

## **Bridgestone to build new plant in Japan to meet the growing demand**

*Four more plants currently under construction in Mexico, China, Hungary and Poland*

In order to tow with the growing demand for tyres, Bridgestone is building a plant in Kitakyushu, Japan for the production of large and ultra large radial tyres for mining and construction equipment. It will be the first time in more than 30 years that Bridgestone has built a new tire plant in Japan, the last being the Hofu Plant, which started operation in 1976.

Bridgestone will also increase production capacity of steel cord for mining and construction vehicle tyres at the Saga Plant in order to support this new plant. Approximately ¥32.0 billion has been earmarked for the both projects. The facility will be built on about 20 hectares of land to enable adequate ground for production and testing purposes.

The new plant will be located adjacent to an already existing plant in Kitakyushu to facilitate the use of sophisticated technologies required in the development and production of the ultra large radial tyres ensuring the optimal usage of domestic resources and technology. Additionally, the plant will liaise closely with the hub of Bridgestone's R&D activities and the Technical Center, with the objective of swiftly creating a global supply system.

Construction for the plant will begin in the second half of 2007, with production expected to get underway in the second half of 2009. ***Production capacity is projected to reach around 30 tons of new rubber a day by the second half of 2010. Combined with the capacity increase at the Shimonoseki Plant, the aggregate production capacity of large and ultra large tyres for mining and construction equipment is projected to climb by 40%.***

The ultimate management goal of Bridgestone is to establish and retain the company as an undisputed no.1 tyre and Rubber Company. Building the new plant strengthens Bridgestone's position as a market leader in this tire segment. The new plant will be the 52nd plant in Bridgestone Group's global production network for tires, which spans 23 nations. This includes four plants currently under construction in Mexico, China, Hungary and Poland.

Bridgestone Corporation, headquartered in Tokyo, is the world's largest manufacturer of tyres and other rubber products. Tyres account for 80 percent of Bridgestone Group sales worldwide. The company also manufactures industrial rubber and chemical products, sporting goods, and other diversified products. It sells its tyres and other products in more than 150 nations.

Towell Auto Centre is the sole representative for Bridgestone in Oman. In keeping in line with Bridgestone's concept of "Closer to Customers", Towell Auto Centre has set up 14 state of the art specialized Bridgestone 'Tyre Care Plus' outlets in different

parts of Oman to provide excellent sales and service to their valuable customers. The 14 Tyre Care Plus outlets are located at Wadi Kabir, Bausher, Ghala, Goubra, Rusayl, Barkha, Saham, Sohar, Karsha, Nizwa, Ibri, Sur, Salalah and Buali. Bridgestone has also set up two Truck Centres located in Nimr and now in Ghala.