

AUTOGUIDE

INDIA'S AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY & TRADE JOURNAL

55
YEARS
SINCE 1966

New entrants in EV arena



SCRAPPAGE POLICY

Industry gives its
endorsement

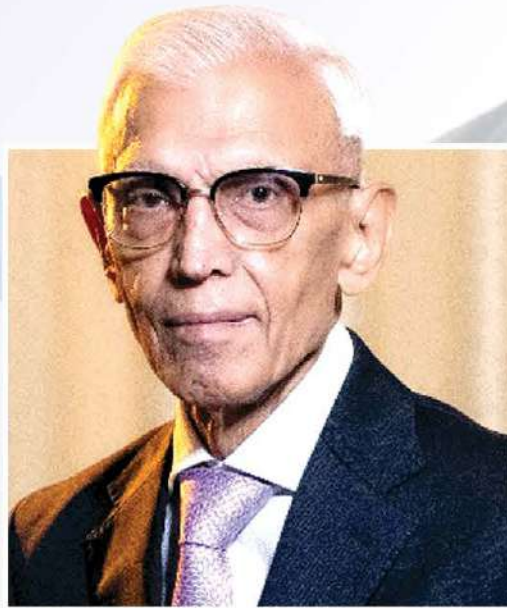




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associated with our flagship,
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on the company completing
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First Anniversary



JOGINDER P. MALHOTRA

Founder Editor, Autoguide

NOVEMBER 19, 1935 - APRIL 18, 2020

It has been a year since you left us however your memory has walked beside us all these 365 days! Thanks to your guiding spirit, we have been able to carry forward the rich legacy of autoguide and today, the magazine launched by you over five decades ago is as strong a voice of the industry as you would have liked it to be. On the first anniversary of your passing away, we seek your blessings as we steer Autoguide towards fresh heights of success and glory!

Team Autoguide

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Editor's viewpoint



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Executive Editor
SHILPA MALHOTRA

Of FY21, scrapping policy and EV startups

THE automobile industry ended the financial year on a satisfying note with PV sales growing more than double in March, albeit on a low base. Our regular story on monthly sales deals with this aspect. The month year ago saw imposition of a nationwide lockdown with most business activity coming to a halt and the industry clocking total PV sales of 1,43,014 units. Compared to that, the sales of over 3,20,000 units in March 2021 is certainly a healthy improvement. Sequentially, too, the sales went up by 3.9 pc over 3,08,593 units sold in February. But despite the consistent recovery during the past few months, the sales for the entire fiscal witnessed a drop of around 2 to 3 pc. That, however, should not cause much concern as the industry has been through the most challenging times, like the rest of the businesses, but recovered swiftly, unlike many. One only hopes the recent surge in coronavirus cases doesn't lead to any fresh disruptions and the growth momentum persists in the coming months as well.

ONE HOPES THE RECENT SURGE IN CORONAVIRUS CASES DOESN'T LEAD TO ANY FRESH DISRUPTIONS AND THE GROWTH MOMENTUM PERSISTS

The other big news development we cover in this issue is the details of the vehicle scrapping policy outlined in the House on March 18. The promised policy comes with hosts of incentives and rebates and once implemented, it is going to be a win-win for both the industry and the vehicle owners. All stakeholders have welcomed the long-pending policy and we carry some select responses in an accompanying story.

In our special story for the month, we focus on the new players and young startups who are keeping the EV arena invigorated with a flurry of models, particularly in the 2W and 3W segment. There is a long list of such new entrants to the industry and we have tried to include as many as we could. Besides elaborating on the low-cost, feature-rich EVs these manufacturers are introducing at regular intervals, the story also details the initiatives being taken by the established brands and the Centre and the state governments to promote electric mobility in the country. With newer, higher-range EVs coming in the market and the charging infrastructure getting strengthened by the day, there are legitimated hopes that the goal of sustainable mobility will be reached sooner than expected.

It's over to you now!

Scrappage policy packs incentives and rebates

Gadkari outlines much-awaited scheme in House

FOLLOWING up on the announcement of the Finance Minister in her Union Budget 2021 speech, Road Transport Minister Mr Nitin Gadkari shared the outlines of the vehicle scrappage policy in the Lok Sabha on March 18. Incorporating incentives and rebates, the much-awaited policy has been welcomed by the automobile industry across the board.

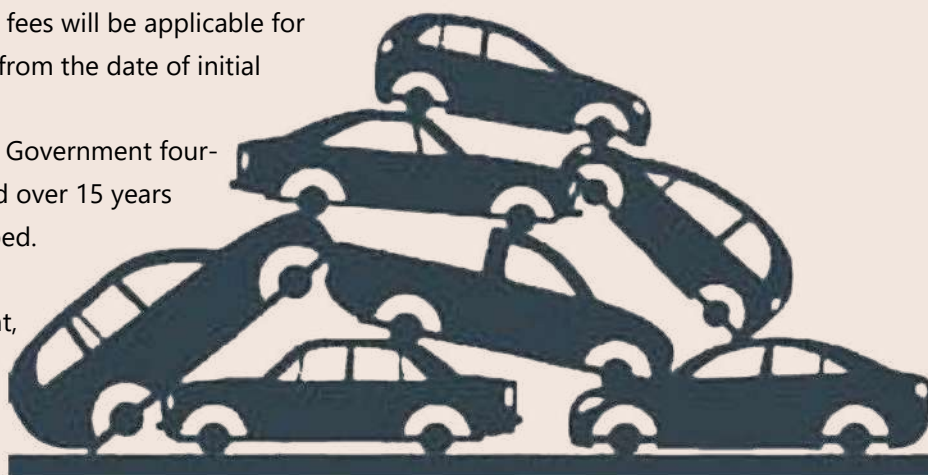
The policy proposes that in the case of commercial vehicles older than 15 years without a fitness certificate, it will automatically lead to the cancellation of registration. The timeline for private vehicles, however, has been extended to 20 years while the vintage and classic cars have been left out of the purview of the policy.

"It is proposed that commercial vehicles be deregistered after 15 years in case of failure to get the fitness certificate. As a disincentive measure, increased fees for fitness certificate and fitness test may be applicable for commercial vehicles 15 year onwards from the date of initial registration," said Mr Gadkari in a statement in the House.

He added: "It is proposed that private vehicles be deregistered after 20 years if found unfit or in case of a failure to renew registration certificate. As a disincentive measure, increased re-registration fees will be applicable for private vehicles 15 years onwards from the date of initial registration."

The policy also highlighted that Government four-wheeler vehicles having completed over 15 years will mandatorily have to be scrapped.

"It is being proposed that all vehicles of the Central Government, State Government, Municipal Corporation, Panchayats, State Transport Undertakings,



Public Sector Undertakings and autonomous bodies with the Union and state governments may be de-registered and scrapped after 15 years from the date of registration," said the minister.

He further announced that the scheme will provide strong incentives to owners of old vehicles to scrap old and unfit vehicles through registered scrapping centres.



Road Transport Minister Mr Nitin Gadkari

A rebate of 4-6 per cent will be granted on the ex-showroom price of the new vehicle. Further, state governments are being suggested to offer 25 per cent and 15 per cent concession on road tax for passenger vehicles and commercial vehicles, respectively. The Government has also proposed an additional discount of 5 per cent or waiving of registration fees by OEMs on buying a new vehicle to customers having a valid 'Certificate of Vehicle Scrapping'.

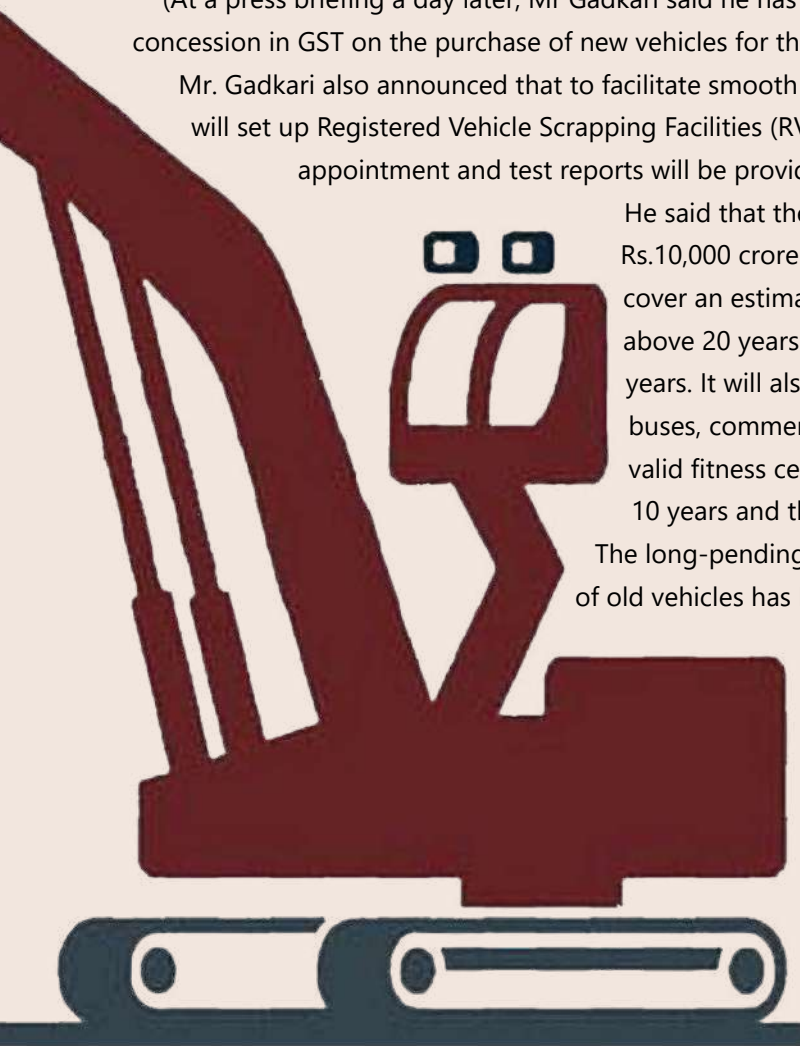
(At a press briefing a day later, Mr Gadkari said he has requested the Union Finance Minister and states to give concession in GST on the purchase of new vehicles for those scrapping older vehicles.)

Mr. Gadkari also announced that to facilitate smooth scrapping of old vehicles by the owners, the Government will set up Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facilities (RVSFs) and fitness centres across the country where appointment and test reports will be provided in a digital form.

He said that the scrappage policy will lead to new investment of around Rs.10,000 crore and create 35,000 jobs. The policy, said the minister, will cover an estimated 51 lakh light motor vehicles (mostly cars) that are above 20 years of age, while another 34 lakh LMVs that are above 15 years. It will also cover 17 lakh medium and heavy motor vehicles (trucks, buses, commercial vans) that are above 15 years and currently without valid fitness certificates. The average age of commercial vehicles is over 10 years and the private ones 10-15 years.

The long-pending voluntary vehicle scrappage policy for phasing out of old vehicles has been in the works since 2016, but was announced by Union Finance Minister Mrs Nirmala Sitharaman in the Union Budget for 2021-22. The policy of scrapping old, polluting and fuel-guzzling vehicles is an attempt to reduce pollution and road congestion. It was sent to the Cabinet Secretariat to be put up before the Cabinet for its approval in February last year.

The Transport Ministry will publish the draft notification for the policy within the next few weeks and seek public comments within a period of 30 days. Following that, it will come up with an order bringing the policy in force.





INDUSTRY HAILS SCRAPPAGE POLICY

The following is the edited version of industry reactions to the outlines of scrappage policy announced on March 18:

“SIAM welcomes the concept and outline of scrappage policy being implemented for the first time in India. The benefits to environment and safety of a sound system of removing unsafe or unfit vehicles from the road have been felt strongly by all stakeholders. The most important step is to build an infrastructure of testing and scrapping centers fast all over the country and SIAM will work on this front with the Government. Mandatory scrapping of over 15-year-old Government vehicles from April 1, 2022 is a step in the right direction.”



Mr. Rajesh Menon,
DG, SIAM

“The guidelines and advice announced are in the right direction and now, the state Governments and OEMs have to do their part to make it a success. Scrappage value of vehicle in range of 4-6 pc of the ex-showroom price, rebate of up to 25 pc for PV and 15 pc for CV by state governments on road tax, 5 pc discount from OEM's on new vehicle and registration fee being waived of will definitely help to excite the customer and motivate him to scrap his old vehicle. It will also revive the ailing CV segment and in turn will boost the state exchequer's revenue on sale of new vehicles.”



Mr. Vinkesh Gulati,
President, FADA



Ms. Vinutaa S
Assistant V-P, ICRA

“Notwithstanding the lower demand from the aftermarket segment, ICRA expects that the scrappage policy will be positive for the auto component industry and it will benefit from higher demand for new vehicles from FY2024 onwards (with 3-4 pc upside) owing to a favourable incentive structure. The same will more than offset the loss of revenues from the aftermarket business, which may be pegged at 3-5 pc because of part scrapping of vehicles undergoing the fitness test. Further, the policy will also improve raw material availability through metal recycling and aid in reducing imports.”

“DICV has long advocated for a well-designed, incentivized 'end of life' policy that boosts demand, improves safety, and supports the environment by encouraging CV owners to exchange their older vehicles for new ones, meeting current emissions norms. Only a joint effort by Government, industry and the customer can result in a scrappage policy that offers true safety, economic and environmental benefits.”



Mr. Satyakam Arya
MD & CEO, DICV



Mr. Venkatram Mamillapalle,
Country CEO & MD,
Renault India

“This is indeed a historic moment in the automotive sphere and will go a long way in setting a new benchmark for India in the global context. We are on the cusp of a major breakthrough in the industry; firstly we saw advanced emission standards being adopted by the sector and now a move that is momentous on multiple fronts. Besides presenting with a huge business opportunity for the OEMs, the social impact of this move will be revolutionary, employment generation, significantly reducing pollution and bolstering road safety just a few amongst many.”

“We welcome the announcement on vehicle scrapping policy. This incentive-led announcement will lead to reduction in the pollution levels in the long run and boost the demand for new and environment-friendly vehicles, especially in the personal mobility segment. The strong incentive scheme will motivate consumers towards sustainable mobility solutions that can help the Government meet its set EV target by 2030.”



Mr Nagesh Basavanhalli,
Group CEO & MD,
Greaves Cotton

Sales more than double in March

Most automakers report healthy growth

A total of 3,20,487 passenger cars were sold in March this year compared to 1,43,014 in the corresponding month last year showing an increase of 128 per cent. The whopping growth was primarily due to the low base of March 2020 because of the lockdown that was imposed towards the end of the month.

Sequentially, too, the PV sales went up by 3.9 per cent over 308,593 units sold in February 2021. For the entire financial year, however, the wholesale volumes declined by around 2-3 pc at 2.71 million units.

Maruti Suzuki, the country's largest carmaker, reported sales of 1,46,203 units during the month as compared to 76,240 units sold in March 2020, witnessing a growth of 91.76 per cent.

"MSIL domestic sales in FY19-20 had fallen by 18 pc due to reasons that are well known and in FY20-21

have been impacted due to COVID-related factors," the company said in a statement. "Domestic sales in March 2020 had dropped about 48 pc due to COVID-related disruptions. It will be seen that domestic sales in March 2021 have only recovered to March 2019 levels", the company statement added.

Number two player Hyundai Motor India also doubled volumes, selling 52,600 units in March this year although its fiscal year volumes fell 2.8 per cent to 4,71,535 units. "With cumulative sales of 64,621 units in March 2021, HMIL has built further on the sales momentum achieved over the last few months," said Mr Tarun Garg, Director, Sales, Marketing and Service, Hyundai Motor.

Home-grown major Tata Motors continued its dream run and grew at phenomenal 422.5 pc YoY with sales of 29,654 units in March. The company posted its highest



ever volumes in eight years to reclaim the third spot in the local passenger vehicle market with sales of 2,22,025 units in FY21. "The PV industry witnessed a strong growth in Q4FY21 on a low base with robust demand for personal mobility and new launches driving demand," said Mr Shailesh Chandra, President, PVB, Tata Motors.

The other domestic giant, Mahindra & Mahindra, saw its sales soar five times YoY to 16,700 units last month against 3,383 units a year earlier. The company said it is witnessing good momentum in demand and has a strong pipeline of bookings across its range of SUVs *Bolero*, *Scorpio*, *XUV300* and *Thar*.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor reported its highest monthly sales in the domestic market since 2013, at 15,001 units, 114 per cent more than March 2020. "We have been able to sustain the growth momentum as we closed the last quarter registering a 73 pc growth in domestic sales, when compared to the sales in the corresponding period last year (January-March 2020)," said Mr Naveen Soni, Senior V-P, at TKM.

MG Motor India trebled sales to 5,528 units but said the company is likely to see a disruption in the supply chain due to shortage of semiconductor chips globally as well as the second wave of COVID-19. "We may observe a few NPDs (no production days) in April 2021 as a preventive measure," said Mr Rakesh Sidana, Director (Sales) at MG Motor India.

Honda Cars India, which sold 7,103 units in March, also saw the production of its sedan, City, being affected because of the shortage of semiconductors.

Kia Motors India's volumes saw 122 per cent YoY increase and 14.4 pc MoM increase while Nissan posted a YoY growth of 386 per cent and crossed 4k volumes for the third consecutive month.

In the two-wheeler segment, Hero MotoCorp reported a 72 pc year-on-year increase in sales at 544,340 units in March. Sales in the fiscal year ended March dipped 10 pc at 5.6 million units.

MARCH 2021



Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India's domestic sales grew 61 per cent to 395,037 units last month while TVS Motor Company's sales more than doubled to 202,155 units from 94,103 units in March 2020. TVS also crossed the milestone of exporting 100,000 two-wheelers last month. Royal Enfield's sales increased 84 per cent to 60,173 units during the month.

Among CV makers, Tata Motors witnessed a six-fold increase in sales of CVs at 36,995 units in March. Chennai-based Ashok Leyland saw its commercial vehicle sales go up to 15,761 units, compared to 1,734 units sold in the year-ago period. VE Commercial Vehicles' sales grew to 6,221 units from 1,432 units in March 2020.

Steady demand in rural markets continued to support demand for tractors. Market leader Mahindra saw its tractor sales more than double in March to 29,817 units. Escorts too saw its tractors sales more than double to 11,730 units from 5,228 units a year earlier.

Ashok Leyland reported total sales of 17,231 units of commercial vehicles in March. Its medium and heavy commercial vehicle sales were at 11,101 units while LCV sales were at 6,130 units.



NEW PLAYERS INFUSE ZEST

E-mobility in India picks pace

Team Autoguide

AT a nascent stage currently, the electric vehicle market in the country is set to grow substantially in the near future. Multiple initiatives by the Government coupled with aggressive steps taken by the automobile manufacturers, both in terms of widening product portfolio and strengthening charging infrastructure, have increased the confidence-level of potential buyers leading to rise in EV adoption.

While the Government is promoting EVs through schemes like FAME and investing heavily on public charging infrastructure, automakers are innovating constantly to launch newer models with improved range. Many of them are also collaborating with top power companies to set up public charging stations.

Despite all this, the EV market size in India is just above 1 per cent of the total automobile sales; and a whopping 95 per cent of this is dominated by two and three-wheelers. While established players across segments have been keeping the market abuzz, many new entrants are adding to its zest. A majority of these new kids on the block have, understandably, caught on to the low-hanging fruit – the two and three-wheeler segment.

While Mahindra eVerito is the oldest among the four-wheeled electric vehicles in the country, Tata Motors' offerings in the segment comprise *Tigor EV* and *Nexon EV*. The other prominent EVs in the market include Hyundai's *Kona Electric*, MG Motors' *ZS EV* and Mercedes-Benz's *EQC*. Jaguar Land Rover launched its all-electric SUV *I-Pace* on March 23 and Audi is set to drive in its e-tron in the coming weeks.

In the two-wheeler segment, Hero Electric was the first to launch a lithium-ion scooter in the country and since 2008, it has sold close to 3,00,000 units. Pune-based Bajaj Auto's plans to come up with its first electric three-wheeler last year were shelved due to the pandemic and it has now rescheduled the launch to the second half of FY2022. Overall, the organised passenger e-3W space is dominated by M&M while TVS, Piaggio, Lohia Auto, Kinetic Green and Atul Auto are also in the fray.

While all these established brands steadily push the EV bandwagon, it's the new players, many of them startups, which are providing all the excitement. With their launch spree of feature-rich, low-cost e-rickshaws, e-scooters and e-bikes at regular intervals, they are contributing immensely to the cause of e-mobility in the country.



While the Government is promoting EVs through schemes like FAME and investing heavily on public charging infrastructure, automakers are innovating constantly to launch newer models with improved range.



Ampere Electric



Ather 450



Prominent among those who have already launched their products, or in the process of doing so in the near future, are: Ampere Electric, Ather Energy, Detel, Enigma Automobies, EvVee India, ETO Motors, Okinawa Autotech, Odysse Electric, Matter, GoGreenBOV, Nexzu Mobility, Nahak Motors and Balan Engineering.

Ampere Electric, the wholly owned electric mobility subsidiary of Greaves Cotton, is pushing boundaries to create an affordable and sustainable ecosystem for clean last-mile mobility. In the e-2W segment, Ampere is the fastest growing brand with presence in both B2C and B2B segments. Recently, the company signed a MoU with the Tamil Nadu Government to set up an e-mobility manufacturing plant in the state.

Ather Energy, which calls itself the country's first intelligent electric scooter manufacturer, is gradually spreading its footprints pan-India with its 450X e-scooter. The company also offers an upgraded version of Ather 450, called Ather 450X, which has a top speed of 70 kmph.

Economical electric two-wheeler brand **Detel** is gradually strengthening its presence in the northern region with its newly-launched range of electric two wheelers. The company is in the market with *Easy* and has plans to add a new range of e-scooters, *Easy Plus* and *Easy Loader*, for B2C and B2B segments.

Established in 2015, **Okinawa Autotech** currently has six electric scooters in its portfolio in the price range of ₹50,000 to ₹1.14 lakh. These are a mix of li-ion slow-speed and li-ion high-speed scooters. While the low-speed range includes R30, Lite and Dual, the three high-speed products are *Ridge+*, *Praise Pro* and *iPraise+*. The company also has plans to launch two more high-speed two-wheelers this year.

Matter, a technology start-up based in Ahmedabad, has firmed up plans to launch electric vehicles and a range of energy solutions this year. Since its inception in January last year, Matter has extensively invested in R&D for development of platforms for EV and storage solutions technology in stealth mode.

Founded by computer science-engineer brothers Anmol Bohre and Alankrit Bohre in October 2015, **Enigma Automobiles** manufactures e-rickshaws and e-scooters with local manufacturing parts, thus offering these at 40 per cent cheaper rates. Currently, the brand has three variants in electric scooters – *Crink*, *GT450*, and *Amber* and all three come with two battery options, including lithium-ion.

Go GreenBOV is an electric two-wheeler manufacturing company that emerged from the Go GreenEOT in 2011. Its e-scooters available in the market include Kavach, Sunoti and Kimaya.



Go GreenBOV



ETO Motors

Established in 2018, **EeVe India** is an e-2W manufacturing company headquartered in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The company claims that its products are designed for Indian consumers and Indian roads and are the perfect examples of utility, style, and comfort. With a strength of 90 touch-points across the country, EeVe has six product variants in market; *Atreo*, *Ahava*, *Xeniaa*, *Wind*, *4U* and *Your*.

Launched in March last year, **Odysse Electric Vehicles** is a part of Vora Group of Companies which has varied line of businesses. In January this year, it came up with low-speed scooters, called *E2Go* and *E2Go Lite*. Available in two models of lead-acid and lithium-ion batteries, these e-scooters are cost-effective and don't require any registration or licence.

ETO Motors, the proclaimed electric mobility-as-a-service (EMaaS) company, is into deployment of electric vehicles for logistics operations. Towards the end of last year, it signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Telangana to set up a green-field manufacturing facility in the state under its subsidiary Keto Motors for its range of electric three-wheelers.

Starting with e-rickshaw, **Nahak Motors** entered electric vehicle market in 2014 and today it is one of the biggest manufacturers of most variants of EVs. The manufacturing unit of Nahak is located in Faridabad and the R&D facility is in Greater Noida. In January, Nahak launched, what it called, the first-ever 100 per cent made in India electric bicycles.

Bengaluru-based **Balan Engineering** launched six variants of EVs in January this year which, it said, would benefit individuals and companies focused on cargo transport, agriculture and civic amenities amongst others. The electric vehicles included loader Vishwas, garbage vehicle Swach Rath, passenger-rickshaw B5, sanitising vehicle, fumigation vehicle and push-cart Kamala.

Apart from all these, there are several startups which unveiled their EV offerings at the Auto Expo 2020 and are in various stages of their sustainability journey today.

Prominent among these are **Evolet India** with Polo, Derby and Hawk EVs and Pune-based **Everve Motors** with EF1 scooter, which has got a top speed of 95 kmph. Then there are **Devot Motors**, which unveiled its first prototype of the electric bike with a retro feel; **Battrixx Electric** with a bike that goes up to 300 km; Goa-based **Kabira Mobility** with KM 3000 electric sports bike and Tamil Nadu-based **Raptee Energy** with bike having a range of 200 km and a top speed of 150 kmph. Besides, the expo also saw Hyderabad-based **Charjet Electric** Vehicle Solutions unveiling its plans to install around 2,000 EV charging stations that would be compatible with almost all the brands.

With so many big and small players pooling in all their resources and the Government chipping in with multifarious incentives, the goal of full electric mobility is bound to be reached in not-too-distant a future.

CarDekho-OMG survey

66 pc of customers ready to buy EVs



AN increasing number of customers are willing to buy electric vehicles, according to a CarDekho-OMG survey.

The auto-tech firm released the findings of the Electric Vehicle Customer Awareness Study in association with and Omnicom Media Group, on March 22.

The survey was conducted with a broad objective of understanding the current state of consumer awareness, interest and apprehensions related to electric vehicles.

Presently, EVs contribute less than 1 pc of total vehicles sold, but have the potential to scale up to 5 pc within a few years. In 2019-20, about 3.8 lakh electric vehicles were sold in the country of which 58 pc were low-speed E3W and 40 pc e-2W.

According to the survey, 66 per cent of customers are willing to buy electric vehicles, out of which 53 pc said they were strongly inclined to go electric. Among those surveyed, 13 pc are not yet ready for the transformation whereas 19 pc decline to go either way.

Further, 68 per cent of the customers showed their concern towards the environment and believe switching to EVs will help reduce air pollution, whereas 11 pc and 6

pc of respondents considered driving pleasure and lower maintenance cost as the main reason for considering a shift to EVs.

The unique opportunity created by the EV segment also comes with a few challenges. Forty-three per cent of respondents stated that frequent recharging will be a big concern, 20 pc raised concerns on the reliability of EVs during long drives/ inter-city travel, while 16 per cent considered inadequate infrastructure (charging stations) a bigger hurdle. Nearly 12 per cent of those surveyed said that pricing was an important consideration.

The core objective of this survey, said a press release, was to gauge the consumer psyche and understand what sort of information or services from automobile OEMs could help in the buying decision. Respondents suggested manufacturers offer a full list of service stations in any city, accessories for easy and fast home-charging, and an extended service warranty assurance for the car.

The survey was conducted across India among potential 4W vehicle buyers. Almost 40 pc of the respondents own an SUV and 29 pc own a hatchback, followed by 25 pc owning sedans.

Jaguar's all-electric SUV *I-Pace* launched in India

JAGUAR Land Rover India on March 23 announced the launch of its all-electric *I-Pace* in the country with a starting price of ₹105.9 Lakh (ex-showroom).

I-Pace is powered by a 90 kWh battery that delivers 294 kW power and 696 Nm torque, allowing the *I-Pace* to accelerate from 0-100 km/h in just 4.8 seconds, said a press release.

Since its launch, the Jaguar *I-Pace* has won over 80 global awards, including the prestigious World Car of the Year, World Car Design of the Year and World Green Car in 2019, making it a true electric vehicle icon within a short span of time, it said further.



Mr Rohit Suri, President & Managing Director, Jaguar Land Rover India Ltd, said: "Jaguar *I-Pace* is the first all-electric SUV that we've launched in India and it marks the beginning of our electrification journey. With our electrified products we look forward to playing a significant role in India's electrification drive into the future."

Jaguar has ensured that every step of the customer journey delivers peace of mind and makes owning an electric car as easy as possible. Twenty-two retail outlets across 19 cities are now EV-ready with over 35 EV chargers installed and more underway. Further, to charge the Jaguar *I-Pace*, customers may either use a Home Charging Cable that is provided as standard with the vehicle or use a 7.4 kW AC wall-mounted charger that is also provided as standard.



Mr Rohit Suri, President & MD, JLR



From the pronounced front wheel arches to the rear diffuser, every supercar inspired styling element allows I-Pace to slice cleanly through the air for maximum range and stability, said the release further. *I-Pace* reimagines the classic Jaguar balance of sports car focus and luxury craftsmanship for the digital age.

The new Pivi Pro infotainment system is a highlight of the SUV's spacious, luxurious interior. Electric architecture defines the five-seater cabin's character and handcrafted touches reaffirm the cabin's luxury atmosphere.

I-Pace features the latest and more driver-focused technology and is the first Jaguar in India to offer Pivi Pro Infotainment System. The 31.24 cm (12.3) HD instrument cluster features completely revised graphics to give an even clearer indication of battery state of charge.

Inside the cabin, the ClearSight Rear View Mirror improves vision and convenience by ensuring the driver always has an unobstructed view of the road behind even with three people in the rear seat.

I-Pace is equipped with Software over the Air (SOTA) functionality. This means Systems including infotainment, battery management and charging can be updated remotely.

All occupants benefit from the enhanced climate control system, which delivers smart, energy-efficient heating or cooling of up to four zones independently.

The SUV's 294 kW of peak power takes one from 0-100 km/h in only 4.8 seconds. The 90 kWh-battery is positioned within the floor, between the axles, giving a low centre of gravity and near perfect weight distribution.

I-Pace is underpinned by an advanced electric vehicle architecture created specifically for this car that delivers excellent driving dynamics while minimising weight. The double wishbone suspension at the front and integral link suspension at the rear have been tuned to give the *I-Pace* the perfect balance of dynamic handling and refinement, added the release.

Volvo to launch *XC40 Recharge*

Its first full electric car in India in October

SWEDISH luxury car maker Volvo Car India on March 9 announced that it will commence deliveries of its first full electric car - *XC40 Recharge* in October this year.

"We are committed to becoming a leader in the fast-growing premium electric car market and plan to double our volumes in the next two years. We will commence bookings of our first pure electric SUV, *XC40 Recharge* in June this year and start deliveries three months hence. By 2025 electric cars should constitute 80 pc of our annual sales" said Mr. Jyoti Malhotra, Managing Director, Volvo Car India

As part of its sustainability initiatives, the company announced that it aims to become carbon-neutral by 2040, said a press release.

The company, it said, is also gearing towards having all its dealerships in India becoming Green Dealerships. It is undertaking skill-upgradation of its dealer workforce to familiarise them with the new technology of electric cars as well as to respond to the exacting requirements of its customers.

The release further said that Volvo intends to sell only fully electric cars and phase out any car, in the portfolio, with an internal combustion engine, including hybrids by 2030.

Mr. Malhotra said, "Our first electric car *XC40 Recharge* has been received very well globally and we expect the same in India as well. Starting this year we will launch one electric car every year in the Indian market and by 2030 we aspire to become a fully electric car company. This will reinforce our values and commitment towards sustainability and climate safety."



Mr Jyoti Malhotra, Managing Director (Left) and Mr Charles Frump, Former Managing Director, Volvo Car India with the *XC40 Recharge*

Ather hands over first e-scooter to Munjal



Mr. Tarun Mehta, Co-founder and CEO of Ather Energy, presented the first unit of their new electric scooter 450X to Dr. Pawan Munjal, the Chairman & CEO, Hero MotoCorp

MR Tarun Mehta, Co-founder and CEO of Ather Energy, on March 31 presented the first unit of its new electric scooter 450X in Delhi to Dr. Pawan Munjal, Chairman and CEO of Hero MotoCorp.

Handing over the scooter to Dr. Munjal, Mr Mehta said, "We have launched the Ather 450X across markets in the past few months and are now delighted to begin our retail operations in New Delhi. To kick-start this phase, we are happy to deliver the first vehicle in Delhi to Dr. Pawan Munjal. Not only has Dr. Munjal instilled confidence in Ather as one of our key investors but he also has been a mentor to me and Swapnil personally over the years. This is an extremely proud moment for us."

Dr. Pawan Munjal, said, "I am truly delighted to receive Ather 450X scooter from Tarun. Sustainability and clean energy remain at the core of Hero MotoCorp's vision - 'Be the Future of Mobility'. I congratulate Tarun, Swapnil and the entire team for developing this technologically-advanced and connected vehicle for customers in the country."

Hero MotoCorp has been a part of Ather's growth story since 2016 and currently has nearly 35 per cent of shareholding in the EV-maker.

Ather begins test-rides in Mysore and Hubli

ATHER Energy has begun test-rides of *Ather 450X* at Hinkal in Mysore and Bhairidevarkoppa in Hubli,

While in Mysore it has tied up with Honnassiri Energy, the Hubli operations are in association with Bellad Group.

The experience centres at both the locations will open in May.

Mr Ravneet Singh Phokela, Chief Business Officer, Ather Energy, said, "Since our launch in Bengaluru, Mysore has been showing immense potential and with the launch of the 450X, the demand surged multiple folds. The overwhelming inbound requests for test-rides and bookings have led us to start operations in Mysore sooner than planned."

Mysore, he said, will be Ather's third market in Karnataka after Bengaluru and Hubli.



Ather opens retail outlet in Kochi; Jaipur is next in line



A THER Energy inaugurated its retail outlet - Ather Space, in Vytilla, Kochi in association with Palal Group.

The central Kerala location picked for the experience centre will cater to the evolving crowd of the city, said a press release.

The experience centre, it said, is well equipped to provide a unique ownership experience along with complete service and support for the owners. Designed to be a dynamic, tactile, and interactive space, the new Ather Space will offer customers an opportunity to learn about every aspect of the vehicle and provide a complete overview of the various parts with a stripped-bare unit on display, added the release.

A few days after the Kochi opening, the company began test-rides of Ather 450X at Durgapura, Jaipur, in association with Akhand Distributors. The Jaipur experience centre will open in April.

Mr Ravneet Phokela, Chief Business Officer, Ather Energy, said, "Kochi has always been on top of the list for expansion because of the awareness and acceptance of EVs in the market. Our experience centre will further enhance awareness about high-performance 2-wheelers and highlight Ather Energy's value proposition, a great experience powered by intelligence."

BatX launches 'Buy Back Battery Programme'

BATX Energies on March 10 announced the launch of a 'Buy Back Battery Programme'.

BatX is the only company that works on both lithium-ion battery manufacturing as well as its recycling, said a press release

Under this programme, BatX Energies will take back batteries from the market and harvest the good cells from them, understanding the life and state of health of those cells and putting them back for stationary applications by developing lithium-ion batteries for inverters and solar storage batteries.



BatX is also offering a 10 per cent buyback cost to its electric vehicle OEMs clients like e-rickshaw and e2Ws.

Mr. Vikrant Singh, Co-Founder and CTO, BatX Energies, said, "Refurbishing of lithium-ion batteries will play an imperative role in the growth of electric transportation industry. At BatX Energies, we work together with our customers to build smart and sustainable solutions for ensuring the circulation of valuable material and the removal of harmful substances from the material cycle and aim to solve the global problem of end-of-lifecycle of a lithium-ion battery."

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Detel plans to open 150 dealerships this year

ELECTRIC two-wheeler brand Detel on March 11 announced its plan to establish a network of 150 sales partners for its EVs by the end of this year.

The company aims to strengthen its presence in the northern region with its newly-launched range of electric two-wheelers, said a press release.

With an objective to manufacture 100 per cent localised electric scooters components, Detel will soon open its assembly unit in Gurugram with an aim to produce 1,00,000 low speed e-vehicles per year, added the release.



Dr. Yogesh Bhatia, Founder, Detel

DETEL

Dr. Yogesh Bhatia, Founder, Detel, said, "We are working furiously on our plans to open new dealership networks pan-India. Our acquired dealerships will reinforce Detel's mission to reach out to millions at the bottom of the pyramid with smart sustainable and affordable products. The objective of this exercise is to rapidly cover the key markets and to increase the sales and market share in the low-speed EV segment."

Detel makes Easy Plus 'most affordable' EV



ELECTRIC two-wheeler manufacturers Detel on March 19 disclosed the price, specifications, and pre-booking date of its recently introduced e-2W Easy Plus at Ride Asia Expo.

Priced at ₹39,999, Easy Plus is the most affordable electric vehicle in the country, said a press release.

Detel e-vehicle has a high ground clearance of 170 mm, designed to tackle Indian roads. It is powered by a 20AH lithium-ion battery. The lightweight vehicle can be charged in four-five it runs up to 60 Km on a single charge.

Easy Plus is available in various colour combinations such as Metallic Red, Pearl White, Gunmetal, Metallic Black, and Metallic Yellow. Besides this, Easy Plus comes with a

Dr. Yogesh Bhatia, Founder, Detel, said, "Detel is a homegrown brand for the masses and our vision is to be the most trusted low-speed two-wheelers manufacturer in India. We are offering a sustainable mobility solution to the daily commuting needs of an average user."

JK Tyre hosts top honours

Hyundai *i20* titled ICOTY 2021 Royal Enfield *Meteor 350* IMOTY

JLR's Defender and Tata's Nexon EV also awarded



(L-R) Dr. Raghupati Singhania, Chairman & MD, JK Tyres & Industries Ltd and Mr. S. S. Kim, MD & CEO, HMIL with the Indian Car of the Year 2021- all-new *i20*

JK Tyre & Industries on February 27 hosted the top honours in the automotive industry, the 16th Indian Car of the Year (ICOTY) and the 14th Indian Motorcycle of the Year (IMOTY).

Winners of the prestigious awards, which recognise performance, innovation and excellence, were felicitated amidst a limited, yet highly celebrated gathering of industry stalwarts, key officials and auto enthusiasts.

Dr. Raghupati Singhania, Chairman & Managing Director, JK Tyre & Industries Limited, presented the awards to the winners along with Mr. Yogendra Pratap, Chairman, ICOTY 2021, Mr. Aspi Bhatena, Chairman, IMOTY 2021, and other jury members.

Hyundai *i20* was honored with the title of 'Indian Car of the Year 2021', while Royal Enfield *Meteor 350* edged out in the two-wheeler category and bagged the title of 'Indian Motorcycle of the Year 2021'.

With the growing demand of premium cars in the country, in 2019, the ICOTY jury introduced the Premium Car Award which honours the finest automobiles from around the world. Land Rover *Defender* was honoured with the 'Premium Car Award 2021 by ICOTY'.

This year the ICOTY jury introduced the 'Green Car Award' so as to reward manufacturers contributing towards the future of mobility. Tata Nexon EV received the 'Green Car Award 2021 by ICOTY' in the inaugural edition.

Commenting on the occasion, Dr. Raghupati Singhania, Chairman & Managing Director, JK Tyre & Industries Limited said, "It's a matter of pride for us to be associated with the Indian Car of the Year & Indian Motorcycle of the Year awards since its inception. While every year has been special, this one is truly exceptional, where we are not just celebrating the technological-excellence and innovation brought in by the manufacturers, but the zeal and resilience of the entire automotive industry, as it emerged stronger from the uncharted waters."

On Hyundai *i20* winning

the ICOTY 2021, Mr. SS Kim, MD & CEO, Hyundai Motor India Limited, said, "It is a moment of great pride for all of us at Hyundai. We are honoured to win this most prestigious automotive award – 'Indian Car of the Year 2021' for the all-new *i20*. The all-new *i20*, has once again redefined standards in the premium hatchback segment and today depicts strong expression of progressive spirit of the new age Indian customers."

Mr. Shubhranshu Singh, Global Head – Marketing at Royal Enfield, said, "I am privileged and humbled to receive this award on behalf of the entire Royal Enfield team. This has been an exceptional year and it is testimony to the great teamwork that in extraordinary times we received this extraordinary recognition."

Winner of 'Premium Car Award 2021 by ICOTY', for Land Rover *Defender*, Mr. Rohit Suri, President & Managing Director, Jaguar Land Rover India, said, "We are truly delighted to receive the most coveted recognition for the Land Rover *Defender* in India – the luxury car award by ICOTY. It's another testimony to the fabulous work done by Land Rover designers and engineers."

Mr. Shailesh Chandra, President, Passenger Vehicle Business Unit, Tata Motors, said, "It is indeed a very proud moment for us all at Tata Motors. We are honored to win ICOTY's first-ever 'Green Car Award 2021' for India's most aspirational, practical and accessible electric car – the Tata *Nexon EV*."



The Royal Enfield Meteor 350 was crowned the IMOTY 2021. Dr Raghupati Singhania, chairman & MD, JK Tyre & Industries Limited and Aspi Bathena, chairman of the jury, IMOTY handed the award to Mr Shubhranshu Singh, Global Head Marketing at Royal Enfield

PV industry is set to post 22-25 pc growth in FY22

UVs to outperform other sub-segments: ICRA

THE passenger vehicle industry in the country is expected to post an impressive growth of 22 pc to 25 pc for FY2022, after 2-4 pc de-growth in FY2021.

As per ICRA research, the growth will be on a lower base of Q1 FY2021, primarily due to industry slowdown and the pandemic impact.

In addition to the lower base, expected pick-up in economic activity, improved consumer sentiments besides resilient rural income sentiments, healthy crop cycles and several Government initiatives will propel growth, said the report. The shift towards personal mobility from public transport in the present pandemic laden scenario will also help the sector, it said.

Among the various PV industry sub-segments, the utility vehicle (UV) segment is likely to post impressive growth and will outperform the rest of the industry, the report said further.

Mr. Ashish Modani, Vice-President, ICRA, said, "The V-shaped economic recovery has boosted consumer

sentiments from lows of June'21 quarter even though it still remains lower than previous (2019) levels. Consumer sentiments are one of the key indicators for non-discretionary purchases like cars and luxury goods. Demand has remained strong post the festive seasons as both retail and wholesale dispatches witnessed recovery. The industry clocked the best-ever volume during H2 FY2021, primarily driven by inventory restocking and pent-up demand. Also, as demand sentiments improved, discounts offered during the lean phase eased substantially. The industry's outlook continues to remain stable."

On the macro economic scenario, India is expected to be amongst the fastest growing large economies during FY2022 with most economists expecting double digit growth in GDP. Historically, PV demand has witnessed stellar growth whenever GDP growth exceeded 7 pc. The low base of Q1 FY2021 will optically result in exceptionally high growth rate in FY2022, though FY2019-24 CAGR growth will remain modest at 3-4 per cent.





As per ICRA, whether the industry will cross the earlier peak of FY2019 in FY2022 or not remains to be seen. The long-term industry growth drivers remain intact viz. relatively low penetration, weak public transport infrastructure, high financing penetration, favourable demographics and improving per capita income, urbanisation and improving road infrastructure etc.

What might affect growth are concerns like high fuel prices and inflationary environment which impact first-time buyers, supply chain disruption which could impact production volume, steady increase in vehicle prices, especially in the backdrop of rising commodity prices, stricter emission/safety norms; and second round of COVID-19 wave being witnessed currently.

According to the report, the semi-conductor shortage is a key challenge in Q1 FY2022 as the automotive industry accounts for 12 pc of global semi-conductor demand. The stronger than expected recovery along with supply disruption at few manufacturing locations has aggravated chip shortage issues and some OEMs have experienced the impact on production volumes. Though some normalcy is expected from Jun-2021 onwards industry volume will be impacted during Q1 FY2022. India's dependency on overseas suppliers for semi-conductor is likely to continue over the next three to five years, said the report.

Within the industry sub-segments, luxury car volumes are expected to clock over 25-30 pc growth in CY2021, after two years of decline. luxury car penetration in India remains the lowest amongst large economies (US, China, Germany), thus there is long-term growth visibility. However; higher taxes on CBUs/CKDs is a key deterrent as local manufacturing is not viable due to low volumes.

Despite all odds, the compact SUV (C-SUV) segment which currently accounts for 31 pc of industry share YTD FY20201 has registered fifth consecutive year of growth in FY2021. The sedans, especially mid-size and executive segment (₹10-12 lakh price bracket) will likely underperform due to cannibalisation from UV segment. The entry segment too will continue to shrink over the medium term.

In line with ICRA's expectations, the small car sales again fizzled out after short term momentum during Q2 FY2021. Preference for personal mobility and focus on cash conservation had resulted in outperformance of small car segment. But with better availability of finance and improvement in consumer sentiments, the shift towards the compact car and UV segment is expected to continue over the medium term, resulting in under-performance of small car segment.

TATA MOTORS



(L-R): Mr. V Seethapathi, V-P, Product Line Head, I&LCV and Mr. Girish Wagh, President, CVBU, Tata Motors at the launch of Ultra Sleek T Series trucks

Tata Motors unveils *Ultra Sleek T-Series*

New-generation, smart trucks range

TATA Motors has unveiled its new range of intermediate and light commercial trucks (I&LCV), the *Ultra Sleek T-Series*.

The range is designed and engineered to suit contemporary demands of urban transportation, said a company press release.

Available in three models – *T.6*, *T.7* and *T.9*, the all-new *Ultra Sleek* range is available in varied deck lengths from 10 to 20 feet to adapt to all the required applications, it said further.

A sleek 1900mm-wide cabin provides superior driver comfort yet swift movement in confined city spaces, and smart features provide for easy manoeuvrability, added the release.

Launching the *Ultra Sleek T-Series* range, Mr. Girish Wagh, President, Commercial Vehicle Business Unit, Tata Motors, said, "The launch of the *Ultra Sleek T-Series* range marks a new landmark in urban freight transportation. These trucks are sleeker and smarter enabling faster movement and hence higher utilisation and revenue with more trips. Built on the internationally recognised Ultra platform, the trucks are engineered to cater to a diverse set of applications."

The *Ultra Sleek T-Series* range combines futuristic styling with comfort, provides significantly lower Noise, Vibration and Harshness (NVH) levels, ease-of-movement on congested and narrow roads and a fatigue-free driving experience.

The walk-through cabin is rigorously crash-tested for superior safety and comes equipped with adjustable seat height, tilt-and-telescopic power steering, and a dashboard-mounted gear lever.

The addition of an in-built music system, USB fast charging port and liberal storage space offers enhanced comfort, while air brakes and parabolic leaf suspension provide better safety and control with clear-lens headlamps and LED tail-lamps improving night visibility.

Tata Motors launches 'Wheels of Love'

A holistic programme that supports new parents



TATA Motors on March 10 launched 'Wheels of Love', a holistic programme that supports new parents in their exciting journey both as a parent and also as a valued employee while promoting a progressive culture of care, inclusion and sensitisation within the organization across levels.

Also presented in the form of a specially curated book, 'Wheels of Love' puts forth various tenets to enable new and expectant parents successfully manage the need to focus on their growing family while also fulfilling their career goals, said a press release.

In addition to guiding parents, the books also provides valuable insights for managers to support their team members as they progress through the various stages of parenthood.

Announcing the launch of 'Wheels of Love', Mr. Ravindra Kumar GP, Chief Human Resources Officer, Tata Motors, said: "At Tata Motors, we have embraced diversity and inclusion at all levels as a strategy to success. Over the years, we have strived to cultivate a gender diverse workspace, which is both sensitive and inclusive. It's built on the foundation of creating an ecosystem that is attractive and supportive to women professionals at various stages of their life and career. 'Wheels of Love' takes this thinking forward by creating a cohesive network of connect, warmth and support for new and expectant parents to enjoy the bliss of parenthood."

Skoda unveils its latest offering - *Kushaq SUV*



CELEBRATING its 20th year in the country, Skoda unveiled its latest offering - the 2021 *Kushaq SUV* - in Mumbai on March 18 during a global premiere.

The SUV is the production version of the Skoda VISION IN concept SUV the carmaker showcased at the Auto Expo last year. The official launch of *Kushaq*, along with price, is likely to be announced later this year.

As part of its India 2.0 Project, Skoda aims to ride high on this brand new model. The Skoda *Kushaq SUV* is based on the MQB-A0-IN platform. Skoda's facility in Chakan has been upgraded for this purpose to use the new platform and manufacture vehicles. This is the same platform that will be used for Volkswagen's upcoming *Taigun SUV* which is a technical twin to Skoda's *Kushaq SUV*.

As far as the design is concerned, the 2021 Skoda *Kushaq SUV* sports a very aggressive, bold and modern design. Skoda says that the SUV has been designed in India, for India and the world. It features a signature Skoda grille at the front with prominent twin ribs outlined in crystal. There is also split LED headlights at the front flanking the new-look grille.

The new Skoda *Kushaq SUV* has a ground clearance of 188 mm and a wheelbase of 2651mm, which the carmaker claims to be the best in the segment. Step inside the *Kushaq SUV*, and one will be welcomed with a spacious cabin, highlighted by a 10-inch digital instrument cluster. Among other features, the *Kushaq SUV* also gets ventilated front seats, a sub-woofer, wireless charging, ambient lighting, connected tech and much more.

The new *Kushaq* will feature two engine options - a 1.0-litre and a 1.5-litre TSI motor, both will be produced locally.

The SUV will be offered in five colour schemes: Candy White, Brilliant Silver, Carbon Steel, Honey Orange and Tornado Red.

BMW launches *M340i xDrive*



BMW India has launched its *M340i xDrive* in the country. Locally produced at BMW Group plant in Chennai, it is the first high-performance BMW with an M engine to be made in India, said a press release.

Mr. Vikram Pawah, President, BMW Group India, said, "We are excited to launch the first-ever BMW *M340i xDrive*, the quickest car to be locally produced in India - a completely novel high-performance product that the Indian auto enthusiasts have been waiting for eagerly. It is a unique car because it has the thrilling soul of the BMW *3 Series*, the amplified power of M and the driving dynamics of BMW *xDrive*."

The first-ever BMW *M340i xDrive* sets new standards of performance attributes that will satisfy and impress auto enthusiasts, said the release.

The car is powered by a six-cylinder petrol engine with 387 hp. Together, the high engine performance, M Performance chassis tuning, M-specific suspension technology, BMW *xDrive* intelligent all-wheel drive and the *M Sport* rear differential provide for an outstanding driving experience.

BMW *M340i xDrive* is available in following metallic paintworks - Dravit Grey, Sunset Orange and Tanzanite Blue. It features the exclusive Alcantara/Sensatec combination upholstery in Black with contrast stitching Blue, the release added.

BMW 220i Sport makes its debut

THE new BMW 220i Sport was launched in the country on March 24.

Mr. Vikram Pawah, President, BMW Group India, said, "The addition of the 'Sport' variant to the successful BMW 2 Series Gran Coupé model line-up, presents an excellent value proposition along with attractive features."

The new BMW 220i Sport injects a fresh dose of individuality, aesthetic appeal and emotional engagement to everyday usability, said a press release. The stylish design stands out with an elongated silhouette and frameless doors. The spacious and sophisticated interior suits all kinds of travel.



The BMW TwinPower Turbo two-litre four-cylinder petrol engine ensures best-in-segment performance and acceleration. It produces an output of 190 hp and a maximum torque of 280 Nm at 1350-4600 rpm. The car accelerates from 0 -100 km / hr in just 7.1 seconds, added the release.

The car offers many features like sport seats (for driver and front passenger), Ambient Light package with illuminated Interior Trim, Panorama Glass sunroof, BMW Live Cockpit Plus, Performance Control and Parking Assist with Reverse Assist among others.

The car is available at an introductory price of ₹37.90 lakh (ex-showroom).

Mercedes-Benz launches The new E-Class

LUXURY car manufacturer Mercedes-Benz on March 16 bolstered its presence in the luxury saloon segment with the launch of the new *E-Class*.

According to a press release, the new *E-Class* debuts with comprehensive changes on exterior styling and design, significant interior updates along with the integration of latest new-generation telematics making it more dynamic and intelligent than ever before.

The *E-Class* boasts of the 'most spacious' rear cabin in the segment owing to its long wheelbase, and together with its dynamic driving elements and latest enhancements, make the saloon unmatched in its segment, added the release.

For the first time, Mercedes-Benz has introduced an India specific sporty *AMG* exterior line in the *E-Class* (*E 350 d*). The car is launched in three variants *E 200*, *E 220 d* and *E 350 d*

The new model features an all new front fascia with new headlamps, new grille design, new bumpers and new split tail lamps. It is extremely sporty with the new *AMG Line*, diamond grill and *AMG* alloys.

The interiors enriched with refreshed appointments, new generation steering wheel, latest telematics including NTG6 MBUX head unit with touchscreen.

The intuitive, touch-sensitive controls of the Mercedes-Benz User Experience (MBUX) offer host of features. The digital cockpit's dual 12.3-inch displays include a central touchscreen.

The *E-Class* is tech-laden featuring 2021 'Mercedes Me' Connect with Alexa, Google Home integration and Parking location on navigation system. It intelligently blends driving performance with unmatched luxury and comfort while boasting the 'most spacious' rear cabin in the segment. While *E 200* is priced at ₹63.6 lakh, *E 220 d* costs ₹64.8 lakh and *E 350 d AMG Line* ₹80.9 lakh.



In front, Mr. Martin Schwenk, MD and CEO, Mercedes-Benz India and Mr. Santosh Iyer, Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Mercedes-Benz India. At the back, Mr. Vidur Talwar, Chairman of T&T Motors and Mr. Rohan Talwar, MD, Mercedes-Benz T&T Motors

Maruti Suzuki picks three more startups for MAIL



MARUTI Suzuki India Limited has shortlisted three new startups as part of the fourth cohort of the MAIL (Mobility & Automobile Innovation Lab) programme. These startups include: Nable IT, Redbot and Sleeve.

With these additions, the company is now engaged with 17 startups under the MAIL programme in the last two years.

Commenced with an aim to nurture innovation in the automobile and mobility sector, Maruti Suzuki had launched the MAIL initiative in partnership with GHV Accelerator in January 2019. It aims to create a suitable environment to nurture, foster and guide the early-stage startups.

Explaining the company's efforts towards mentoring startups, Mr. Kenichi Ayukawa, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Maruti Suzuki India, said: "The startups are poised to disrupt the consumer technology world. The Company's MAIL initiative supports them by co-creating innovative business solutions. The three new startups will now engage with Maruti Suzuki for paid projects. In the end, the solutions offered by these innovative minds will help delight customers."

Nable IT, a startup from New Delhi, emerged winner at Cohort 4, while Redbot from Bengaluru is the first runner up and Sleeve from New Delhi is the second runner up.

Maruti Suzuki ties up with Karnataka Bank

MARUTI Suzuki India Limited (MSIL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Mangaluru-headquartered private sector lender Karnataka Bank to introduce attractive finance options.

Customers can avail the benefits across 858 branches of Karnataka Bank at metro, urban, semi-urban and rural locations, said a press release issued by Maruti.



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Under this collaboration, customers can avail loans up to 85 pc of the on-road price of all new cars from Maruti Suzuki Arena and Nexa showrooms. The car loans will bear an interest rate linked to the external benchmark lending rate. Customers can opt for tenure of up to 84 months for their loans.

Mr. Shashank Srivastava, Executive Director (Marketing & Sales), Maruti Suzuki India Limited, said, "This partnership is aimed to make the vehicle buying journey easy and affordable for our customers."

Mr. Mahabaleshwara MS, Managing Director & CEO, Karnataka Bank, said, "This partnership with Maruti Suzuki India will boost the consumers' convenience and ease, at the same time they can have the delightful experience of our digital car loan product, to fulfil their aspirations of owning world-class products from Maruti Suzuki."

Nissan, ExxonMobil join hands



Mr Deepankar Banerjee, CEO, ExxonMobil Lubricants Pvt. Ltd and Mr Rakesh Srivastava, MD, Nissan Motor India

EXXONMOBIL Lubricants on March 31 announced that it has signed an agreement with Nissan Motor India to supply lubricants for the passenger vehicles (PV) aftermarket business.

Commencing April, ExxonMobil will supply an extensive range of engine oils to Nissan India that is suitable for India's BS-VI standards, while remaining compatible with older generation BS-III or BS-IV Nissan passenger vehicles, said a press release.

The partnership provides Nissan car owners access to advanced lubricant technology that meets the latest specifications for optimal performance reliability and potential fuel economy benefits, said a press release.

Mr Deepankar Banerjee, CEO, ExxonMobil Lubricants Pvt. Ltd., said, "We are delighted to be Nissan's trusted partner to provide the latest lubricant technology that helps protect Nissan engines and allows them to run more efficiently."

Mr Rakesh Srivastava, MD, Nissan Motor India, said, "We are pleased to be partnering with ExxonMobil, as both companies have core strength areas in their respective fields."

MSDS milestone

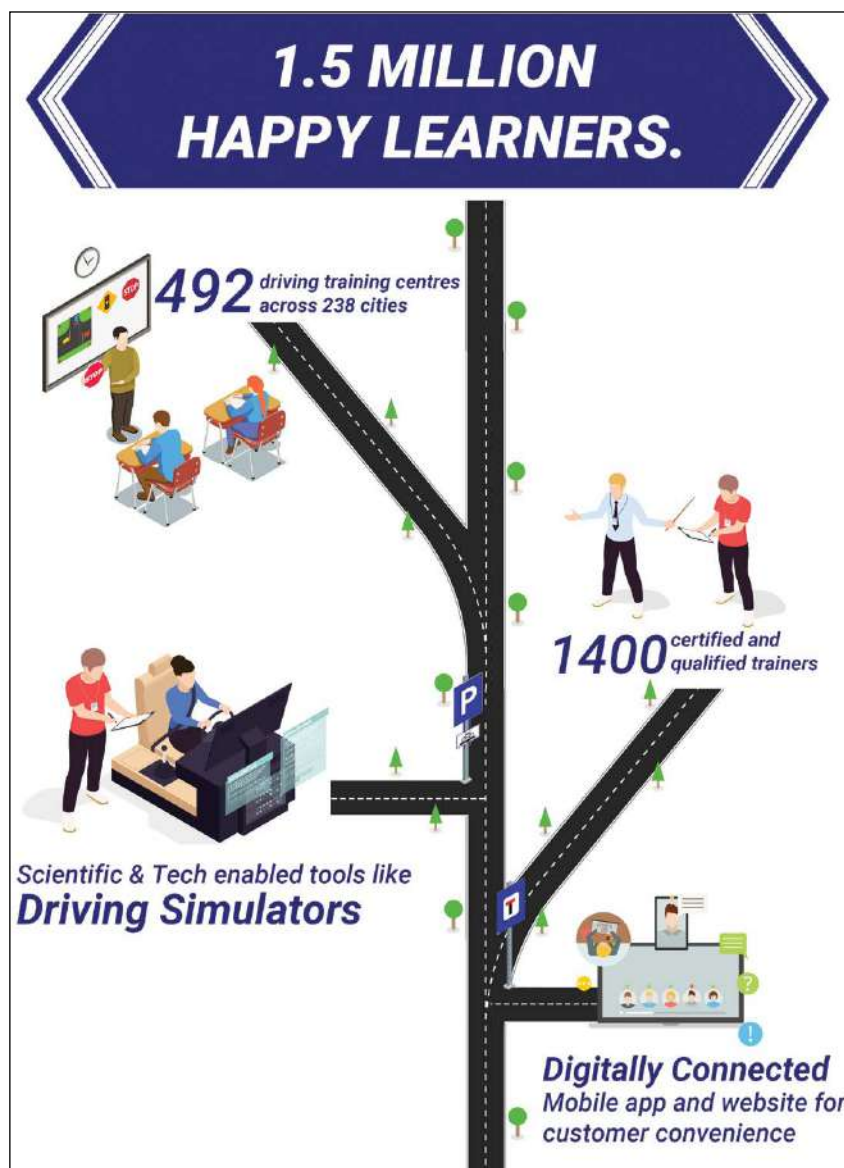
Over 1.5 mn trained in safe driving

MARUTI Suzuki Driving School (MSDS) has successfully trained more than 1.5 million applicants in safe driving.

Created with the core endeavour of making Indian roads safer, it has introduced global standards for quality driving training, said a press release.

MSDS has persistently set benchmarks through its advanced training methodology that includes state-of-the-art driving simulators, and carefully designed practical and theoretical courses, it added.

Speaking on the milestone, Mr. Shashank Srivastava, Executive Director (Marketing & Sales), Maruti Suzuki India Limited, said, "Maruti Suzuki Driving School (MSDS) was conceived with an aim to provide best-in-class driving training to the citizens. It has grown to become India's leading professional driving school chain with over 492 facilities in 238 cities across India. The MSDS network has around 1,400 certified and qualified expert trainers. At MSDS, our focus is to inculcate safe and responsible road behaviour in each applicant while imparting safe driving skills with 360* knowledge about the vehicle basic maintenance and emergency handling techniques."



MG picks eight more startups for support

As part of its commitment to nurture and provide a platform to startups, MG Developer Program & Grant jury on March 31 announced the names of eight more startups that it could explore synergies with.

These synergies could be in the areas of customer service, iSMART & telematics, battery management, blockchain, AR & VR and autonomous technologies.

The carmaker received a total of 170 entries under the MG Developer Program & Grant 2.0. Out of these, 14 startups were shortlisted and presented their solutions to the jury. The eight finalists selected are Mihup, Redbot-Innovations, Electreefi, Avataar.me, Grinntech, Orxa Energies, KoineArth, Fabrik.

Speaking on the occasion, Gaurav Gupta, Chief Commercial Officer, MG Motor India and Jury Chair, said, "Innovation has always been part of MG's DNA and we believe that programmes such as these allow us to explore and tap the vast potential of startups. The MG Developer Program and Grant 2.0 is a platform that plays a pivotal role in not only hand-holding and supporting startups but also reducing the go-to-market time of pioneering solutions."



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2020-2021

HERE ARE THE 8 STARTUPS WHO WILL BE TAKING INNOVATION TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

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The response to MGDP Season 2 has been overwhelming and we've identified our final 8.

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Congratulations to all the start-ups!

We cannot wait to exchange ideas, learn, and grow from each other.

Hyundai releases design sketches of *Alcazar* SUV

HYUNDAI Motor on March 23 released the design sketches of its upcoming SUV, *Alcazar*.

Developed on Hyundai's Global Design identity of Sensuous Sportiness, *Alcazar* synchronises vital design elements of proportion, architecture, styling and technology, forming a modern and premium seven-seater SUV, said a press release.

The SUV portrays a confident and bold stance, while its charismatic appeal and rugged elegance characterises a unique design theme that is extraordinary. With rich yet solid volume wheel arches and bold character lines,

Alcazar epitomises a masculine expression of design and dynamic proportions, it said further.

Exuberating the finest characteristics of space innovation that ensures ample room for second and third-row passengers, *Alcazar* brings to the fore lavish comfort and modern in-car experiences.

The cabin of *Alcazar*, said the release, is the exemplary incarnation of a superior future leading experience. The widespread Wing-Surround architecture enhances the bold and dynamic design of the interiors, perfectly complementing the magnificence of the SUV.



Minda Board clears expansion plans



THE Board of Minda Industries Limited (the flagship company of Uno Minda Group) has approved expansion plans in its Four Wheel (4W) Lighting and 4W Alloy Wheel businesses.

Minda Industries will be setting up a lighting manufacturing plant at Bhagapura in Gujarat to cater to increased demand for 4W automotive lighting. The business has existing manufacturing facilities at Pune, Chennai and Manesar. The new plant will be in vicinity of key OEMs hence will also achieve better logistic management, said a press release.

The Company had augmented its technical capabilities with acquisition of Delvis last year. It also plans to tap potential export business in Europe and America in future from this plant.

The total capital expenditure for this new facility in Gujarat is ₹90 crore which will be funded through mix of debt and internal accruals. The plant is expected to commence operations by quarter ending March 2022, said the release.

Minda Kosei Aluminum Wheel Private Limited, one of the key subsidiaries of Minda Industries Ltd, will be expanding its 4W Alloy wheel capacity by 60,000 wheels/month at its plant in Bawal, Haryana, to cater to the increased demand. The additional capital expenditure for the capacity expansion will be ₹167 crore.

Mr. NK Minda, Chairman & MD, Uno MINDA, said, "The automotive lighting industry is witnessing a gradual shift in technology into more LED based lighting products. With strengthened technical capabilities in next level of lighting technologies, we are well positioned to benefit from these technological shifts and to achieve leadership in the segment. Similarly, in 4W alloy wheels, customer preferences are moving towards alloy wheels. Though penetration of alloy wheel has increased in last few years, however it is still very low in comparison to developed countries providing ample opportunities."

UNO MINDA GROUP EMBARKS ON Organisation and business transformation

UNO Minda has embarked on organisation and business transformation which, it said, will reimagine, redesign and realign its businesses, processes, systems and structures to be a future-ready and sustainable organisation.

The changes take effect from April 1, said a press release issued by the company.

The organisation, it said, is being carved into four domains which shall be system-oriented. Domain realignment is done on the basis of technologies, collaborators and customer connects. Realignment will result in better synergies and efficiency.

Key functions like marketing, procurement and R&D also have been redesigned to have centralised team facilitating better control and cost efficiency on account of scale.

Dedicated teams have been formed within marketing function to focus on ASEAN, EU, Americas and Japan markets. The company also proposes to open office in Thailand to cater to ASEAN market for better coordination and strengthening relation with global OEM's

Mr. Nirmal K Minda, CMD of Uno Minda Group, said, "Evolving to the needs of industry is key to sustainable future and creating a robust business model. Uno Minda Group continues to transform how it operates and build a more customer-driven and streamlined organisation for the future. The latest phase of our transformation journey is designed to improve growth and operational efficiency, and will enable us to create even more value for our customers and shareholders. This is a defining moment for the group and will be



Mr. Nirmal K Minda, CMD of Uno Minda Group



instrumental in our journey of transformation to a unified force".

Mr. Sunil Bohra, Group CFO of Uno Minda Group, said, "These changes create the right structure to build our businesses over the long term and increase our ability to successfully execute on our top priority. Our goal is to better align with the needs of our customers, and through that increase accountability, reduce complexity and improve cost-efficiency. We will continue to evolve into a more global company, leveraging economies of scale and driving innovation across Uno Minda Group."

Hero comes up with *Destini 125 'Platinum'*



CONTINUING with its aggressive product strategy, Hero MotoCorp has launched the new *Destini 125 'Platinum'* edition.

The elegant, premium and durable *Destini 125 Platinum* packs a host of new design and theme elements that add to its appeal, said a press release. Coming close on the heels of *Maestro Edge 125 Stealth* and *Pleasure+ Platinum*, the new scooter further extends the diverse range of offerings in Hero's scooter portfolio, it said.

With enhanced aesthetics, signature LED guide lamp, premium badging, sheet metal body with the new black & chrome theme, *Destini 125 Platinum* will impress various customer segments, added the release.

The *Destini 125 Platinum* is priced at ₹72,050 (ex-showroom, Delhi).

Mr Malo Le Masson, Head – Strategy & Global Product Planning, Hero MotoCorp, said, "The *Destini 125* is a key player in the 125cc segment and has gained recognition from customers since its launch. With the new *Platinum* edition, we are adding an elegant option to the *Destini* portfolio. Based on the overwhelming response to *Pleasure+ Platinum* edition, we are confident that *Destini 125 Platinum* edition will also be a success!"



TVS launches *Apache RTR 160 4V*

TVS Motor Company on March 10 launched *Apache RTR 160 4V* motorcycle.

According to a press release, the motorcycle continues to stay true to its racing pedigree by offering increased power and torque in line with its customers' evolving needs, thereby ensuring the best performance and power of 17.63 PS – making it the 'Most Powerful' motorcycle in its class.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Meghashyam Dighole, Head - (Marketing) Premium Motorcycles, TVS Motor Company, said, "Backed by 38 years of racing pedigree, the new 2021 TVS *Apache RTR 160 4V* offers best-in-class performance with enhanced power to weight ratio and increased torque, offering our customers better-riding experiences along with advanced technologies."

TVS *Apache RTR 160 4V* gets an advanced engine 159.7cc, single-cylinder, 4-valve, oil-cooled engine, that now churns out 17.63 PS at 9250 RPM and 14.73 Nm torque at 7250 RPM. The engine is mated to a 5-speed super-slick gearbox that offers a precise and powerful riding experience, said the release.

The motorcycle comes with an all-new dual tone seat with carbon fibre pattern and LED headlamp with claw styled position lamps adding to its overall premium appeal. Additionally, it has become lighter with a two kg weight reduction, with the disc variant weighing 147kg and the drum variant weighing 145 kg.

The new TVS *Apache RTR 160 4V* motorcycle will be available in three colours: Racing Red, Knight Black and Metallic Blue.

Ducati enriches 'Land of Joy' with Two new Scrambler models

LUXURY motorcycle brand, Ducati on March 15 launched two new *Scramblers* in the country, *Scrambler Nightshift* and the new BS-VI *Desert Sled*.

While *Scrambler Nightshift* is priced at ₹9,80,000 lakh, the *Desert Sled* will cost ₹10,89,000 (ex-showroom pan-India).

Born out of the spirit of motor grandeur and the sense of freedom – the new *Scrambler Nightshift* and *Desert Sled* further enrich and strengthen the ever-grand *Scrambler* 'Land of Joy', said a press release.

Created for the ones who are a cut above the rest when it comes to passion for riding, these two models are the latest offerings from a Ducati family, said the release further.

Offering a unique riding experience, equipped with a Café Racer style flat seat and a wide handlebar, the new *Scrambler Nightshift* is an ideal choice for those night riders who want to ride a motorcycle full of character and effortless power, it added. *Desert Sled*, it said, is for those adventure-seekers who want to explore the roads less travelled.



Scrambler Desert Sled



Scrambler Nightshift

Mr. Bipul Chandra, Managing Director of Ducati India said, "The sophisticated design shows the extensive research which has gone behind the two bikes and we surely believe that all riders, new and experienced, will be able to use these motorcycles to challenge their riding skills and fulfill their dreams of owning a *Scrambler*."

Apollo Apterra Cross tyres for compact SUV segment



APOLLO Tyres on March 16 introduced Apterra Cross tyres for the fast-growing compact SUV segment.

This is the first dedicated range of tyres that caters to the CSUV segment, the hottest selling segment of the decade, in the Indian automotive industry, said a press release.

Apterra Cross tyres are the outcome of an in-depth research to understand the exact usage patterns of CSUV owners/drivers, basis which the team at Apollo Tyres Global R&D Centre Asia, in Chennai, designed and developed the new tyres, it said further.

The Apterra Cross with its aggressive design is by far the best-looking tyre in the market for CSUVs and performs brilliantly under all conditions. From the

quietest and most comfortable ride, to extra durability that ensures no compromises even when travelling through bad patches of roads, these tyres are a perfect combination of both comfort and style, added the release.

Mr Satish Sharma, President, Asia Pacific, Middle East & Africa (APMEA), Apollo Tyres Ltd, said, "The rise of the compact SUV segment, priced affordably, has reinvigorated the dream of owning an SUV in the Indian market, and we being the segment creators in the tyre space, are looking at leveraging on this opportunity with a dedicated range of tyres for this growing segment. We have the first mover advantage with Apollo Apterra Cross, and we are targeting at a leadership position in this segment."

Apollo Tyres back with #BadRoadBuddies

AFTER hosting the mega inaugural edition successfully in Goa two years back, and thousands of smaller editions in different locations over the last 24 months, Apollo Tyres is back with the #BadRoadBuddies in a digital format.

As most of the activations have moved to the virtual space, the company has also chosen the path of building the community of enthusiasts online and is opening this event to the SUV owners/drivers and the two-wheeler riders, who enjoy drives during the weekend or on leisure/adventure trips.

Enthusiasts willing to participate in #BadRoadBuddies, must upload the video/photographs of their drive on Apollo Tyres' social media channels, tagging their buddies, which would then be judged under the these categories: Best video on a road trip, Best photography on a road trip, A hidden eatery and BRB Cares – a social cause undertaken during the drive/trip.

Mr Satish Sharma, President, Asia Pacific, Middle East & Africa (APMEA), Apollo Tyres Ltd, said, "We wanted to provide the enthusiasts a platform to come together and discover the roads less travelled across the vast Indian terrain. Bad Road Buddies is a special initiative curated by Apollo Tyres for them. We have opened this to people who love to explore the unexplored, and enjoy driving, whether on a two-wheeler or a four-wheeler, and our range of tyres will always be a reliable companion for their drive."



Automechanika to take place as a physical event with digital option



THIS year's Automechanika Frankfurt is taking place as a hybrid event for the first time. The primary focus will be on the physical event and all the advantages it offers, according to a press release said a press release issued by Messe Frankfurt

Automechanika, said the release, will be supplementing these by providing all exhibitors with new opportunities to network digitally with those members of the international B2B audience who cannot travel to Frankfurt due to the pandemic.

Mr Detlef Braun, Member, Executive Board of Messe Frankfurt GmbH, is positive about the future: "Starting in June, the Frankfurt exhibition grounds will be hosting trade fairs once again. First up is 'Indoor-Air', a trade fair for ventilation and air quality, and work on the content and organisation of this September's Automechanika, our leading trade fair brand, is also in full swing. Thanks to our hygiene and safety concept, everything is in place to ensure safe events for everyone involved."

Mr Michael Johannes, Brand Manager of Automechanika, said, "We want to bring industry players from different countries and continents together – be it live in Frankfurt or virtually from afar – to satisfy their need to network. Based on the good experience we've had over the past six months providing digital services for our customers not only in German-speaking countries, but also in Russia, Dubai, Shanghai and beyond, we have decided to hold Automechanika Frankfurt as a hybrid event."

ACMA Automechanika New Delhi, one of 15 Automechanika trade fairs worldwide, has also opted for the hybrid format when it takes place next month. Mr Johannes added: "Our entire international brand family works together closely, and we have gained valuable experience and expertise from each of our trade fair teams' activities in their home countries."

Mahindra Logistics Board appoints Shah as Chairman



Dr. Anish Shah

MAHINDRA Logistics Limited on March 8 announced the appointment of Dr. Anish Shah as the Chairman of the Board, effective April 2. He will join the Board of Directors of the company on the same date.

Dr Shah is the Deputy Managing Director and Group CFO of Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) Limited. He is designated to take over as the Managing Director and CEO of M&M Limited from April 2, said a press release.

It added that Mr. VS Parthasarathy (President - Mobility Services Sector and Member of the Mahindra Group Executive Board) has decided to leave the Mahindra Group to pursue personal interests. He will resign from the Board of Mahindra Logistics Limited (MLL) with effect from April 2. Dr. Shah will take over as Chairman of the MLL Board on that day.

Nissan names Cartier as Chairperson for AMIEO region

NISSAN Motor Co. Ltd has announced Mr. Guillaume Cartier as its new Chairperson for Africa, Middle East, India, Europe and Oceania (AMIEO) region.

Effective April 1, Mr. Cartier will lead all Nissan operations in the region, which covers more than 140 markets across four continents, said a press release.

Reacting to the appointment, Mr. Cartier said: "I am thrilled to be leading this culturally rich and diverse region into a period of unprecedented change for the automotive industry, and with a refreshed range of Nissan models and technologies coming to the market.

Currently Vice-Chairperson of the AMIEO region and AMI President, Mr. Cartier joined Nissan in 1995 as Aftersales Manager and went on to hold a number of senior management positions in the Alliance.

Mr. Cartier will replace Mr. Gianluca De Ficchy, who served for three years as Chairperson of Nissan Europe and latterly of the expanded AMIEO region. De Ficchy takes on a new senior role within the Alliance.



Mr. Guillaume Cartier



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