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Other States - Rajasthan

Rajasthan's quest for gold ends

Special Correspondent

Explorations in Banswara area show enough potential for commercial production

JAIPUR: Rajasthan's quest for gold has ended with two-year-long intensive explorations around the ancient Bhukia gold mine site in Ghatol tehsil of Banswara district showing enough potential for commercial production of the yellow metal in the near future. It is estimated that the area, falling under the Bhukia prospects of the Mahi and Panch Mahuri zones, contains numerous gold and base metal prospects along a 50-60 km long structural corridor in depths averaging 150 metres.

The Bhukia region supposedly had mines some 2,000 years ago. The potential of the place inhabited by Bheel tribes was re-discovered during the past 14 years through explorations undertaken by the Geological Survey of India (GSI) and, of late, by Hindustan Zinc Limited (HZL).

Indo Gold Limited, a Brisbane-based mining company, which did the prospecting in the area in the past two years, is planning to start commercial operation once it gets the mining lease. At present IGL has licence for prospecting in an area of 2,135 sq km referred to as Jagpura Project. It has already spent Rs.2.5 crore to 3 crore out of its budget of Rs.60 crore for prospecting.

"This is going to be the first world class gold mine in Rajasthan," IGL Managing Director Mike Higgins said announcing the gold strike to journalists here on Wednesday. The gold mine would literally prove a gold mine for the people of Rajasthan with a total investment of Rs.2,000 crore which would facilitate 2,000 jobs and income in the form of royalty to the State Government and all-round development in one of the most backward areas of the State.

"We are talking with some confidence as we know a gold mine when we see one," said Surendra K.Chaku, an NRI who has spent 35 years in the gold mines of Australia.

The Rajasthan project of IGL is a joint venture with Metals Mining India Pvt. Ltd. headed by Mr. Chaku. "A new gold district is to come up at Jagpura. It can be compared with major gold provinces in the world such as Telfer in Western Australia, Homestake in the US and Pilgrims Rest in South Africa," he added.

"The latest results support our contention that a new gold-copper mineral camp has been identified over at least 60 km strike within Jagpura indicating a huge potential for the Bhukia prospect area. The mineral resource upgrades for the Mahi and Panch Mahuri zones are also very encouraging," Mr.Higgins said.

