

Pressing demand

Tire equipment company Uzer Makina is undergoing a major phase of expansion in response to a significant step-up in demand from customers both in Turkey and overseas.

In the field of tire curing moulds, for instance, the Turkish company increased its annual production capacity to 1,500 for 2018, up from 1,200 units/year previously.

"We have completely changed our CNC machine stock, replacing existing units with the latest machines," said Mehmet Akın Kılıç, marketing & business development engineer at the Kocaeli-based company.

The programme, which has increased the number to CNC machines at Uzer Makina to 47 units, also encompasses a project for casting tire-mould segments for winter tires.

"Up to now we have outsourced production of cast mould segments for winter tires and then finish them for supply to customers," explained Kılıç. "But, by the end of the year, we will be able to produce cast winter moulds in-house."

Production of tire curing presses at Uzer Makina has increased even more dramatically: capacity is now up to 240 units/year, from around 60 previously. This has also led to significant expansion

and reorganisation of the company's manufacturing operations.

"This year we have already got, for 2018, orders for 170 presses," said Kılıç. "That is why we have separated mould and press production. So, we bought another plant just next to us and are moving our press production to the building."



Uzer Makina has expanded its facilities for the production of moulds and presses

The plan is for Uzer Makina to have capacity to produce 400 presses a year by the end of 2020, according to Kılıç, noting that the company supplies presses to more than 38 countries, including in Europe, North America and South America. This year, he added, 70% of the company's presses will go to foreign countries.

Uzer Makina has also opened a new facility in Aksaray, central Turkey – close to a Bridgestone

Turkey tire plant, which, said Kılıç, is currently increasing capacity – as well as to Sumitomo and Petlas tire plants.

"We opened a workshop there and will be able to do mould and press maintenance; operating as a support centre," said Kılıç. "So, we will be able to reach customers more easily."

In terms of overseas business, a particular current focus for Uzer Makina's tire curing press operation is India.

"We are expanding our presence in India, where until two years ago, we did not supply any presses," said Kılıç. "But now this market is really growing for us."

Companies such as MRF, Apollo and BKT, he noted, are investing a lot in tire manufacture and need more presses, mostly for PCR and 2/3-wheeler tire production.

Uzer is also planning to expand to Indonesia, Thailand, South Africa, Brazil markets, while it sent curing presses to the US for the first time in 2017, Kılıç also pointed out.

Pre-heating development

Uzer Makina has developed a pre-heating press to eliminate downtime when changing tire moulds: it typically takes two hours to heat up a mould prior to actual curing.

The Turkish company has produced a small mould-heating machine, which can be supplied with a mobile crane as part of a system developed with an outside company.

With this machine, a tire maker can make up to eight extra tires a day on a typical line, said Mehmet Akın Kılıç, marketing & business development engineer at Uzer Makina.

The mobile crane, he added, makes it safer for operators and helps to protect the moulds from damage that can happen with forklifts or manual handling.

