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India's Automotive Industry & Trade Journal
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EVs back in focus as market recovers

Demand-generation is the key

Exclusive Interview: Mr Sohinder Gill, CEO, Hero Electric, DG, SMEV

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EV focus back with strength

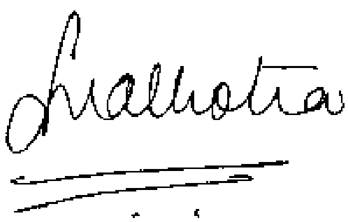
ELECTRIC mobility has been as much a buzzword in the automobile industry as in the corridors of power for the past many years now. A collective push towards promotion of electric vehicles and creation of a robust charging infrastructure has been aimed at by each stakeholder, and the process is continuing. Amid such a scenario, EVs are a perennial subject matter to dwell upon in any given issue. But our decision to choose it as the Cover Story for the current issue is prompted by some significant developments on the EV front during the past few weeks.

First, of course, is the resumption of focus on EVs with the return of near-stability to the industry. After a few months of forced lull, the Government has sounded its intent to strengthen the EV ecosystem. This is borne out by the announcement of the Union Road Transport Minister, Mr Ntin Gadkari, to have one charging kiosk each installed at all the 69,000 petrol pumps in the country. The decision is bound to encourage many fence-sitters to make the EV changeover. Another morale-booster for the segment came in the form of a report by KPMG India and CII, which said a strong case was emerging for B2B shift to EVs since the running cost of EVs is much lower than ICE vehicles.

A BIG DEVELOPMENT THAT CLINCHED THE ISSUE WAS THE US ELECTRIC CARMAKER TESLA'S PLAN TO FORAY INTO THE INDIA MARKET IN 2021

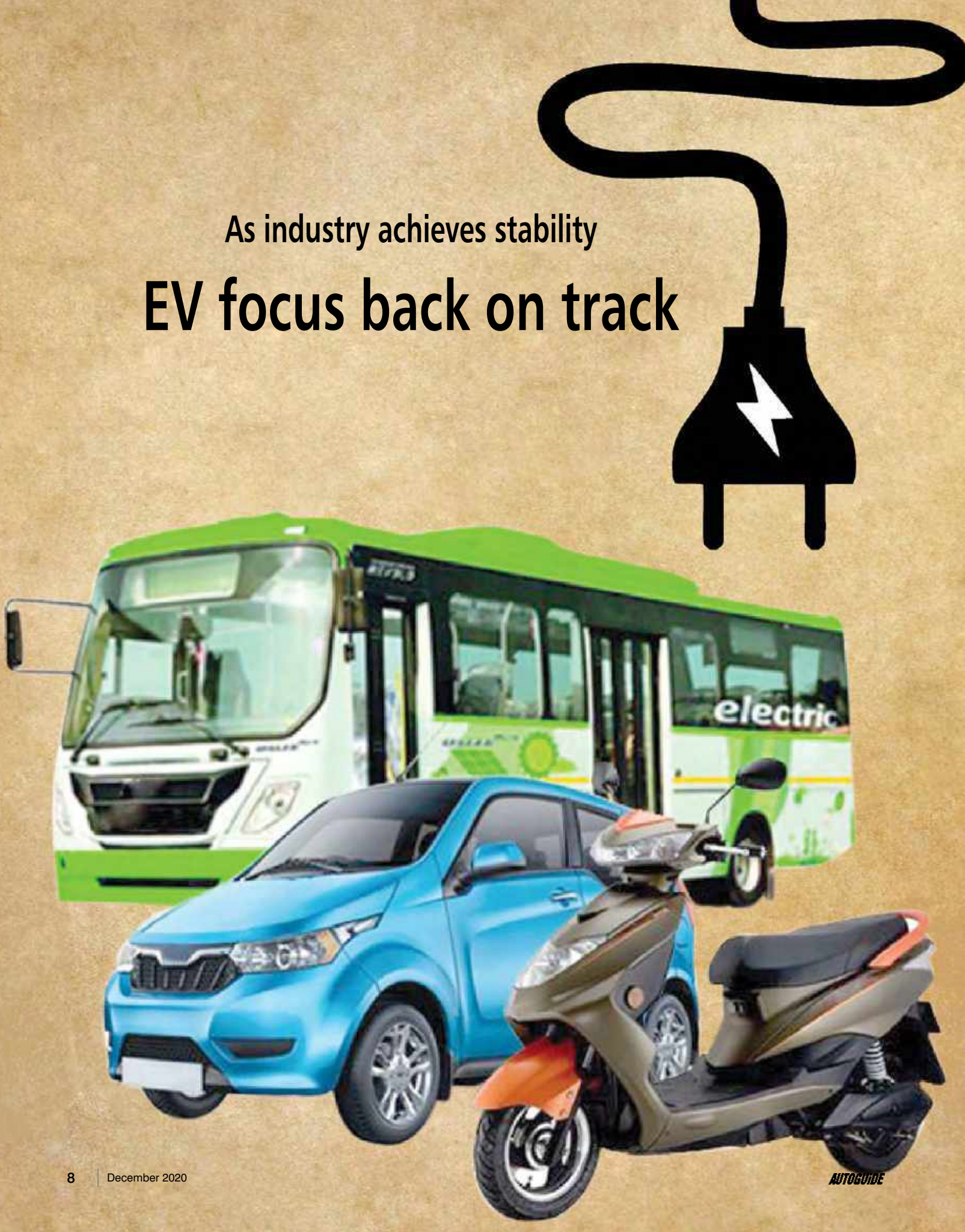
A big development that clinched the issue for this month's choice of the Cover Story was the US electric carmaker Tesla's plan to foray into the India market in 2021. Though the proposal was announced in a tweet by Tesla CEO Mr Elon Musk, who has earlier also given many such hints, it is crucial as it carries a more definitive timeline and also comes at a juncture when the country is further bolstering its charging infrastructure. Besides, there were a whole lot of reports from the EV industry, both from the domestic and global arena, which we decided to package together to make the December issue an EV Special. To get a deeper understanding of the prevailing EV scenario, we sent an elaborate questionnaire to three prominent stakeholders of the industry who were gracious enough to respond. The profound content yielded by these three Q&As is an immense value-add to our EV package and we are sincerely thankful to all the three contributors.

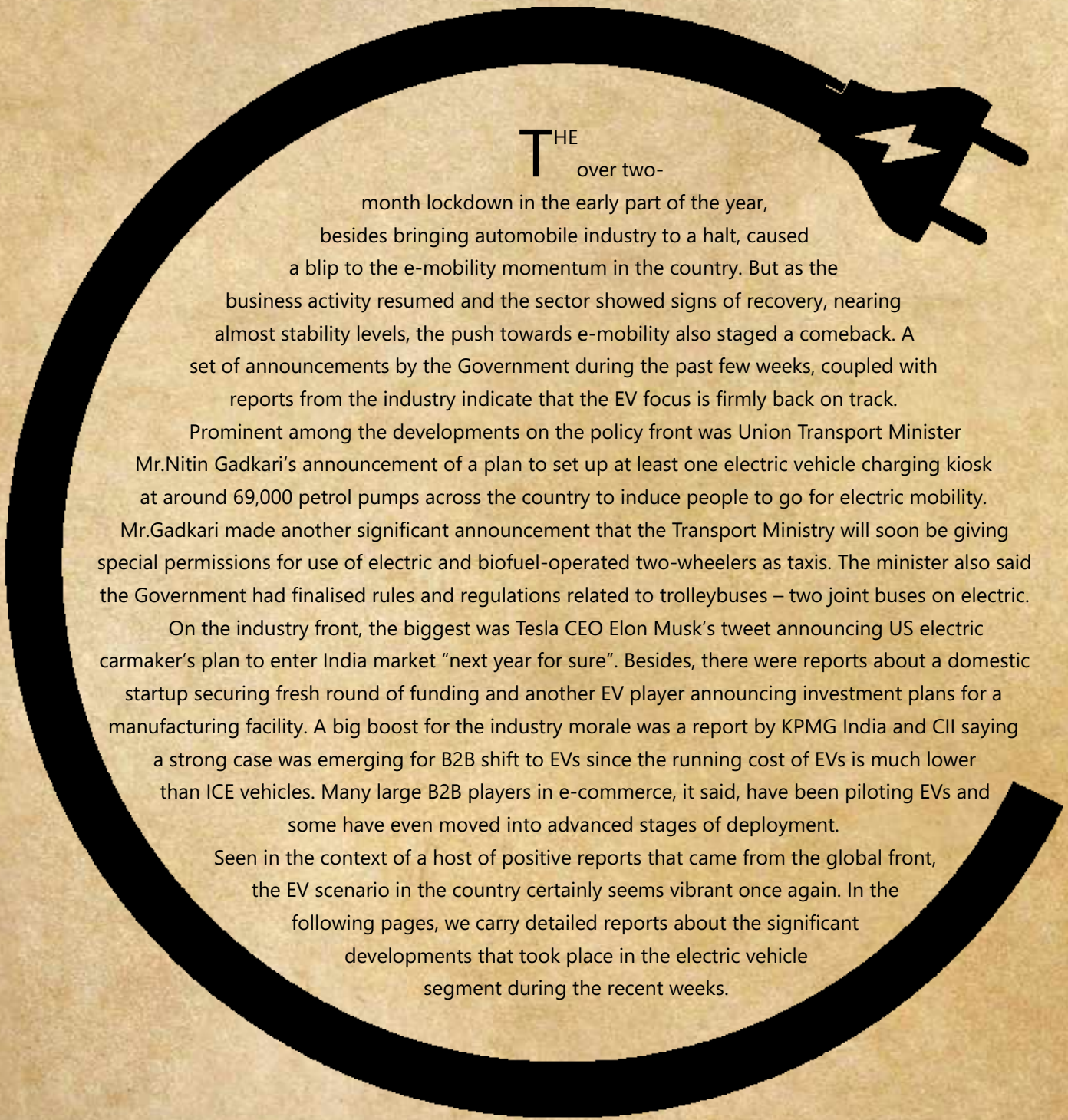
With this, over now to our EV Special!



As industry achieves stability

EV focus back on track





THE over two-month lockdown in the early part of the year, besides bringing automobile industry to a halt, caused a blip to the e-mobility momentum in the country. But as the business activity resumed and the sector showed signs of recovery, nearing almost stability levels, the push towards e-mobility also staged a comeback. A set of announcements by the Government during the past few weeks, coupled with reports from the industry indicate that the EV focus is firmly back on track.

Prominent among the developments on the policy front was Union Transport Minister Mr.Nitin Gadkari's announcement of a plan to set up at least one electric vehicle charging kiosk at around 69,000 petrol pumps across the country to induce people to go for electric mobility. Mr.Gadkari made another significant announcement that the Transport Ministry will soon be giving special permissions for use of electric and biofuel-operated two-wheelers as taxis. The minister also said the Government had finalised rules and regulations related to trolleybuses – two joint buses on electric.

On the industry front, the biggest was Tesla CEO Elon Musk's tweet announcing US electric carmaker's plan to enter India market "next year for sure". Besides, there were reports about a domestic startup securing fresh round of funding and another EV player announcing investment plans for a manufacturing facility. A big boost for the industry morale was a report by KPMG India and CII saying a strong case was emerging for B2B shift to EVs since the running cost of EVs is much lower than ICE vehicles. Many large B2B players in e-commerce, it said, have been piloting EVs and some have even moved into advanced stages of deployment.

Seen in the context of a host of positive reports that came from the global front, the EV scenario in the country certainly seems vibrant once again. In the following pages, we carry detailed reports about the significant developments that took place in the electric vehicle segment during the recent weeks.

Govt move to strengthen EV ecosystem

Charging kiosks at petrol pumps

Mr Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Road Transport and Highways & MSME

THE Government has promised to create an ecosystem to accelerate the uptake of electric vehicles in the country. Since battery charging constitutes an important part of the ecosystem, it plans to set up at least one electric vehicle charging kiosk at around 69,000 petrol pumps across the country to induce people to go for electric mobility.

This was announced by the Minister of Road Transport and Highways & MSME, Mr Nitin Gadkari, at a virtual conference on automotive aftermarket organised by the Confederation of Indian industry (CII) on November 23. The conference, held as part of the ninth edition of Auto Serve, was themed 'Seizing Opportunities in New Normal'.

Earlier in September, a news agency report had also said that the Centre wanted to install at least one electric vehicle charging kiosk each at all petrol pumps in the country. The Government, said the report, was also considering making it compulsory for all state refiners' company-owned, company-operated (COCO) petrol pumps to install EV charging

Mr Sohinder Gill
Director General, SMEV

SMEV hails Government plan

THE Society of Manufactures of Electric Vehicles (SMEV) has welcomed the Government plan to set up charging kiosk at every fuel station in the country. In a statement, Mr Sohinder Gill, Director General, SMEV said, "It is a massive initiative that, if done quickly and in sufficient density, could address the issue of range anxiety in a big way."

The statement further said, "Providing sufficient space for parking EVs, especially e-cars for few hours while they are being charged could be a challenge that needs to be addressed while setting up such stations. A mix of battery swapping and charging station would perhaps be optimal as it would cater to all sorts of EVs including e-2Ws and e-3Ws."

Mr Gill said a few other steps that should be taken are rejigging the FAME-2 to spur the demand of e-2Ws and removing the anomaly of very high GST on the batteries if sold separately from the vehicles.

kiosks. The report added that the Union Minister of Power, Mr RK Singh, recommended that oil ministry officials might issue orders to oil marketing companies to establish EV charging kiosks at all COCO petrol pumps.

At the CII conference, Mr Gadkari said the Government aims at creating core global competencies in India by facilitating seamless integration of the automotive industry with the world. He asked the auto industry to come together to work jointly towards achieving broader national agenda of reducing pollution.

The minister elaborated a number of steps that the Government had taken to promote electric vehicles which include reduction in GST to 5 pc and allowing delinking of battery cost of two- and three-heelers from vehicle cost as it accounts for nearly 30 pc of the total cost.

Mr Gadkari said, "Government is also working towards making India a global automobile manufacturing hub in next five years.' This is my dream, he stressed. This will also contribute in fulfilling the Prime Minister's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat, he added.

He stressed that India is poised to become global automobile manufacturing hub in next five years. This, he felt, is possible as our auto industry has made significant strides in terms of development of different designs and models, robust R&D, huge market, stable Government frame-work and bright and young engineering minds. He added that India already is the largest manufacturer of two-wheelers in the world.

The minister also urged the automobile industry to move away from a cost-centric approach to quality-oriented one to serve the needs of the customers and the society. "I have been telling this to the Indian manufacturers. Don't be cost-centric and you should be quality-centric. Even a poor man in this country is keen to buy a quality EV irrespective of his economic status. So the industry should improve quality while finding the ways and means to reduce the cost at the same time," he said.

Mr Gadkari also urged that for India to become a global player in auto manufacturing, the local auto parts industry needs to be developed, he said. Instead of importing auto parts from different countries, these parts should be locally sourced. A lot of R&D needs to be done in the field of alternative and less-polluting fuels like hydrogen, compressed natural gas (CNG), liquified natural gas (LNG) and electricity.

Ending his address on a positive note, the minister said, "I am fully confident that the future of this industry is very bright. The only thing is you have to be cost-effective, import-substitute, pollution-free and indigenous."

Govt to permit electric and biofuel-operated two-wheelers as taxis

THE Transport Ministry will soon be giving special permissions for use of two-wheelers as taxis.

This was announced by the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Mr Nitin Gadkari, during an interaction with Governing Council members of the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA).

He said the electric and biofuel-operated two-wheelers can be used as a taxi with an electronic meter.

The minister said, "We are giving special permission for two-wheeler as a taxi. The two-wheeler on electric and biofuel, we are allowing that they can be used as a taxi with an electronic meter. We don't want to launch this scheme in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata or Chennai, but small places where people want to go to the station or airport. It can be really useful for them."

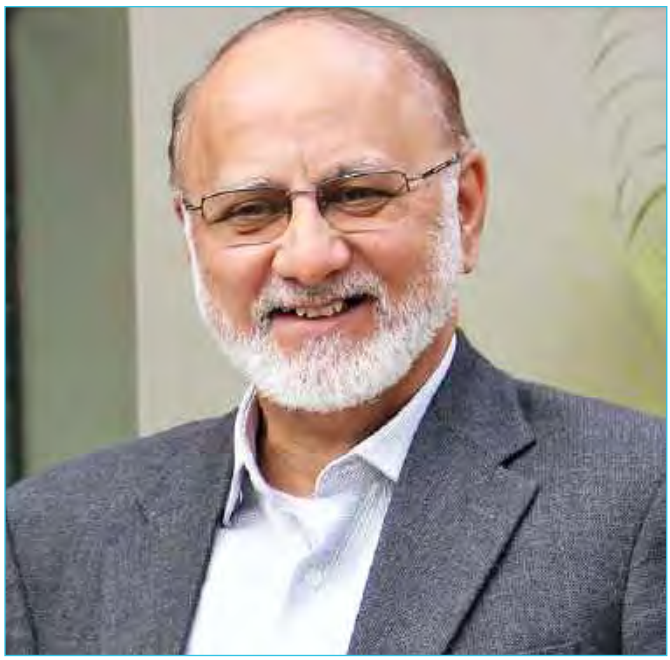
Mr Gadkari further said, "We have already finalised rules and regulations for that. My suggestion is that if you can initiate this, it would be a good business."

During the interaction, the minister also stated that the Government has finalised rules and regulations related to trolleybuses - two joint buses on electric. These buses operating on electricity will be cost-effective and economically viable, he said.

He also mentioned that public transport powered by electric technology is the need of the hour "as we are already facing ecological and environmental problems majorly because of air pollution."

An interaction with SMEV DG Sohinder Gill

Demand-generation is the key



Mr Sohinder Gill

Lauding the Central and state governments' initiatives to promote e-mobility in the country, Mr Sohinder Gill, Director General, Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles, and CEO, Hero Electric, says there is still a lot to be done. Running programmes to increase peoples' awareness, facilitating bank finance and linking adoption of cleaner vehicles to Swachh Bharat campaign are some of the steps which can go a long way in generating demand, said Mr Gill in response to a questionnaire sent by Autoguide.

With the auto sector having stabilised to a great extent, do you think the electric mobility is getting the desired attention now?

In the last five years, we have seen movement happening in the e-mobility space. The two key reasons behind the industry getting attention are pollution and reducing dependence on crude oil. The Government has realised that electric vehicles are the future and sustainable mode of transportation. To promote EV industry, several schemes and incentives have been announced by the Central as well as state governments. However, there is still a lot to be done for the rapid adoption of e-mobility, especially on the demand-generation side.

How do you rate the overall progress in the EV ecosystem?

Though several initiatives have been launched, and some of them have been successful as well, more needs to be done to achieve critical numbers. The key is to run programmes to educate and conduct demand-generation activities so that more people become aware and start looking to buy EVs. Right now under FAME-2 scheme, less than 10 pc of its sales target has been achieved. We feel there is a need to rejig the scheme so that higher growth can be witnessed.

What do you think is the trajectory of EV investments?

To attract more investments, we believe that bringing volumes on road is required. Once EVs become visible on the roads, it will have a spiral effect and more people will start to look at EVs when they decide to purchase

any new vehicle. Companies are analysing the market and waiting for numbers to come before deciding on investments. A few OEMs have invested in product development in the past years and in coming years we feel that charging infrastructure would attract more investment. The Central and state governments have announced both fiscal and non-fiscal policies to help and support the investments. This will definitely help in getting OEMs and other ancillary manufacturers to start investing in the country.

How long do you think will it take to reach comfortable levels in terms of charging infrastructure?

Recently, we have seen the Government announcing various measures to strengthen the need of charging infrastructure. Last week, Mr Nitin Gadkari announced the Government's plan of establish charging kiosks at 69,000 petrol pumps. If the scheme announced is executed properly, we will see a good network of charging infrastructure across the country in the next four-five years. Also, private sector is showing a keen interest in setting up charging infrastructure. This will indeed help in fastening the pace of setting up charging infrastructure.

The Government is focused on 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and the battery technology and raw material are mostly controlled by China. Do you think this will slow down or change the impetus on EVs?

Currently, India doesn't have a known source of lithium and other raw material. Hence, the import dependence will continue for minerals that we do not seem to have in sufficient quantities. Companies are currently sourcing material from South America, Europe and China. To promote battery manufacturing in the country, the Government has recently launched a PLI (production-linked incentive) Scheme with an outlay of Rs 18,000 crore. It would accelerate the movement of the EV industry.

Has the pandemic impacted peoples' preference for EVs in any way?

There has been a positive change amongst citizens towards EVs. Customers are considering switching to personal mobility from crowded mass transport. To that end, sensibly priced electric two-wheelers are being considered since the cost of commuting is almost the same as of public transport. Also, during the lockdown, people have witnessed cleaner sky and breathed pure air due to non-movement of fuel-guzzling vehicles.

Which segment is seeing the maximum EV penetration and what is the future of growth in EVs plying interstate or long-distance routes?

The electric two-wheeler and three-wheeler are the segments witnessing huge demands. The reasons behind their popularity are the low running and ownership cost. With the Government's strong push towards charging infrastructure, we will see more number of e-cars and e-buses plying on long-distance routes in the near future.

Are you satisfied with the steps taken by the Centre and various state governments to promote electric vehicles?

The policies announced by Central and a few state governments like Delhi and Gujarat are promising, and we are thankful to them. Though FAME-2 policy which is currently on has some shortcomings which can be improved further for giving greater impetus to EVs, the Government is also now beginning to clear them up as they have understood the importance of EVs in the larger interest of the country. I think both the Central and state governments have to work in tandem and involve the industry closely in their strategies and decisions.

Are there any specific expectations from the Government on the policy front post-pandemic?

There is a need to come up with some bold measures to push for quick adoption of EVs. For instance, projecting EVs as a solution to the clean environment under the 'Swachh Bharat Campaign' could create massive awareness about the electric vehicles and their benefit toward the environment. The other could be instructing banks to finance electric vehicles to reduce the burden of paying the money upfront for buying vehicles. Lastly, by mandating the delivery businesses to convert their fleets to EVs can bring a huge volume in the market.

Mr Sohinder Gill, Director General, SMEV and CEO, Hero Electric

A mix of direct customer incentives, indirect stimulus, both fiscal and non-fiscal, apart from some mandating, together with an awareness and demand-generation campaign can do wonders to convince the citizens to shift to electric mobility.

Lastly, what's your take on the overall EV scenario in 2021?

The market for EVs looks somewhat optimistic of a robust recovery in 2021. We will see more demand coming, especially for personal vehicles, i.e. entry-level segment cars and two-wheelers. Many companies would plan to expand their product portfolios, spend more on R&D, see more impetus in creating a local eco-system for EVs and aligning their businesses to meet customer demand. We believe both e-2Ws and e-3Ws will see quick recovery in the next year.

Synchronised efforts needed

Says Okaya Director Anshul Gupta in an interaction

Mr Anshul Gupta

The need of the hour is to create well co-ordinated and synchronised efforts for scaling up manufacturing, infrastructure development and an integration of service providers for mobility solutions, said Mr Anshul Gupta, Director, Okaya Power Pvt. Ltd. Answering an Autoguide questionnaire on electric mobility, Mr Gupta also expressed the hope that with supporting policy interventions and increased adoption of EVs, the landscape for charging and battery swapping should reach comfortable level over the next three to five years.

With the auto sector having stabilised to a great extent, do you think the electric mobility is getting the desired attention now?

The recent pandemic has brought the advantages of electric vehicles to mainstream. The falling pollution levels and the resultant health and environment benefits were witnessed by people first hand during the lockdown phases, and hence, the spotlight on EVs has been all the more prominent in the past few months. So, the transition to electric vehicles and mobility solutions have received a shot in the arm in the recent past which has been further accentuated by proactive efforts from the Government and the automotive OEs.

Please rate the overall progress in the EV ecosystem?

The EV ecosystem development is a cross-sector issue, needing involvement and support from multiple stakeholders to sustain and expand it successfully. The Government has already initiated large-scale investments and policy interventions. This has been complemented by several players entering the fray. The need of the hour is to create well co-ordinated and synchronised efforts for scaling up manufacturing, infrastructure development and an integration of service providers for mobility. Okaya has also been at the forefront of this initiative, having already deployed over 500 charging stations, and we recently received a World Bank-funded order for an additional 1,020 charging station installation across the country.

What do you think is the trajectory of EV investments?

Undoubtedly, there has been an upswing to the investments in the EV industry – fuelled by the increase in the interest and awareness of the consumers. The national and state governments are promoting the adoption of EVs heavily by incentivising both demand and supply side and providing an impetus in the infrastructure development. The private sector too is participating with investments by both established players and the new-age entrepreneurs.

How long do you think will it take to reach comfortable levels in terms of charging infrastructure?

The Government has declared public charging stations and EV charging businesses as a de-licensed activity. It has also laid down the roadmap to have substantial coverage of the road networks – both intra-city and highways by EV charging stations. There have been initiatives to set up community charging stations too and many players have now ventured with small-scale recharging solutions. With supporting policy interventions and increased adoption of EVs, the landscape for charging and battery swapping should reach a comfortable level over the next few years.

The Government is focused on 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and the battery technology and raw material are mostly controlled by China. Do you think this will slow down or change the impetus on EVs?

While India is largely self-reliant in manufacture of lead acid batteries, the key components and raw material for advanced batteries such as lithium Ion is controlled by other developed nations such as China. The Government needs to promote manufacture of entire batteries in India, including the cells. Adequate raw material should be procured and made available to ensure sustained manufacturing. Also, we need to invest increasingly into the R&D and development of newer battery technologies.

Has the pandemic impacted peoples' preference for EVs in any way?

The continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the consumer behaviour and preference in a significant manner. The need for physical distancing has seen the people make the switch from public transports and sharing solutions to owned private vehicles on account of safety and precautionary measures. The EVs with their low running and maintenance costs have garnered a lot of interest from consumers. The preference for EVs is further supported by increased consciousness of the people towards environmental concerns following the pandemic.

Which segments is seeing the maximum EV penetration and what is the future of growth in EVs plying interstate or long-distance routes?

The fastest penetration for electric vehicles is currently being witnessed across the 2W and 3W segments of the industry. The three-wheeler segment, in particular, is seeing the most rapid adoption of EVs. Policy interventions and incentive programmes along with low daily running costs have earmarked the rapid adoption of 3W across the passenger and cargo-carrying segment. The electric 2W are also making significant inroads in consumer purchase decisions.

With the improvement in the charging ecosystem and innovative solutions such as battery swapping, the EVs shall also create a formidable presence in inter-city movement enabling long-distance travels in the future.

Are you satisfied with the steps taken by the Centre and various state Govts to promote electric vehicles?

Both the Centre and state governments are currently deploying significant resources towards transition to electric vehicles. Various fiscal and non-fiscal incentives have increased the value propositions for EVs. The recent policy announcement delinking the EV and battery sales is an innovative solution to create increased demand. A more cohesive effort on a large scale shall further amplify the impact of such measures and help a smoother and faster transition to EVs.

What's your take on the overall EV scenario in 2021?

The EV industry presents huge potential and opportunity for wide scale acceptance in the country. The Government is also firmly disposed towards bringing in a low/reduced carbon footprint in mobility scenario by 2030 – and EVs seem to be pivotal to these plans. As such, we would expect the EV market and ecosystem to grow at a rapid and robust pace in the next decade.

Mahindra Electric MD & CEO Mahesh Babu sees

An opportunity in this crisis

Mr Mahesh Babu

The unprecedented crisis has made people realise the importance of using zero-emission vehicles thereby opening an opportunity to accelerate the transition towards sustainable mobility, according to Mr. Mahesh Babu, MD & CEO, Mahindra Electric Mobility Limited. Answering an Autoguide questionnaire on electric mobility, Mr Babu said there also was an opportunity to build EV components indigenously going by the growth potential of e-2Ws & 3Ws.

With the auto sector having stabilised to a great extent, do you think the electric mobility is getting the desired attention now?

During this pandemic, we have seen a decline in public-transit ridership by over 70 per cent and the virus has also adversely affected fleet and shared mobility operations. However, as things open up, we have seen a gradual increase in demand for local mobility for short-distance travel. We expect the demand for electric three/two-wheelers to go up. The demand for our Mahindra Treo electric auto has picked up and is about 70-80 pc of pre-COVID levels. We also believe that micro-mobility solutions and other technologies that support physical distancing may benefit. Customer demand for these solutions could soar once the crisis subsides, increasing their attractiveness to investors. As India continues to urbanise and the demand for last and first-mile connectivity increases, its EV revolution will be led by electric three-wheelers.

How do you rate the overall progress in the EV ecosystem?

The Indian EV story is very different from many other global countries. In India, two and three-wheelers make about 80 pc of total vehicles sold every year. These are promising EV segments going forward and expected to account for over 4 million units in the next five to six years. Further, this gives an opportunity to build our own EV components indigenously, right from electric motors to battery packs and even power electronics. The EV value-chain itself is growing and is expected to reach $4.8 billion in 2025. Mahindra Electric is no longer just an EV manufacturer. We are a total EV technology

solutions provider and working towards developing products for mass adoption.

We have started to see the success of our Treo range of electric three-wheelers across the country. Adoption in Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities is the maximum. The ease of driving an electric vehicle has opened up a whole new segment of women drivers, which has further given a big boost to the segment.

The Government is focused on 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and the battery technology and raw material are mostly controlled by China. Do you think this will slow down or change the impetus on EVs?

We believe that India is on the path to become a global leader in development and manufacturing of electric vehicles. Various central and state EV policies such as FAME-II and Phased Manufacturing Programme will help us to reduce our import dependence and create a strong and robust domestic supply-chain which will further help in making EVs more affordable. We are proud to announce that our Treo range of electric three-wheelers is completely localised (except for the cell). We have our own components including the battery pack. Mahindra Electric is setting up a new manufacturing plant in Chakan and a global R&D centre for electric vehicle technology in Bengaluru. Our aim is to make EV technology in India for the world.

Mr Mahesh Babu

Has the pandemic impacted peoples' preference for EVs in any way?

This unprecedented crisis has made people realise the importance of using zero-emission vehicles for the betterment of the planet. Going forward, we expect to see an increase in ridership of last/first-mile commute. At the same time, most of the logistics and e-commerce companies are looking to go green with their deliveries. We should look at this crisis as an opportunity to accelerate the transition toward sustainable mobility. Here's a good chance to revive the economy with a greener mission.

Which segments is seeing the maximum EV penetration and what is the future of growth in EVs plying interstate or long-distance routes?

We believe that electric three-wheelers, two-wheelers and four-wheelers in fleet operations will drive the Indian EV market and are expected to reach almost 4 million units by 2025.

Are you satisfied with the steps taken by the Centre and various state governments to promote electric vehicles?

The Government has laid a strong foundation for EVs to succeed in India. FAME and various state EV policies have certainly helped to push the sales of EVs in the country. The Phased Manufacturing Programme has ensured scalability of local content in EVs in an ordered manner and has helped OEMs to become self-reliant.

Tesla coming to India ‘next year for sure’

CEO Elon Musk’s tweet creates buzz, triggers debates

US electric carmaker Tesla is making its foray into the India market in 2021, if its CEO Mr Elon Musk's latest tweet is to be believed.

"Next year for sure," Mr Musk tweeted on October 2 In reply to a tweet from a Tesla Fan Club in India inquiring about the company's debut in the country. The club's tweet was appended with a photograph of a T-shirt with the message: "India wants Tesla".

Another Twitter-user stated that the wait has been long, to which Mr Musk responded with a "Thank you for waiting".

Mr Musk's recent tweet is yet another in a series of tweets from him earlier hinting at Tesla's entry in India. In July this year, Mr Musk had responded to a customer in India who booked his Tesla Model 3 some four years ago, stating that Tesla is coming 'soon' to India. Similar tweets happened the previous year as well.

Twitter followers also inquired whether reports about Tesla setting up an R&D facility in Bengaluru were true, but there was no response to the query. Last month, the Tami Nadu Government also wrote to several automobile companies, including Tesla, to set up shop in the state.

In 2015, the Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi, had visited Tesla headquarters at Palo Alto, California, and met Mr Musk who gave him a tour of the company's electric car plant.

Tesla has not launched any of its electric cars in India or any other country in South Asia yet. The only Asian market where Tesla has a presence is China.

Moving back and forth on Tesla's India dream, Mr Elon Musk has in the past pointed to the Indian Government's policies and criticised FDI norms that are causing a delay in the electric car company's debut in the country. "Would love to be in India. Some challenging Government regulations, unfortunately," Mr Musk had tweeted at one stage.

The latest tweet of Tesla boss, however, gives a more definitive timeline of EV giant's possible India entry.

It also comes at a time when India is ramping up charging infrastructure for electric vehicles with the aim of significantly increasing the proportion of electric vehicles plying on the roads. The Government is also increasingly focused on promoting the use and manufacture of electric vehicles.

However, a debate has triggered in the media on whether Tesla would be able to survive in the Indian EV market. Coming from countries where EV infrastructure is on full swing, to India where at present merely 500 EV charging stations remain functional, can be quite a setback for Tesla, was the predominant sentiment in these debates. Entering the Indian market, Tesla needs to pay attention to the lack of infrastructure as its main competitor, it's being said.

The next, say domain experts, is the issue of Tesla's high-priced vehicles which might turn out to be unattractive to the budget-conscious Indian consumer. Tesla, they say, might also consider building a production facility in India as it will bring down the cost of its vehicles significantly. Considering the huge size and potential of the Indian auto market, this investment should not be a problem for a company like Tesla.

Recently, the US electric carmaker had cut the starting price of its Chinese-made Model 3 sedans by about 8 per cent to 2,49,900 yuan ($36,805), once Chinese subsidies for electric vehicles are taken into account, according to its China website. Previously, the starting price for Model 3 sedans made in Tesla's Shanghai factory with a standard driving range was 2,71,550 yuan, after state purchase subsidies.

Given the current scenario in India, Tesla's proposed entry may not bring any sudden change but will definitely shine the spotlight on the EV sector in the country.

EV

KPMG-CII report says EVs emerging as disruptive force

KPMG India and Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) have launched a report titled, 'Shifting Gears: The evolving electric vehicle landscape in India'.

The report offers a holistic view of how EVs are emerging as a disruptive force, with OEMs making investments in product development and players across the ecosystem testing and discovering new innovative business models and use cases.

Since the running cost of EVs is much lower than ICE vehicles (one-tenth for 2W and 3W), said the report, a strong case emerges for a shift to EVs in B2B. Many large B2B players in e-commerce, grocery, food, courier delivery have been piloting EVs and some have moved into advanced stages of deployment. Battery swapping and Energy as Service are being deployed to reduce upfront investment, improve vehicle uptime and eliminate range anxiety.

Thus, it sees the entire EV ecosystem come together and make EV ownership with accelerated timelines a reality.

KPMG in India expects 25 to 35 per cent 2W penetration and 65 to 75 per cent in 3Ws by 2030. Four-wheeler passenger vehicle (PV) electrification is expected to follow, with 10 to 15 per cent penetration in the personal segment and 20 to 30 per cent in the commercial one by 2030. About 10 to 12 per cent of the overall market for buses is expected to be electrified by 2030

Innovative business models such as battery swapping have emerged and will become mainstreams to enable widespread EV adoption.

FOR ALL

Builds a strong case for B2B shift to EVs

In line with 'Make-in-India' initiatives and global supply chain realignments, the Government is strongly pushing the localisation of production to achieve the twin objectives of self-reliance and job creation

To drive EV adoption, Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) and the Government, both at state and Central levels, need to work collaboratively towards an integrated policy, creating a conducive ecosystem for India's electric mobility vision, said the report.

Currently, only a few state EV policies provide guidelines and incentives on battery recycling. Given this, a coherent recycling policy is the need of the hour, added the report.

The report also highlights the Total cost of ownership (TCO) analysis for different vehicle segments, few models that have been introduced in the Indian market to boost the adoption of EVs, and how the B2B segment is likely to lead growth in the next few years on account of established use cases, fixed/ pre-defined routes and cost savings due to higher utilisation.

Mr Rohan Rao, Partner – Industrials and Automotive, KPMG in India, said, "Electric Vehicles (EVs) are on course to fulfill their promise as a game-changer for the automobile industry. Two-wheeler (2W) and Three-wheeler (3W) auto segments are likely to lead the adoption curve followed by e-buses and passenger taxis. Directionally several factors, including availability of charging infrastructure, robust financing ecosystem, reduced battery prices and increased customer awareness, are paving the way for new era of EV adoption."

The Government, he said, is also pushing EV policy to address some of the adoption barriers. "The government has launched a Phased Manufacturing Programme under FAME-II through which it is pushing the indigenisation of parts. The Government has also outlined plans to set up a battery manufacturing plants in India Overall, there seems to be great promise in India's EV story, as all the above factors come together to drive long-term growth", said Mr Rao.

Mr Jeffry Jacob, Partner, Management Consulting - Industrials and Automotive, KPMG in India, said: "EVs are undoubtedly the way forward for sustainable mobility and is increasingly gaining traction across the world. In India, the charge is being led by 2W and 3W segments, followed by public transport and non-public passenger fleet. One of the biggest hurdles India currently faces is our limited ecosystem for EVs. Significant number of critical components still continues to be largely imported and the charging infrastructure is largely inadequate. However the industry and Government are proactively working to address these constraints and are taking steps in the right direction. Several leading states have released EV policies with clear focus on driving increased adoption through both demand and supply led incentives."

Among the key gaps in the existing policy ecosystem and the recommendations offered by KPMG are: state EV policies could lay a greater focus on demand incentives that shall bring down the upfront cost differential; these polices could have certain targets for conversion of EVs, at a segment level or for a particular industry/use case; setting up of adequate charging infrastructure; EVs could be promoted by encouraging users to purchase/use EVs over ICE vehicles with measures such as increasing road tax/registration fees on ICE vehicles, the vehicle scrappage policy is expected to spur the adoption of EVs; formulation of clear policies on sustainable end-of-life and disposal practices for the EV industry and corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) norms to mandate automakers to have a certain percentage of their vehicle sales as electric.

COP26 Ambassador says at TERI webinar

India has suitable environment to develop EV ecosystem further

Mr Ken O'Flaherty, Regional Ambassador for COP26

"ELECTRIC vehicles are already cheaper to run than ICE vehicles and they are expected to be cheaper to buy within the next few years. India has a great foundation, strong commitment, and suitable environment to develop its EV ecosystem further", said Mr Ken O'Flaherty, Regional Ambassador for Asia-Pacific and South Asia for United Nations' Climate Change Conference (COP26).

The COP26 Ambassador was speaking on December 1 at the webinar on 'Future of E-Mobility in India: Strategies to Drive Demand' – part of COP26 webinar Series.

The four-day discussions were convened by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) in partnership with the British High Commission, New Delhi, in the run-up to its annual global conference, the World Sustainable Development Summit, scheduled from February 10 to 12, 2021.

"As hosts of COP26, the UK is trying to set a strong example with our legally binding targets to cut emissions by 2030 whilst growing our economy. We have cut coal use in the power sector from almost 40 pc in 2012 to 5 pc in 2018, and we will phase it out entirely by 2025." the Ambassador added.

Mr Pietro Sferra Carini, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Italy, emphasised the need for an integrated approach. He said, "The digitalisation of electric grids will be essential to reduce emissions and enhance efficiency. The old concept of zero-carbon transport revolves around the idea of infrastructure networks and grids that go hand-in-hand with the production of EVs."

Delivering his special remarks at the event, Dr Ajay Mathur, Director General, TERI, said "India's transport sector should move from fossil fuels towards electricity, and in the future, aim that this electricity is generated from renewable energy."

Industry representatives including Mr Mahesh Babu, MD & CEO, Mahindra Electric, Mr Rajeev Chaba, MD, MG Motors; and Mr Sohinder Gill, CEO, Hero Electric, emphasised that the Indian market will require different approaches across segments, and even cities.

They also stressed on the need for collaborations among various players and the need to address consumer issues by building demand by putting the first batch of a million EVs on the road and generating word of mouth awareness, and by building the charging infrastructure required to allay consumer anxiety about charging.

Jaguar opens bookings for its all-electric SUV

I-PACE

JAGUAR Land Rover India announced on November 4 that it has opened bookings for its all-electric SUV, *I-PACE*.

The vehicle, said a press release, is fitted with the state-of-the-art 90 kWh Lithium-ion battery that delivers 400 PS from its two electric motors. The 90 kWh Lithium-ion battery comes with an eight-year or 1,60, 000 km warranty. The *I-PACE* will be offered in three variants that include S, SE, and HSE.

The deliveries of *I-PACE* are expected to begin from March 2021.

Since its debut, the Jaguar *I-PACE* has won several accolades and over 80 global awards, including the prestigious 2019 World Car of the Year, World Car Design of the Year, and World Green Car. It was the first car ever to win all three World Car titles simultaneously, making the *I-PACE* a true global EV icon, added the release.

Jaguar Land Rover is committed to providing a worry-free EV experience to its customers. And for this, it has already tied-up with Tata Power to provide office and home charging solutions to customers of *I-PACE*. Further, Tata Power as part of its 'EZ Charge' EV Charging network has installed 200+ charging points across the country. These are present at convenient locations like malls, restaurants, offices, residential complexes and along the highways.

Jaguar customers will have access to this fast-expanding 'EZ Charge' EV charging network of Tata Power.

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Tata Motors delivers 45 *Nexon EVs* to Kerala MVD

THE Government of Kerala has selected Tata Motors' *Nexon EV* for its Motor Vehicle Department (MVD) as part of its ambitious 'Safe Kerala' programme.

A smart fleet of 65 *Nexon EVs* will strengthen this programme to manage and regulate the state's vehicular traffic effectively round the clock, said a press release issued by Tata Motors.

The Kerala MVD will lease the EVs for a period of eight years from the Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) through the Agency for New and Renewable Energy Research and Technology (ANERT).

At a ceremony held in Thiruvananthapuram on November 7, the first lot of 45 *Nexon EVs* was delivered to the Kerala MVD.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Shailesh Chandra, President – Passenger Vehicle Business Unit, Tata Motors, said, "The Kerala Government has been at the forefront of initiating several measures to enhance public safety. We are grateful to ANERT for driving this initiative on behalf of the Kerala Government and look forward to a fruitful partnership with them and MVD."

'Safe Kerala' is a programme that focuses on significantly enhancing road safety by reducing traffic offences and addressing all related aspects holistically through mediums such as proper training of drivers, providing safe roads, raising awareness amongst pedestrians, and ensuring effective management of vehicular traffic.

Tata *Nexon EV* crosses 2,000-sales milestone

TATA *Nexon EV* has surpassed the 2,000-sales milestone.

In over 10 months since launch, the sales of the *Nexon EV* reached 2,200 units in November indicating the rapid demand for the EVs in the personal car segment, said a press release issued by the company.

After rolling out its 1,000th *Nexon EV* in August this year, the car clocked in another 1,000 sales units in a record time of three months (Sept-Nov 2020).

Currently, Tata Motors is leading the EV segment with a 74 per cent market share, added the release.

Mr. Shailesh Chandra, President – Passenger Vehicle Business Unit, Tata Motors, said, "This is a moment of great pride for us and those working with us in our journey to accelerate the adoption of EVs in India."

Tata Motor delivers 26 e-buses to BEST

Hon'ble Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray flagging off 26 Tata Ultra Urban AC electric Buses for Brihanmumbai Electric Supply & Transport (BEST)

TATA Motors on December 4 delivered 26 electric buses to Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST).

The delivery marks the commencement of the first-ever Gross Cost Contract (GCC) electric bus service to BEST. The buses are delivered as a part of the larger order of 340 electric buses from BEST under the Government of India's FAME-II initiative, said a press release.

The 25-seater Tata Ultra Urban 9/9 electric AC buses were flagged off by the Maharashtra Chief Minister, Mr. Uddhav Thackeray, in the presence of dignitaries from the Maharashtra state Government, BEST and Tata Motors, at an event at Nariman Point, Mumbai.

Tata Motors will be undertaking to build, deploy, maintain and operate the complete charging infrastructure along with the buses across four Mumbai depots of – Backbay, Worli, Malvani and Shivaji Nagar, added the press release.

Commenting on the occasion, Mr. Girish Wagh, President, Commercial Vehicle Business Unit, Tata Motors, said, "The buses have been specially designed keeping the comfort and convenience of Mumbaikars including a lift mechanism for differently-abled travellers."

To redefine last-mile delivery

Mahindra launches *Treo Zor*
New electric 3-wheeler cargo model

MAHINDRA Electric Mobility Ltd, part of the Mahindra Group, on October 29 announced the launch of its new electric three-wheeler cargo model, *Treo Zor*.

With prices starting at ₹2.73 lakh (ex-showroom Delhi, net of FAME-2 and state subsidies), *Treo Zor* will come in three variants – Pickup, Delivery Van and Flat Bed. It will be available in select cities starting December.

Speaking at the launch, Dr Pawan Goenka, MD & CEO, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd, said, "On the 75th anniversary of Mahindra, we are driven by purpose for a tomorrow that is clean, green and technologically-connected. I believe that India has a huge opportunity to become the world leader in electric vehicles for first and last-mile connectivity. Our *Treo* platform demonstrates our commitment to Atmanirbhar Bharat through latest technology and make in India. The *Treo Zor* will provide a clean, sustainable and affordable solution for last-mile delivery."

Mr Mahesh Babu, MD & CEO, Mahindra Electric, said, "The proven *Treo* electric three-wheeler platform has already redefined last-mile mobility with 5,000+ satisfied customers who have traversed 35 million km on Indian roads. *Treo Zor* has been developed with cutting-edge technology to deliver substantial customer value proposition."

According to a press release, *Treo Zor* has best-in-industry power of 8kW and best-in-segment torque of 42Nm. With its Boost Mode, one can boost driving experience with higher speeds and get quick turnaround times. The vehicle ensures more trips per day with a certified driving range of 125 km.

Charging *Treo Zor* is as easy as charging a mobile phone, said the release. One just needs to plug it into a 15AMP socket! With Automatic Transmission, one can enjoy a clutch-less, noiseless and vibration-free ride.

The loading and unloading time is reduced with tray loading height of 675 mm, when compared with diesel cargo three-wheelers.

Treo Zor's modern design with unique dual tone exteriors make the vehicle stand out. Its rust-free, dent-resistant, modular SMC panels provide a better life, ease-of-repair and replacement. One also gets more comfort with an ergonomically designed driver cabin and seat.

Among its other Features are: telematics unit and GPS, windscreen and wiping system, spare wheel provision, driving modes - FNR (Forward, Neutral, Reverse), Economy and Boost mode, lockable glove box, 12 V socket, 15-amp off-board charger, hazard indicator and reverse buzzer.

Hitachi ABB Power Grids teams up with Ashok Leyland in

E-bus pilot at IIT Madras

HITACHI ABB Power Grids in India has announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Ashok Leyland and the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IITM) for an e-mobility pilot.

The triumvirate will run an electric bus (e-bus) pilot to support sustainable in-campus commuting by IITM's students and staff, said a press release.

The e-bus, which will incorporate Hitachi ABB Power Grids' innovative flash-charging technology – Grid-eMotionTM Flash, will be provided by Ashok Leyland. IITM will host the infrastructure required to operate the flash-charging system for the e-bus.

"We need to have all hands on deck – industry, academia and policymakers to develop a strong and reliable local ecosystem to support the Indian electric vehicle (EV) revolution," said Mr N Venu, Managing Director, Hitachi ABB Power Grids in India.

Dr. N Saravanan, Chief Technology Offiicer, Ashok Leyland, said, "As pioneers in the bus segment, we are proud to partner on yet another innovative solution in the e-bus segment. Combination of our robust buses with electric propulsion technology and flash charging from Hitachi ABB Power Grids, can be the answer to the need for sustainable public transportation across the country."

"The development of India's e-mobility charging infrastructure and increased deployment of e-buses is key to meeting the demand for sustainable transport solutions across India's rural and urban areas," said Prof. Bhaskar Ramamurthi, Director, IIT Madras. "We hope to study and understand how the right technology can enable an efficient transport system without damaging the environment. We are delighted to have partnered with the best in the industry for this endeavor," Prof. Bhaskar Ramamurthi added.

Ather Energy raises fresh round of funding

ATHER Energy has raised an investment of $35 million in its latest round of Series D led by Mr Sachin Bansal's investment of $23 Mn.

Ather Energy was one of the earliest start-up investments of Mr Sachin Bansal when he invested $0.5 million in the firm as an angel investor in 2014 and with this round, has made a total investment of $53 million, said a press release.

It went on to say that Hero MotoCorp has also invested $12 million as a part of the Series D round in Ather Energy. The continued investment by the existing investors is a manifestation of confidence in the brand and the sector, added the release.

Mr Tarun Mehta, Co-founder & CEO, Ather Energy, said, "Electric vehicles are here to stay and Ather Energy is playing a leading role in driving this change. Sachin has been part of our growth journey and this investment is a strong endorsement of the momentum we've built over these years. Post the successful launch of our new product line, we are now looking forward to delivering the vehicles and seeing them across all cities. The pandemic has changed the landscape of personal transport and we hope that with high performance alternatives available people will choose electric vehicles for their daily commute."

Mr Sachin Bansal commented: "Ather Energy has set a new benchmark for intelligent electric bikes in the Indian automobile industry. Their new product line and expansion plans across the country will make EVs a part of the Indian landscape. Having been a part of the team since 2014, it's great to see their vision taking shape."

Mr Sachin Bansal

ETO to invest Rs 150 cr in new EV plant in Telangana

ETO Motors, an electric mobility solutions and services company, announced that the company has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Telangana to set up a greenfield manufacturing facility in the state for its range of electric three-wheelers.

The manufacturing facility will be set up under its subsidiary Keto Motors, with an investment of ₹150 crores over the next five years. The project will generate employment of over 1,500 people, said a press release issued by the company.

The products range under the company includes ergonomically designed zero-emission electric three-wheelers in passenger as well as in the cargo segment.

Speaking on the development, Mr. NK Rawal, Managing Director, ETO Motors, said, "The new EV policy of Telangana Government is aimed to create a sustainable ecosystem for EVs in the state including manufacturing, design, and adoption. It also comes at the right time when the EV segment is poised to grow at a significant rate considering the demand from the booming e-commerce side apart from policy push from the central government. The tail-wind being created from the demand and policy perspective makes us bullish for the electric vehicle segment. The new plant will help us cater to the increasing interest we are witnessing from the e-commerce and third-party logistics players in our products that are not only equipped to handle the decent load but are also capable to run in diverse terrains."

ETO Motors to deploy 300 e-3W cargo with Bigbasket

ETO Motors announced on November 23 that it has commenced commercial deliveries of its flagship electric three-wheeler cargo vehicle BULKe.

The company would be deploying 300 numbers of BULKe in the next six months to Bigbasket, e-commerce platform for groceries. The deployment has started initially in Hyderabad and would soon expand to other cities.

A company press release said, the ergonomically designed BULKe is a high-speed (L5 category) cargo electric three-wheeler with unique features. It is manufactured by ETO Motors' subsidiary Keto Motors at its plant in Jedcharla, Telangana.

BULKe, added the release, is capable to carry a load of 500 lg; covers up to 120 km in single charge using advance lithium ion batteries.

Mr. KB Nagaraju, Chief Customer Experience Officer, Bigbasket, said, "As the last-mile hub operations become denser, electric vehicles are a perfect choice for our last-mile delivery. We believe ETO Motors has come out with the right vehicle for e-commerce operations and share a common vision of providing a clean and cost-effective solution which our customers would appreciate."

Mr. Venugopal Rao N, President – ETO Motors (left) and Mr. AR Ramesh, Transport Manager - Bigbasket during the delivery of BULKe - a high-speed (L5 category) cargo electric three-wheeler

Omega Seiki opens its first dealership in India

Mr Karan Reddy, CoFounder, OHM Automotives, Mr Nirmal Reddy, Founder of OHM Automotives, Mr Uday Narang, Chairman, Omega Seiki Mobility, and Mr. Deb Mukherjee, MD, Omega Seiki Mobility

OMEGA Seiki Mobility, part of the Anglian Omega Group, launched its first dealership in the country on November 5.

The dealership has come up in Telangana and the company plans to strengthen its footprints further by opening dealerships in Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada by 2021, said a press release.

The first dealership is under the name of OHM Automotive, which has already set up several batteries charging stations in the state and is operating them for the last three years.

The dealership at Kukatpally Y junction in Hyderabad will be showcasing different variants of Omega Seiki Mobility's cargo three-wheeler Rage+.

Speaking on the partnership with OHM Automotive, Mr Uday Narang, Chairman, Omega Seiki Mobility, said: "Telangana is an important market for Omega Seiki Mobility and we are committed to offering an unrivaled brand experience to our customers and prospects. We are exhilarated in partnering with OHM Automotive who has the same values and vision as OSM. We hope to have a long and fruitful relationship with OHM Automotive".

Mr. Nirmal Reddy, Founder, OHM Automotives, said, "We are extremely proud to start the dealership of Omega Seiki Mobility electric vehicles. This adds to our strength of the existing battery charging network and we position ourselves as a service provider to our customers in the electric mobility space. We wish to take this movement to many other parts of the state and regions. Rage+ gives us this platform".

BloombergNEF report

Global EV sales likely to fall 18 per cent in 2020

THE global sales of electric vehicles are projected to fall by 18 per cent to 1.7 million units in 2020 with the coronavirus crisis interrupting ten successive years of strong growth, according to BloombergNEF.

It said in a report, published in a prominent business daily, the sales of combustion engine cars are set to drop even faster by around 23 per cent this year. The electric models are seen accounting for 3 per cent of global car sales in 2020, rising to 7 per cent in 2023 at some 5.4 million units.

Mr Colin McKerracher, head of advanced transport at BNEF, said the COVID-19 pandemic is set to cause a major downturn in global auto sales in 2020 and although the long-term trajectory has not changed much, the market will be bumpy for the next three years.

The report "Long-Term Electric Vehicle Outlook" projects electric models accounting for 58 per cent of new passenger car sales globally by 2040 and 31 per cent of the whole car fleet. Electric vehicles of all types are seen adding 5.2 per cent to global electricity demand by 2040.

BNEF said that the figures have major implications for oil and electricity markets as transport electrification, particularly in the form of two-wheelers is already taking out almost 1 million barrels of oil demand per day and by 2040 it will take around 17.6 million barrels per day.

IEA REPORT

EVs on world roads may hit 10-million milestone this year despite COVID blow

THE number of electric cars on the road is expected to reach almost 10 million this year, as sales grow this year despite the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a new report by International Energy Agency.

Electric car sales are expected to fare better than the overall passenger car market, with EV sales this year to broadly match the 2.1 million sold in 2019, according to the latest edition of the IEA's Global EV Outlook. This would account for a record 3 pc of the total global car sales. Based on data from January to April this year, total global passenger car sales this year are set to decline by 15 per cent.

Global electric car sales grew by at least 30 percent every year over the past decade except for 2019, when growth slowed down to 6 pc as the regulatory environment changed in China and passenger car sales contracted in major markets. Even so, electric cars had another banner year in 2019, securing their highest ever share – 2.6 pc – of the global car market.

Last year, electric vehicles performed differently in markets worldwide. China remained by far the largest electric car market in the world, accounting for half sold in 2019. More than 1 million electric cars were sold in China in 2019, a 2 pc decrease from the previous year. Europe was the second largest market, with 5,61,000 cars sold in 2019. The United States followed with 327,000 cars sold.

Electric cars are expected to account for nearly 1% of the global car stock with this year's sales. However, the report explains that second waves of the pandemic and slower-than-expected economic recovery could lead to different outcomes. Ultimately, government responses to the pandemic and how consumers emerge from the crisis will determine what happens to electric car markets in 2020 and beyond.

Volvo's full range of electric trucks to be available in Europe next year

NEXT year, road transporters in Europe will be able to order all-electric versions of Volvo's heavy-duty trucks.

Volvo Trucks will offer a complete heavy-duty range with electric drivelines starting in Europe in 2021. The company's drive toward electrification marks a major step forward on the road to fossil-free transport.

Volvo Trucks is now running tests of the electric heavy-duty Volvo *FH*, Volvo *FM* and Volvo *FMX* trucks, which will be used for regional transport and urban construction operations in Europe. These trucks will have a gross combination weight of up to 44 tonnes. Depending on the battery configuration the range could be up to 300 km.

Sales of these trucks will begin next year and volume production will start in 2022.

"By rapidly increasing the number of heavy-duty electric trucks, we want to help our customers and transport buyers to achieve their ambitious sustainability goals. We're determined to continue driving our industry towards a sustainable future," said Mr Roger Alm, President, Volvo Trucks.

Volvo Trucks started manufacturing the Volvo *FL Electric* and Volvo *FE Electric* in 2019. These are electric trucks intended for city distribution and refuse operations, primarily in Europe.

Volvo Trucks' objective is for its entire product range to be fossil-free by 2040, said a company press release.

"To reduce the impact of transport on the climate, we need to make a swift transition from fossil fuels to alternatives such as electricity. But the conditions for making this shift, and consequently the pace of the transition, vary dramatically across different hauliers and markets, depending on many variables such as financial incentives, access to charging infrastructure and type of transport operations," explained Mr Alm.

For this reason, most transport companies will change over to electric operation in stages. In practice, many of them will have a mixed fleet of trucks powered by different fuels during a transition period.

From Volvo Trucks' perspective, the transition to more sustainable transport is largely about making the shift as smooth as possible for haulage operators, so that they can begin to adjust. The solutions offered must be fossil-free and allow hauliers to achieve the necessary levels of profitability and productivity.

"Our primary task is to ease the transition to electrified vehicles. We're doing this by offering holistic solutions that include route planning, correctly specified vehicles, charging equipment, financing and services." said Mr Alm.

BMW *X3 M* launched in India

First-ever M car in mid-size SAV segment

BMW India introduced the first-ever *M* car in its mid-size Sports Activity Vehicle (SAV) segment with the launch of BMW *X3 M*.

The BMW *X3 M* is designed to offer standout performance characteristics, personified with squarely geared features to meet the functional requirements of a high-performance car, said a press release.

It is now available in the country as a completely built-up unit. The ex-showroom price of BMW *X3 M* is ₹99,90,000.

Mr. Vikram Pawah, President, BMW Group India, said, "BMW's Sports Activity Vehicle (SAV) segment is a testament to a remarkable success story. The introduction of a high-performance mid-size SAV will further strengthen our presence in the segment and entice new driving experiences. Uniqueness of the first-ever BMW *X3 M* lies in a newly developed powerful engine and sophisticated chassis technology. This vehicle, to the very last detail, offers a unique combination of luxury and sporting dynamics, providing an exciting, safe and novel driving experience to our customers."

According to the press release, the exterior design of the car takes the typical muscular proportions shared by all BMW *X* models. Its long wheelbase, short overhangs, slightly hexagonal wheel arches, crisp lines and clean-cut surface contouring completes the picture with a sprinkling of tell-tale *M* features for that extra dose of sporting supremacy.

The all-new model sports a BMW kidney grille with black double bars. The signature M gills are integrated into the Air Breathers on the front flanks. The exterior

Mr. Vikram Pawah, President, BMW Group India

Lifestyle Collection from BMW

BMW Group India recently launched its 2020 BMW Lifestyle Collections in the country. The offering includes a wide range of innovative products for an urban lifestyle which underscores simplicity and long-lasting quality.

Mr. Vikram Pawah, President, BMW Group India said, "BMW Lifestyle Collection represents a modern, elegant and functional urban fashion. The use of high-quality materials and craftsmanship reflect the same quality standards that are put into the creation of BMW cars. The minimalistic and intelligently designed product range is full of panache and is perfect for those who are always on the move."

The collection, which offers maximum comfort and a high degree of functionality, consists of apparel, jackets, sunglasses and sippers.

The range is supplemented by lifestyle articles such as the BMW Logo T-Shirt for women with a large BMW logo for fans of the brand. Strong, harmonious colours underline a modern, self-confident style. In addition to subtly elegant shades such as blue nights, wild lime, sand and midnight navy, the trend colour orange ensures an expressive look.

The highlights of the collection include the BMW Soft down Jacket for men and women and the BMW Chronograph with BMW kidney design.

BMW is also introducing innovations in lifestyle accessories with products such as – BMW Active Sports bottle, BMW Thermo Cup, BMW Active Yoga Mat, BMW Cool Bag, BMW Travel Set and products for pets.

mirrors' special *M* design brings about a further reduction in aerodynamic drag. The standard equipment also includes 20-inch *M* light-alloy wheels.

The interior, added the release, creates a sporty and luxurious ambience. The unmistakable *M*-style cockpit design has electrically adjustable sports seats with memory, Vernasca leather upholstery, ambient lighting, an *M*-specific instrument cluster and a restyled *M* selector lever.

The addition to the BMW *M* GmbH line-up in the mid-size Sports Activity Vehicle (SAV) segment also heralds the arrival of a newly developed six-cylinder in-line engine with superlative performance. The engine stands out with its familiar *M* high-revving character, the latest *M* TwinPower Turbo technology update, plus track-tested cooling and oil supply systems.

The engine generates maximum output of 353 kW/480 hp from its 3.0-litre displacement, together with peak torque of 600 Nm (442 lb-ft), & goes from 0-100 km/h in 4.2 seconds, with a top speed of 250 km/h. The *M* xDrive system has a rear-wheel bias and offers four driving modes that optimise performance.

The engine is complemented with a sophisticated chassis technology, tuned astutely to marshal the engine's prowess and provide sublime dynamics.

The first-ever BMW *X3 M* is loaded with cutting-edge BMW safety technologies. It also features a 12.3-inch Multifunction Display touchscreen, iDrive Touch Controller, multifunction steering wheel's buttons and the voice control feature along-with the optional BMW Gesture Control.

BMW *2 Series Coupe 'Black Shadow'* edition launched in India

BMW Group India launched the new BMW *2 Series Gran Coupe* 'Black Shadow' edition on December 3. Produced locally at BMW Plant Chennai, the exclusive edition was available from December 7 onwards.

Mr. Vikram Pawah, President, BMW Group India, said, "The first-ever BMW *2 Series Gran Coupe* perfectly blends the comfort of a sedan and the sportiness of a coupe. The new *'Black Shadow'* edition with BMW *'M'* Performance parts offers an excellent athletic edge which further enhances the sporty character of the car in all aspects."

The new design elements enhance the exterior of the new BMW *2 Series Gran Coupe* to give it even more dynamic looks. The *'M'* Performance parts are not only visually attractive, but also integral elements of the light-weight construction concept, said a company press release. All components, it said, are perfectly matched to the specific character of the car and meet the highest requirements with regard to performance, production quality and design.

What sets the special *'Black Shadow'* edition apart is the special individualisation content from the BMW Individual high-gloss shadow line package along with BMW *'M'* Performance parts.

Enhanced exterior of the new BMW *2 Series Gran Coupe 'Black Shadow'* edition provides a distinctive visual appeal with its BMW Individual high-gloss shadow line package along with BMW *'M'* Performance parts. The high-gloss black mesh-style *M* front grille lends a highly dynamic front look.

The interior is designed to accentuate cabin spaciousness with the driver-focused cockpit with exquisite materials and a large panorama glass sunroof. The newly designed Sport Seats with electrical memory function and generous cabin space offer rear passengers an ample knee-room for greater long-distance comfort.

The BMW TwinPower Turbo diesel engine melds maximum power with exemplary efficiency and offers spontaneous responsiveness even at low engine speeds. The two-litre four-cylinder diesel engine produces an output of 190 hp and a maximum torque of 400 Nm at 1,750 - 2,500 rpm. The car accelerates from 0 -100 km / hr in just 7.5 seconds.

A host of BMW ConnectedDrive technologies continue to break the innovation barrier, said the release.

Mahindra hands over the all-new *Thar #1* to the online auction winner Aakash Minda

MAHINDRA & Mahindra on November 1 handed over the all-new *Thar #1* to Mr. Aakash Minda, winner of the online auction.

According to a press release, Mr. Minda, CEO of Minda Corporation, placed a winning bid of ₹1.11 crore in the auction outdoing almost 5,500 bidders from over 500 locations across the country.

Mr. Minda opted for the fully loaded LX petrol automatic transmission convertible variant of the all-new Thar and chose Mystic Copper from a range of six shades.

Mr. Satinder Bajwa, Senior Vice-President, Sales and Customer Care, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd, presented the Thar to Mr. Minda, in New Delhi.

The all-new *Thar #1* comes emblazoned with the *'Thar #1'* badge, distinguishing the owner as the very first one. Its other exclusive and distinguishing features includes customised badging on the vehicle flaunting the owner's initials 'A.M' and serial number '1' on the decorative plate of the dashboard and leatherette seats.

Mahindra held the online auction to raise funds for COVID-19 relief efforts. The winning bidder had the option to choose from three non-profit organisations, to donate the proceeds of the auction, and he opted for the Swades Foundation, with Mahindra matching the winning bid to bring the total donation amount to ₹2.22 crore.

Mr Aakash Minda, CEO, Minda Corporation Ltd

Harley, Hero MotoCorp to ride together in India

EMBARKING on a new journey together, Harley-Davidson, Inc., the legendary motorcycle manufacturer and Hero MotoCorp, world's largest maker of motorcycles and scooters in terms of unit volumes, announced on October 27 that the two will ride together in India.

As per a distribution agreement, Hero MotoCorp will sell and service Harley-Davidson motorcycles, and sell parts & accessories and general merchandise riding gear and apparel through a network of brand-exclusive Harley-Davidson dealers and Hero's existing dealership network in India.

As part of a licensing agreement, Hero MotoCorp will develop and sell a range of premium motorcycles under the Harley-Davidson brand name.

These actions are aligned with Harley-Davidson's business overhaul, The Rewire, and the company's announcement in September to change its business model in India.

This arrangement is mutually beneficial for both companies and riders in India, as it brings together the iconic Harley-Davidson brand with the strong distribution network and customer service of Hero MotoCorp, said a press release.

In an official statement issued on November 21, Mr. Sajeev Rajasekharan, Managing Director – Asia Emerging Markets & India, Harley-Davidson, said, "As we change our business model in India, we are pleased to be continuing our journey in the country together with Hero MotoCorp. We are working closely with Hero to ensure a smooth transition for our riders. We are providing our riders with updates as available and have assured them that Harley-Davidson motorcycle, parts and accessories and general merchandise sales, as well as after-sale services, warranty and H.O.G. activities will continue from January 2021 onwards."

'Dark Rides' against Harley decision to shut operations

BRAND ambassadors of Harley Davidson took out rallies on November 22 across 14 cities, including the national Capital, to rally support against the American giant's decision to close operations in India abruptly, said a press release issued by the Harley Owners Group (HOG).

"The move to close Harley Davidson operations would cause huge losses to dealers in India who have invested crores in the business. The common consumers who have brought the bike would lose out to riding experience they bought the bike for," said, Mr Deepesh Tanwar, former HOG Director, who resigned from the directorship in support of the dealers.

The common consumers who have brought the bike would face difficulties in getting spare parts and services, he added.

The Harley Davidson Dealers Association along with Harley Owners Group, supported by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations of India (FADA), took out multi-city 'Dark Rides' in Ludhiana, Chandigarh, Dehradun, Lucknow, Delhi, Gurgaon, Jaipur, Indore, Bhopal, Raipur, Kolkata, Bhubaneswar, Mumbai and Guwahati.

Speaking on the occasion, HOG riders said, "These Dark Rides were organised to highlight the concerns of the dealers being let down by Harley Davidson. Members of Harley Owners Group, and many of the dealers as ambassadors of the cause participated in the rides across 14 cities with a single demand that compensation be offered in line with upholding the philosophy of brotherhood that Harley was known to stand for."

The HOG riders took to the streets to highlight their support and appeal to the company that the true brotherhood of Harley Davidson be protected and the dealers be given their due respect. In addition, the Harley dealers were protesting against "unjust compensation structure and tie-up with Hero MotoCorp."

The 'Dark Rides' received tremendous support where bikers rode in their Harleys on a Sunday morning. Hundreds of riders from across cities gathered in large numbers and drove within the city to support the Harley Dealers Association.

Festive spirit ebbs, but Nov sales stay healthy

ALTHOUGH down from the upbeat double-digit growth witnessed during the festive months of September and October, passenger vehicles still put up a decent performance in November, recording a 9 per cent increase in sales over the same month last year.

The overall sales in November totaled 2,86,469 units, which is a 14 per cent decline as compared to October sales of 3,33,659 units but a marked improvement of 9 per cent as seen against 2,63,355 units sold in November 2019. Except for market leader Maruti Suzuki India which saw 2 per cent decline last month, most manufacturers posted positive growth in wholesale numbers strengthening hopes that the recovery is here to stay.

Maruti Suzuki India despatched a total of 1,35,775 units last month, reporting a 2.4 per cent de-growth year-on-year. In November last year, it had sold 1,39,133 units. The company's entry-level pair of *Alto* and *S-Presso* registered a 15 per cent decline whereas compact cars like *Wagon R, Swift, Baleno, Ignis, Dzire, Celerio* and *Tour S*

reported a negative growth of 2 per cent year-on-year.

In contrast, Hyundai Motor India presented a positive picture with its November despatches touching 48,800 units as against 44,600 in the corresponding period last year, an uptick of 9.4 per cent. Mr Tarun Garg, Director, Sales, Marketing and Service, Hyundai Motor India, said, "Building on the strong sales momentum that was driven by festive demand this year, we continue to build high customer excitement through the line-up."

The star performer of the month was Tata Motors, which reported a whopping increase of 108 per cent with total sales scaling to 21,641 units as against 10,400 in November 2019. Market analysts attribute the surge witnessed by the homegrown carmaker to a renewed demand for *Nexon* as well as flagship SUV, *Harrier*.

Another homegrown giant, Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M), too reported a growth of 24 per cent in sales which stood at 18,212 units as against 14,637 in November last year. The driving factor for M&M was its pack of UVs, within which the all-new Thar played a key role. Mr Veejay Nakra, CEO, Automotive Division, M&M, said, "At Mahindra we are happy to achieve strong double-digit growth in SUVs during the month of November, aided by a robust festive demand for all our products."

Japanese carmaker Honda reported a robust 55 per cent growth in November with 9,990 units as against 6,459 units in CPLY. Expressing optimism, Mr Rajesh Goel, Senior V-P and Director, Marketing and Sales, Honda Cars India, said, "Although there are continuing challenges of pandemic and its impact on overall consumer sentiment, the rise in personal mobility is expected to help us sustain our sales momentum during the rest of fiscal year."

The total sales witnessed by Toyota Kirloskar Motor were 8,508 units, which is a year-on-year increase of 2.4 per cent. According to Mr Naveen Soni, Senior V-P (Sales & Service) TKM, "The company has been witnessing a gradual yet steady recovery owing to factors such as pent- up and festive season demand as well as consolidation of the market at the lower end due to increasing preference for personal mobility amongst customers."

While Kia Motors despatched a total of 21,022 units registering a 50 per cent year-on-year improvement, MG Motor India retailed a total of 4,163 units during the month as against 3,239 in November last year, an increase of 28.5 per cent.

In the two-wheeler segment also, most manufacturers reported a growth in November sales. Hero MotoCorp sold 5,91,091 units of motorcycles and scooters, recording a double-digit growth of 14.4 per cent over the corresponding month of the previous year.

Bajaj Auto sold 1,88,196 units last month as against 1,76,337 units in November 2019. The company also reported an 18 per cent growth in exports compared to November 2019.

While Honda's domestic sales grew 11 per cent to 4,12,641 units, TVS Motor Company reported a total two-wheelers sales growth of 25 pc. Royal Enfield reported an overall sales growth of 6 per cent last month compared to the same period last year.

RANK	OEM	Nov'20	Nov'19	GROWTH
1	Maruti Suzuki	1,35,775	1,39,133	-2.4%
2	Hyundai	48,800	44,600	9.4%
3	Tata	21,640	10,400	108.1%
4	Kia	21,022	14,005	50.1%
5	Mahindra**	18,212	14,635	24.4%
6	Renault	10,181	10,882	-6.4%
7	Honda	9,990	6,459	54.7%
8	Toyota	8,508	8,307	2.4%
9	MG	4,163	3,239	28.5%
10	Ford	3,991	5,392	-26.0%
11	Volkswagen	1,412	2,937	-51.9%
12	Skoda	1,056	1,266	-16.6%
13	Nissan	1,017	1,455	-30.1%
14	FCA	709	643	10.3%

**Excludes Maxximo & Supro Volumes

Hero's *Xtreme 200S* in BS-VI avatar now

XTREME 200S, said a press release, is a striking and powerful chapter in the company's well-rounded premium portfolio. Focused on catering to the aspirations of the youth across the country, *Xtreme 200S* offers a dynamic combination of performance, styling, and differentiated appeal, added the release.

Riding on a BS-VI engine with advanced XSens technology, the new *Xtreme 200S* now comes with an oil-cooler and in a new Pearl Fadeless White color. The vehicle is priced at ₹1,15,715 (ex-showroom Delhi).

Commenting on the launch, Mr Naveen Chauhan, Head – Sales and Aftersales, Hero MotoCorp, said, "The new *Xtreme 200S* showcases our focused approach to the premium segment. Our premium products like the *Xtreme 160R* and *XPulse 200* BS-VI are receiving an overwhelming response from the customers. I am confident that the *Xtreme 200S* will build on their success."

Hero *Glamour* bikes for Karnataka Police

HERO MotoCorp on November 11 delivered 751 units of Hero *Glamour* BS-VI motorcycle to the Karnataka's Police department.

Karnataka Chief Minister Mr BS Yediuruppa and the Home Minister, Mr Basavaraj Bommai, flagged off a rally of Hero Glamour motorcycles from Vidhan Soudha in Bengaluru.

Recently launched in its BS-VI avatar, the flagship Hero *Glamour* 125cc motorcycle offers a seamless city riding experience, said a press release. In addition to i3S (idle start-stop system), the motorcycle runs on a 125cc engine with XSens-programmed fuel injection technology with a power output of 10.73 BHP @ 7500 RPM and torque of 10.6 Nm @ 6000 RPM.

Hyundai launches all-new *i20*

'Redefines standards in premium hatchback'

HYUNDAI Motor India Ltd on November 5 launched an all-new *i20*. Through its sleek styling, futuristic design, exhilarating performance and segment-leading technologies, the all-new *i20* is slated to redefine benchmarks, creating yet another iconic offering for the smart Indian customer, said a press release issued by the carmaker.

Commenting on the launch, Mr. S S Kim, MD & CEO, Hyundai Motor India Ltd, said, "With the launch of the all-new *i20*, Hyundai has once again redefined standards in the premium hatchback segment. As a customer-centric organisation, we have developed the all-new *i20* to offer state-of-the-art technologies and flamboyant design, bringing to life an unparalleled mobility experience for new-age customers. Hyundai has packaged the all-new *i20* as a future-ready car that will not just become the pinnacle of this segment, but set the benchmark for automobiles in India."

It is built on six core pillars: iconic exteriors, impressive interiors, innovative technology, invincible performance, incredible safety and an impeccable peace of mind, added the release.

The façade of the all-new *i20* is defined by the parametric jewel pattern grille, LED projector headlamps and LED DRLs creating a premium and flamboyant appeal. Its exquisite style is accentuated through a dynamic side profile with sharp-looking R16 diamond cut alloys and flyback chrome beltline design.

The all-new *i20* exudes a luxurious, advanced and upmarket feel that has been exceptionally packaged to create a class-leading cabin space. Featuring harmonizing design symmetry, the interiors of the all-new *i20* have been crafted to foster a serene and calming ambience for its occupants.

Mr S S Kim, MD & CEO, HMIL at the launch of the all-new *i20*

Hero MotoCorp names global mobility expert Michael Clarke as COO


Mr Michael Clarke

HERO MotoCorp on December 1 appointed global mobility expert Mr Michael Clarke to the newly-created position of Chief Operating Officer (COO) with the additional role of Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO).

Based out of India, Mr Clarke will join Hero MotoCorp effective January 1, 2021 and report to Dr. Pawan Munjal, Chairman & CEO of Hero MotoCorp. The Nomination and Remuneration Committee (NRC) of Hero MotoCorp has approved the appointment, said a press release issued by the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters

Mr Clarke, said the release, is a business leader with more than 25 years' global experience in publicly listed companies in the US and UK. He has worked extensively in building, leading and managing teams across geographies and functions.

Dr. Munjal said, "I am excited to have Mike join the Hero family at this crucial juncture in time of emerging opportunities and new challenges."

Thiruppathy Srinivasan is CTO at Ampere Electric

AMPERE Electric, a wholly-owned electric mobility subsidiary of Greaves Cotton, announced on December 7 that Mr Thiruppathy Srinivasan will be joining as Chief Technology Officer (CTO) and Head of Manufacturing, with immediate effect.


Mr Thiruppathy Srinivasan

Prior to joining Ampere, Mr Srinivasan was working with Ather Energy. His expertise lies in technology and organisational strategy, product development and manufacturing operations to enable efficiency in businesses, said a press release issued by Ampere.

Mr Srinivasan is an MS in Mechanical Engineering from Ohio State University and B.Tech from IIT-Madaras. With over 29 years of total experience, he has taken up several projects related to product development and manufacturing operations.

Castrol India appoints Deepesh Baxi as CFO


Mr Deepesh Baxi

CASTROL India Limited announced on December 1 that Mr Deepesh Baxi will succeed Ms.Rashmi Joshi as Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Wholetime Director, as she steps down from her current position on December 31, 2020.

Mr Baxi, who is currently Financial Controller for Castrol's businesses globally, will take up the role and join the Board on January 1, 2021. Ms Joshi will move to another leadership position after having served Castrol India for seven years as CFO and Wholetime Director. The two will work together between now and the end of December to ensure a seamless transition.

Castrol India Chairman, Mr R Gopalakrishnan, said, "Rashmi has played a key leadership role offering financial stewardship and strategic insights to the business as it undertook several successful transitions during her tenure as CFO. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Rashmi for all she has done for Castrol India and extend a warm welcome to Deepesh."

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