

Media Coverage

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ASSMANG has decided to shut down three high carbon ferromanganese furnaces at its Cato Ridge operations, effective 25 December. The chrome, manganese and iron ore company said the closures were due to "the extensive cutbacks in carbon steel production, particularly in Europe and North America." "The smelter will then be operating three furnaces, which equates to approximately 60% of capacity," the company said.

ASSORE was fined R2.5 million for unintentionally breaking the rules on insider trading, the Financial Services Board said yesterday. The board's enforcement committee took into account that the dealing was an oversight, rather than an intentional transgression.

Desmond Sacco, chairman, has bought 8 500 ordinary shares at R350 at ASSORE .

ASSMANG has submitted an environmental impact assessment report on two furnaces it wanted to build at its CATO RIDGE PLANT. The KwaZulu-Natal department of agriculture and environmental affairs suspended the EIA process eight months ago after six people died in an explosion at the plant, which already has six furnaces.

Manganese ore prices are so high that ASSMANG is trucking ore 1 000 km from its mines in the Northern Cape to Richards Bay in KwaZulu-Natal for export. ASSMANG is doing this because it cannot get the ore out through Port Elizabeth, the port traditionally used for manganese exports. At the moment, the harbour cannot cope with increased export volumes. Road haulage costs to Richards Bay amount to about R650/t, but high-grade manganese fines sold for an average price of US\$197/t (about R1 400) FOB (free on board) during the year to end-June. Prices for high-grade manganese fines have doubled to between \$380/t and \$400/t (between R2 900/t and R3 080/t). ASSMANG sells a variety of grades of manganese ore through long-term contracts, as well as on the spot market.

ASSMANG has planned six-metre ton Khumani iron ore expansion in South Africa and it will cost the company close to R7.3 billion. Start-up funding of R1.2 billion had been approved for the project and a study determining its viability would be completed in the second quarter next year. ASSMANG is a joint venture between ARM and ASSORE.

ASSMANG yesterday denied a report that it would consider disinvesting in SA if the government compelled it to adopt strict controls on hazardous dust. A spokesperson for the firm said the company is not considering any such thing.

Annual earnings at ASSORE a share increased as much as fourfold as it "continued to benefit from the boom in mineral markets".

ASSORE jumps 6.5% to R740 making it its biggest one-day advance since April 7.

ASSORE's full-year profit per share increased as much as fourfold as it "continued to benefit from the boom in base minerals markets", the owner of half of South African manganese producer ASSMANG, said yesterday.