



With infrastructure projects on the rise, there is a huge requirement for technologically advanced steel products.

nounced an anti-dumping duty on steel imports from six nations, cheaper imports from these countries into India have been curbed, greatly benefitting local players. Players have since been consolidated and forced to become adequately competitive by raising efficiency and productivity levels.

Considering that India would want to cement its place within the top club of steel manufacturers (India has already emerged as the third largest steel producer, globally), it is imperative that Indian steel industry overcome any challenges. These challenges are in the form of uneconomic production capacities, poor quality raw materials and low interest levels in metallurgical education in Indian academia. The industry is



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MUKESH JAITLEY, THE WADHWA GROUP

actively addressing the problem of poor techno-economics through its efforts of capacity consolidation by phasing out old/obsolete production facilities and adopting state-of-the-art technologies that are relevant to local needs. Globally, such technologies are easily available commercially, and they also focus on energy conservation and environmental protection as key goals.

Giridhar Rajagopalan, executive director, technical, Afcons Infrastructure, articulates this need for change well, stating, "Looking at the larger picture, it is high time that the codes of practice for manufacturing steel are updated to match international standards. There is a need to bridge the gap between the practices vis-à-vis the infrastructure development in the country."

BENDING TO CUSTOMER NEEDS

In an industry where demand generation is the key, vendors are required to keep a close eye on customer requirements. Even in countries like India, where there is a spurt in demand subsequent to new government initiatives and increase in private & public spending, customer requirements cannot be undermined. As a result, the Indian steel industry is getting highly competitive. Managing cost pressures means providing customers what they need. And steel vendors are complying.

As **Mukesh Jaitley, director, projects, The Wadhwa Group**, explains, "Time is always of the essence for project completion and is one of the key requirements for our business. Pre-engineered buildings (PEB structures) are a widely used concept for the early completion of projects, through which great speed is achieved. This leads to cost benefits not only for us, but also for our potential customers."

Shabbir Kanchwala, senior VP, K Raheja Corp, agrees when he suggests, "We have been utilising an increasing number