

News and Notes

Hutti Gold Mines Co. Ltd.: The Pride of India Completes 75 Glorious Years

India's major gold producer is Hutti Gold Mines Co. Ltd. (HGML), a Govt of Karnataka undertaking. The HGML is active in the exploration, mining and metallurgy of Gold and Copper deposits of Karnataka. The Company's Corporate Office is situated in Bengaluru and operates two units –the Hutti Gold Unit (HGU) in Raichur district and Chitrdurga Gold Unit (CGU), Chitrdurga district, Karnataka.

The world class Hutti Gold Mines, situated in Hutti, Lingsgur taluk, Raichur dist, Karnataka, owned by the Karnataka Government. In 1939, Hutti was a small village with hardly 60 to 70 huts & houses. Now, it is a town and the population is over 40,000. Half of the this population lives in the colony constructed by the HGML.

Evolutionary Stages of Exploration and Mining in Hutti

The pursuit of gold has been there since time immemorial. There are about four periods of exploration and mining in Hutti with widely separated historical time spans as follows:

a. Pre-Ashokan Era (more than 2000 years old): Ancient Mining; b. Nizam's Period (1886-1920); c. Nizam's and British Period (1937-1947); d. Modern Mining (1947-till date).

Methods of Old Mining and Metallurgy at Hutti

The Hutti Gold Mines are reckoned among the most ancient metal mines in the world, dating back to the pre-Ashokan period. The ancient miners worked down to a depth of over 600 feet. During the period, they had probably broken the rock by “fire-setting” a process of heating it in fire and pouring water suddenly on the heated rock thereby causing it to crack and splinter. The carbon dating of the timbers found in the old workings has been considered to be about 1900 years old. For crushing the ore to extract its gold, they used a grinding stone similar to that one used now for making massalalas in rural areas. A few of these can be found in the area even now. The gold was recovered by passing the crushed ore mixed with water over goats- skins for the trapping the heavy gold particles, while associated lighter minerals were washed off.

In addition to the ancient mining in Hutti, there was further mining in the area between 1890 to 1920, when the price of gold was about Rs.18 for 10 grams (Rs.20.97 a tola). During this period, the Main Mine was reached a depth of about 1,100 meters. The industry was closed down in 1920 due to technical difficulties and lack of funds.

In 1937, the Hyderabad Nizam Government had decided to prospect the area again with a view of possible re-opening of the mines, as this was the only industry in the area, apart from agriculture, so as provide the employment. The area was a backward district and perpetual famine affected area. In 1940, after some satisfactory exploratory work, it was decided to install a plant to treat 100 metric tonnes of ore per day, but before the plant could be obtained, the operations were suspended from 1942 to 1946 due to world war-II, the mine was shut down except for pumping. The Hyderabad Gold Mines Co Ltd was founded on 08.07.1947. The

mine works were resumed and production started in sept, 1948 at the rate of 13 tonnes per day. After the war regular mine production started in 1949 at the rate of 130 tonnes per day [TPD], progressively increased to 600 TPD in 1972, 910 TPD in 1979, currently 2400 TPD. The present depth of the Hutti Gold Mine is 960 meters and it can be mined up to 3 km depth as per gravity geo-physical exploration. It was renamed in 1956 as Hutti Gold Mines Co Ltd (HGML) with the formation of erstwhile Mysore State (now Karnataka).

M/s HGML has gold reserves of around 18.87 million tonnes @ 4.10 g/t in its mining lease hold areas (Hutti, Ut and Hira-Buddinni). At present, it is operating three eco-friendly underground gold mines (Hutti, Ut & Hira-Buddinni). M/s HGML has produced [1947-2022] about 92.78 tonnes of gold from its lease hold areas and has an employee strength of 3605.

“Nature is precious than Gold” is the belief, that has made M/s HGML one of the most eco-friendly companies of the country. Many actions of M/s HGML such as large scale multi-species plantations, bio-fuel initiatives, establishment of a Bio-fuel park, creation of a Clonal Orchard for bio-fuel development, biogas and bio-diesel plants, introduction of non-polluting electric vehicles in the campus manifests, M/s HGML commitment towards reducing global warming. It is evident that these green initiatives of M/s HGML would soon transform Hutti Gold Mines into Hutti Gold's Green Mines.

The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives are not limited to its M/s HGML's operational areas alone but extended to all corners of the state. The State & national economics have benefited from HGML operations, in addition to direct and indirect employment is provided in the backward districts.

Since inception M/s HGML has continued to combine outstanding production performance with low operating cost. The HGML has built up vast gold ore reserves and established large scale production potential. Its net income, cash-flow position, track record of making profit continuously, continued growth in its existing leases, entry into hot-spot areas for which applications for prospecting licenses (PL)/mining licenses (ML) have already made in Karnataka, will ensure the HGML position as the Premier Gold Mining Co in the country. M/s HGML is adopting the new technologies in exploration, mining and metallurgy immediately to keep pace with the rest of the gold industries across the globe and is in the midst of implementing an ambitious expansion plan to enhance its gold production capacity.

M/s HGML is built upon for long term vision and a clear mission. It is one of the most vibrant, self-reliant, a financially viable, growth oriented and humane organization.

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