

AUTOGUIDE

India's Automotive Industry & Trade Journal

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**SOAR
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Editor's viewpoint



Chairman - Editorial Board
M.P. MALHOTRA



Executive Editor
SHILPA MALHOTRA

Curtains 2020; Year of Hope is here!

HAVING withstood manifold adversities, tackled tough challenges and learnt some precious lessons in 2020, entering the New Year 2021 gives a huge sense of relief. So let me start by wishing all of you a healthy, happy and prosperous New Year! There are enormous hopes from 2021 and we at *Autoguide* earnestly wish that the automobile industry not only regains complete normalcy, but also touches pinnacles of glory in the year ahead. In the Cover Story this month, we publish viewpoints of some key stakeholders of the industry about the year gone by and their outlook for the New Year.

Despite a host of obstacles it had to confront, the industry ended 2020 on a positive note with most automobile manufacturers managing to pull off a fruitful last quarter. After a roaring festival season, the final month of the year also brought in healthy sales numbers. Market leader Maruti continued to assert dominance in the PV segment as it was the only car brand to sell over one lakh cars in December. The

**THERE ARE ENORMOUS HOPES FROM 2021
AND WE WISH THAT THE AUTOMOBILE
INDUSTRY TOUCHES PINNACLES OF GLORY
IN THE YEAR AHEAD**

number two player, Hyundai Motor India, posted its highest-ever monthly sales. While Tata Motors' domestic PV sales zoomed 84 per cent Y-o-Y, Mahindra too fared quite well. Our regular report on monthly sales figures carries details about various manufacturers' performance in December 2020.

Among the major developments during the past weeks was Tata Motors' decision to bring back its iconic *Safari*. The return of the brand that introduced India to the SUV lifestyle and glamourised the segment in the country is sure to rev up the segment. The issue carries a report on that. A steady increase in input costs coupled with several other factors has escalated the cost of manufacturing leaving many automakers with no option but to share part of the burden with the customers. We carry a consolidated report on the companies which have gone for a price hike beginning January. The other significant development covered in the current issue is SUN Mobility's plan to roll out 100 battery-swapping stations in Bengaluru by the end of 2021. Four such Swap Points, as they are called, have already been made available at IOCL outlets in Bengaluru. Our report carries full details.

And lastly, the not-to-be-missed report in this month's edition is tech giant Apple's potential entry into the self-driving electric mobility space by 2024. Read that and much more in this very first issue of 2021.

2021 ushers in fresh hopes

Industry stakeholders offer assessment

THE year that's just over left an indelible impression on all of us in a variety of ways. The coronavirus pandemic, which struck the world in the beginning of 2020, wreaked havoc upon mankind, trampled economies, mauled businesses and gave birth to new lifestyles. The auto sector also suffered a great deal, particularly during the first half of the year, but staged a swift recovery once the corona-induced lockdown was lifted. With its inherent resilient nature, the automobile industry adapted fast to the new normal, evolved fresh business paradigm and matched the transformed consumer preferences exceptionally well. In that regard, the year 2020 has been a great learning opportunity as well. The last months of the year, starting with the festival season, witnessed healthy growth in sales, thereby, lifting the morale of the industry, which ushered into the New Year 2021 with enormous hopes, renewed confidence, and cautious optimism.

Herewith, we reproduce the assessment of some key stakeholders of the automobile industry about the year gone by and their outlook for the year ahead of us.

WELCOME 2021



Mr. Shashank Srivastava

Executive Director (Marketing & Sales)
Maruti Suzuki India Limited



“ THE year 2020 can be termed as a ‘Tale of two Halves’, with the first half being rather disastrous from the sales point of view. The second half though saw a strong bounce back largely on account of pent-up demand and a good comeback from rural areas. However, overall the industry should end with a big negative in volumes.

The year began decently enough with markets improving from the negative sales in 2019. Then came the unprecedented lockdown due to the pandemic which altered the industry scenario and the consumer behaviour hugely.

On the consumer side, conspicuous consumption was replaced with conscious spending. The consumer moved away from public transport and shared mobility to personal transportation. The industry showed great resilience and took this as an opportunity to relook and re-examine every process for increased efficiency, cost optimisation and productivity.

We can look forward to 2021 with some optimism as regards the auto industry markets. But, of course, it is not easy to give a forward guidance to the demand. However, given the smart recovery in the economy, good monsoons and the expected good liquidity in the market, we can look forward to 2021 with guarded optimism. ”

**Mr Vinnie Mehta**

Director General, ACMA

“ THE year gone by has been one of the most challenging in the history of the automotive industry. In the backdrop of the pandemic and the lockdown, the automotive industry faced unprecedented disruptions. The auto component industry, through agility, flexibility and financial discipline, has indeed displayed remarkable resilience.

With unlocking of the Indian economy, the vehicle sales have been increasing month-on-month that has allowed the component industry to come back strongly. Due credit must be given to the Government for its timely interventions in addressing the supply side issues and support by the OEMs to the component sector.

Going forward, there are indications that the vehicle demand, in the coming months, will be sustained. This, together with the increased focus by the auto industry on deep-localisation and the recent announcement of PLI schemes for the automotive sector and cell/battery manufacturing by the Government, augur well towards making the auto-component industry a self-reliant one. We are also hopeful that the forthcoming Union Budget will be a benign one and will help sustain growth in the economy and the automotive industry. ”



Mr. Rajesh Jain,
CMD, Neolite

“THE year gone by - 2020 has been the most taxing, full of uncertainty, filled with anxiety and with the road to recovery looking very bleak. But at the start of 2021, with the COVID-fallout in the rearview mirror, we all are looking forward to new beginnings and new opportunities.

Indeed the year gone by has been a life-changing experience and great learning experience for us and we all have endured very difficult and unprecedented times. In spite of the adversities, we at Neolite group are fortunate to have weathered the storm bravely and in fact come out stronger and better. I wish to thank our partners, customers, suppliers and employees for their wonderful support. Automotive sector on the whole has coped rather well during this turbulent year and we are now very well on the growth path. Overall, India's self-resilience and strong resolve has led to a faster recovery than envisaged by experts.

The year 2021 will be a resurgent year and I am excitedly looking ahead for a path filled with brightness. ”

Mr Sanjay Malhotra

MD, Jumps Auto Industries Ltd



“ THE year 2020 has been a very challenging year and we all look at 2021 with a lot of hope. I am expecting a V-shape recovery in 2021 and my expectation is based on the following:

The first is that the uncertainty around business will reduce when the vaccination process starts, Secondly agricultural income is quite buoyant and will drive demand. Further the change to BS-VI which affected the sales in 2020 will no longer be relevant and lastly I feel that the Govt is injecting a lot of money into the economy which will also drive demand in all sectors including automotive.”



Mr Swapnil Jain
CEO, Pavna Group

“ AFTER a few months of unprecedented challenges, the industry bounced back better than many expected and performed well in the festive season. Though 2020 was a rollercoaster ride for the entire auto industry and while the four-wheeler market ended the bittersweet year on a high note, the two-wheeler segment wasn't far behind either. Going forward, positive sentiments are likely to be in play as the Government has started acknowledging the

challenges posed for the industry and taking action on these. The recent launch of the vaccine is expected to revive many industries thus boosting demand. Also, the monsoon has been good which will give impetus to improvement in tractor industry. Rural economy is expected to revive leading to better sales of tractors and also two-wheelers, especially motorcycles.

The post-COVID world will not be the same and affect automotive habits of individuals. There may be much speculation but glimpse of the future will unfold within a couple of quarters. Exports throw up lot of opportunity for the Indian automotive industry to grab and flourish. However, the Government support policies and diplomacy will be the key. Domestic demand is expected to bounce back by the next festive season on an optimistic scale. ”

Automakers go for price hike

Rising input costs force the decision

IN view of the increase in material and other input costs, several automakers have announced price hike of their various models. Leading vehicle manufacturer Tata Motors announced on December 21 that there will be a price increase across its commercial vehicle range effective January 1, 2021.

In a statement, the company said, "The steady rise in material and other input costs, impact of forex and transition to BS-VI norms, have cumulatively escalated the cost of manufacturing vehicles."

The price increase is expected across Tata Motors' portfolio of M&HCV, I&LCV, SCV and buses. The actual change in price will depend on individual model, variant and fuel type.

Two days later, Nissan India announced a price hike of up to 5 per cent across its models. The revised prices will be applicable across all available models for Nissan and Datsun, effective January 2021.

Mr Rakesh Srivastava, Managing Director, Nissan Motor India, said, "In the current challenging market conditions, we are constrained to increase the price of all Nissan and Datsun models due to increased costs."

BMW Group India introduced revised pricing for all BMW and MINI models with effect from January 4. The prices will increase by up to 2 per cent across the portfolio.

Mr. Vikram Pawah, President, BMW Group India, said, "From January 4, 2021, BMW Group India will introduce the new pricing for BMW and MINI portfolio, increasing the prices marginally by up to 2 pc to offset the increasing input costs. This will ensure that customer satisfaction, dealer profitability and sustainable growth, which are fundamentals of a successful business, remain strong."

Isuzu Motors too announced an increase in the prices of its commercial pick-up range - *D-MAX Regular Cab* and *D-MAX S-CAB*. The increase is expected to be approximately ₹10,000 from the current ex-showroom price.

A statement issued by Hero MotoCorp said, "There has been a steady rise in commodity costs across the spectrum, including steel, aluminium, plastics, and precious metals. In order to partially offset the impact of the commodity costs, we will be increasing the prices of our products by up to ₹1,500, with effect from January 1, 2021."



Facelifts galvanise car market

TO widen options for customers in the New Year 2021, several carmakers have come up with refurbished and updated versions of their top-selling models. While most of these models retain the existing engines, the exteriors and interiors have been majorly overhauled and a host of new features added to give a completely new look and feel.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor has given facelifts to two of its popular models. While it launched a new Innova *Crysta* during last November, the other best-selling SUV, *Fortuner*, came in a new avatar this month. The new Innova *Crysta* gets a cooler and tougher exterior with features such as a new trapezoidal piano black grille with chrome ornamentation, a sharper front bumper design and diamond-cut alloy wheels for a contemporary look.



Toyota Innova Crysta

Crysta's security has been further bolstered with front clearance sonar to prevent collisions while parking in tight spaces. To increase the luxury quotient, the interiors get a fresh look too with the option of new upholstery colour of Camel Tan in the ZX grade. A new and larger Smart Playcast touchscreen audio with Android Auto and Apple Carplay has been introduced in the upgraded *Innova*.



Toyota Fortuner

The Toyota *Fortuner* facelift has been launched in four engine-gearbox combinations with two trim levels, *Fortuner* and *Legender*. The vehicle is being offered with 2.8-litre diesel and 2.7-litre petrol engine options while the gearbox options include a 5-speed MT, 6-speed MT and 6-speed AT. The *Fortuner* facelift is available in eight exterior colour options and *Fortuner Legender* can also be had in a dual-tone pearl white and matte black paint scheme.

Along with *Hector* facelift, MG Motor India has launched *Hector Plus* 7-seater variant. It is now available in 6-seater and 7-seater seating configurations. The new 7-seater variants come with a standard bench-type second row, in comparison to captain seats in the 6-seater variants. The prices of the *Hector Plus* 7-seater start from ₹13.34 lakh and go up to ₹18.32 lakh (ex-showroom Delhi).



MG Hector Plus



Audi A4



Jeep Compass

Audi India has launched the facelifted 2021 A4 luxury sedan at ₹42.34 lakh to ₹46.67 lakh. The A4 is powered by a 2.0-litre TFSI turbo-petrol and offered in two variants. It adds features such as connected Audi's latest MMI touch-controlled infotainment system, LED headlamps, gesture-controlled boot opening, and wireless charging.

Jeep Compass, the American carmaker's most affordable SUV, has also got a facelift ahead of the scheduled launch in India next month. Fiat Chrysler Automobiles on January 7 unveiled the new *Jeep Compass* with a sharper design and improved infotainment system to target the young drivers. The updated *Jeep Compass 2021* boasts of much improved interiors, infotainment system and re-designed LED headlights and tail-lights among others.

The list of new, updated models is still not over. The BMW 2 Series *Gran Coupe* petrol (220i) has been launched in India at ₹40.90 lakh (ex-showroom) for the *M Sport* petrol variant. So far, the 2 Series *Gran Coupe* was only available in the diesel (220d) variant. According to reports, BMW is set to launch the 3 Series *Gran Limousine* on January 21. It is 120mm longer and has a 110mm longer wheelbase compared to the standard version. It will come at a premium over the standard sedan priced from ₹42.30 lakh to ₹49.30 lakh (ex-showroom).

While the cabin layout is nearly the same as that of the standard version, the 3 Series *Gran Limousine* offers 43mm of additional legroom at the rear, say media reports. BMW is also expected to offer the 3 Series *Gran Limousine* with a similar feature list as the standard sedan that includes wireless charging, touchscreen infotainment system with Apple CarPlay, and ambient lighting.



BMW 2 Series Gran Coupe



BMW 3 Series Gran Limousine

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December sales see hefty growth

A majority of automobile manufacturers ended 2020 on a positive note, registering good wholesales growth, and entering the New Year with renewed hope and optimism.

Market leader Maruti Suzuki India dispatched 1,40,754 passenger vehicles to dealers in December 2020, a growth of 14.6 per cent year-on-year. In addition, the sales of the company's light commercial vehicle Super Carry more than tripled to 5,726 units, while its exports rose 31.4 per cent to 9,938 units.

South Korean brand Hyundai posted highest-ever sales for December at 47,400 units, registering a Y-o-Y an increase of 25 per cent. This was, however, slightly lower than 48,800 unit sales registered by the carmaker in November 2020 which resulted in M-o-M decline of 3 per cent. Mr SS Kim, MD & CEO, Hyundai Motor India Ltd, said the firm achieved the milestone of highest production in a single month with 71,178 units last month. "We are proceeding with cautious optimism and positively anticipate green shoots of recovery in 2021", he added.

Tata Motors' domestic PV sales zoomed 84 per cent Y-o-Y to 23,545 units, an M-o-M growth of 9 per cent. The company has been witnessing a considerable jump in sales over the past few months and is currently the country's third-largest passenger vehicle manufacturer. Mr Shailesh Chandra, President, PVB, Tata Motors, said, said in Q3, PVs posted a growth of 89 pc — the highest-ever sales in the last 33 quarters adding that retail sales in December were 18 per cent higher than wholesales and that pipeline inventory remained thin.

Mahindra gained the fourth spot with 16,182 units sold in December. While its M-o-M sales declined 10 per cent, the company witnessed a positive Y-o-Y growth of 6 per cent. Mr Veejay Nakra, CEO, Automotive Division, M&M, said the demand remained strong even after the festival season. "Our overall sales have been affected due to the continuing supply chain challenges specifically the supply shortage of (semiconductors) used in the Electronic Control Unit", he said.

Among those who lagged behind, Kia Motors witnessed a drastic drop of 44 per cent M-o-M with a sales volume of 11,818 units. Renault (9,800 units), Honda (8,638 units) and Toyota (7,487 units) also recorded a decline in M-o-M sales volume. Renault witnessed de-growth in Y-o-Y sales as well.

In CVs, M&M sold 16,795 vehicles, a drop of 21.5 per cent. Tata Motors saw its CV sales fall 5 per cent to 29,885. While Ashok Leyland saw 14 per cent growth in domestic CV sales at 11,857 units, VE Commercial Vehicles sales declined 7.7 per cent at 4,069 units.

In the two-wheelers segment, Hero MotoCorp saw its domestic sales grow 5 per cent to 4.27 lakh units. According to the company, the December volumes indicated the continuously improving consumer sentiment. "Hero MotoCorp [clocked] its best-ever third quarter, with a 19.7 per cent growth over [a year earlier]," it said.

While Yamaha Motor India saw its total sales rise 33 per cent to 39,224 units, Royal Enfield said its domestic sales rose 35 pc to 65,492 units.

ACMA Industry Performance Review for H1

Auto component industry sees de-growth of 34 pc



“While the first quarter for FY20-21 was significantly stressed, however with unlocking of the economy, the sales of vehicles witnessed improvement, month-on-month, in the second quarter.”

Mr VINNIE MEHTA
Director General, ACMA

THE turnover of the automotive component industry stood at ₹1.19 lakh crore (\$15.9 billion) for the period April to September 2020, registering a de-growth of 34 per cent over the first half of the previous year, said the Industry Performance Review for the first half of fiscal 2020-21, announced by the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA) in New Delhi on December 16.

According to the findings, the exports of auto components declined by 23.6 per cent to ₹39,003 crore (\$5.2 billion) in H1 2020-21 from ₹51,028 crore (\$7.4 billion) in H1 2019-20. Europe, accounting for 31 per cent of exports, saw a decline of 28 per cent while North America and Asia, accounting for 30 per cent and 29 per cent respectively, registered decline of 28 and 30 per cent respectively.

The key export items included drive transmission & steering, engine components, Body/Chassis, Suspension & Braking, among others.

The Imports decreased by 32.7 per cent to ₹37,710 crore (\$5.0 billion) in H1 2020-21 from ₹56,066 crore (\$8.2 billion) in H1 2019-20. Asia accounted for 60 per cent of imports followed by Europe and North America, with 30 per cent and 9 per cent respectively. Imports from all geographies witnessed steep decline, said the Review.

The aftermarket, it said, witnessed de-growth of 15 per cent to ₹31,116 crore (\$4.1 billion) from ₹36,607 crore (\$5.3 billion) in H1 2019-20.

The auto component industry, through agility, flexibility and financial discipline, has displayed remarkable resilience and has comeback strongly with the unlocking of the economy.”



Mr DEEPAK JAIN
President, ACMA

Commenting on the performance, Mr Vinnie Mehta, Director General, ACMA, said, “The auto industry witnessed a downturn in FY2019-20, the situation further aggravated with the outbreak of the pandemic and the lockdown. While the first quarter for FY20-21 was significantly stressed, however with unlocking of the economy, the sales of vehicles witnessed improvement, month-on-month, in the second quarter. The component industry, in tandem, posted a subdued performance with de-growth of 34 per cent over the first half of the last fiscal.”

Sharing his insights, Mr Deepak Jain, President, ACMA, said, “In the backdrop of the pandemic and the lockdown, the automotive industry faced unprecedented challenges in the first-half of FY 2020-21. The auto component industry, through agility, flexibility and financial discipline, has displayed remarkable resilience and has comeback strongly with the unlocking of the economy. I am thankful to the OEMs for their support and for the timely intervention by the Government, especially in addressing the supply side challenges.”

Going forward, he said, while the performance of the industry during the festive season has been heartening, there are indications that the vehicle demand, in the coming months, will be sustained. “This, together with the increased focus by the auto industry on deep-localisation and the recent announcement of PLI schemes for the automotive sector and cell/battery manufacturing by the Government, augur well towards making the auto-component industry a self-reliant one”, said Mr Jain.

He also expressed the hope that the Government would consider PLI or appropriate manufacturing schemes for auto-electronics and xEV components as well.

Elaborating on the mood of the industry and outlook for the near to mid-term future, Mr Jain mentioned, “According to the recent ACMA-PwC joint survey of ACMA leadership, despite concerns of another wave of pandemic, the industry is cautiously optimistic about the prospects of the Indian economy and the automotive sector for FY2021-22. Companies have mostly recovered and are back to moderate financial health, post the lockdown. Financially healthy and growth focused companies are also actively focusing on CAPEX and acquisition / merger opportunities. While increased visibility and commitment to new programme timelines from OEMs is a key industry expectation, at an organisational level, focus on employee productivity and organisation structure consolidation will be the key thrust areas.”

SUN Mobility to set up 100 Swap Points in Bengaluru

Partners MetroRide for last-mile connectivity



SUN Mobility, provider of electric mobility solutions and services, on December 22 announced its plan to roll out 100 battery-swapping stations, called Swap Points, in Bengaluru by the end of 2021.

At a virtual event, Karnataka Chief Minister, Mr B.S. Yediyurappa, formally commenced the commercial launch of SUN Mobility's swapping network in Bengaluru.

A total of four Swap Points are now available at IOCL outlets in the Bengaluru's densely populated areas of Indiranagar, Jayanagar, Koramangala and HSR Layout.

SUN Mobility also announced its partnership with the City's MetroRide, a sustainable and environment-friendly shared mobility solution to solve first and last-mile connectivity for Metro rails. MetroRide's fleet of Piaggio Ape E-City electric three-wheelers will make use of SUN Mobility's Swap Points deployed at prime IOCL outlets.



Mr B.S. Yediyurappa
Karnataka Chief Minister,

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Yediyurappa said, "The Government of Karnataka has envisaged a systematic growth of Bengaluru, with one of the focus areas being shared mobility. As part of our efforts to make the state and its urban landscapes cleaner and greener, this support and collaboration is a significant step in furthering our vision to establish Karnataka as the EV capital of India. Bengaluru will lead the change with an environment that historically has nurtured innovation. I am excited that we will see innovative technologies and models in shared mobility emerge here, like battery-swapping that can be taken to the rest of India and the world. We look forward to working with various players in the space, and extending all necessary support to make this a reality."



Mr Chetan Maini,
Co-Founder and Vice-Chairman, SUN Mobility

Mr Chetan Maini, Co-Founder and Vice-Chairman, SUN Mobility, said, "We realise that good infrastructure is a precursor to enabling a vibrant, clean and shared mobility ecosystem in a city like Bengaluru. A great example of this is the three-wheeler market that has 180,000 three-wheelers, supported by 85 LPG stations. We want to create a similar supporting ecosystem by deploying 100 Swap Points that can power and support all forms of shared mobility in the city, including 2-wheelers, 3-wheelers, and last-mile delivery trucks."

Mr Diego Graffi, Chairman and MD, Piaggio Vehicles, said, "We are pleased to start our EV business in Bengaluru, in association with SUN Mobility and



Mr Diego Graffi,
Chairman and MD, Piaggio Vehicles

MetroRide. At Piaggio, we always believe in providing best in class solutions to our customers in the last-mile transportation segment. Our *Ape' E-City*, with the swappable battery solution, will provide an easy, clean and comfortable Metro station commute, which is the need of the hour for a fast, young and cosmopolitan city like Bengaluru."

"There is a need for reliable and efficient transport solutions for Metro Rail which can greatly increase its ridership. With our focus on Metro riders, the partnership with SUN Mobility will help make last-mile commuting easy, safe and eco-friendly for everyone," said Mr Girish Nagpal, CEO & Co-Founder, MetroRide.

EESL sets up a public charging station at HAREDA, Panchkula



WITH a view to promoting e-mobility in Haryana, a public charging station for all types of electric cars was opened at the head office of HAREDA in Panchkula on January 4.

The charging station was inaugurated by Mr Tarun Kapoor, Secretary in the Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry, in the presence of Mr Trilok Chand Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Haryana and Dr. Hanif Qureshi, Director General-cum- Secretary, New and Renewable Energy Department, Haryana/HAREDA.

Capable of charging any type or model of EV, this is the first-of-its-kind charging station in North India where all types of electric cars can be charged free of cost.

It has been set up by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a JV of public sector undertakings under the Ministry of Power, as part of an agreement with the Haryana Renewable Energy Department Agency (HAREDA). The installation is part of EESL's PCS pilot phase in the state and will be open to public for use, free of cost. HAREDA will bear its entire cost of installation and maintenance.

The dignitaries also flagged off five EVs which were handed over by EESL to HAREDA on a dry-lease monthly agreement. Among the five EVs, a Hyundai Kona EV has been deployed at the head office of the Department in Panchkula while one Tata Nexon EV each will be deployed in district offices of the Department in Gurugram, Faridabad, Panchkula and Karnal.

Dr. Qureshi said that e-vehicles are the only solution to address increasing vehicular pollution in the country. "For the promotion of the e-vehicle, the first step is to provide charging facility in the state. HAREDA is committed to create infrastructure for EV charging facility all over Haryana, but in the first phase highways and major cities will be covered."



Tech giant Apple plans EV foray

Speculation rife about tie-up with Hyundai

THE news about Tech giant Apple's entry into the self-driving electric mobility space by 2024 has created a huge excitement in the EV industry.

According to a news agency report, Apple is moving forward with self-driving car technology and is targeting 2024 to produce a passenger vehicle that could include its own breakthrough battery technology.

Later, on January 10, a local newspaper in Seoul reported that South Korean automotive brand Hyundai Motor and Apple Inc. plan to sign a partnership deal on autonomous electric cars by March this year and start production around 2024 in the US.

Hyundai Motor, however, declined to comment on the report published by Korea IT News and reiterated it has received requests for potential cooperation from various companies on developing autonomous EVs. Once there, Apple is set to pose direct competition to the already-established EV manufacturer Tesla, besides facing stiff competition from dozens of new electric vehicle manufacturers that are waiting to flood the market over the next few years.

Media reports suggest that Apple has been working on its automotive efforts, codenamed Project Titan, since 2014 when it first started to design the vehicle from scratch. After investing millions of dollars, the project was, however, shelved and the whole R&D team laid off.

According to sources quoted in these reports, Apple's new battery design is named 'monocell' and it will give an EV much longer range and faster charging capability with no overheating issues. Apple also plans to provide its smart technologies, like Lidar and 'Apple Ecosystem', to improve the overall driving experience of EV customers. These features will be provided based on the company's current subscription model.

Apple Inc. has also come up with a new automobile-related feature, digital key, for iPhone users. With digital key, iPhone users can lock/unlock and start a car using their mobile phone. They can also share the digital key with their family members and friends through the iMessage system. This feature has already been installed in the new BMW 5 Series. The system runs on iOS 13 operating system and many upcoming car models are going to feature it.

For digital transformation of dealerships ASDC, FADA tie up with Google



THE Automotive Skills Development Council (ASDC) and the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) have joined hands with Google India to bridge the digital skill gap in the country's auto dealerships and build their capacity in this critical growth driver.

Industry experts believe that some customers may not wish to visit a dealership as many times as before prior to making a purchase decision, and hence, there is an urgent need for automotive retail to become virtual, lean, and flexible, said a press release.

Tailor-made by Google India under its 'Grow with Google' initiative, the training programme will be conducted via a series of webinars on digital marketing, hyper local marketing, and full funnel strategy on Google India's YouTube channel.



“To maintain market continuity, both ASDC and FADA, with the help of Google, are helping the dealerships become as active as original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) on digital platforms.”

Mr Nikunj Sanghi, Chairman, ASDC



“With this initiative, we are now bringing our learning and support to handhold the larger auto dealer ecosystem to go digital in collaboration with ASDC and FADA.”

Mr Nikhil Bansal, Head of Automotive, Google India

The focus of the programme, said the release, is on empowering dealer principals to adopt digital tools and platforms to engage with customers. In its second phase, the programme also aims to train frontline sales and marketing executives via a series of vernacular executional videos. This will be followed by an online assessment and certification by Google India, ASDC and FADA.

The initiative focuses on training over 20,000 auto dealerships across the country to build an online presence and providing digital skill training to 100,000+ auto dealers across the marketing and sales divisions.

Commenting on the initiative, Mr Nikhil Bansal, Head of Automotive, Google India, said “Over the years, the window to influence purchase decisions through offline efforts has become smaller. The average number of visits to dealerships in India fell by 50 pc over the last three years from 2016 to 2019. And now, COVID-19 has made consumers further reluctant to visit car dealerships, and as a result, walk-ins are even fewer. To aid business recovery, auto players are encouraged to take their dealerships to customers, online. We have been working with leading auto OEMs to help them digitise their dealership networks, and with this initiative, we are now bringing our learning and support

to handhold the larger auto dealer ecosystem to go digital in collaboration with ASDC and FADA.”

Mr Nikunj Sanghi, Chairman, ASDC, said, “We are collectively experiencing an unprecedented time. COVID-19 has brought significant change and our relationships have gone digital. Existing skills will require a lot of redefinition and skilling will play a major role when we re-enter the new world. We need to train the workforce on how to use digital tools and train the entire ecosystem to monitor their efficiency. Hence to maintain market continuity, both ASDC and FADA, with the help of Google, are helping the dealerships become as active as original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) on digital platforms”

Mr Vinkesh Gulati, President, FADA, said “The digital movement by the dealers’ community reaffirms FADA’s strong commitment to retain the dynamism of dealer business in the automobile ecosystem and also assure its participation in Government’s Digital India Movement in the post-COVID world. The Google-ASDC-FADA webinars are hence aimed to prepare Dealer Principals and their teams to stay ahead in the game in times to come.”

“The digital movement by the dealers’ community reaffirms FADA’s strong commitment to retain the dynamism of dealer business in the automobile ecosystem.”

Mr Vinkesh Gulati, President, FADA



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Tata Motors to bring back its Safari in a new avatar

TATA Motors on January 6 announced that it is bringing back its iconic brand Safari with its forthcoming flagship SUV, (codenamed as the *Gravitas*).

Tata *Safari* introduced India to the SUV lifestyle, and glamourised the segment in the country for other players to follow. For over two decades, *Safari* has represented prestige and performance, and in its new avatar, the *Safari* will carry forward this rich idea and its strong legacy, according to a press release issued by the automotive brand..

Announcing the formal branding of its forthcoming SUV as 'Tata *Safari*', Mr. Shailesh Chandra – President, Passenger Vehicles Business Unit (PVBU), Tata Motors, said, "We are proud and elated to re-introduce our flagship SUV–*Safari*. The *Safari*, an iconic brand with a strong following, has been the most sought-after SUV on Indian roads for well over two decades. In its new avatar, the *Safari* will appeal to the socially active, fun-



loving customers who seek out unique experiences and adventure. Its design, performance, versatility, features, and long lasting build quality, reinforce the SUV lifestyle to provide unending pleasure. We are confident that the launch of the *Safari* will once again re-energise the market, amplifying its cult status."

Renault Kiger makes global debut in India on Jan 28

AFTER generating a lot of exhilaration with the showcase of Renault *Kiger*, the company will be globally premiering the car in India on January 28. Slated to revolutionise the B-SUV segment in India, Renault *Kiger* is a Stunning, smart and sporty offering to be first launched in India, followed by other markets.

Built on the CMFA+ Platform, Renault *Kiger* will come loaded with several smart attributes and features which will include some best-in-class offerings that will complement the design and styling of the car. It will be powered by an all new turbo engine and will offer an exciting drive, added the release.

A collaboration between the corporate design teams in France and Renault India design, Renault *Kiger* will be the third global car from Groupe Renault to be launched in India first.



Land Rover opens bookings for plug in-hybrid *Defender*



JAGUAR Land Rover India on December 15 announced that it has opened bookings of its first plug-in hybrid in India, the new *Defender P400e*.

Combining a powerful 2.0 l four-cylinder petrol engine and a 105 kW electric motor, the *P400e* develops 297 kW of combined power and 640 Nm of combined torque. This helps the New *Defender* accelerate from 0-100 km/h in just 5.6 s and achieve a top speed of 209 km/h, said a press release issued by the company.

The New *Defender P400e* has a 19.2 kWh battery, which can be charged at home or office using a 15A socket or a 7.4 kW AC wall box charger, supplied complimentary with the vehicle.

Mr Rohit Suri, President & Managing Director, Jaguar Land Rover India, said, "We are extremely proud to introduce our first plug-in hybrid, the New *Defender P400e* in India, a vehicle that perfectly balances performance with efficiency, while retaining Land Rover's legendary off-road capability. This also reaffirms our commitment to introduction of electrified vehicles across the Jaguar Land Rover portfolio, after we had opened bookings for Jaguar *I-PACE* in November 2020."

The new *Defender P400e* will be offered in India in four variants, the *SE*, *HSE*, *X-Dynamic HSE* and *X* on the *Defender 110*. Deliveries are expected to begin from Q1 of FY 2021-22.

EeVe India launches two new EV variants



Atreo



Ahava

ELECTRIC two-wheeler manufacturing company EeVe India on December 15 launched two new variants of EV scooters, *Atreo* and *Ahava*.

Both the variants are fully loaded with latest technology-enabled features alongside a 5-year warranty, said a press release.

While *Atreo* has a riding range of 90 to 100 km, *Ahava* offers a riding range of 60-70 km. Besides being a new energy solution that is eco-friendly, both the vehicles offer day-time running lights and its running cost per km is 15 paisa, the release said further.

The all-new *Atreo* and *Ahava* have been embedded with Artificial Intelligence like geo-tagging, geo-fencing and immobilisation, etc. They boast a sporty look and an enticing design, added the release.

Mr Harsh Vardhan Didwania, Co-Founder & Director of EeVe India, said, "We are really excited about adding two new variants of electric scooters besides the existing Xeniaa, Wind, 4U and Your models. We look forward to establishing ourselves as one of the pioneer manufacturers of electric scooters in the near future."

BMW opens dealership in Thiruvananthapuram



Mr. Sabu Johny, Dealer Principal, EVM Autokraft



BMW Group India has announced the launch of its Facility *NEXT* in Thiruvananthapuram. EVM Autokraft now represents BMW and BMW Motorrad in the sales and service facility in Thiruvananthapuram, said a press release.

Based on the latest BMW Facility *NEXT* framework, the new facility showcases exclusive range of both BMW cars and BMW Motorrad motorcycles.

The dealership is headed by Mr. Sabu Johny as Dealer Principal, EVM Autokraft.

Mr. Vikram Pawah, President, BMW Group India, said, "EVM Autokraft has been a trusted BMW partner and today we have strengthened our relationship further with the inauguration of the largest BMW Facility *NEXT* framework based dealership in Thiruvananthapuram. This is a reflection of our commitment to serving our discerning customers in one of the fastest emerging markets in Kerala."

Mr. Sabu Johny, Dealer Principal, EVM Autokraft, said, "EVM Autokraft is proud of its association with BMW Group India and we are delighted to represent BMW and BMW Motorrad by setting up the largest BMW Facility *NEXT* in Thiruvananthapuram."

The showroom is spread over a total area of 14,000 sq.ft and displays five BMW cars, along with a three car display for BMW Premium Selection, an Experience Zone featuring Virtual Reality to bring customers face-to-face with the latest updates on the BMW product range.



BMW X5 M Competition in India

'M' supermacy with versatility of BMW 'X'

BMW India has announced the launch of *X5 M Competition* in India. The supremely powerful Sports Activity Vehicle (SAV) is designed and engineered to offer unrivalled performance and signature attributes of BMW *M*, said a company press release. The all-new BMW *X5 M Competition* is now available across BMW dealerships in the country as a completely built-up unit (CBU).

The all-new BMW *X5 M Competition* combines high-performance power with the versatility of an SAV. Its unique attributes combine with the renowned prowess of the BMW *X* range to bring an even greater degree of dominance, fueled by performance and visual appearance.

The ex-showroom price of the vehicle is ₹1,94,90,000. The all-new BMW *X5 M Competition* is available in metallic colours - Carbon Black, Black Sapphire, Mineral White, Marina Bay Blue, Donnington Grey, Manhattan Green and Tornado Red. Optionally, BMW Individual colours are available in Tanzanite Blue and Ametrine.

The standard upholstery is in Black Extended Merino Leather interior as standard. Available optionally on the Full Merino Leather interiors in a choice of Silverstone, Sakhir Orange/Black, Adelaide Grey, Taruma Brown, Black or Ivory White/Night Blue with color matched Alcantara headliner.

The hallmark BMW *M* design and striking exterior features lends to an extrovert appearance exuding supreme authority in any environment, said the press release. It has an immediately-recognisable large front bumper air intake opening to feed additional air to the coolers. It features both a roof and lower tailgate spoiler as part of aerodynamic enhancements. The car features exclusive '*M*' light-alloy wheels in 21-inch format at the front axle and 22-inch at the rear with star-spoke style 809 '*M*' Bi-color. The optional BMW Laserlight offers selective beam and no dazzling high beam function with a range of around 500 meters.

The latest-generation V8 engine stands out with its high revving character and unmistakable performance of the *M* TwinPower Turbo technology with racetrack-proven cooling system. The vehicle is loaded with cutting-edge BMW safety technologies.

VW opens two more DWA Excellence Centres



Ahmedabad outlet

VOLKSWAGEN Passenger Cars India announced the expansion of its Das WeltAuto Excellence Centers with the launch of two new outlets in Bengaluru and Ahmedabad.

With the aim to enhance customers' buying, selling or exchange experience in the pre-owned car segment, Volkswagen's digitally integrated service outlets provide a bouquet of options including pricing transparency, unique accessory offers, a dedicated relationship manager, hassle-free transfer and warranty packages, said a press release issued by the German carmaker.

Through this initiative, the brand has successfully opened total seven DWA Excellence Centers in 2020.

Along with providing a complete digital experience, Volkswagen with its DWA Excellence Centers intends to offer a professionally managed and value for money proposition to its potential customers looking for pre-owned mobility options, added the release.



Bengaluru outlet

Mr. Ashish Gupta, Brand Head, Volkswagen Passenger Cars India, said, "The organised pre-owned car business has received a positive response this year, wherein customer demand for affordable individual mobility has grown, which is likely to double in the coming years. In-line with this momentum, our Das WeltAuto Excellence Centres with multi-brand options, aim to professionalise the customer purchase experience and be a one-stop shop for all the customer's needs. We intend to further penetrate the markets by launching 10 more facilities in 2021."

MAHINDRA & Mahindra on November 25 announced that its SUV *Thar* has been awarded the 4-star safety rating by Global NCAP.

The all-new *Thar* has set a new benchmark in safety with highest ever rating for a body-on-frame SUV tested by Global NCAP so far. In fact, *Thar* has scored the highest point in child safety in cars tested by Global NCAP so far, said a company press release.

The official Global NCAP test for *Thar* was conducted in Germany recently.

Mahindra's *Thar* receives Global NCAP 4-star rating



Mahindra First Choice and TVS Automobile Solutions join hands



AUTOMOBILE SOLUTIONS

MAHINDRA First Choice Services, a pan-India chain of multi-brand car and two-wheeler service workshops, on November 26 announced a plan to integrate its operations with TVS Automobile Solutions, an independent automotive aftermarket player.

The move will enable the two to combine their strengths to organise the highly fragmented automobile aftermarket services space, thereby providing superior value to customers, channel partners, employees and other stakeholders, said a press release.

MFCSL will partner with TVS Automobile Solutions, which houses 'myTVS,' a multi-brand independent automobile aftermarket brand that offers integrated solutions across the aftermarket value chain. As part of the transaction, Mahindra and Mahindra Ltd. will secure a stake in TVSASPL and in turn, MFCSL will become a subsidiary of TVS ASPL. The transaction is subject to regulatory approvals, including an approval from the Competition Commission of India (CCI).

Mr. R. Dinesh, Director, TVS Automobile Solutions Pvt. Ltd. said, "I am delighted with this deal as two great brands have come together for the benefit of the overall aftermarket ecosystem."

Mr. G. Srinivasa Raghavan, Managing Director, TVS ASL, added, "myTVS has created a digital platform and ecosystem for over 2,500 garages especially across South India. With MFCSL, we will have an opportunity to create a pan India digital footprint."

Nissan starts bookings for its SUV *Magnite*



NISSAN India on December 2 announced the price and commenced bookings for its new SUV *Magnite* across all its dealerships in the country and on its website.

The big, bold, beautiful and charismatic SUV was made available at an introductory price of ₹4,99,000 (ex-showroom) until December 31, according to a press release.

"The all-new Nissan *Magnite* marks the beginning of a new chapter in the Nissan *NEXT* strategy for both the Indian and global market. Built on the philosophy of 'Make in India, Make for the World', the all-new Nissan *Magnite* comes with more than 20 first-in-class and best-in-segment features that provide consumers with a differentiated, innovative and accessible ownership experience," said Mr Sinan Ozkok, President, Nissan Motor India.

Nissan India also launched a first-in-industry virtual test drive feature that allows the customer to experience the all-new Nissan *Magnite* on their personal device, wherever they may be.

"With the launch of the all-new Nissan *Magnite*, Nissan has reached a memorable milestone in its customer-centric journey for the Indian market. Specifically for our discerning Indian customers, we are offering the big, bold, beautiful and 'charismatic' SUV at a special introductory price. We believe that the all-new Nissan *Magnite* will be a disruptive game-changer that is high on technology and aspirations," said Mr Rakesh Srivastava, Managing Director, Nissan Motor India.



**Mr Rakesh Srivastava,
MD, Nissan Motor India**



Maruti dedicates housing project to its employees

Affordable, world-class homes at Dharuhera

MARUTI Suzuki completed a housing township of affordable modern eco-friendly houses for its employees in Dharuhera in Delhi-NCR region and handed over the first batch of houses on December 23.

The remaining apartments, out of a total of 360, are expected to be ready for possession in a staggered manner, said a press release by the country's biggest carmaker. The company launched its first housing project in 1989 at Chakkarpur, Gurugram and its second project in 1994 at Bhondsi, Gurugram. This is the third project in Dharuhera called Maruti Suzuki Enclave and the company is already exploring more housing projects based on employee needs.

Unlike usual employee housing projects, the houses in this township will be owned and managed by the employees themselves. The company has facilitated employees by way of bulk negotiation for land and building, coordination with the Haryana Government for approvals and monitoring the quality and execution through a professional agency. The company has supported financially and facilitated soft loans. The employees have also availed of the benefits under the Government's Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and Deen Dayal Jan Awas Yojana schemes.

The project, said the release, has been carried out using the ecologically-friendly practices and expertise of the company. Maruti Suzuki Enclave hosts well-maintained gardens, LED street lights, rainwater harvesting, sewage treatment plant (STP), water treatment plant and electrical sub-station, among others. The apartments feature modern and best quality monolithic construction technology. In this state-of-art technology, the whole structure along with the slab is casted in a single go avoiding the use of bricks, thereby reducing pollution and time drastically. Provided with security, homes will have access to utility services such as housekeeping, electrician and plumber, among others.

Ola to set up scooter factory in TN

Signs MoU with Govt for investment of Rs 2,400 cr

MOBILITY platform Ola signed a MoU with the Tamil Nadu Government on December 14 for an investment of ₹2,400 crore in setting up its first factory in the state.

Upon completion, the factory will create almost 10,000 jobs and will be the world's largest scooter manufacturing facility, which will initially have an annual capacity of 2 million units, said a press release.

In line with the Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi's vision, Ola's factory is an important step in making an AtmaNirbhar Bharat, said the release. It will catalyse reduction of India's import dependence in a key future sector



Mr Bhavish Aggarwal,
Chairman and Group CEO, Ola

like electric vehicles, boost local manufacturing, create jobs as well as improve the technical expertise in the country, the release added.

Ola's factory will cater to customers not only in India but in markets around the world including Europe, Asia, Latin America, and more. The company is gearing up to launch the first of its range of electric scooters in the coming months.

Mr Bhavish Aggarwal, Chairman and Group CEO, Ola, said, "We are excited to announce our plans to set up the world's largest scooter factory. This is a significant milestone for Ola and a proud moment for our country as we rapidly progress towards realising our vision of moving the world to sustainable mobility solutions across shared and owned mobility. This will be one of the most advanced manufacturing facilities in the world. This factory will showcase India's skill and talent to produce world class products that will cater to global markets."

Aprilia SXR 160 comes to India

Piaggio's premium offering

PIAGGIO India on December 23 launched its premium scooter *Aprilia SXR 160*. It has been priced at ₹1,25,997 (ex-showroom Pune).

Aprilia SXR 160 incorporates Aprilia's latest global design language and is equipped with a single-cylinder, four-stroke, air-cooled, three-valve fuel injection clean emission engine technology that produces peak power of 11 PS at 7,100 RPM.

To deliver the best riding experience and highest level of comfort, *Aprilia SXR 160* offers bigger, longer, comfortable and ergonomic seats, crafted in art leather suede feel, said a company press release. The sharp body lines, geometric contours and high craftsmanship reflect the dynamic premium appeal of *SXR 160*, it added. The scooter comes with a fuel tank capacity of 7L.

Commenting on the launch, Mr. Diego Graffi, Chairman and Managing Director, Piaggio India, said, "Designed in Italy, for India, the *Aprilia SXR 160* is an epitome of

great style, high performance and great comfort. Available at all dealerships across India, we believe that this scooter will set high standards in the Indian premium two-wheeler market and will be a testament of Piaggio's upcoming plans for India."

Equipped with a large 210 cm sq. multifunctional all digital cluster display, the *SXR 160* has a host of features such as digital speed indicator, RPM meter, mileage indicator, average speed and top speed display, digital fuel indicator, ABS indicator, engine malfunction indicator, etc.

Customers can also opt for the mobile connectivity accessory which connects the user's mobile to the scooter and helps them in locating it, raising security alarm when needed and more.



Yamaha introduces *FZS-FI* vintage edition



Mr Motofumi Shitara, Chairman,
Yamaha Motor India Group



YAMAHA Motor India on December 1 introduced a vintage edition for *FZ* brand enthusiasts in the country. A mix of style and technology, the vintage edition of *FZS-FI* is ready to boost the iconic style quotient of Yamaha in India, said a press release.

Apart from the timeless vintage graphics that augment its iconic legacy, a new leather finish single piece two-level seat adds to its styled-up antiquity. The new vintage edition of *FZS-FI* also has the latest introduced features like Bluetooth connectivity 'Yamaha Motorcycle *Connect X*' application for various utilities.

FZS-FI ABS vintage edition has been priced at ₹1,09,700 (ex-showroom, Delhi).

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Motofumi Shitara, Chairman, Yamaha Motor India Group of companies, said, "We are committed to offer better motorcycling experiences to the customers in India. Today we have introduced the vintage edition in our *FZS-FI* variant with smart features like Bluetooth connectivity. We will continue to bring more such excitement for the biking enthusiasts in future, eventually as we rev up the entire line-up of our motorcycles."

KTM launches all-new *Duke*

PREMIUM motorcycle brand KTM on December 7 announced the launch of MY21 KTM *125 Duke* with the promise of delivering maximum riding fun that punches way above its displacement.

The all-new machine has received multiple enhancements for 2021 to keep the KTM *125 Duke* at the top of its game, said a press release.

Instantly noticeable and impossible to ignore is the KTM *125 Duke's* distinctive new styling, added the release. The design is flanked by more aggressive, sharper bodywork with a seat unit that exposes more of the sportier geometry chassis.

The ergonomics of this lightweight streetfighter have also been altered, with a more authoritative riding position, backed up by revised rider and passenger seats. *Duke* riders also benefit from a modified and larger fuel tank which creates better leg contact and feel, and the 13.5-litre capacity will take ambitious riders further than ever, the release said further.

Boasting top level chassis and braking components, the completely new WP Suspension front and back further adds to the superior proposition of the new KTM *125 Duke*.



With a maximum output of 14.5 PS at 9,250rpm and a torque maximum of 12 Nm at 8,000rpm, the 125cc liquid cooled fuel injected engine combines an instantaneous power delivery with great refinement.

Mr Sumeet Narang, President (Probiking) at Bajaj Auto Ltd, said, "Spawned from the 1290 beast itself and packed full of *Duke* attitude, the KTM *125 Duke* exudes qualities never seen in this category before."

Bajaj launches *Platina 100KS*

BAJAJ Auto has launched *Platina 100 Kick Start (KS)* which offers great comfort with the proven 'Comfortec technology' of the Platina brand, said a press release by the bike-maker.

It comes with 'Spring-on-Spring' Nitrox suspension that offers 15 per cent more comfort on long rides. The bike also comes equipped with tubeless tyres.

The new *Platina 100KS* also gets a refreshed look due to its unique and stylish hand guards which offers great comfort by protecting the hands from wind blasts.

Priced at ₹51,667 (ex-showroom), the new *Platina 100KS* comes in two colours - Cocktail Wine Red and Ebony Black with Silver decals.



Bajaj Auto signs MoU with Maharashtra for manufacturing facility; to invest Rs 650 crore



is expected to commence production in 2023.

This facility will be utilised for manufacturing high-end KTM, Husqvarna and Triumph motorcycles as well as for electric vehicles starting with Chetak, said a press release.

Under the arrangement, the Government of Maharashtra will facilitate Bajaj Auto in obtaining necessary permissions/registrations/ approvals/ clearances/ fiscal incentives etc. from the concerned departments of the state, as per the existing policies/ rules and regulations.

BAJAJ Auto announced on December 22 that it has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Maharashtra to set up a manufacturing facility on a proposed investment of ₹650 crore in Chakan, Maharashtra. The facility

Royal Enfield *Classic 350*

Gets two new colour variants, MiY initiative

ROYAL Enfield on November 25 introduced two new colour variants of its bestselling motorcycle, *Classic 350* - Metallo Silver and Orange Ember.

The new variants of the *Classic 350* have been conceptualized in bright new hues and designed to evoke a youthful and refreshing motorcycling experience, said a press release.

The introduction of alloy wheels and tubeless tyres on these variants has added to the style quotient of the machines with enhanced handling experience for riding enthusiasts, added the release.



The *Classic 350* will now be available on the Royal Enfield Make It Yours - MiY - initiative. Customers can customise and accessorise their motorcycles through the MiY initiative available on all channels, dealerships, website and app.

Introducing the new motorcycle variants, Mr. Vinod K. Dasari, CEO, Royal Enfield, said, "In a continuous effort to evolve the *Classic*, we have introduced new variants of the motorcycle and added the option to view and configure, enabling our riders to express themselves in distinct and unique ways. The young and vibrant colour schemes and trims of the *Classic 350*, coupled with several personalisation and accessorisation combinations via MiY will definitely offer a more involved purchase and ownership experience for riding enthusiasts."

Sonalika launches India's first e-tractor
Tiger Electric



Mr. Raman Mittal,
ED, Sonalika Group

UNLEASHING a new era of agricultural innovation, tractor brand Sonalika on December 23 launched India's first field-ready electric tractor, *Tiger Electric*.

The latest technology marvel, said a press release, has been designed in Europe and developed in-house with proven aggregates to deliver seamless power as well as emission-free, noiseless farming.

Sonalika *Tiger Electric* is powered by a state-of-the-art IP67-compliant 25.5 kW natural cooling compact battery to ensure 1/4th running costs against the traditionally-used diesel. Its battery can be fully charged with a regular home charging point in 10 hours.

The energy efficient Etrac motor of *Tiger Electric* offers high power density and high peak torque with zero RPM drop for optimal performance. The German design motor ensures 100 per cent torque availability at 100 pc times that powers the tractor for fastest pick-up across any load conditions.

The tractor has been made available for booking at an introductory price of ₹5.99 lakh (ex-showroom).



Mr. Raman Mittal, Executive Director, Sonalika Group, said, "Sonalika Tractors has always been at the forefront of innovation and continues to offer best-in-class technology to the farmers across the globe, especially Europe and USA. Our promise to every Indian farmer to constantly provide technological evolutions to enhance farm productivity and profitability comes packaged with Tiger Electric, where we have bridged the gap between concept and being field-ready, while keeping pace with global benchmarks in farm mechanisation technology."

Tiger Electric is manufactured at Sonalika's manufacturing plant at Hoshiarpur, in Punjab.

Sonalika registers staggering growth



SONALIKA Tractors clocked an extraordinary 71 per cent domestic growth in November by selling 11,478 tractors surpassing the industry growth of around 49 per cent, said a press release.

Cumulatively the company recorded an overall (domestic + exports) sale of 92,913 tractors during April-November period.

Mr. Raman Mittal, Executive Director, Sonalika Group, said, "I am pleased to share that our strategy to offer customised farming solutions has won us the farmer's trust in our technologically advanced products. This noteworthy trust has powered us to surpass industry growth month after month by a significant margin."

Tata Motors drives in *Ultra T.7*

A truck designed for urban transportation



TATA Motors on December 23 introduced *Ultra T.7* LCV, designed specifically for urban transportation with a sleek cabin. According to a press release, the *Ultra* cabin has been engineered for a sleeker version to offer the best-in-class comfort and agility with its optimum dimensions of 1900 mm wide cabin to reduce the turnaround time. The reduced turnaround time ensures higher earning potential for the truck owners and brings more efficiency in the logistics sector for profitability, added the release.

The *Ultra T.7* range comes with a modular platform with variants of various deck lengths and in 4-tyre and 6-tyre combinations to suit a wide range of applications.

The LCV is powered by technologically-advanced 4SPCR engine, with superior 100hp of power and 300Nm of torque from 1,200 to 2,200rpm. It has underpinnings of a strong modular chassis design for better durability and radial tubeless tyres, offering increased fuel economy.

Mr. V Seethapathi, Vice-President, ILCV Product Line, Tata Motors, said, "With the introduction of the latest *Ultra T.7*, Tata Motors furthers its commitment to scale new heights of innovative automotive manufacturing to provide a variety of products for diverse applications at minimum operation costs."

Equipped with a crash-tested cabin and powerful air-brakes for enhanced safety, adjustable seating positions, tilt-and-telescopic power steering and a dash-mounted gear shifter for comfort, the *Ultra T.7* combines futuristic styling with comfort, providing significantly lower NVH levels and a fatigue-less driving experience.

JCB launches dual-fuel CNG backhoe loader



JCB India Limited, leading manufacturer of earthmoving and construction equipment on November 25 launched dual-fuel CNG backhoe loader, called the 3DX DFi. The machine can operate on CNG and diesel simultaneously using the HCCI (Homogeneous Charge Compression Ignition) technology, said a press release.

It was launched in New Delhi by the Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Mr Nitin Gadkari.

The machine has been developed in India and has been tested in various operating conditions before its launch. It will be built at company's Delhi-NCR factory at Ballabgarh.

Speaking at the occasion, Mr Deepak Shetty, CEO & Managing Director, JCB India, said, "Throughout our four decades of operations in India, we have continued to invest in Innovation. It is one of the cornerstones of our operations. This dual-fuel machine can substitute diesel with CNG and has been developed to cater to the evolving needs of our customers. It will further contribute to the creation of Infrastructure in the country and will also be exported to countries around the world."

JCB opens its largest parts centre in Haryana

JCB India inaugurated its largest parts centre at Bhaproda in Haryana. The facility, spread over 1,50,000 square feet, will provide parts support to the northern Indian region.

It will cater to 15 dealer locations and contribute almost 40 per cent to JCB's parts business in the country, said a press release.

Located on NH 334B near Kundli-Manesar-Palwal Expressway, the route enables quick connectivity towards the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor and critical customer bases in North India.

Inaugurating the new Parts Centre, Mr. Deepak Shetty, CEO and Managing Director of JCB India Limited, said, "This location gives us the unique advantage of having access to trained manpower, future scalability options and an approach to all major highways. By investing in this state-of-the-art



JCB India inaugurated its largest Parts Centre at Bhaproda, Haryana. L-R: Mr. Deepak Shetty, Deputy CEO & MD, JCB India and Mr. Sunil Khurrana, Executive Vice-President - Manufacturing at JCB India Ltd

warehouse infrastructure, we have continued to remain committed to the India Growth Story for over four decades. It will help in developing a local ecosystem for JCB machine owners and dealers and will also provide employment opportunities to more than 100 people, including women".

The parts centre is a modern state-of-the-art facility, having one of the highest standards for safety and energy efficiency. While SAP enables accurate control over inventory and transactions, the TOC concept ensures material availability at the site and at the dealer's end.

With the opening of the latest facility, JCB India's total warehouse capacity has increased to 3,10,000 sq feet covering five locations, including Pune, Bengaluru, Kolkata and Guwahati.

VECV begins production at new truck plant in Bhopal

VE Commercial Vehicles Ltd on December 5 commenced commercial operations at its new, state-of-the-art truck manufacturing unit at Bagroda in Bhopal. This is the eighth manufacturing facility of VECV in the state.

Chief Minister Mr Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurated the new manufacturing facility and flagged off the new trucks rolled out from this plant.

With the setting up of this plant at Bagroda Industrial Area, Bhopal, VECV becomes the pioneer company in development of a new Industrial Estate at Bagroda, said a press release.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Chouhan said, "I am very delighted to see the dream that we had seen two years ago, to get fulfilled in front of my eyes. It is an honour to be inaugurating VECV's Bhopal plant along with the Industry Minister today."



Chief Minister Mr Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurated the new manufacturing facility with Mr Vinod Aggarwal, MD & CEO, VECV

Congratulating VECV, Industry Policy and Investment Promotion Minister, Mr Rajvardhan Singh Dattigaon, said, "The company has acted as the green shoot investor in Madhya Pradesh and has been a magnet to draw other industries to the state."

Mr Vinod Aggarwal, MD & CEO, VECV, said, "It's a very proud moment for us today when we commence commercial operations at our new plant. This is a testament to our commitment to the state of Madhya Pradesh with eight plants in the state now. We are extremely happy with the industry-friendly policies, as well as the very peaceful industrial atmosphere of the state"

Goodyear teams up with Assurance to launch new line of engine oils in Lanka



AFTER their successful launch in India, Goodyear lubricants will soon be available in Sri Lanka; expected to be launched in February.

Goodyear and leading lubricants manufacturer Assurance Intl Limited launched a new line of engine oils recently in India under their collaboration. To complement Goodyear's tyre product portfolio, this time the product line has been introduced in Sri Lanka which consisted of a vast domain of lubricants for multiple vehicles including greases, brake fluid, transmission oil, tractor oil, diesel exhaust fluid, gear oil and hydraulic oils.

Addressing the press, Mr Sanjay Sharma, Country Head India - Sales, Marketing & Operations, (Assurance Intl Ltd-Goodyear Lubricants), said, "We are anticipating assertive reviews for the lubricant collection because of its advanced additive technologies, designed exclusively to generate quality performance in all kinds of vehicles, including commercial and passenger vehicles and two-wheelers as well. Moreover, Assurance Intl Limited is consistently trying to improve the performance of all products through the development of a proprietary type of synthetic based oil. Using the most advanced formulation, the products are fully tested in laboratory and fields and the lab ensures that all products are examined before

leaving the blending plant. Also all products are guaranteed to perform as per API (American Petroleum Institute)-specifications, which makes them dependable."

After adding lubricants section to its product profile, The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, collaborated with Assurance Intl Limited to mass-produce, source and distribute Goodyear branded lubricant products. Besides serving all kinds of vehicles, Goodyear has swooped into automotive lubricants component, resulting to the introduction of high-performance premium quality genuine oils latterly, in Sri Lanka and Colombo respectively. The country's automotive lubricants market is huge and lucrative, and major shares are held by the public sector oil companies which also run fuel pumps.

All these products would be manufactured at two arrangements as of now, one in Mumbai, and the other in Haryana. While Assurance Intl will look after all manufacturing, marketing, distribution and aftersales assistance to consumers, Goodyear US headquarters would make the final approval of all products, product development and other supports under this collaboration.

ACMA's iAutoConnect 2020 concludes on a high note

THE fifth edition of iAutoConnect 2020, international reverse buyers sellers meet organised by ACMA under the aegis of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, concluded successfully on December 1.

Held on a virtual platform, the seven-day extravaganza helped the exhibitors to connect with overseas auto component distributors and buyers from several countries.

Over 307 international auto component aftermarket distributors from around the world participated in the event while over 65 Indian component manufacturers displayed their products. The Indian manufacturers displayed their excellence in manufacturing, supporting the 'Make in India' vision of the Government and the drive towards atmanirbharta (self-reliance), said a press release issued by ACMA. .

International auto component aftermarket distributors from ASEAN, Middle East, Africa, SAARC, and Europe were among the visitors at the event. Many leading IPOs such as Navistar, Paccar, AAM, BMW, COBO, Mercedes Benz, Cummins and Ford were also among the active business visitors.



Mr. Deepak Jain, President, ACMA



Mr Vinnie Mehta, Director General, ACMA

The global trade in auto component in 2019 has been estimated at \$1.3 trillion, of which nearly 50 per cent is in aftermarket components. ACMA's iAutoConnect 2020 was organised to help the Indian auto component manufacturers gain global exposure by showcasing their manufacturing capabilities and products to dedicated international buyers.

Commenting on the success of the event, Mr. Deepak Jain, President, ACMA, said, "This year, we have braved many uncertainties and emerged more resilient and confident which was amply reflected in the enthusiasm of the members participating at iAutoConnect 2020. In its fifth year, iAutoConnect is now well established as a key global networking platform for domestic component manufactures and international buyers. I am confident that initiatives such as these will help our industry become a net exporter in not too distant a future."

Mr Vinnie Mehta, Director General, ACMA, said, "Despite the challenges, we concluded a highly successful edition of this year's virtual iAutoConnect. We saw a tremendous response from the international buyers, which is testimony to their growing interest and confidence in India as a global automotive manufacturing and sourcing hub."

SIAM holds 7th inter-school competition on road safety



THE Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) organised the 7th inter-school competition on 'Safe Roads, Safer World', in collaboration with Gyan Mandir Public School, Naraina Vihar, New Delhi. The event witnessed participations from over 500+ students, across 50 prominent schools, said a press release issued by SIAM.

It was designed to sensitise the students about

the issues relating to safe mobility keeping it simple, entertaining yet informative.

The two-day event witnessed an active involvement of students across all age groups through various activities and competitions. A special team from Traffic Police, Delhi, was also invited to address the participating students and teachers. The event concluded with a 'Ted Talk' on 'Speak up, Save Lives'.

SIAM concludes lecture series on vehicular safety standards

THE tri-lecture series on active and passive vehicular safety standards conducted by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) concluded on December 11 with a lecture on "Technology & Safety Features of Two & Three-Wheelers".

The lecture series emphasised on creating a sustainable road safety roadmap with due emphasis on engineering, education, enforcement and emergency care through technological breakthroughs and policy implementation.

The panel of speakers included Mr V Pattabiraman, Chairman, SIAM Three-Wheeler Group and Associate Vice-President, TVS Motor Company, Mr Soumya Das, Head International Marketing & Business Development, Bajaj Auto Ltd, Mr Edwin Bastiaensen, Secretary General, International Motorcycle Manufacturers Association (IMMA), Mr Ravishankar Rajaraman, Technical Director, Chairman RASSI Technical Steering Committee, JP Research India, Mr Harpreet Singh, Head – Safety, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India Ltd, and Mr Prashant K Banerjee, Executive Director, SIAM.

VW makes leadership changes



Mr. Priyesh Kumar,
new Head of Sales



Mr. P. Ravichandran,
new Head of Dealer Development

VOLKSWAGEN India strengthened its leadership team with the internal movement of Mr. Priyesh Kumar, Head of Dealer Development, as the new Head of Sales. Mr. P. Ravichandran, Head of Aftersales has taken over as the Head of Dealer Development.

Both will report in to Mr. Ashish Gupta, Brand Head, Volkswagen Passenger Cars India. The new appointments became effective from December 1.

Mr. Ashish Gupta said, "At Volkswagen, we strongly believe in nurturing in-house talent and offering newer learning platforms for personal and professional growth. With Priyesh and Ravichandran leading sales and dealer development function respectively, we are confident that their expertise will further take brand Volkswagen to much greater heights."

VW names Bhat as Head of After-Sales Services

VOLKSWAGEN India has appointed Mr. Vishal Bhat as the Head of After-Sales Services, effective January 1, 2021. Currently, the Head of Corporate & Pre-owned car sales at Volkswagen, Mr. Bhat would be taking over the responsibility from Mr. P. Ravichandran, who is now responsible for Dealer Development.

With over 17 years of experience in automotive industry, Mr. Bhat brings in diverse expertise to the position. In a period of last five years, he has undertaken various roles and responsibilities across functions, said a press release.

Speaking on the appointment, Mr. Ashish Gupta, Brand Head, Volkswagen Passenger Cars India, said, "As we plan for our biggest launch of 2021 with the Volkswagen Taigun, our core focus is to ensure enhanced customer experience, value proposition and peace of mind for the customers. With Vishal's vast experience and understanding of customers, we strongly believe he will bring-in new growth avenues in our service operations."



Mr. Vishal Bhat,
Head of After-Sales Services



Mr. Shailendra Shukla,
MD, Vehicle Group India

Eaton appoints Shukla as MD for Vehicle Group India

EATON, one of the largest power manufacturing firms globally, has announced the appointment of Mr Shailendra Shukla as Managing Director of Vehicle Group India.

In his new role, Mr Shukla will be responsible for leading Eaton's vehicle business in India and oversee operations, sales performance, market development, customer management, partner relationships, new product launches and leadership development.

Mr Shukla has over 21 years of experience in Indian and international markets. He has held leadership positions with leading global technology organisations such as Schneider Electric, Samsung, Kobian Singapore and Ingram Micro.

UPCOMING EVENTS

International Conference on Alternative Fuels & Electric Vehicles

February 04-05, 2021

Alard College of Engineering and Management, Pune
Email : icafev@gmail.com

Car Care Expo

February 17-19, 2021

Bombay Exhibition Centre (BEC), Mumbai
Email: manju@virtualinfo.in

Future Mobility Show

February 25-27, 2021

Pragati Maidan, New Delhi
Email: neelam.bhagat@cii.in

ACMA Automechanika New Delhi

April 22-25, 2021

Pragati Maidan, New Delhi,
Email:nikita.pires@india.messefrankfurt.com

EVEXPO

May 07-09, 2021

Pragati Maidan, New Delhi
Email: sales@evexpo.in

EV India Expo

June 03-05, 2021

Pragati Maidan, New Delhi,
Email: event@ies-india.com

Auto Technika Expo

June 28-30, 2021

BIEC Bengaluru International Exhibition Centre, Bengaluru
Email: expo@autotechnika.in

Automotive Engineering Show

July 01-03, 2021

Chennai Trade Centre, Chennai,
Email:nikita.pires@india.messefrankfurt.com

COMFAST

July 28-31, 2021

Pragati Maidan, New Delhi
Email: rajesh@imtos.com

Prawaas

05-07 Aug 2021

CIDCO Exhibition Centre, Mumbai,
Email: connect@mmactiv.com

Truck, Trailer & Tyre Expo

November 17-19, 2021

CIDCO Exhibition Centre, Mumbai,
Email: info@mediaday.co.in

United Auto Expo

November 19-21, 2021

CODISSIA Trade Fair Complex, Coimbatore
Email: info@unitedtradefairs.com

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Michigan International Auto Show

February 04-07, 2021

DeVos Place, Grand Rapids, USA
Email: dawnb@showspan.com

Model Tractor Plant and Construction Show

February 07, 2021

Warwickshire Exhibition Centre, Warwick, UK
Email: info@meridienneexhibitions.co.uk

Big Truck Show

February 11-13, 2021

Paquette's Historical Farmall Museum, Leesburg, USA
Email:Jerry.Grizzell@VintageTrucksFL.com

Jacksonville International Auto Show

February 12-14, 2021

The Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center, Jacksonville, USA
Email: rcasey@paragonexpo.com

Pittsburgh International Auto Show

February 12-15, 2021

David L. Lawrence Convention Center, Pittsburgh, USA
Email: john@GPADA.com

Cincinnati Auto Expo

February 17-21, 2021

Duke Energy Convention Center, Cincinnati, USA
Email: info@cincinnatiautoexpo.com

Indonesia International Motor Show

February 18-28, 2021

Jakarta International Expo, Indonesia
Email: bintang0274@gmail.com

Miami International Auto Show

February 19-28, 2021

Miami Beach Convention Center, USA
Email: info@miamiautoshow.com

AutoRama-Detroit

March 05-07, 2021

Cobo Center, Detroit, USA
Email: ulanowicz@worldofwheels.com

Geneva International Motor Show

March 04-14, 2021

Geneva, Switzerland
Email: alexandre.catton@palexpo.ch

Dhaka Motor Show

March 18-20, 2021

International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB), Dhaka, Bangladesh
Email: cems@cemsonline.com

Atlanta International Auto Show

March 17-21, 2021

Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, USA
Email: autoshow@maada.com

Seoul Motor Show

April 01-11, 2021

Kintex, Goyang-si, South Korea
Email: kofair@kofair.com

New York International Auto Show

April 02-11, 2021

Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, New York, USA
Email: assistance@gnyada.com, alan@autoshowny.com

Saigon International Autotech & Accessories Show

May 20-23, 2021

Saigon Exhibition and Convention Center, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam
Email: jetta.taiwan@msa.hinet.net

Los Angeles Auto Show

May 21-31, 2021

Los Angeles Convention Center, Los Angeles, USA
Email: help@laautoshow.com

Automechanika Dubai

June 07-09, 2021

Dubai World Trade Centre, Dubai, UAE
Email: gazi.bilikozen@uae.messefrankfurt.com

North American International Auto Show

June 19-26, 2021

Detroit, USA
Email: tavi@fulkersongroup.com



At a time when it is crucial for all the auto component manufacturers to sustain in prevailing conditions,
At a time when delivering on stakeholders' expectations is more important than ever,
Our diverse range of products, impeccable service and cutting-edge technology is helping us beat the odds.
It equips us with a strength that helps turn every odd into an opportunity.



BEATING the odds

Our Diversified Product Lines

Alternate Fuel Systems | Air Filtration Systems | Canisters | Brake Hoses | Fuel Hoses | Combined Braking System (CBS) | Noise Suppressor Cap | PDC Parts | Alloy Wheels | Seat Belts | Cameras | EA Pad | Steering Wheel with Airbags | Air Brakes | Fuel Caps | Lighting | Air Ducts & Washer Bottle | Spoiler | Body Sealings | 4W Switches & HVAC | Cigar Lighters | Wheel Covers | Shifters | 2W Switches & Handle Bar Assembly | Infotainment Systems (CD Tuners, Display Audio & Audio Video Navigations) | Speakers | RPAS & ADAS | Sensors | Actuators | Controllers | Relay | End to End Telematics & Connected Car Solutions | Horns | Seating Systems

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