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Steel Market Info

THE MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO STAINLESS STEEL AND ITS APPLICATIONS

स्टील मार्केट इन्फो

**INDIA, World's
2nd largest
stainless steel
producer**

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The world's most eminent producers of stainless steel long products.

In little over two decades, **Viraj Profiles Ltd.** has grown to become one of the world's most eminent producers of stainless steel long products, with a market reach extending to over 90 countries.



In little over two decades, Viraj Profiles Ltd. has grown to become one of the world's most eminent producers of stainless steel long products, with a market reach extending to over 90 countries. Stainless steel is one of the most important industries in India – and according to India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF), the country's stainless steel demand has outpaced supply over the last five years. Moreover, driven by rising infrastructure development and growing demand for automotive, Indian stainless steel demand is expected to report solid growth in the coming year backed by consumption-boosting reforms and infrastructure investment. Even looking at the global situation, things are looking up, with the world's stainless steel production returning to growth this year.

Such figures will be welcome news to Indian heavyweight Viraj Profiles, who manufacture stainless steel and plenty of it, with a portfolio spanning a wide range of products using austenitic, ferritic, martensitic and duplex stainless steel grades

besides wires, wire rods, welding wires, fasteners, flanges and bright bars in various grades of stainless steel. Boasting over 50,000 SKUs across different product levels, the variety is positively mind-boggling. What remains a constant, however, is the quality, advises Chairman and Managing Director, Mr Neeraj Kochhar – and it is this unerring emphasis on high standards combined with a vast portfolio that has clearly stood the company in excellent stead on the international stage throughout what has undeniably been a sluggish recent period for the sector worldwide. Indeed, with the global economic scenario now recovering, the company is confident of increasing its sales.

“Our products have many applications in industries including petrochemicals, oil & gas, ship building, structural designs, high-tensile cables and springs, boilers, pressure vessels, liquid storage terminals, liquid cargo ships, and automobiles, to name but a few,” informs Mr Kochhar, who tells us Viraj Profiles is today one of the

world's largest manufacturers of flanges. The company also recently launched its range of stainless steel welding wire, which finds application in fabrication work, the chemical industry, food processing equipment, pressure vessels, the automotive sector and various other industries. The wires – manufactured in various grades and compliant with global standards – are produced as per customer requirements for specific applications. “The MIG wires come with various packaging options in plastic or metal spool options. The TIG wires, which are used in gas tungsten arc welding and whose surface is cleaned for hassle free welding, have marking or embossing done on each rod. The TIG wires are packed in plastic and paper tubes, allowing for convenient and safe transportation. The company also produces SAW wires – used in submerged-arc welding,” adds Mrs Renu Kochhar, Managing Director and Head of Sales & Marketing at Viraj Profiles Ltd.

"Currently we are producing over 30 grades of stainless steels to global standards, and are supplying to more than 90 countries worldwide," Mr Kochhar informs. "We have an established and approved quality system ISO 9001:2008 in place and we have over 90 certificates of approvals for supplying stainless steel flanges to our global customers."

Talking about the latest technological up-gradations and developments, the Chairman advises that the company has developed Precision Shaft quality bright bars with the size range of 10 mm to 100mm. "In addition to this, we have also started producing bright bars with H8 tolerance in the size range of 10 mm to 100 mm. We have also developed special coating wires, which are used for springs and nails. This leaves a very light lubricant film on the wire and as a result, guides are not jammed, tool life is increased and epoxy coating on nails is improved during processing at the customer end," he says.

Mrs Renu Kochhar further adds, "We have also installed Material Tracking System, one of its kind in India, which gives an accurate data about the movement of raw material and finished goods on real time basis. This has helped us in speeding up the manufacturing and delivery of our products to the customers. On the packaging front, Viraj has added new options such as Spool SH460 and SH390 for spring wire and also developed larger coil weight for spring wire. As value addition to our packaging solutions, we have developed plastic strapping instead of metal strapping up to 1MT coils for easy handling and also to avoid damages." In the past few years the company has also acquired a new ring-rolling machine, 2,000-ton forging press and a 10-ton pneumatic hammer to enhance its production capacity, alongside having installed 15 new CNC machines and big diameter machine for flanges. And the company is already in the process of installing few more drawing machines and high efficiency grinding machines too. With such equipment in place,

the company aims to meet the increasing demand of quality stainless steel flanges. With much investment in its operations over the years, Viraj Profiles today boasts six manufacturing plants – each facility producing stainless steel (SS) wire rods, SS bright bars, SS fasteners, SS profiles, SS wires, SS welding wires and SS flanges. The six plants boast a combined production capacity of 528,000 TPA, while the company also benefits from a 180,000tpa section rolling mill.

"we have recently installed a new soft annealing furnace batch type which is going to further increase our capacity by around 800 MT per month. We have also installed two gas fired solution annealing furnaces and 5 more furnaces are in the process of installation. As part of our ethos of green and safe environment, we have converted all the furnaces from liquid fuel to CNG."

Returning to speak about the company's own products and prospective areas, Mr Kochhar expects the building and construction sector to witness the fastest growth in the future. Elsewhere, with the developed world focused on lightweighting automobiles to reduce global warming and emissions, the demand for stainless steel is expected to accelerate over the next couple of years, with its excellent formability behaviour combined with high strength leading many to tout SS as a suitable lightweight material for auto components. "We have already been exporting our fasteners and bright bars to some leading global automobile companies and are currently discussing development of new products for other companies," the Chairman reveals. "Our range of welding wire products – new to our stable – has been received well so far in the Indian market and we are very hopeful to carve a niche for ourselves with such solutions in the international domain too," he advises.

"The household sector is also expected to witness good demand, while expanding and emerging



Mr Neeraj R Kochhar, CMD



Mrs Renu Kochhar, MD

applications in renewable energy, construction, healthcare and cryogenic industries will likewise provide good opportunities, and we are fully geared to respond to those market trends," he adds.

As for the future, with a tremendous range of around 50,000 SKUs across various product categories, Viraj Profiles will not be looking for horizontal growth, but will rather be focusing on vertical growth, reveals the Chairman. "This is being done keeping in mind the requirement of our customers and the strategy is being developed in constant consultation with them," he informs in closing, adding that Viraj Profiles has nonetheless not ruled out new product development. With myriad markets and an ever-expanding range of applications, stainless steel is well known for being incredibly versatile – over a quarter of a century down the line, few could argue that Viraj Profiles Ltd shares that valuable characteristic.