

Automobile Industry awaits recovery

Domestic Sales

The figures for April-February 2008 over April-February 2007 indicate that the domestic sales of automobiles further decelerated registering a negative growth rate of (-) 5.31 %.

The cumulative growth of the Passenger Vehicles segment during April-February 2008 was 12.32 %. Passenger Cars grew by 11.74 %, Multi Purpose Vehicles by 22.66 % and Utility Vehicles by 11.21 % compared to the same period last year.

In April- February 2008, the Commercial Vehicles segment grew by 2.88 % over the same period in 2007. Light Commercial Vehicles recorded a growth of 12.57 %; however, Medium & Heavy Commercial Vehicles witnessed a fall by 3.86 %.

Three Wheelers sales fell by 9.20 % with sales of Goods Carriers decreasing by 20.01 %. Passenger Carriers also fell with a negative growth rate of 1.56 % during the period.

Two Wheeler sales registered a negative growth of 8.58 % during April-February 2008 over April-February 2007. Despite the fact that the Moped and Scooter segment registered a growth of 17.05



% and 13.35 % respectively, the two wheeler automotive sector suffered in totality as the Motorcycle and Electric Two Wheeler segment registered a decline by 12.89 % and 42.04 % respectively.

Exports

The good news is that Automobile Exports saw a growth rate at 21.03 % during April- February 2008. Exports of two wheelers segment were up by 31.16 %, Commercial Vehicles exports grew by 18.55 % and Passenger Vehicles exports at 7.22 % by February 2008 over the same period last year. However, the Three Wheeler saw a decline of 2.51% in exports during this period.

ArcelorMittal Fos-sur-Mer leverages the benefits of BetaPlanner on its HSM

Since October 2006, the HSM of ArcelorMittal Fos-sur-Mer is scheduled daily with the powerful and flexible AIS BetaPlanner mill scheduling solution. The BetaPlanner has been configured to model all logistical and technological constraints of the mill and helps the schedulers with the complex and challenging task of mill scheduling. An in-depth re-engineering of the rules of the Hot-Strip mill based on the physical model of the mill was performed. The scheduling team had to deal with a new set of constraints which gave more flexibility in the scheduling process, but increased the complexity of the manual scheduling.

The main goal of the project was to give to the scheduler a tool that builds schedules according to the new set of rules in order to leverage the full flexibility of the new rules and to increase the size of the schedule. Another major function of the system is the frequent update of the slabyard information (also with slabs arriving still hot from the casters).

"With the usage of BetaPlanner, we made Fos HSM Scheduling process enter into 21st century" said Mr. Basse, lead HSM scheduler in ArcelorMittal Fos-sur-Mer. He highlighted the BetaPlanner project benefits as follows:

- Perfect and quick integration of the new rules

- High flexibility in case of unexpected drastic change (breakdown, new constraints, banned products, etc.)
- Easy tuning on the relative weights for due date respect, cost reduction, ...
- Appreciable increase of hot charging rate by checking every virtual slab
- Appreciable contribution to coffin size increase
- Time saving on Scheduling process allowing operators to dedicate on more value added tasks

The implementation also improved the transparency of the HSM production schedules and allowed a clear and easy interpretation of rules for materials difficult to roll. In case of incidents on the mill (e.g. the downtime of one stand), the production constraints were better understood and taken into account in the scheduling process, avoiding production stoppage. The BetaPlanner solution is also operating at several other sites of ArcelorMittal on Hot Strip Mills as well as on other lines such as cold mills, tandem pickling-cold mill lines, galvanising lines, dividing lines, and continuous annealing.