

CEAT: its past and its present

This year celebrating the 95th anniversary of its foundation, CEAT has its roots in Italy, where it was born in 1924 as the manufacturing company Cavi Elettrici e Affini Torino (Electrical Cables and Allied Products of Turin). Although CEAT is a relatively new name in the agricultural sector, it has a long history as a leading global tyre producer. Its story is one that spans not only centuries, but continents too.



The company's beginnings can be traced back to 1924, when Virginio Bruni Tedeschi began his business in the northern Italian city of Turin. Following its early developments in the field of tyre manufacturing, with sales developed across Europe, in 1952 the company expanded its horizons by establishing operations in India. Twelve years later, the firm began exporting its products from its new location.

The story of the company that became CEAT's parent goes back even further. In the early 1800s, Ramdutt Goenka came to Calcutta from a small town in Rajasthan. Over time, the company he established entered diverse business areas, including banking, textiles, jute and tea. Part of the sixth generation of the family, in 1979 Rama Prasad Goenka established RPG Enterprises, an industrial business with interests in a number of different sectors. In 1982, his business acquired CEAT.



Today, RPG is a US\$3bn conglomerate with business interests that, in addition to tyres, include infrastructure, information technology, health, energy and plantations, and is now one of the largest concerns of its type in India. Other RPG businesses include Harrisons Malayalam, an integrated agriculture operation which is India's largest producer of rubber, South India's largest cultivator of tea and one the largest growers of pineapple in the region. The company also produces smaller quantities of crops including banana, cardamom, cocoa, coffee, coconut, pepper and vanilla.

Under RPG, CEAT continued to develop a growing range of tyres for passenger cars, motorcycles and other on-road transport. Today, the company, which is headquartered in Mumbai, is the flagship business of RPG Enterprises, and is one of India's leading tyre manufacturers, with a strong presence in more than 115 countries across the globe. CEAT produces over 15 million tyres each year across a full range of radial and crossply types, sizes, segments and applications. Directly employing 6,000 people across five plants, of which three are in India and two in Sri Lanka, CEAT has been certified to ISO 9001 quality standards since 1994, being the first tyre company in India to be accredited with what is recognised as the highest and most stringent quality certification.



In 2015, CEAT brought its experience and expertise in passenger vehicle tyre manufacturing into the commercial and off-road vehicle sector, and particularly into agriculture, with the creation of a new CEAT Specialty Tyres subsidiary. In the agriculture sector, CEAT Specialty's design focus has been on three key areas: compaction, traction and ride comfort/roadability (CTR). To limit **compaction**, CEAT Specialty agricultural tyre design focuses on a relatively large inner volume, high tread arc width and flexible sidewall, for a larger footprint and minimal compaction. This minimises soil damage, helping maintain its aeration and mechanical strength, which has a direct effect on enhancing crop yield potential. To maximise **traction**, CEAT Specialty tyres feature a unique dual angle, blending a lower angle at the shoulder and more lugs in the footprint, for greater tractive ability both on and off the field, minimising slippage, maximising fuel economy and enhancing workrates for improved timeliness of field activities. And for maximum **roadability**, enhancing ride comfort both in fields and between them, CEAT Specialty design features include higher lug overlap and higher lug continuity. Tie bars provide strength to the centre of the tyre where the lugs meet, while the dual angle lug, with its higher lug at the centre, is designed to ensure the tyre provides comfort as well as performance both in the field and on the road.



In addition to making tyres for the needs of the farming industry, CEAT Specialty Tyres also supplies sectors where the conditions are equally as challenging, including the mining, industrial and construction equipment industries. After 95 years in the tyre business, CEAT Specialty is one of the largest suppliers to OEMs in the Indian manufacturing sector, particularly in the agricultural, earthmoving and material handling equipment segments.

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