

Michelin to push truck radialisation for India growth

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Chennai

MICHELIN, one of world's leading tyre brands, intends to pioneer the shift to radialisation in truck segment in India. The €20.7 billion French tyre maker is gearing up for larger play in the Indian market as it launches its new tyre factory near Chennai by this year-end.

"Michelin in India is to contribute to the shift towards radialisation and is committed to ensuring the improvement of Indian mobility in the long term. Radialisation was at 14.5 per cent in 2010 and we feel that this rate will go up to 50 per cent by 2020, the potential is massive and we wish to be a part of this growth," Abhijit Bakre, country marketing manager, Michelin India told *Financial Chronicle*.

"OEMs are realising the positive impact of radialisation and are committing to the use of radial tyres, he said adding. The replacement market is also growing at a steady pace."

Though radial tyres are priced 20-25 per cent higher than crossply tyres, it offers tangible benefits to the customers with longer life, higher fuel efficiency, better manoeuvrability and is hence cheaper than cross ply tyres over the life of the product.

Bakre also explained about the initiatives of Michelin to aid faster truck radialisation in India. "The travelling Michelin Caravan reached out to our end consumers and influencers. With this, we reach transport hubs and showcase the benefits of radial truck tyres. We intend to reach out to fleet owners and end users making them aware of the

Tyre tactics

- Michelin is betting on truck tyre radialisation through ideas like the Michelin Caravan
- The firm will start tyre production at its upcoming plant near Chennai by late this year
- Its distribution business is also selling concepts like TyrePlus & Michelin Truck Service Centres

benefits of radialisation in a language they are most receptive to. In its first leg, the Caravan touched 22 transport hubs across India in six months," he added.

Michelin is also gearing up to start tyre production at its upcoming greenfield plant near Chennai by last quarter of this year. The factory will have a capacity of three lakh units of truck and bus radials in the first year and will ramp up to 20 lakh units of truck radials.

The company is also rapidly expanding its network and is already present in most parts of the country. It has brought its innovative concepts in Indian distribution business through TyrePlus and Michelin Truck Service Centre (MTSC) outlets. "The objective for bringing TyrePlus to India is to make available the wide choice of tyres, other automobile related needs and tyre related services to Indian car owners under one roof. MTSC similarly is a pioneering initiative that provides a one-stop solution for truck tyre needs for the first time in India," said Bakre.

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