

Beat: Automobiles

MITSUBISHI RAYON NEW PLANT FOR PRODUCING CARBON FIBER INTERMEDIATE MATERIALS

A NEW PLANT AT VILSHOFEN IN GERMANY

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USPA NEWS - Mitsubishi Rayon Co., Ltd. will construct a new plant at Vilshofen in Bavaria, Germany, for producing SMC (Sheet Molding Compound) intermediate materials in order to reinforce and expand its carbon fiber and composite materials business in Europe...

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The factory is expected to commence operation in September 2016 with annual production capacity of 1,000 metric tons, to be expanded up to 6,000 tons as demand further increases in the European market. After completion of the expansion, MRC's overall production capacity grows to 9,000 tons, triple the current production capacity at the Toyohashi plant in Japan.

Against the backdrop of tighter fuel efficiency regulations in the European automobile market, car manufacturers are actively moving toward vehicle weight reduction, and the full-fledged adoption of carbon fiber-reinforced plastic (CFRP) with its high strength and light weight is being accelerated, not only for luxury cars, whose production volume is limited, but also for mass-produced cars.

Under those circumstances, MRC has developed and turned into products high-performance large-tow carbon fiber - suitable for automobile applications, and quick-cure prepregs - intermediate materials with which elaborate exterior panel parts can be press-molded in a short period of time.

SMC is a type of intermediate material of fiber-reinforced plastic (FRP). This sheet-shaped material with fibers several centimeter long dispersed in resin is press-molded into automotive parts. Compared with prepreg intermediate materials (carbon fiber fabric impregnated with resin), SMC can be used for molding complicatedly shaped parts in a short period of time.

With its uniform mechanical characteristics similar to metal, lighter weight and higher strength can be achieved rather easily by using carbon fiber and utilizing existing know-how on parts design.

Source : Mitsubishi Rayon Co., Ltd - Headquarters : Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo

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