Metallurgy Materials Engineering



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International Conference on Process and Product Innovations in Metal Production

Delhi Chapter of The Indian Institute of Metals, organized International Conference on **Process and Product Innovations in Metal Production** as a part of 14th edition of *Mining, Minerals, Metals & Metallurgy* event, **MMMM 2024** at recently inaugurated *India International Convention & Expo Centre* located at Yashobhoomi, Dwarka in New Delhi.

Honourable Minister of State for Steel & Heavy Industries: Shri Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma Ji, inaugurated the Conference. Former Secretary, Ministry of Steel, Shri NN Sinha Ji, also graced the inaugural program.



Shri Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma, Hon. Minister of State for Steel and Heavy Industries, spoke on imbibing the best practices in the metals ecosystem in India and the need to ensure resource efficiency and sustainability in production processes. *Souvenir* and the *Conference Volume* (compilation of technical papers presented in the Conference), were released during Inaugural Program by Hon. Minister of State for Steel & Heavy Industries.





The Conference was also graced by Dr Sanak Mishra, Dr L. Pugazhenthy and Shri S. S. Mohanty, Former Presidents of The Indian Institute of Metals. Shri PK Singh, Former SAIL Chairman, Shri KK Mehrotra, Former CMD, MECON, Shri PK Bajaj, Former MD of Durgapur Steel Plant, Prof. S Basu of IIT Delhi and Prof. V. Ramaswamy from PSG College of Technology chaired various sessions in the Conference. Several other industry veterans and Brig. (Retd.) Arun Ganguli, Secretary General, IIM Kolkata, were also present.

Conference attracted delegates from many parts of the country. There were 32 presentations from experts from Industries, National Laboratories, Technology Suppliers and Academic Institutes covering both ferrous and non-ferrous sectors and also primary and secondary sectors.







Apart from Inaugural, Valedictory and Panel Discussion Sessions, the Conference included following seven technical sessions:

- Product Development and Applications
- Process Innovations in Steel and Metal Sector
- Decarbonisation of the Metal Sector
- New Technologies
- Recovery, Recycling and Waste Management
- Raw Material Beneficiation Advanced Refractory Material Digitalisation and Smart Technologies













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The challenges confronting the metals sectors demand collective thinking and action. Inter-disciplinary research and collaboration is not just a choice but also a necessity in navigating the complexities in metal production. This conference aimed to be an ideal platform for fostering inter-disciplinary research in technology and innovation.

The Conference showcased some of the most path-breaking and innovative research currently underway in the metals space, with specific and in-depth focus on product and process efficiencies, sustainability and circularity, as well as the roadblocks towards development and adoption of cutting-edge technologies.

New-age product research

A thought-provoking paper by SAIL was presented on the development of indigenous capability in the production of electrical steels in the country (CRGO, CRNO), which might turn out to be a major substitute to imports of specialty steels. Demand currently is projected at around 0.3 million tonnes (mnt) per annum.

The automotive sector has the major technological challenge of light-weighting, which can be addressed with AHSS. A perceptive presentation by Tata Steel focussed on the different metallurgical processes involved in dealing with the requisite steel microstructure and desired properties for the auto sector.

Steel & sustainability

An insightful paper from Linde plc. focussed on hydrogen, syngas and carbon capture as the three major ways to mitigate emissions from ironmaking.

CCUS technologies will be required in the Indian context to capture emissions from primary steel production, a paper from M.N. Dastur pointed out. However, challenges still persist with respect to utilization of captured CO₂, as well as geological storage capacity.

Against the backdrop of the Steel Ministry's 'green steel' roadmap and recognition of biomass-based sustainable resources as a low-CO₂ alternative in iron production, an insightful paper was presented on ongoing research being conducted by SAIL.

Interestingly, while hydrogen is often considered the silver bullet in decarbonisation of ironmaking, it is important to reconsider the metallurgical complexities of H₂-based iron reduction compared to traditional reductants such as CO in DRI vertical shaft furnaces and coke in the BF.

Presentation by SRTMI focused on the domestic steel industry decarbonisation challenge and the role of best available technologies in low-CO₂ transition of the BF-BOF route of steelmaking, which is so critical a factor in the Indian context.

Leading technology solutions providers, such as Danieli and Tenova, presented on potential ways of transitioning to low-CO₂ operations. Moreover, perceptive papers on recycling of slag (BF/BOF/VOD, etc.) attracted particular attention as a key lever for leading steel mills to cut down on CO₂ footprint.

BigMint presented a paper on decarbonisation challenges in the Indian steel industry and technology pathways that shine a light on future roadmaps for steel producers.

Key takeaway

As the experts at MMMM 2024 so presciently highlighted, the need of the hour is to drive innovation, energy savings and sustainability in the domestic metals ecosystem to drive collective growth, while technical innovation has to be embraced whole-heartedly in driving the metals ecosystem forward.

Nations with Mineral Reserves Needed for Energy Transition

The world's energy system is mainly powered by fossil fuels. The transition to a low-carbon one will shift its underpinnings away from coal, oil, and gas to the minerals needed for solar, wind, nuclear, and other technologies. Which countries have such mineral reserves that can be minded? Below importance of each mineral is explained. The graphic shows the share of the world's reserves in each country.

- **Bauxite:** Primary source of aluminum. Essential for wind turbines, solar panels, batteries, electrolyzers, and transmission cables.
- **Chromium:** Key for geothermal and concentrated solar power. Used in wind turbines, and for radiation shielding in nuclear power plants.
- **Cobalt:** Used in consumer electronics, catalysts for the oil industry, resistant metal alloys, critical components in many lithium-ion battery technologies.
- **Copper:** Critical element in solar photovoltaics, wind power, battery storage, and electricity grids.
- **Graphite:** Key component of battery anodes and therefore important for the transition to electric vehicles, and stationary batteries for balancing electricity grids.
- **Lithium:** Core component of lithium-ion batteries.
- **Manganese:** Widely used in solar and wind power, and in lithium-ion batteries for electric cars.
- **Molybdenum**: Has a very high electrical conductivity but expands little when exposed to heat

Minerals for a clean and green future

The data for the charts were sourced from Our World in Data. The data shows the reserves as a share of the global total as of 2023

Nickel:	Key component in the cathodes of lithium-ion batteries in electric
	cars.

- **Rare earths:** Used in wind power for permanent magnets.
- **Silver:** It's most important role in clean energy is in solar photovoltaics and electric vehicles.
- **Uranium:** Primary fuel for nuclear energy production.

CCS Hype and Hopes Sinking

Stubbornly high costs and performance issues threaten the prospects for carbon capture and storage (CCS), which is considered as vital to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions.

CCS uncompetitive with alternatives in many sectors

The main reason for this projected decline is a lack of cost competitiveness with renewable-based solutions.

In the power sector, the IEA estimates the fossil fuels with CCS will only generate about 1.5% of global electricity by 2050 in both its 1.5°C and 1.7°C global warming scenarios. In the NZE scenario, the capital cost of coal generation with CCS is expected to be about six times higher than large solar plants in 2030, making it uncompetitive with renewables even when associated with firming (complementary flexible energy supply).

In the hydrogen sector, blue hydrogen (made from gas with CCS) is likely to have carbon emissions well above clean hydrogen benchmarks, and to be more expensive than green hydrogen (made from renewable electricity) by 2030 in most markets.

In the steel sector, CCS has never been used at commercial scale in coal-based blast furnaces, and only three CCS projects are being considered, all at early development stages. The pipeline of low-carbon steel projects is dominated by electric arc furnace (EAF) and direct reduced iron (DRI) projects powered by gas and green hydrogen.

CCS cost estimates likely to increase

CCS's competitiveness is likely to worsen as its actual costs become apparent. An IEEFA review of 13 global flagship CCS projects found most had either failed or underperformed by 20%-50%. Of the three CCS projects that met their targets – one experienced a geological fault while another had to find a new storage location after only 18 months – at a high additional cost.

Australia is home to the world's largest CCS project at Chevron's Gorgon LNG facility on Barrow Island in Western Australia. In its first five years, Gorgon has been beset by delays and operational challenges, capturing just 43% of the CO₂ removed from its reservoir, well short of its 80% target.

The impact of delays, technical challenges and underperformance on costs is high. Those challenges have both decreased the volume of CO₂ captured and increased capital costs for the project, making actual costs much higher than theoretical costs.

IEEFA calculates Gorgon delivered a cost of A\$206 (US\$138) per tonne of CO_2 captured in the past two years. Since it started operations, the cost amounts to about A\$159/tCO2 (US\$106). This is four to six times higher than IEA's median cost estimate for the sector.

Today, about three-quarters of CO_2 captured is used for enhanced oil recovery, which provides a revenue stream but increases global emissions. Shifting to permanently storing CO_2 to reduce global emissions makes the financial case much more challenging.

Due to its high cost and low performance, CCS associated with fossil fuels is unlikely to be competitive with renewable alternatives. IEEFA expects the outlook of CCS will continue to decline in coming years.

Source: IEEFA (Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis) Friday Week in Review, 12 Oct. 2024; IEEFA.org

Know Your Members

Sushil K Varshney

Academics

- B. Tech in Mechanical Engg. (1973) from Pantnagar University
- Masters in Total Quality Management
- Certificate Course in Business Management from I.I.T. Delhi
- Certificate in 'Machine Monitoring & Diagnostic Engineering'
- Chartered Engineer of Institution of Engineers
- Lean Six Sigma Belt
- Qualified Master Trainer of the Govt.'s ZED scheme

Experience & Expertise

Starting his career at Rourkela Steel Plant, SAIL in 1975, Mr. Varshney, is now a reputed international consultant / trainer on *Industrial Operation, Maintenance* and *Lean Manufacturing* with 50 years industrial experience. Since 2004, he is Director/ CEO of 'Academy of Industrial Management', New Delhi.

He has personally conducted 700 training and consultancy assignments in 100 industrial units all over India, including 400+ training programs for engineers / technicians of India's largest power generation company- NTPC - on various maintenance topics. He has also conducted 36 international training programs of 4 or 5 days each in Qatar, Dubai, Saudi Arabia, Mauritius, Bahrain and Bhutan, most of them being successful repeats.

He has presented 27 technical papers in reputed national conferences of IE(I), FICCI, CII, IIPE, NPC, UNDP etc. In 2019, he presented a paper at International Maintenance Conference in Florida, USA. on 'Design Out Maintenance Strategy'

He firmly believes that most repetitive equipment problems which adversely affect the quantity and quality of production, result from deficiency of technical skills at technician as well as the engineer level. Regular technical training helps bridge this gap - which he is actively pursuing through his academy's training programs.

Career History

- 1. SAIL Rourkela: (1975-98) 23 yrs as Sr Design Engr and Sr Maintenance Manager. Left on VRS
- 2. Jindal Stainless Ltd, Hisar: Senior Consultant (Technical Development) & Technical Advisor (Operation)
- 3. Bhushan Steel Strips: (Now Tata Steel) DGM (Head of Maintenance)
- 4. Indian Institute for Production Management (IIPM) Asst. Director and Sr Faculty
- 5. ABES Institute of Technology, Ghaziabad: ex Visiting Professor
- 6. Served as Executive Committee Member of the Research Council of I.I.T. Delhi
- 7. Since 2020, working as General Secretary of IIPE- Delhi Haryana Chapter
- 8. Presently associated as Technical Editor with TreeSub Media Group producing India's leading monthly magazines, 'Electrical Mirror', 'Renewable Mirror' and 'Construction Mirror'

Membership of Professional Bodies

- Life fellow (FIE) The Institution of Engineers(India)
- Life Member (LMIIM) The Indian Institute of Metals
- Life fellow (FIIPE) Indian Institution of Plant Engineers