
Venezuela seizes control of Cemex plants

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Associated Press reported that Venezuelan government officials backed by National Guard troops has seized control of cement plants owned by Mexico's Cemex SAB after failing to reach a deal on terms for nationalizing them.

As a deadline for talks expired at midnight of August 18th 2008, Mr Rafael Ramirez oil minister of Venezuela raised a fist in the air while hundreds of flag waving workers cheered at a Cemex plant. Mr Ramirez said that "We are taking over operations. With Cemex, regrettably, we could not reach an agreement."

It may be noted that two other cement companies, Lafarge SA of France and Switzerland's Holcim Limited, earlier agreed to nationalization terms for their companies in Venezuela and said they would stay on as minority partners.

Cemex said that its Venezuela assets include 3 cement plants, 30 smaller concrete plants, a shipping terminal and other facilities. Cemex acknowledged Venezuela's move to assume control of its plants in a statement, but declined further comment.

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