

# China Basic Materials Sector

Refer to important disclosures at the end of this report

DBS Group Research . Equity

17 Jan 2022

## Opportunities from tighter supply in 1Q22

- **China's new infrastructure development and carbon policies to drive better consumption growth for lithium and aluminium materials**
- **Growing demand amid accommodative China monetary policies and persistent tight supply to benefit product price sentiment**
- **Positive on lithium and aluminium but turn cautious on steel**
- **Sector valuation has turned attractive and we prefer industry cost leaders with more resilient earnings outlook - [Hongqiao \(1378 HK\)](#), [Ganfeng \(1772 HK\)](#) and [Conch \(914 HK\)](#)**

### Opportunities from new infrastructure drivers to continue.

Overall material consumption growth has decelerated after its robust recovery from the pandemic. China's new and clean economy development should drive faster consumption growth for lithium and aluminium materials (16%/3% CAGR) in the next five years. Also, we believe the continued new infrastructure projects will mitigate cement and steel demand slowdown.

**Expect price rebound but conservative on steel.** Overall market supply has slowed down in reaction to product price correction since 3Q21. We expect market prices would rebound, underpinned by persistent tight supply outlook, with accommodative China monetary policies to mitigate demand slowdown. Despite this, we are conservative on steel price outlook given possible supply rebound upon completion of the industry output curb last year.

### Falling input costs amid increase in China's power supply.

We expect China's easing power shortage woes and coal price decline to lower production costs. Aluminium smelters and cement producers are the two energy-intensive industries to benefit the most. The dual control on energy consumption policies will persist in restraining supply of finished products and demand for input materials, which could support products GP expansion.

**Appealing valuation.** The sector is currently trading at only 1.2x FY22F price-to-book (P/B), lower than its historical average of 1.6x. We believe the sector has been oversold as China's market consumption growth is unlikely to collapse next year, and companies' financial positions are generally strengthening. On an expected ROE of 15% versus 9% over the last decade, we see share price to re-rate underpinned by an expected pick-up in margins. Prefer industry leaders with strong cost leadership and reiterate BUY Hongqiao. We also like Conch and Ganfeng. Meanwhile, we downgrade our TP and rating on steel.

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### Recommendation & valuation

Company Name	Currency	Price Local\$	Target	Recom	PE
			Price Local\$		22F
<a href="#">Anhui Conch Cement 'H' (914 HK)</a>	HKD	40.60	58.00	BUY	5.3
<a href="#">Anhui Conch Cmt. 'A' (600585 CH)</a>	CNY	39.06	55.00	BUY	6.3
<a href="#">China Hongqiao Group (1378 HK)</a>	HKD	8.93	15.00	BUY	3.5
<a href="#">Ganfeng Lithium 'H' (1772 HK)</a>	HKD	117.40	230.00	BUY	28.5
<a href="#">Ganfeng Lithium 'A' (002460 CH)</a>	CNY	128.63	230.00	BUY	38.2

Source: Thomson Reuters, DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited ("DBS HK")



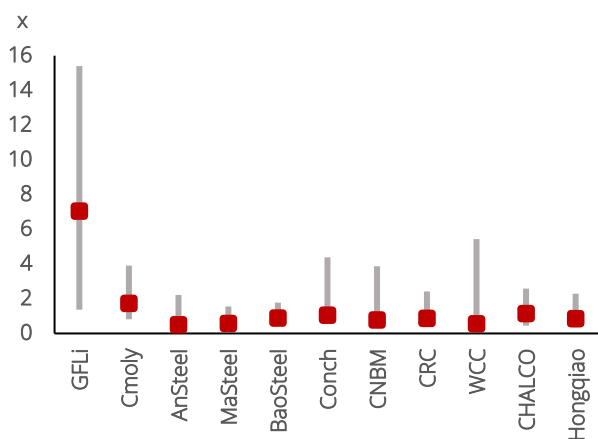
Live more, Bank less

**When would the cycle turn?**

**P/B ROE**

We believe P/B ROE-based valuation parameters are appropriate in gauging market expectations of when the cycle will turn. The sector has corrected by an average of 31% since late August and early September this year, triggered by the correction in commodity prices. At the current level, almost all of them are trading at an average of 1.2x FY22F price-to-book (P/B), clustering at their corresponding lows in the last decade. While we expect a earnings downgrade on the street estimate due to weak 4Q21 earnings, we do believe the tight supply outlook driven commodities price rebound will drive margins and earnings to be maintained at their relatively high historical bases. As such, the captioned valuation level does provide good opportunities for entry in view that the sector is still offering good ROE returns.

**China basic materials' prevailing P/B, 2010-2021**



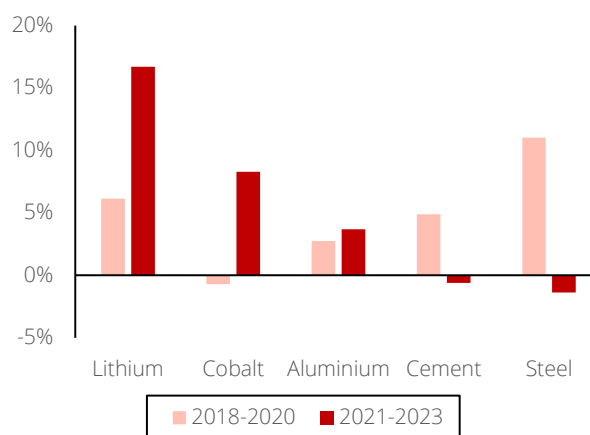
Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., DBS HK

▪ **Slowing consumption versus opportunities in electric vehicles and carbon transition**

We expect China's material consumption growth to decelerate in 2022 after making a strong recovery from the pandemic this year. This is also partly due to the negative impact from the slowing China real estate investment over the year. As the government's monetary policies are expected to be accommodative, we believe this could support a gradual market rebound for construction materials. In the meantime, amid China's new infrastructure development, rising electric vehicle market penetration and its 2030 carbon strategy, we expect better consumption growth potential for lithium and aluminium materials, at an

estimated >16% CAGR for lithium and c.3% for aluminium from 2021-2023.

**China consumption growth, 2021-2023 CAGR**



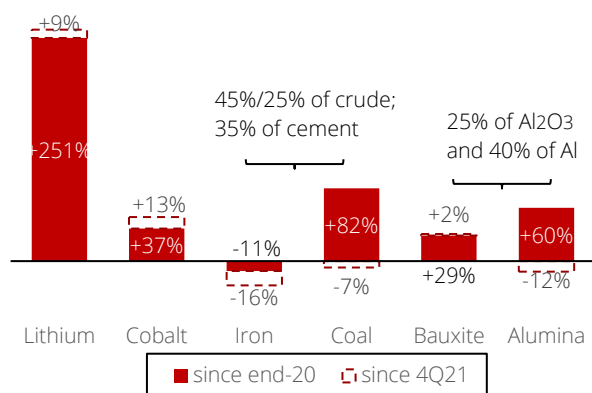
Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., DBS HK

▪ **Normalising steel output from power supply shortage**

China's slowing economic growth and production disruptions amid China's power shortage have resulted in a correction in the commodity market since late August and early September. Until mid-December, amid further liquidity injection into the banking system from China PBOC's second cut of the year in required reserve ratio, overall material market prices had started to stabilise. However, we believe the normalising steel production may increase market supply. With signs of production run rate rebounding towards Dec-21, we are conservative on steel GP, which may come under pressure with price rebound in iron ore exceeding that in steel product on speculation and restocking. In all, we are concerned about the incremental steel supply would cap steel price upside.

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Power shortage has dampened Chinese steel iron ore prices since 4Q21



Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., DBS HK

Mixed GP outlook

	FY19	FY20	FY21F	FY22F	FY23F	Trend
<b>Aluminium</b>						
Chalco	6.4%	7.2%	11.5%	13.2%	14.7%	↑
Hongqiao	19.6%	22.5%	28.1%	29.1%	30.6%	↑
<b>Cement</b>						
CNBM	30.2%	26.2%	24.3%	25.5%	26.0%	→
Conch	32.4%	28.5%	27.6%	28.0%	29.1%	→
CRC*	40.2%	39.0%	37.1%	37.3%	37.9%	→
WCC	33.7%	32.8%	35.7%	35.4%	35.7%	→
<b>Steel</b>						
AnSteel	8.3%	9.2%	14.3%	13.9%	14.6%	→
BaoSteel	11.0%	11.1%	17.4%	15.3%	15.9%	→
MaSteel	8.1%	9.1%	16.7%	14.2%	15.0%	↑
<b>Li &amp; Co</b>						
Cmoly	3.3%	6.7%	9.2%	9.3%	9.3%	→
GFLi	23.6%	21.2%	38.4%	42.6%	39.0%	↑

Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., DBS HK

Implication from China’s carbon trading development and other regulatory risks

Except for coal, we think overall policy headwinds from the government’s price regulation are diminishing, following the broad correction from their multiple year highs during the last quarter in Q4FY21. Meanwhile, media has reported that the industry is reviewing new capacity projects that are required to adhere to corresponding carbon quota before starting construction amid the dual regulatory control on

energy consumption. This supports market outlook on restraining the increase in new supply, combined with existing efforts to limit industry capacity and off-peak production arrangement. We are eagerly watching the development of China’s carbon trading market development to see whether cement or steel would be the next to join the fray. This could provide hints on the next industry outperformer in the race to become the first clean producer.

Expecting a new equilibrium

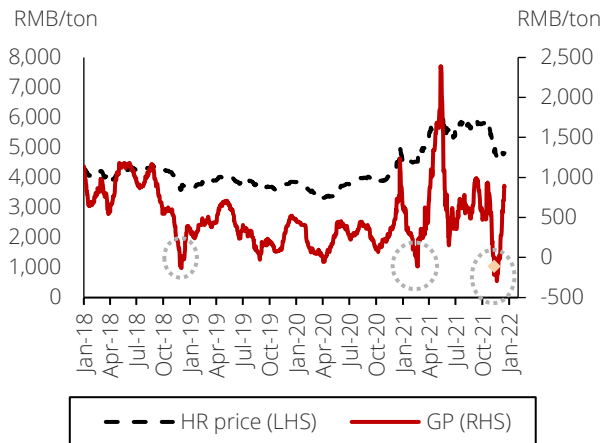
- Steel (Neutral from POSITIVE) – output curb continues to mitigate the shrinking market demand

The output curb is not an ultimate measure. Under the governments’ blueprint of carbon peak strategy, we have witnessed a dramatic shift in the Chinese steel industry’s production pattern over the second half of the year. That was read as the industry’s efforts in controlling emissions at the “peak” while maintaining steady China’s crude steel production relative to previous year. Based on Chinese crude steel production run rate during 2H21, we estimate China’s crude steel production growth to decline by >2% y-o-y in 2022. The uncertainty in supply arises from China’s power supply shortage which is expected to ease gradually although we see supply upside risks.

Less optimistic on domestic consumption. In our observation over the last two months, considering the steel output curb, Chinese social inventory held by middlemen was largely unchanged over the period. Our interpretation is that despite the supply cut, the magnitude of domestic consumption slowdown has equally affected the inventory and market balance level. The anecdotal evidence is that there was a more widespread impact on domestic steel demand from real estate investments during the previous downcycle. Assuming the continuation of a steadier export momentum, we expect China’s apparent consumption to drop c.3% in 2022 after 2021’s c.2% decline.

Steel products’ margin overhang. We are cautious that Chinese steel product margins will remain subdued. And we believe the market outlook would depends on the introduction of new output curbs. In the event that curbs are relaxed next year, iron ore prices could rebound quickly as they have been largely depressed and this disincentivised the miners from responding immediately. Considering the three-week lag between steel prices and inputs costs, we are concerned that a slower rebound in steel prices as compared to iron ore could restrain Chinese steel products’ margin performance ahead. Meanwhile, we expect a relatively low likelihood of a significant rebound in Chinese steel prices over 2022.

**China steel product price and simulated GP**



Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., DBS HK

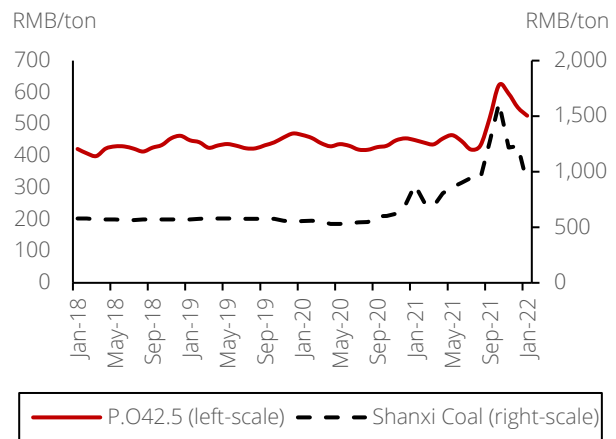
- **Cement (NEUTRAL) – opportunities of sales recovery and margin rebound**

**Off-peak winter production to mitigate silo level increase.** China cement output dropped 17% y-o-y in Oct-21 due to a double whammy from dual control on energy consumption and the power rationing constraint, but the overall situation was less severe than previously thought with accumulated consumption rose 2% y-o-y in Jan to Oct-21. The silo level of cement products at plants had exceeded 2018's high which was primarily attributed to subdued cement sales shipment recorded after product prices hit their historical high. We note that provinces have announced their off-peak production plan for winter which could help to slow down the increase in silo level. After all, we remain optimistic that the industry's capacity replacement arrangement of two tons of capacity closure per ton of new capacity (across those pollution prevention key regions) would support a stable capacity utilisation outlook.

**Catalyst from construction projects restarting in the near term.** We expect overall cement sales to eventually rebound as: (1) new starts of infrastructure projects accelerate, (2) special bond issuances continue, and more importantly (3) gradual improvement in market sentiment after the liquidity injection from PBOC's second cut in RRR, and relaxed mortgage and refinancing requirements supported the real estate sector. We maintain our stance that China's cement consumption per capita is at its peak and the high outstanding local government debt level also constrains additional spending on large-scale projects. However, we expect the near-term catalyst from the restart of construction projects to drive better market outlook in the quarters ahead. Meanwhile, we forecast China's cement consumption to contract by 1% each in 2021 and 2022.

**Prime beneficiary of coal price decline.** China P.O42.5 grade cement price is slowly coming off its historical high amid weakening downstream consumption. We believe cement producers could still benefit in product margin rebound from the normalising coal market supply, resulting in a faster decline in their coal input cost. Coal benchmark price decline has benefitted not only in terms of lower production costs but has also enable them to utilise power generated from residual heat. We foresee a clearer pathway when the right to participate in the carbon trading market is granted. In the longer run, producers have also opted to shift towards clean energy or pursue green power purchases advocated in western countries which is overall complementing China's development strategy of Industry 4.0.

**China P.O42.5 grade cement price**



Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., DBS HK

- **Aluminium (POSITIVE) – resilient demand; tight supply outlook support price momentum**

**The "dual control" on energy consumption swings China's supply market landscape.** In 2021, China dual control and power shortage has disrupted local market supply, exceeding 2m tons cut as per Antaika estimate, representing 5% of total aluminium supply in 2021. Over the next 12 months, we believe the aluminium supply increase will decelerate, limited by the industry capacity ceiling which is likely to be kept unchanged at 45m tons. Even considering the easing bottleneck in upstream supply chain, such as a return in oversupply in alumina market and diminishing geopolitical risk in bauxite supply from Guinea, we believe there will still be undersupply in Chinese aluminium due to production constraints. Also, we believe project delays following the implementation of ladder-type pricing for electricity would also add to the downside risk for supply growth.

**Constructive consumption outlook.** We foresee several factors supporting consumption to return to pre-pandemic levels. Firstly, the anticipation of expected fiscal and monetary stimulus has driven a rebound in infrastructure and property investments, resulting in greater demand for construction activities, including aluminium usage in electrical equipment and machinery sectors. Secondly, we expect a continued need for lightweight materials as replacement for aluminium car-body parts as lighter materials result in lower energy consumption. Thirdly, amid China's carbon strategy, we expect support from China's rising electric vehicle penetration amid the energy transition development. We note that China's electric vehicle output grew 164% y-o-y in the first 10 months of 2021, well above that of fuel-car market growth. Overall, we stay optimistic on China's consumption growth momentum over the next few years.

**Undersupply supports SHFE aluminium price uptrend.** In 2022, imports will still be needed to fill China's market supply gap. Meanwhile, we estimate China's primary aluminium supply growth to be slower at 5.1%, down from 5.4% in 2021, whereas estimated demand growth remains fast at c.5%. Considering the relatively low social stock available, the domestic aluminium market price uptrend should be maintained next year. Based on our regional commodity price forecast, we have revised up our latest aluminium price forecast to RMB19,000 and RMB20,000 for 2022 and 2023 respectively. There is a major overhang from whether the state reserve bureau's metal disposal programme will be continued next year despite its overall impact over the last six months when it sold an equivalent of c.1% of our estimated supply in 2021.

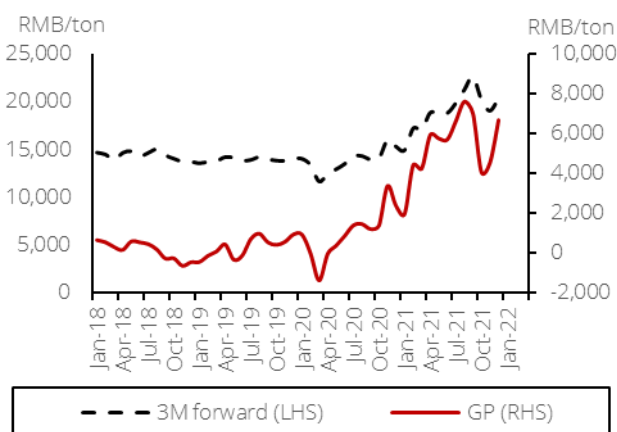
- **Cobalt (NEUTRAL from POSITIVE) – solid demand; risk arising from quicker supply resumption**

**Incremental supply from Glencore's resumption and new production in Congo.** Glencore's Mutanda in the Democratic Republic of Congo accounted for 20% of global total cobalt production in 2018. It was suspended since 2019 due to the slump in cobalt prices along with surging costs and taxes. The mine is scheduled to restart after the current market prices have made production economically feasible and would be the main source of new market supply in 2022 and 2023. Meanwhile, over 81% of global cobalt mined supply comes from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Considering that the mines operated by individual Chinese investors are also ramping up capacity, we believe this could provide incremental new supply pressure over the next two years.

**Solid consumption near term despite upcoming cobalt-free technology.** Even though concerns about advanced technology would reduce cobalt usage in battery production as a few major manufacturers are developing their cobalt-free cathode material production. Global annual cobalt demand from lithium-ion batteries is expected to grow at a CAGR of 5.7% during 2021-2025, as per Bloomberg data, led by rising trend of China's electric vehicle market penetration growth. Despite this, we highlight the risk that if energy density improvement continues, currently at a perceived threshold of 250Wh/kg or above, the market could shift out from NCM categories hence posing potential downside in cobalt consumption per pack of battery and are constraining the industry's consumption growth outlook.

**Cobalt price appreciation might moderate in the medium term.** After its 72% run-up in 2021 which has returned to a high level since 2019, we expect Chinese cobalt prices to remain at its 4Q21 level but upside would turn moderate from 2022 afterwards. Over our forecast period till end-2025, battery consumption is projected to reach 70% of total cobalt consumption, expanding from 63% in 2020. However, the continuous technology advancement in reducing cobalt usage will eventually neutralise the benefit from the rising trend of China's electric vehicle market penetration growth. Due to the industry's efforts to lower overall battery pack prices, we believe the cobalt price upside will be ultimately capped.

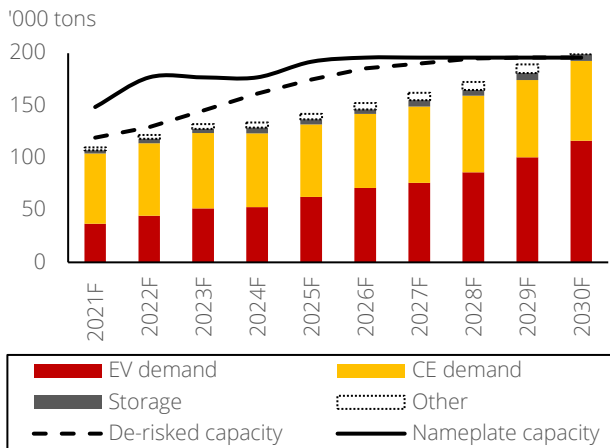
**China 3M aluminium price and simulated GP**



Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., DBS HK



**Cobalt supply expansion underway**



Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., DBS HK

- Lithium (POSITIVE) – new supply lag; riding on rising trend of China electric vehicle market penetration growth

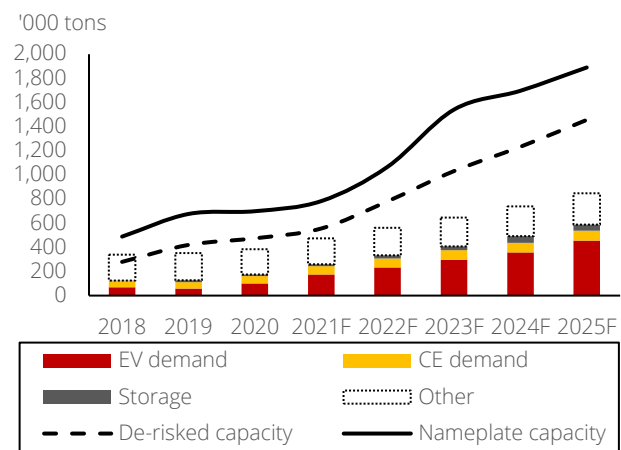
**Lithium supply expansion lags the market.** Taking advantage of rising lithium and equity market prices in 2021, those upstream companies in the supply-chain have opted to maximise conventional large-scale production and to diversify geographically into more marginal, unconventional resources. For example, Mt Holland and Kemerton plants in Australia, and Nemaska in North America are being developed, resulting in capacity expansion at an estimated CAGR of 27% during 2021-2025 which are mostly scheduled to commence towards the end of the period mentioned. Despite expecting so, spodumene concentrate prices continued to hit all-time highs, reflecting the strong buying interest as existing market supply is insufficient to meet the rapid demand from the consumption market.

**Keen market consumption from battery production.**

According to GGII a local research firm specialising in power battery research, China power battery installation for electric vehicles increased 164% y-o-y during Jan – Nov 2021. Among the installed battery categories, lithium-iron-phosphate has exceeded ternary cathode material although both categories delivered robust growth over the period. We believe the phenomenon indicates that overall market consumption growth will remain solid in view of the rising trend of China electric vehicle market penetration growth. The optimistic outlook remains that China’s new electric vehicle sales will reach 5.1m units in 2022, significantly rising from 2021’s 3.4m units, versus 2.7m units in Jan-Oct 2021, as forecasted by China Association of Automotive Manufacturers. This will provide sustained demand for lithium.

**Optimistic lithium product price outlook.** We remain optimistic on lithium product prices in the near term. After climbing up by 319% from 2020, we expect China lithium carbonate prices to remain at their 4Q21 level in 2022. They are then expected to consolidate in view of the new supply projects in 2023. For China’s lithium hydroxide, we expect prices to trade closely with lithium carbonate products in response to periodic market flows between LFP and NCM batteries, depending on the model to be launched by auto makers and battery manufacturers. We generally see the uptrend in products prices spilling over to the next year.

**China lithium – robust demand growth outlook**



Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., DBS HK

**Slower sales revenue and mixed margin outlook**

Amid our slowing China GDP forecast for 2022, the outlook for our 11 covered China companies are as follows: (1) revenue – slower sales revenue growth, combined with lower sales volume and market price rebound amid stringent supply regulations; and (2) margin – gradual margin pick-up on lower input costs. We have revised our price and cost assumptions accordingly. Overall, we hold our pecking order in terms of earnings: lithium, aluminium then cobalt, cement and lastly steel.

**Earnings revisions.** We cut our earnings for steel names such as AnSteel and BaoSteel by 4-27% for FY21F-FY23F, to reflect a lower steel price assumption. However, we raise our earnings forecasts for MaSteel by 32-95% on its shift of product mix towards higher-margin sales. Also, we revised down our estimate for aluminium and cement companies’ after revising down our sales volume assumptions. Following the revisions, our new forecast implies net earnings growth at an average of 3% CAGR during 2021-

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2023, higher than their -3% CAGR during 2018-2020. That is primarily attributed to the expected margin increase as factored into our earnings models.

**Revised earnings forecasts**

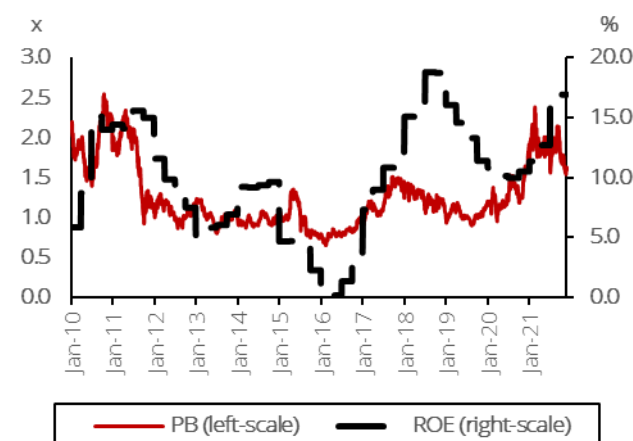
Unit: RMB m/ *HK\$m	FY21F	% rev.	FY22F	% rev.	FY23F	% rev.
<b>Aluminium</b>						
Chalco	6,145	35.1	6,767	23.7	7,307	12.4
Hongqiao	17,870	(5.1)	19,121	(10.9)	21,269	-
<b>Cement</b>						
CNBM	15,268	-	17,181	0.5	18,545	(4.8)
Conch	32,145	-	33,110	(8.9)	34,513	(15.5)
CRC*	8,021	(3.4)	8,084	(8.2)	8,265	(8.2)
WCC	1,885	(6.1)	2,043	(8.9)	2,265	(8.5)
<b>Steel</b>						
AnSteel	6,878	3.5	5,963	(12.2)	6,664	-
BaoSteel	27,644	(4.1)	22,319	(27.0)	23,975	(25.4)
MaSteel	7,214	95.2	5,171	32.8	5,663	-
<b>Li &amp; Co</b>						
Cmoly	4,748	(0.4)	5,099	(4.7)	5,297	-
GFLi	2,544	-	4,839	-	5,246	-

Source: DBS HK

**Attractive sector valuation**

The sector is currently trading at only 1.2x FY22F price-book (P/B) relative to its historical average of 1.6x. We believe the market is oversold as China's market consumption growth is unlikely to collapse next year, and overall companies' financial position is strengthening. On the expected ROE of 15% versus 9% over the last decade, we see share price upside underpinned by the expected pick-up in margins. We are cautious on steel names, downgraded BaoSteel and AnSteel and prefer companies with visible expansion growth pipeline and strong cost leadership, top picks Hongqiao, Ganfeng and Conch.

**China basic materials simple average P/B**



**Stable cashflow and gearing outlook**

	FY21F		FY22F		FY23F	
	ND/E (%)	(RMB/s h)	ND/E (%)	(RMB/s h)	ND/E (%)	FCF (RMB/sh)
<b>Aluminium</b>						
Chalco	86	0.7	59	0.8	37	0.9
Hongqiao	30	0.8	18	2.0	9	2.2
<b>Cement</b>						
CNBM	78	0.1	66	1.5	54	2.1
Conch	CASH	2.7	CASH	2.9	CASH	3.4
CRC*	CASH	0.6	CASH	1.1	CASH	1.2
WCC	17	0.2	12	0.2	6	0.3
<b>Steel</b>						
AnSteel	11	0.5	4	0.7	CASH	0.7
BaoSteel	6	0.9	1	1.0	CASH	1.1
MaSteel	22	(0.4)	11	0.8	3	0.8
<b>Li &amp; Co</b>						
Cmoly	46	(0.1)	46	(0.0)	39	0.2
GFLi	19	(2.4)	32	(1.1)	29	1.2

Source: DBS HK

\*stocks mentioned include aluminium, cement, steel, lithium and cobalt

Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., DBS HK

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## Revised rating and TP

	Rating		TP (LC)		Valuation basis
	New	Prior	New	Prior	
<b>Aluminium</b>					
Chalco	BUY	BUY	7.0	6.5	+1SD FY22F PB
Hongqiao	BUY	BUY	15.0	18.0	+1SD FY22F PB
<b>Cement</b>					
CNBM	BUY	BUY	16.0	16.0	10-yr avg. FY22F PB
Conch	BUY	BUY	58.0	60.0	-1SD FY22F PB
CRC	HOLD	HOLD	8.0	9.0	10-yr avg. FY22F PB
WCC	BUY	BUY	1.60	1.65	Avg. dis. to Conch
<b>Steel</b>					
AnSteel	HOLD	BUY	4.5	7.2	-0.5SD FY22F PB
BaoSteel	HOLD	BUY	8.5	12.0	-0.5SD FY22F PB
MaSteel	BUY	BUY	4.5	4.7	+0.5SD FY22F PB
<b>Li &amp; Co</b>					
Cmoly	BUY	BUY	7.5	7.5	+2SD FY22F PB
GFLi	BUY	BUY	230.0	230.0	+2.5SD FY22F PB

Source: DBS HK

## Anhui Conch (914 HK, BUY, TP: HK\$58) – A deep-value play

There are several reasons we like Conch: (1) sales momentum should eventually improve next year with margin expected to benefit from declining coal prices, (2) ample inorganic expansion growth opportunities arising from its mid-term budgeted M&A plan of total RMB100bn, nearly doubling from the total capex amount during 2016-2020. Indeed, Conch's recent acquisition of a new energy asset from its parent will support the company's future energy cost of production, and (3) attractive valuation as the stock offers deep value and a decent dividend yield. We expect the improved industry supply dynamics to support Conch's above-peer unit cement GP. Our unit cement GP estimate is RMB167 per ton for 2022, widening from RMB156 per ton in 2021. The strong net cash position should enable Conch to accelerate its new market share absorption. Our TP of HK\$58 is based on 1.3x FY22F P/BV, pegged to its historical average during 2016-2020, against an ROE which is expected to stabilise at 17% over 2022-2023. The stock also offers an attractive net dividend yield of >7%.

## Ganfeng Lithium (1772 HK, BUY, TP: HK\$230) – Giant to lead the charging market

We believe GFLi's market share expansion and earnings growth prospects remain solid. Its sales volume growth is estimated to remain fast during 2021-2023, underpinned by the renewal of its supplier contract with Tesla. Also, the accelerating upstream expansion development should lift its margin outlook. According to the company's development plan, it will boost raw material self-sufficiency to above 70% in 2024, from 30% in 2020. And we expect upside to our GPM assumption of >42% in FY22F from 21% in FY20. We believe the market has mispriced GFLi on concerns over consumption slowdown amid car chip shortage. On the contrary, we project new supply growth to be insufficient to meet demand amid the electric vehicle market's rapid growth. This will continue to support lithium price uptrend which will be the key driver for GFLi's earnings growth of 43% CAGR during 2021-2023. Our TP of HK\$230 is based on a 14x FY22F P/BV, supported by ROE improvement to >24% by 2023 from <11% in 2020.

## China Hongqiao (1378 HK, BUY, TP: HK\$13.0) – Buy on weakness

We believe the current share price reflects the negative impact relating to the government's abolishment of power tariff discount for newly built capacity in Yunnan. Yet such a move could have limited impact on the company's earnings. And its capacity expansion plan in Yunnan will increase exposure in hydro power resources. In turn, it will benefit from being less reliant on coal power for future production (the company's captive power contribution has fallen to below industry average at 65%). In view of normalising coal market supply, we are optimistic that CHG's GPM can remain well above its peers', underpinned by lower future coal prices expected and its superior production efficiency. The plan of expanding into direct supply for auto makers and higher-margin recycling business, as well as the growth potential from further optimising its capital structure could drive earnings. Our TP of HK\$15.0 is based on a 1.3x FY22F P/BV, which is +1SD of its five-year historical mean, against ROE improving to 23% in 2022-2023 (exceeding its 2013 peak). The net dividend yield in FY22F is attractive at >12%.



Peer comparison

Company Name	Code	Target			Mkt Cap US\$m	Fiscal Yr	PE		Yield		P/Bk		EV/EBITDA		ROE	
		Price Local\$	Price Local\$	Recom			21F x	22F x	21F %	22F %	21F x	22F x	21F x	22F x	21F %	22F %
China Resources Cement	1313 HK	6.56	8.00	HOLD	5,875	Dec	5.7	5.7	8.4	8.5	0.9	0.8	2.9	2.6	15.5	14.5
Anhui Conch Cement 'H'	914 HK	40.6	58.00	BUY	6,767	Dec	5.5	5.3	7.3	7.5	1.0	0.9	2.5	2.4	18.8	17.3
Anhui Conch Cmt. 'A'	600585 CH	39.06	55.00	BUY	24,547	Dec	6.4	6.3	6.2	6.4	1.1	1.0	3.1	2.9	18.8	17.3
CNBM 'H'	3323 HK	10.34	16.00	BUY	11,952	Dec	4.7	4.1	6.8	7.6	0.7	0.6	5.4	5.0	16.0	16.1
West China Cement	2233 HK	1.39	1.60	BUY	970	Dec	3.3	3.0	12.8	13.8	0.5	0.5	2.1	1.9	17.3	17.0
Baoshan Iron & Stl.'A'	600019 CH	7.26	8.50	HOLD	25,402	Dec	5.8	7.2	8.8	7.1	0.8	0.8	3.0	3.3	14.5	11.0
Angang Steel 'H'	347 HK	3.85	4.50	HOLD	697	Dec	4.3	5.0	9.1	7.9	0.5	0.5	2.8	2.8	12.4	10.1
Angang Steel 'A'	000898 CH	3.86	4.50	HOLD	4,848	Dec	5.3	6.1	7.4	6.4	0.6	0.6	3.3	3.3	12.4	10.1
Maanshan Iron & Stl.'H'	323 HK	3.19	4.50	BUY	709	Dec	2.8	3.9	18.2	13.0	0.6	0.6	2.1	2.5	23.9	15.6
Maanshan Iron & Stl. 'A'	600808 CH	4	5.50	BUY	3,751	Dec	4.3	6.0	11.8	8.5	1.0	0.9	2.7	3.3	23.9	15.6
China Hongqiao Group	1378 HK	8.93	15.00	BUY	10,446	Dec	3.7	3.5	12.9	13.8	0.8	0.8	2.8	2.4	23.7	22.8
CHALCO 'H'	2600 HK	4.57	7.00	BUY	2,312	Dec	10.3	9.4	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.9	5.8	5.1	10.7	10.6
CHALCO 'A'	601600 CH	5.93	8.00	BUY	12,186	Dec	16.4	14.9	0.0	0.0	1.7	1.5	7.2	6.4	10.7	10.6
Ganfeng Lithium 'H'	1772 HK	117.4	230.00	BUY	4,340	Dec	54.2	28.5	0.7	1.4	8.2	7.0	36.4	20.8	18.4	26.4
Ganfeng Lithium 'A'	002460 CH	128.63	230.00	BUY	23,226	Dec	72.7	38.2	0.5	1.0	11.0	9.3	48.3	27.4	18.4	26.4
China Molybdenum 'H'	3993 HK	4.28	7.50	BUY	2,159	Dec	15.9	14.8	1.9	2.1	1.7	1.5	9.1	8.5	11.5	11.0
China Moly.Luoyang 'A'	603993 CH	5.62	8.00	BUY	15,599	Dec	25.6	23.8	1.2	1.3	2.8	2.5	13.0	12.2	11.5	11.0
<b>Sector average</b>							<b>14.7</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>16.1</b>

Source: Thomson Reuters, DBS HK

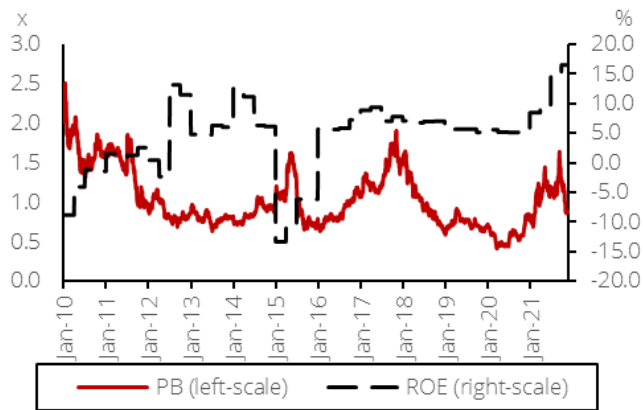
China commodities' market prices

	Last px	Variation (%)				Pulse
	13-Dec	w/w	m/m	y/y	5-y avg.	
<b>Unit: RMB ton</b>						
Alum spot – SHFE	21,670	4.4	8.0	10.9	14,724	↑
Alum spot – LME (US\$)	2,971	2.1	6.5	17.5	1,948	→
China alumina	2,780	-	-12.0	0.6	2,623	↓
China bauxite (US\$)	56	-2.6	0.9	15.3	49	↓
China hot rolled steel	4,960	0.6	2.5	-7.6	3,927	→
China steel rebar	4,750	-0.6	0.2	-5.3	3,843	→
China iron ore	1,060	2.9	20.0	-18.3	834	↑
China metcoke	3,110	6.9	-	-1.3	2,049	↑
China P.O42.5 grade cement	526	-2.6	-9.0	16.5	462	↓
Qinhuangdao coal 5500kcal	841	6.7	-8.0	-4.8	628	↑
Copper spot – SHFE	70,740	0.9	-0.9	2.5	50,620	→
Concentrate treatment cost	62	-	-0.8	30.0	59	→
Changjiang cobalt	498,000	-	8.8	31.7	348,327	→
China Li2CO3	316,000	6.8	35.1	147.6	97,038	↑
China LiOH	258,500	9.3	17.7	112.7	110,686	↑

\*closing date as of 13 Dec, 2021

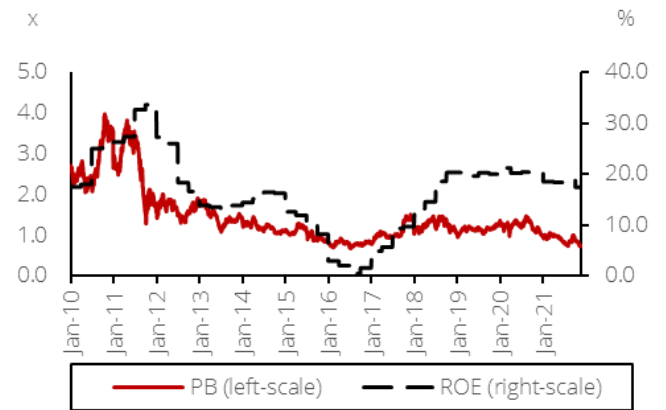
Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., DBS HK

China aluminium P/B ROE



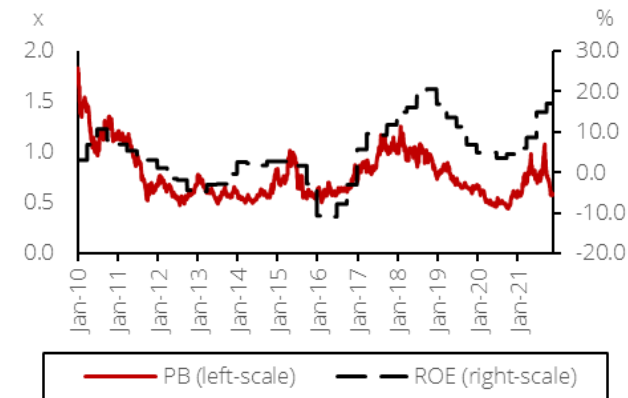
Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., DBS HK

China cement P/B ROE



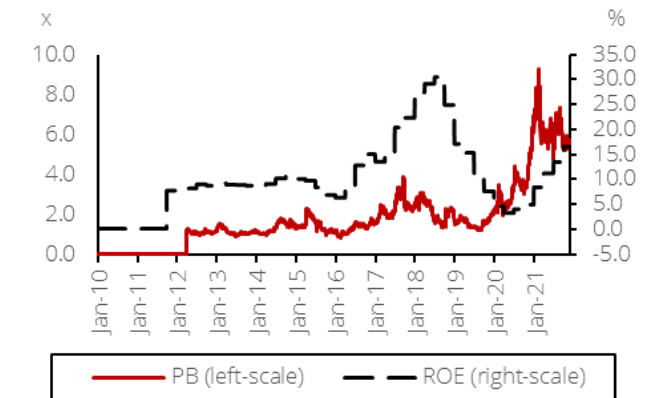
Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., DBS HK

China steel P/B ROE



Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., DBS HK

China minor metals P/B ROE



Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., DBS HK

## China Basic Materials Sector

## China Steel Overview

Unit: m tons, RMB/t	2018	2019	2020	2021F	2022F	2023F
Crude steel capacity	1,175	1,210	1,257	1,284	1,269	1,254
Crude production	928	996	1,053	1,050	1,020	1,020
% Y-o-Y	11.6	7.3	5.7	-0.3	-2.9	0.0
Implied utilisation (%)	79.0	82.3	83.7	81.8	80.4	81.3
Finished steel output	1,105	1,205	1,325	1,322	1,290	1,290
Net export/ (import)	56.2	52	33.4	52	55	55
Apparent consumption	1,048	1,152	1,292	1,270	1,235	1,235
% Y-o-Y	6.4	9.9	12.1	-1.7	-2.8	0.0
China hot rolled price	4,214	3,815	3,822	5,200	4,900	5,000
China rebar price	4,352	4,109	3,850	4,800	4,700	4,800
China IO price	702	837	911	1,200	900	800
China met coal price	2,234	1,987	1,952	3,200	2,800	2,700

Source: DBS HK

## China Aluminium Overview

Unit: m tons, RMB/t	2018	2019	2020	2021F	2022F	2023F
Primary aluminium capacity	40	41	42	45	45	45
Production	36	35	37	39	41	42
% Y-o-Y	10.9	-2.2	5.1	5.4	5.1	2.4
Implied utilisation (%)	89.8	85.4	87.3	86.7	91.1	93.3
Net export/ (import)	0	0	-1	-1	-1	-1
Apparent consumption	36	35	38	40	42	43
% Y-o-Y	10.8	-2.4	8.0	5.3	5.0	2.4
SHFE Al spot	14254	13913	14123	19000	20000	21000
Changjiang spot	14204	13956	14216	19050	20050	21050
LME spot	2,108	1,794	1,706	2,450	2,550	2,650
China alumina price (RMB/t)	2,971	2,707	2,337	2,600	2,650	2,650
China bauxite price (US\$/t)	56	53	46	56	58	59

Source: DBS HK

China Basic Materials Sector

China Cement Overview

Unit: m tons, RMB/t	2018	2019	2020	2021F	2022F	2023F
Clinker capacity	1,870	1,879	1,926	1,990	1,980	1,950
Cement eq capacity	3,366	3,382	3,274	3,184	3,168	3,120
Cement production	2,177	2,330	2,359	2,335	2,312	2,312
% Y-o-Y	-6.0	7.0	1.3	-1.0	-1.0	0.0
Implied utilisation (%)	64.7	68.9	72.1	73.3	73.0	74.1
Net export/ (import)	3	-16	-33	-20	-15	-15
Calculated consumption	2,174	2,346	2,392	2,355	2,327	2,327
% Y-o-Y	-5.6	8.0	2.0	-1.5	-1.2	0.0
Driver1: Infra (m tons)	1,031	1,118	1,007	1,037	1,047	1,048
Driver2: Property (m tons)	643	707	732	702	692	693
PO42.5 grade price	427	438	438	470	530	550
China coal price	648	587	569	950	850	750

Source: DBS HK

China Coal Overview

Unit: m tons, RMB/t	2018	2019	2020	2021F	2022F	2023F
Mining capacity	5,212	5,450	5,500	5,500	5,400	5,300
Raw Coal	3,680	3,850	3,840	4,011	4,051	3,929
Implied utilisation (%)	70.6	70.6	69.8	72.9	75.0	74.1
Thermal Coal	3,103	3,219	3,336	3,484	3,518	3,412
% Y-o-Y	2.4	3.7	3.6	4.4	1.0	-3.0
Net export/ (import)	-118	-132	-100	-100	-100	-100
Apparent consumption	3,221	3,351	3,436	3,584	3,618	3,512
% Y-o-Y	2.5	4.0	2.5	4.3	0.9	-2.9
Driver1: Power (m tons)	1,970	2,050	2,085	2,174	2,194	2,129
Driver2: Metallurgy (m tons)	154	159	171	178	180	174
ZCE Spot	617	580	569	852	900	700
CCTD Steam (Q5500) – Term end-Dec (RMB/ton)	555	546	558	754	700	700

Source: DBS HK

## China Lithium Overview

Unit: '000 tons, RMB/t	2018	2019	2020	2021F	2022F	2023F	2024F	2025F
Mine supply (lithium carbonate equivalent)	237	358	393	476	655	883	1,069	1,269
Refined capacity	488	676	698	782	1,066	1,540	1,696	1,889
Production	287	428	479	524	687	945	1,154	1,358
Implied utilisation (%)	58.8	63.3	68.6	67.0	64.4	61.4	68.0	71.9
EV passenger	58	52	89	153	201	251	295	374
EV commercial	11	7	12	22	32	46	61	81
Consumer electronic	54	52	62	69	74	79	80	82
Storage	4	17	14	16	25	31	54	51
Other	213	225	206	215	228	240	249	260
Total	340	353	383	475	560	647	739	848
China Li <sub>2</sub> CO <sub>3</sub> price	116,813	68,971	44,026	106,000	200,000	190,000	195,000	195,000
China LiOH price	137,676	82,472	51,817	105,000	195,000	185,000	190,000	190,000

Source: DBS HK

## China Cobalt Overview

Unit: '000 tons, USD/lb, RMB/t	2018	2019	2020	2021F	2022F	2023F	2024F	2025F
Mine supply (contained metal)	147	173	139	162	175	190	192	203
Refined capacity	147	180	210	228	240	248	263	285
Production	145	163	151	162	177	199	210	228
Implied utilisation (%)	98.6	90.6	71.9	71	73.7	80.2	80	80
EV passenger	16	13	20	33	39	44	45	54
EV commercial	1	1	2	3	4	6	7	8
Consumer electronic	57	55	61	67	69	72	70	69
Storage	3	5	2	2	4	4	5	4
Other (E-bus, two-wheeler)	64	63	54	57	59	64	65	68
Total	141	137	139	162	175	190	192	203
MB Co Price	33.3	15.1	14.2	22	30	29	28	28
Changjiang Co	536,494	277,548	267,652	370,000	480,000	450,000	430,000	430,000

Source: DBS HK

## China Basic Materials Sector

DBS HK recommendations are based on an Absolute Total Return\* Rating system, defined as follows:

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**BUY** (>15% total return over the next 12 months for small caps, >10% for large caps)

**HOLD** (-10% to +15% total return over the next 12 months for small caps, -10% to +10% for large caps)

**FULLY VALUED** (negative total return, i.e., > -10% over the next 12 months)

**SELL** (negative total return of > -20% over the next 3 months, with identifiable share price catalysts within this time frame)

\*Share price appreciation + dividends

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**China Basic Materials Sector**

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**China Basic Materials Sector**

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