cent, and lead by 5.5 per cent, on an annual basis.