

Hindustan Zinc Ltd eyes metal recovery from waste of mined ores

Our Bureau

Chennai

Hindustan Zinc Limited (HZL), India's largest zinc-lead-silver producer, will recover zinc and silver from historic tailings and transform them for clean energy and infrastructure development.

This will be done through the country's first largescale zinc tailing reprocessing plant that HZL is setting up at Rampura Agucha in Rajasthan.

Historic tailings are waste minerals that remain after valuable components are extracted from the mined ore.

The board of the Vedanta group-owned firm approved the setting up the plant last month with an outlay of ₹3,823 crore. It will have a 10 million tonne annual capacity.



HZL CEO Arun Mishra said in a statement: "For a mineral-rich country like India, mining waste is not an end-point. It is the next frontier."

LOWERING IMPORTS

Zinc is a critical enabler of steel, infrastructure, and clean energy technologies.

"But if India systematically recovers copper, cadmium, cobalt and rare earths from mine tailings, we could

drastically cut import dependence, secure raw materials for Make in India and even emerge as an exporter," said the company's CEO.

Mishra said the development was not just about company balance sheets; it is about building national resilience in the age of clean energy and technology competition.

"Mining waste is no longer waste. It is a resource waiting to be unlocked," he said.

Experts, pointing to research and emerging initiatives, said that India could be close to critical mineral self-reliance if it begins harnessing the untapped potential of mining waste.

The demand for zinc, silver, copper, cobalt, nickel and rare earths is projected to increase manifold in the years to come as the clean energy transition accelerates.