

India may follow Europe in 'green tyres' initiative

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As Europe prepares for a mandatory tyre labelling regime from November 1, India will have no option but follow suit.

"It is my personal belief that India should embrace tyre labelling especially when raw material prices are going through the roof. There will be enormous competitive pressure on Indian tyre makers," Mr Christoph Kalla, Vice-President, Marketing (BU Performance Butadiene Rubbers) of Lanxess, told *Business Line* on a recent visit to India.

FUEL CONSUMPTION

In tyre labelling, it is imperative for manufacturers to spell out details concerning fuel consumption, wet grip and noise classification. This is seen as an important part of the drive towards cleaner emissions.

"India has an aggressive agenda in reducing carbon dioxide emissions like the rest of the world. It is here that tyre makers have a leading role to play especially with their kind of strong knowhow," Mr Kalla said.

As one of the world's leading



Mr Christoph Kalla, Vice-President, Marketing, Lanxess.

suppliers of specialty chemicals, Lanxess has been supporting the cause of green tyres. While Europe (and South Korea) will be the first to kick off labelling towards the end of this year, other countries will have to fall in line eventually.

"Our experience is that when it comes to tyre regulations, it is applicable to all especially when it involves exports to Europe. The market is globalising and that is why tyre labelling is as important in regions like India," Mr Kalla said.

Not too many car owners re-

alise that tyres contribute to 20-30 per cent of fuel consumption in an automobile. This means that every fifth visit to a gas station is attributed to the tyre's rolling resistance.

"This is nothing but the tyres heating up during use. That wasted energy can be reduced with high performance, innovative materials," he explained.

Tyre labelling is important as "it makes the performance visible."

To a layman, a tyre represents a black, round object when there is so much more within in terms of technology.

Further, labelling gives the buyer the chance to understand better what a tyre is all about.

"Customers need to know what they are spending their hard money on. Green tyres have enormous potential in reducing fuel consumption," Mr Kalla said. This becomes even more relevant in the current scenario of high global crude oil prices.

STUDY UNDERTAKEN

Lanxess carried out a study in Europe where it looked at 12,500 km of average driving per year. It was seen that with green tyres, the fuel savings were nearly €100 alone annually.

"If you pay an additional €50 for a green tyre, you recover your investment in 25,000 kilometres or two years," he said.

Despite the current crisis in Europe which is literally putting the heat on the automobile industry, tyre makers are gearing up for the labelling transition.

There is a voluntary drive already under way in Japan, while Brazil and the US are also working on this initiative.