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Autokast set to make bricks from silica sand

Unit has a capacity to produce 4,000 bricks a day

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The Autokast Ltd., a ferrous foundry manufacturing unit in the public sector, is set to begin the commercial production of eco-friendly bricks for the construction sector.

It will make bricks from waste foundry sand, which is rich in silica, using a technology developed by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (CSIR-NIIST).

V.K. Praviraj, managing director, Autokast Ltd., says they have already made brick samples and hope to start mass production before the end of this month.

Officials say the CSIR-NIIST is conducting trials to fix various parameters before the commencement of commercial production.

Technology transfer

"A team from the CSIR-NIIST, the technology partner of the project, is expected to visit the Autokast this week. They will make 3,000 bricks in our presence as part of transferring the technology. We will pay a fee for using their technology," says Mr. Praviraj.

The brick manufacturing



Samples of the brick made from silica sand by Autokast Ltd.

unit has a capacity to produce 4,000 bricks a day. The officials, however, say the initial production would be around 1,500 bricks a day. The plant is expected to reach full production capacity over a period of time.

Silica deposit

The Autokast generates around 700 tonnes of foundry waste sand every month. According to the officials, it has a huge deposit of silica sand that can produce 1.5 lakh high-strength bricks. The CSIR-NIIST technology uses cement bonding and compression moulding technique to make bricks from waste sand.

The Cherthala-based State PSU is looking for buil-

ders to buy the bricks. "We have already received some enquiries. The bricks made from silica sand are eco-friendly and we expect the product will be well received by the market," says an official.

The Autokast, once listed for privatisation, is on a revival path. Recently it manufactured Casnub bogies for Indian Railways, supplied deck-mounted closed chocks and cast iron bricks for solid ballast (used to maintain stability) to INS Vikrant, India's first indigenously aircraft carrier, super-heater header castings in machined condition to the Golden Rock Railway Workshop in Tiruchirappalli and so on.