



Ambuja Cements

STOCK INFO.	BLOOMBERG
BSE SENSEX: 17,016	ACEM IN
	REUTERS CODE
S&P CNX: 5,090	ABUJ.BO

28 April 2008

Neutral

Previous Recommendation: Buy

Rs114

Equity Shares (m)	1,522.4
52-Week Range	161/96
1,6,12 Rel. Perf. (%)	-12/-10/-26
M.Cap. (Rs b)	172.7
M.Cap. (US\$ b)	4.3

YEAR	NET SALES	PAT	EPS	EPS	P/E	P/BV	ROE	ROCE	EV/	EV/
END	(RS M)	(RS M)	(RS)	GROWTH (%)	(X)	(X)	(%)	(%)	SALES	EBITDA
12/07A	56,314	10,814	7.1	-19.6	16.0	3.7	26.6	42.9	2.7	7.5
12/08E	64,170	12,690	8.3	17.3	13.6	3.1	24.9	33.8	2.5	8.1
12/09E	70,035	12,292	8.1	-3.1	14.1	2.8	21.0	27.9	2.4	8.4

- Ambuja Cements' 1QCY08 results were lower than our estimates. EBITDA at Rs5.16b was impacted by lower than estimated realizations and higher cost push in the form of raw material and other expenditure. The company has restated 1QCY07 and CY07 results and hence QoQ comparison is not appropriate.
- Ambuja's 1QCY08 revenue was up 16.6% YoY to Rs16.5b, driven by 10.6% volume growth and 5.4% realizations growth. Volumes at 4.8mt were driven by purchased clinker, whereas improvement in realizations of 5.4% YoY to Rs3,448/ton was driven by improvement in market mix.
- EBITDA for 1QCY08 degrew 9% YoY to Rs5.16b. EBITDA margin contracted 870bp to 31.2%. Higher tax provisioning at 32.5% (v/s 26.3% in 1QCY07) on account of dispute on tax treatment of sales tax incentive has restricted recurring PAT to Rs3.3b (~8% decline).
- We are downgrading our estimates for CY08 by 10% (to Rs8.3) and by 15.7% for CY09 (to Rs8.1) to factor in lower than estimated realizations, lower volumes, higher cost push and higher tax. Valuations at 13.6x CY08E EPS, 8.1x CY08E EV/EBITDA and US\$165/ton (on 25MT capacity) are at premium to its peers. Dilution in superior profitability, inorganic volume growth and concentrated market mix would act as catalyst to alignment of valuations with peers. We downgrade the stock to Neutral with target price of Rs112 (~8x CY08E EV/EBITDA). Corporate action by Holcim, in the form of follow-up open offer, poses risk to our **Neutral** rating.

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE

(RS MILLION)

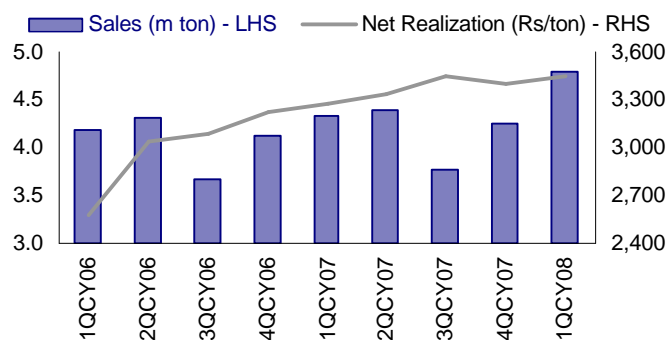
Y/E DECEMBER	CY07				CY08				CY07	CY08E
	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	1Q	2QE	3QE	4QE		
Sales Volume (m ton)	4.34	4.39	3.77	4.26	4.80	4.88	4.20	4.72	16.76	18.60
YoY Change (%)	3.8	1.7	3.0	3.4	10.6	11.2	11.4	10.8	133.3	89.4
Realization (Rs/ton)	3,271	3,336	3,448	3,398	3,448	3,488	3,428	3,433	3,360	3,450
YoY Change (%)	27.3	9.6	11.6	5.3	5.4	4.6	-0.6	1.0	74.2	95.0
QoQ Change (%)	1.4	2.0	3.4	-1.5	1.5	1.2	-1.7	0.2	64.2	16.0
Net Sales	14,195	14,644	12,999	14,476	16,549	17,020	14,396	16,206	56,314	64,170
YoY Change (%)	32.2	11.5	14.9	8.9	16.6	16.2	10.7	12.0	306.8	269.8
EBITDA	5,659	5,453	4,332	5,007	5,160	5,580	4,020	4,703	20,451	19,463
Margins (%)	39.9	37.2	33.3	34.6	31.2	32.8	27.9	29.0	36.3	30.3
Depreciation	598	583	584	598	618	620	650	798	2,363	2,687
Interest	119	-211	-156	1,006	57	65	75	71	759	267
Other Income	330	487	184	935	406	500	450	644	1,935	2,000
PBT before EO Item	5,272	5,567	4,088	4,338	4,890	5,395	3,745	4,479	19,265	18,509
Extraordinary Inc/(Exp)	2,408	5,747	-270	-26	-59	3,032	0	0	7,859	2,973
PBT after EO Exp/(Inc)	7,679	11,314	3,818	4,312	4,832	8,427	3,745	4,479	27,124	21,482
Tax	2,017	2,537	893	3,986	1,570	2,132	1,142	1,339	9,433	6,183
Rate (%)	26.3	22.4	23.4	92.4	32.5	25.3	30.5	29.9	34.8	28.8
Reported Profit	5,663	8,778	2,924	327	3,262	6,295	2,603	3,140	17,691	15,299
Adj PAT	3,582	4,036	3,133	2,083	3,302	3,634	2,603	3,140	10,814	12,700
YoY Change (%)	33.5	23.2	19.7	-38.3	-7.8	-10.0	-16.9	50.8	60.4	428.6

E: MOST Estimates

Volume growth drives revenue growth

Ambuja's 1QCY08 revenue was up 16.6% YoY to Rs16.5b, driven by 10.6% volume growth and 5.4% realizations growth. Volumes at 4.8mt were driven by purchased clinker. Domestic dispatches grew 16%, as focus on domestic market led to 50% decline in exports. Consequently, realizations improvement of 5.4% YoY to Rs3,448/ton was driven by improvement in market mix in favor of domestic market (exports were ~4% of dispatches v/s 9% in 1QCY07).

TREND IN DISPATCHES AND REALIZATIONS

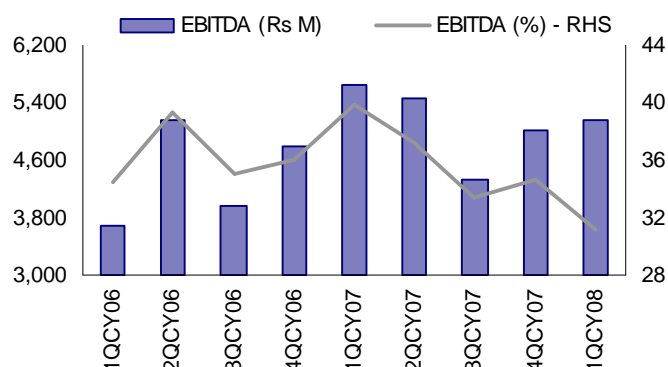


Source: Company/Motilal Oswal Securities

Cost push restricts margin expansion

EBITDA for 1QCY08 degrew 9% YoY to Rs5.16b impacted by higher cost push. EBITDA margin contracted 870bp to 31.2%. Margins were impacted by cost push in form of raw material and higher fixed cost.

TREND IN EBITDA



Source: Company/Motilal Oswal Securities

While raw material cost (higher by 80% YoY on per ton basis) push is on account of higher purchase of clinker

(~188% increase) to support volume growth, other expenditure (up by 25% YoY on per ton basis) was higher due to on-going SAP implementation, increase in marketing spend and fixed cost on recently commissioned grinding units.

INCOME STATEMENT (RS/TON)

	1QCY08	YOY (%)	QOQ (%)
Net Realizations	3,448	5.4	1.5
Raw Material	438	80.4	67.9
Staff Cost	138	18.9	10.2
Power & Fuel	587	9.8	-14.8
Freight	665	4.0	6.1
Other expenditure	544	25.5	4.6
Total Cost	2,373	20.6	6.8
EBITDA	1,075	-17.6	-8.5

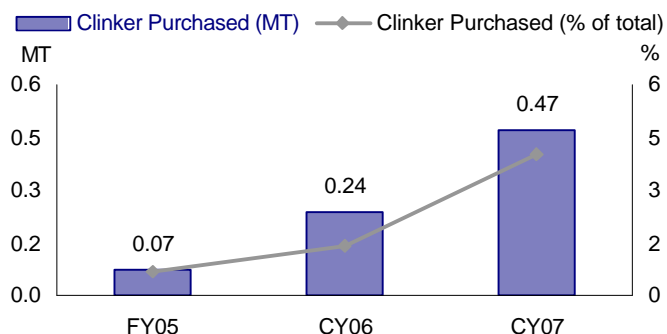
Source: Company/Motilal Oswal Securities

Other income was higher by 66% at Rs349m, driven by dividend income. Higher tax provisioning at 32.5% (v/s 26.3% in 1QCY07), on account of dispute on tax treatment of sales tax incentive, restricted recurring PAT to Rs3.3b (~8% decline).

Volume growth to be driven by purchased clinker...

Ambuja Cements is currently facing capacity constraints, which limited its volume growth to 3.7% in CY07. The company was able to grow volumes by resorting to higher blending and clinker purchases. Although it is pursuing capacity expansion, new capacities would be operational only in CY09. In CY08, volume growth would be driven by purchased clinker, which the company would grind at its recently commissioned standalone grinding units. We estimate volume growth of 7.4% in CY08.

TREND IN CLINKER PURCHASED

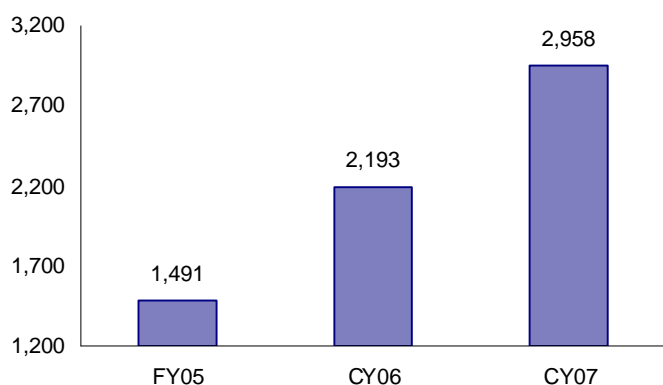


Source: Company/Motilal Oswal Securities

...thereby impacting profitability

To achieve volume growth in CY08, the company would purchase clinker, which would be ground at its recently commissioned grinding units. Incremental volumes would enjoy lower profitability, as purchased clinker costs more. In CY07, it purchased around 0.5m ton of clinker (~4% of total clinker grounded), at an average cost of Rs2,958/ton. Based on clinker cost of Rs2,958/ton, our estimates suggest that Ambuja Cements would have earned EBITDA margin of 22-27% on incremental volumes v/s blended margins of 36% in CY07. Cost of clinker purchases increased by 35% in CY07. While it is difficult to estimate the quantum of purchased clinker, we believe that cost of purchased clinker would go up further in CY08, impacting overall profitability.

TREND IN CLINKER COST (RS/TON)

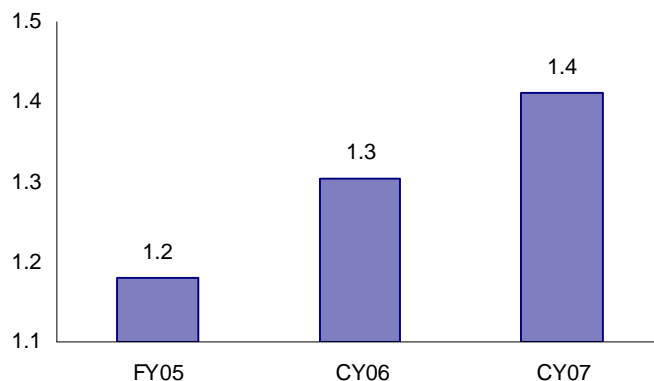


Source: Company/Motilal Oswal Securities

Limited blending potential

The company has limited scope to increase production by increasing blending. Its volume growth in CY07 was also aided by higher blending, with blending ratio of 1.45x (v/s 1.34x in CY06). The increase in blending was also enabled by shifting of cement exports (mainly OPC) to domestic market (mainly PPC). Given that the company is only into fly ash blending and not into slag blending, there is limited scope to increase its blending further to boost throughput.

BLENDED NEARING PEAK (X)



Source: Company/Motilal Oswal Securities

Investment in CPP to dilute impact of spiraling energy cost

The 112MW CPP at various locations are expected to commence operations from 2QCY08, taking total CPP capacity to 519MW. These are in addition to 66MW of CPP added during CY07. These CPP would help mitigate rising energy cost, as reflected in only 10% increase in energy cost in 1QCY08. Further, Ambuja has contracts for imported coal at US\$135-145/ton, which would suffice its requirement till September 2008.

Export ban not to impact volume growth

Ambuja would not be adversely impacted by ban on export of cement and clinker, as it exported only 1.3MT of cement in CY07 (~8% of total dispatches). Given that the company exports only cement, it would be better placed to channelize its exports towards domestic market. While it is early to assess impact of ban on exports on demand and pricing, we do not estimate loss of volume in FY09 and FY10. Further, shift from exports to domestic market would result in improvement in realizations if prices remain stable (domestic prices are higher by ~Rs15/bag).

Strengthening sea transport infrastructure...

The company presently owns seven ships for transport of cement from Ambujanagar to Panvel, Surat and Muldwarka. The existing fleet is just sufficient to meet its current requirement. In order to meet growing cement demand, the company has placed an order for three ships

with capacity of 4,500DWT (2 ships) and 2,800DWT (1 ship). While one 4,500DWT ship is expected by the end of 2008, other ships are slated for delivery in 2009. The addition of these three vessels will enhance its ability to cater to South Gujarat and Mumbai.

...to enable entry into Southern market

The company is setting up a bulk cement terminal at Kochi in Kerala, with total carriage capacity of 1MT. The total investment in this project is estimated at Rs850m. This terminal will give access to fast growing Southern India by sea route cost effectively. The terminal is scheduled to be commissioned by December 2008 and would enable the company to channelize its exports to Southern market.

New capacity from 2QCY09

The company's capex plan to add around 5.4MT (2.2MT clinker unit each at Chattisgarh and HP, with supporting split grinding units) are largely on track to commence operations from 2QCY09. In the interim, volume growth would be driven by recent augmentation of clinker capacity (by 0.5MT at Rajasthan) and higher blending driven by new grinding units being feed by purchased clinker.

CAPACITY EXPANSION - ENSURES VOLUME GROWTH

LOCATION	CAP	COMMIN BY	CAPEX (RS M)
Bhatapara, Chattisgarh	2.2m ton	2QCY09	8,000
Rauri, HP	2.2m ton	3Q/4QCY09	8,000
Dadri, UP	1.5m ton	3QCY09	2,750
Nalagarh, HP	1.5m ton	1HCY10	2,750
Barh, Bihar	1m ton	1HCY10	1,800
Ahmedabad, Gujarat	1.5m ton	2QCY09	2,700
Thermal CPP at multiple locations	112MW		8,250
Total			34,250

Source: Company/Motilal Oswal Securities

Revising estimates

We are downgrading our estimates for CY08 by 10% (to Rs8.3) and by 15.7% for CY09 (to Rs8.1), to factor in:

- ✍ Lower than estimated realizations in 1QCY08
- ✍ Higher raw material cost due to purchased clinker

- ✍ Higher staff cost
- ✍ Higher tax provisioning on account of sales tax incentive treatment
- ✍ Lower volumes in CY09E due to delay in capacity expansion

REVISED FORECAST (RS M)

	CY08E			CY09E		
	REV	OLD	CHG (%)	REV	OLD	CHG (%)
Net Sales	64,170	63,540	1.0	70,035	75,117	-6.8
Net Profit	12,690	14,102	-10.0	12,292	14,576	-15.7
EPS (Rs)	8.3	9.3	-10.0	8.1	9.6	-15.7

Source: Motilal Oswal Securities

Downgrading to Neutral, in line with earnings downgrade

Ambuja commanded premium valuations as compared to its peers, as it earned higher margins with higher volume growth. The company's profitability has been severely impacted by increasing share of traded cement (by purchasing clinker due to back-ended capacity addition), spiraling imported coal cost (~40-50% imported coal) and higher fixed cost (due to investment in SAP). As a result, its profitability has been declining since 1QCY07 (~18% in 1QCY08 to Rs1,075/ton), bringing it in line with the industry average. Although volume growth is expected to remain strong at 11.6% CAGR over CY07-09, volume growth would be margin dilutive as it would be driven by purchased clinker. Lastly, Ambuja Cement's key market could witness excess supply earlier than estimated due to ban on exports (West) and new capacity additions (North), thereby impacting pricing and profitability.

Valuations at 13.6x CY08E EPS, 8.1x CY08E EV/EBITDA and US\$165/ton (on 25MT capacity) are at premium to peers. Dilution in superior profitability, inorganic volume growth and concentrated market mix would act as catalyst to alignment of valuations with peers. **We downgrade the stock to Neutral with target price of Rs112 (~8x CY08E EV/EBITDA).** Corporate action by Holcim, in the form of follow-up open offer, poses risk to our **Neutral** rating.

PARAMETERS (RS MILLION)

Y/E MARCH	ACC [^]		GRASIM*		AMBUJA [^]		ULTRATECH		LARGE-CAP	
	FY09	FY10	FY 09	FY 10	FY 09	FY 10	FY09	FY10	FY 09	FY 10
CMP (Rs)	767	767	2,634	2,634	113	113	778	778		
Valuations										
P/E (x)	12.1	13.2	9.2	9.0	13.6	14.1	8.9	8.8	11.7	12.1
EV/Ton (Cap) US\$	127	116	114	95	210	166	114	96	146	126
EV/EBITDA(x)	6.8	7.7	5.1	4.7	8.1	8.4	5.2	5.0	6.7	7.0
RoE (%)	24.0	19.3	22.8	19.3	24.9	21.0	34.0	26.1	27.6	22.2
RoCE (%)	27.2	20.8	32.8	29.1	33.8	27.9	36.8	32.6		
Operational Parameters										
Cap (mton)	24.5	27.5	35.4	35.9	18.8	25.0	23.1	25.1	66	78
Despatches (mton)	21.4	24.4	29.2	33.6	18.6	20.9	19.2	20.9	59	66
Cement Volume Growth (%)	7.0	14.0	15.3	14.9	11.0	12.2	11.0	9.1	11.4	12.9
EBITDA (Rs/ton)	857	684	1,052	895	1,046	947	1,051	927	979	844

* Grasim's EV is on consolidated basis; [^] Y/E December; ~Y/E June

Source: Motilal Oswal Securities

Ambuja Cements: an investment profile

Company description

Gujarat Ambuja is the third largest cement company in India with total capacity of 14.9m ton under its control. It is one of the lowest cost producers of cement with focus on structurally sound markets of North, West and East. It is also the largest exporter of cement from India.

Key investment arguments

- ✍ Best positioned geographically (#1 & #2 in North and West, respectively) to benefit from current upturn in cement prices.
- ✍ Geographical location gives flexibility to choose between domestic and export market.
- ✍ Financially well placed (zero net debt) to drive further consolidation in the industry.

Key investment risks

- ✍ Exhausting sales tax benefit in Gujarat, coupled with implementation of VAT, could impact margins adversely.
- ✍ Any downturn in the export market would result in over-supply in the domestic market, resulting in pressure on prices in the key market of Gujarat.

COMPARATIVE VALUATIONS

		GACL	ACC	ULTRATECH
P/E (x)	CY08E	13.6	12.1	8.9
	CY09E	14.1	13.2	8.8
P/BV (x)	CY08E	3.1	2.9	2.6
	CY09E	2.8	2.5	2.0
EV/Sales (x)	CY08E	2.5	1.8	1.6
	CY09E	2.4	1.6	1.4
EV/EBITDA (x)	CY08E	8.1	6.8	5.2
	CY09E	8.4	7.7	5.0

SHAREHOLDING PATTERN (%)

	MAR-08	DEC-07	MAR-07
Promoter	46.5	46.5	32.6
Domestic Inst	13.7	14.1	15.7
Foreign	27.9	28.3	37.1
Others	12.0	11.2	14.5

Recent developments

- ✍ Open offer by Holcim for 20% of Ambuja's fully diluted equity is postponed till further notice.

Valuation and view

- ✍ Dilution in superior profitability, inorganic volume growth and concentrated market mix would act as catalyst to alignment of valuations with peers.
- ✍ Valuations at 13.6x CY08E EPS, 8.1x CY08E EV/EBITDA and US\$165/ton (on 25MT capacity) are at premium to its peers. We downgrade the stock to **Neutral** with target price of Rs112 (~8x CY08E EV/EBITDA).

Sector view

- ✍ Strong GDP growth, coupled with sustainable demand drivers, augurs well for cement demand growth
- ✍ Although significant capacity addition has already been announced, real impact of these capacities would be felt only in 2HFY09
- ✍ Imports not a significant threat, due to infrastructural bottlenecks.

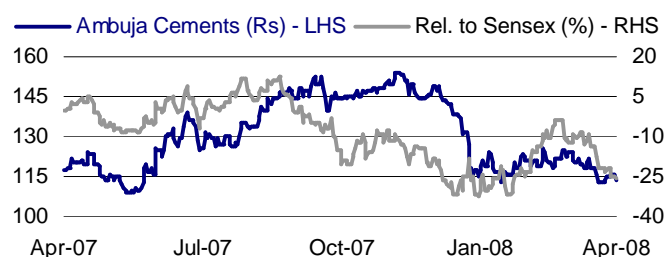
EPS: MOST FORECAST VS CONSENSUS (RS)

	MOST FORECAST	CONSENSUS FORECAST	VARIATION (%)
CY08	8.3	9.4	-11.5
CY09	8.1	8.6	-6.4

TARGET PRICE AND RECOMMENDATION

CURRENT PRICE (RS)	TARGET PRICE (RS)	UPSIDE (%)	RECO.
114	112	-	Neutral

STOCK PERFORMANCE (1 YEAR)



INCOME STATEMENT					
(Rs Million)					
Y/E DECEMBER	2005#	2006E#	2007	2008E	2009E
Net Sales	31,056	48,479	56,314	64,170	70,035
Change (%)	28.6	56.1	16.2	14.0	9.1
EBITDA	8,461	17,608	20,451	19,463	19,764
Margin (%)	27.2	36.3	36.3	30.3	28.2
Depreciation	1,994	2,269	2,363	2,687	3,531
EBIT	6,467	15,338	18,088	16,777	16,233
Int. and Finance Charges	869	377	759	267	399
Other Income - Rec.	1,055	1,199	1,935	2,000	1,600
PBT before EO Exp.	6,654	16,160	19,265	18,509	17,435
EO Expense/(Income)	0	0	-7,859	-2,973	0
PBT after EO Exp.	6,654	16,160	27,124	21,482	17,435
Current Tax	1,046	2,648	9,442	6,199	5,161
Deferred Tax	-24	112	-9	-16	-17
Tax Rate (%)	15.4	17.1	34.8	28.8	29.5
Reported PAT	5,563	13,401	17,691	15,299	12,292
PAT Adj for EO Items	5,563	13,401	10,814	12,690	12,292
Change (%)	70.5	140.9	-19.3	17.3	-3.1
Net Profit	5,494	13,401	10,814	12,690	12,292

BALANCE SHEET					
(Rs Million)					
Y/E DECEMBER	2005^	2006*	2007	2008E	2009E
Equity Share Capital	2,704	3,034	3,045	3,045	3,045
Total Reserves	19,080	31,884	43,568	52,407	58,689
Net Worth	21,784	34,917	46,613	55,452	61,733
Deferred Liabilities	3,811	3,839	3,784	3,768	3,750
Total Loans	11,275	8,654	3,304	6,000	4,630
Capital Employed	36,870	47,410	53,701	65,220	70,108
Gross Block	37,092	45,425	52,311	60,811	83,311
Less: Accum. Deprn.	14,639	20,533	22,712	25,399	28,929
Net Fixed Assets	22,452	24,892	29,599	35,412	54,381
Capital WIP	1,181	6,349	6,968	7,500	1,500
Investments	11,251	11,331	12,889	17,131	9,119
Curr. Assets	5,846	11,776	15,873	16,453	16,665
Inventory	3,170	4,088	5,816	7,479	8,388
Account Receivables	458	900	1,457	1,994	2,237
Cash and Bank Balance	865	3,781	6,508	3,989	2,684
Others	1,352	3,007	2,093	2,991	3,355
Curr. Liability & Prov.	3,958	7,016	11,691	11,338	11,619
Account Payables	2,890	5,329	6,755	7,349	8,264
Provisions	1,068	1,687	4,936	3,989	3,355
Net Current Assets	1,888	4,760	4,182	5,115	5,046
Misc Expenditure	97	77	62	62	62
Appl. of Funds	36,870	47,410	53,701	65,220	70,108

E: MOSt Estimates; ^ Y/E June; # 12 months ending December; * 12 month period end

RATIOS					
Y/E DECEMBER	2005#	2006E#	2007	2008E	2009E
Basic (Rs)					
EPS	4.1	8.8	7.1	8.3	8.1
Cash EPS	5.6	10.3	8.7	10.1	10.4
BV/Share	16.0	23.0	30.6	36.4	40.5
DPS	18	3.3	3.5	3.5	3.5
Payout (%)	38.8	39.2	35.2	40.7	48.9
Valuation (x)					
P/E		12.8	16.0	13.6	14.1
Cash P/E		11.0	13.1	11.2	10.9
P/BV		4.9	3.7	3.1	2.8
EV/Sales		3.3	2.7	2.5	2.4
EV/EBITDA		9.0	7.5	8.1	8.4
EV/Ton (Cap) - US\$		241	203	209	165
Dividend Yield (%)		2.9	3.1	3.1	3.1
Return Ratios (%)					
RoE	28.5	47.4	26.6	24.9	21.0
RoCE	23.3	43.3	42.9	33.8	27.9
Working Capital Ratios					
Asset Turnover (x)	0.8	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Debtor (Days)	5	6	8	10	10
Leverage Ratio (x)					
Current Ratio	15	17	14	15	14
Debt/Equity	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1

CASH FLOW STATEMENT (INCL ACEL)					
(Rs Million)					
Y/E DECEMBER	2005^	2006*	2007	2008E	2009E
Op. Profit/(Loss) before Tax	7,562	22,002	21,185	19,463	19,764
Interest/Dividends Recd.	64	357	1,000	2,000	1,600
Direct Taxes Paid	-371	-4,503	-4,489	-6,183	-5,143
(Inc)/Dec in WC	-791	463	-1,110	-3,452	-1,235
CF from Operations	6,464	18,319	16,587	11,828	14,986
EO Income	0	0	0	2,973	0
CF from Op. incl EO Exp	6,464	18,319	16,587	14,801	14,986
(inc)/dec in FA	-1,709	-7,564	-5,284	-9,032	-16,500
(Pur)/Sale of Investments	-887	935	2,668	-4,241	8,012
CF from Investments	-2,596	-6,629	-2,616	-13,274	-8,488
Issue of Shares	153	481	323	-225	0
(Inc)/Dec in Debt	-1,169	-3,402	-5,253	2,680	-1,387
Interest Paid	-848	-1,202	-483	-267	-399
Dividend Paid	-1,827	-4,766	-5,832	-6,234	-6,010
CF from Fin. Activity	-3,691	-8,889	-11,244	-4,047	-7,796
Inc/Dec of Cash	177	2,802	2,726	-2,519	-1,298
Add: Beginning Balance	688	980	3,782	6,508	3,989
Closing Balance	865	3,781	6,508	3,989	2,690

E: MOSt Estimates; ^ Y/E June; # 12 months ending December; * 12 month period end



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Ambuja Cements

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|---|----|
| 1. Analyst ownership of the stock | No |
| 2. Group/Directors ownership of the stock | No |
| 3. Broking relationship with company covered | No |
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