08 Interview



The latest introduction of XL grip Ultra - in the tipper mining segment is one such, technologically upgraded tire, that BKT offers to suit both the mining and construction sector

Mr. Ashok P. Chhajer Sr. General Manager - OE Sales (Domestic Market) - Balkrishna Industries Ltd.

Q-1. Your plans and preparations for Excon 2023? What tires you are going to display at the Exhibition and/or any launches planned? Ans. EXCON has established itself as one of the largest trade shows in the construction and machinery industries. It provides an excellent platform for exhibitors to showcase their products, network with potential customers, and take advantage of new technological opportunities in the industry.

We are delighted to be attending EXCON this year, especially after the Covid-gap, as we are geared up with new and ground-breaking technology to be showcased at this EXCON with a major focus on all-steel radial tires.

Q-2. What are the products and solutions in the OTR segment that BKT offers and their applications?

Ans. We currently manufacture a range of over 3,200 SKUs, which are exported to over 160 countries across the world.

In the mining segment, BKT is championing the 'All-Steel radial tire', thus at the cusp of transforming the mining and construction industry. Our latest offering, the Earthmax series of tires, that are designed to equip rigid dump trucks operating in the most challenging conditions. These all-steel radial tires have superior technology tread along with high quality and are bound to be a game-changer for the earthmoving segment. BKT recently announced the latest breed of bias mining category i.e. Mineforce.

In the industrial construction segment, BKT has the widest range of tires in tipper mining, backhoe loader, wheel loader, motor-graders, and material handling sectors. The latest introduction of XL grip Ultra – in the tipper mining segment is one such, technologically upgraded tire, that BKT offers to suit both the mining and construction sector.

In agriculture tires, BKT's offering of the 'Commander' series another technologically advanced tractor tire – is highly appreciated by farmers as the best in the Agri segment.

Q-3. The government's relentless effort to complete infrastructure projects in the stipulated time has given rise to construction equipment that is stronger, versatile, and

technologically advanced. How are you supporting the construction equipment industry in this endeavor?

Ans. We have seen a remarkable demand for construction and infrastructure equipment as a result of the increase in construction, real estate, infra, projects, and logistics sectors. In addition, we have noticed a shift in the buying pattern of endusers in the construction equipment sector - to premium tires for trouble-free services and reliability. Also, they are shifting to application-specific tires for a better economy, and we are capitalizing on these trends with our exquisite range of products while simultaneously working on creating better functioning and higher durability products.

We have been constantly developing newer products to meet the requirement of varied machine/equipment operating parameters, in line with OEM upgrading and innovations. Our deep understanding of the Off-Highway tire market has led to capabilities to manufacture over 3,200 SKUs. Every year, BKT brings from 80 to 90 new products or new tire sizes to global markets thanks to extensive R&D, product design, and product development activities.

Q-4. Please share more information on the investment made in the Indian market in terms of the manufacturing facility, etc.

Ans. BKT Tires has historically demonstrated a commitment to expanding its manufacturing capabilities and infrastructure in India. We have made substantial investments in state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities, research and development, and technology integration. These investments align with BKT's goal of enhancing production capacity, ensuring product quality, and staying at the forefront of technological innovation.

Over the past few years, we have invested huge CAPEX in all our manufacturing plants, which emphasizes the technological upgradation of existing equipment and installation of automated material handling systems. Furthermore, upscaling to integrate digital and physical aspects of manufacturing as well as plant expansion. Additionally, improving the operational logistics has allowed the introduction of new specialist workers and greater flexibility in production and storage flows.

Investments are also being made in vertical integration i.e. our tire molds and carbon black are produced in-house, which provides us with major autonomy and ensures enhanced quality control throughout the entire supply chain. Alongside BKT Tires', Bhuj Plant has dedicated 25 acres solely to an R&D center, which is committed to tire research and has been equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and the latest software. This plant also hosts an 'Xtreme Center' dedicated to rigorous testing of tires along with a special Test Track curated, with 6 different tracks, for tire performance tests before releasing in the market. Additionally, BKT Tires conducts around 500 tests throughout the tire production stages to maintain quality control.

Our teams are continuously working towards developing new solutions to meet the needs and requirements of professionals in the construction and mining industries, further augmenting our tires as per customers' requirements.