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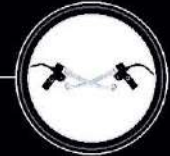
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Editor's Viewpoint



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SHILPA MALHOTRA
Executive Editor

On the export front also, several players set records highlighting a robust demand scenario worldwide

Fiscal-end on happy note

PROPELLED by buoyant consumer sentiment and easing of supply chains, the automobile industry in the country ended the financial year on a satisfying note. The last month of FY22 saw majority of automakers turning out record sales numbers while it also witnessed the top two PV players suffering decline. On the export front also, several players set records highlighting a robust demand scenario worldwide. All this is good news, but does it really signal a risk-free future? The Russia-Ukraine war has caused some concern over supply chain issues, and that may become a dampener in the long run. We take an overview of these inter-related developments in two separate stories this month. Let's look at the domestic front first.

The month of March saw Maruti Suzuki and Hyundai Motors reporting de-growth while others like Tata Motors, Toyota Kirloskar, Skoda Auto and Kia India setting records by recording their highest-ever monthly sales. On the export front, the industry scaled an all-time high in the just-concluded financial year with all segments recording strong growth. While Maruti Suzuki exported a record 238,376 units in FY2021-22, the highest in any financial year, Hyundai Motor India saw more than 30 per cent rise in its exports. In the two-wheeler industry also, the exports hit record levels with a significant increase in shipments of Bajaj Auto and TVS Motor. In CVs, the shipments saw double-digit growth for companies like Tata Motors, Ashok Leyland and VECV. All these developments point towards the global industry being on a high.

That brings us to our Cover Story. While car sales in the US are expected to rise this year, driven by pent-up demand, EU too is projected to return to growth with a rise of 7.9 pc. However, what is likely to play spoilsport is the worsening logistical and supply chain issue as a result of the Russia-Ukraine war, as both the countries are pivotal automotive input suppliers. Top European players, like BMW and Volkswagen have already suffered production losses due to strain in the supply chain and Japanese major Toyota has also said that it will scale down production due to the shortage of chips. It's becoming a matter of concern at home also, but let's stay focused on the brighter side and hope the India Story continues unhindered!

Enjoy the monthly package!!

Global Upsurge

Automobile industry overcomes challenges, heads for growth; India sees record exports

UKRAINE WAR A CAUSE FOR CONCERN



HARVINDER AHUJA

IT started with COVID-19 outbreak and was followed by semiconductor shortage. Then there were issues like supply chain bottlenecks, low inventories, spurt in commodity prices and ever-rising fuel prices. But the global automobile industry, including India, withstood all and came out trumps! The year 2022 began on a positive note and the outlook for the months ahead seems robust on all counts, except for the likely fallout of the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine.

The possibility of critical raw material from the two countries becoming scarce has dampened the automobile industry's spirits to an extent, as there are reports about fall in production numbers in Europe; and Japan, too, has been affected. The automobile market in the United States is roaring and projections for the year are positive. India, too, is looking up with exports scaling an all-time high in the just-concluded financial year. So, notwithstanding the Ukraine impact, the global automobile industry seems to be on a high, as of now.

India's export shipments topped the 5-million-mark for the first time, driven by demand for made-in-India two-wheelers in Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia. All segments of the automotive segment ended the fiscal with strong growth over the previous fiscal. Though the passenger vehicle manufacturers have been faced with the challenge of ramping up production to serve the surge in demand in the post-COVID period due to shortage of chips, their shipments to various markets were not affected to that extent. Most of the PV makers also saw a big rise in exports.

India's top market player Maruti Suzuki exported a record 238,376 units in FY2021-22, the highest in any financial year. The carmaker exported 26,496 units during March 2022, clocking its highest-ever monthly exports. Top export markets for the company included Latin America, ASEAN, Africa, and Middle East.

Assuming office on April 1, Mr. Hisashi Takeuchi, said, "Today is an auspicious day for me as I take up the responsibility of MD & CEO, Maruti Suzuki, that coincides with the achievement of this historic highest-ever exports." The company has been exporting vehicles since 1986 and has achieved a cumulative export of over 22.5 lakh vehicles.



Mr. Hisashi Takeuchi
New CEO and MD of
Maruti Suzuki



Hyundai Motor India, the second-largest PV exporter, reported a more than 30 per cent rise in export of its 'Made in India' PVs at 1.19 lakh units this fiscal. Other leading exporters include Kia Motors, Volkswagen, which exported more PVs than its sales in the Indian market (during 10 months), and Nissan.

In the two-wheeler industry, the exports hit record levels with a significant increase in shipments of companies like Bajaj Auto and TVS Motor. In FY20 and FY19, two-wheeler exports stood at 3.5 million units and 3.3 million units respectively. But in this fiscal (for

the 10 months), the total two-wheeler exports have already crossed 3.7 million units. For the first time, TVS Motor's export volumes crossed the one-million mark this fiscal. Bajaj, the largest two-wheeler exporter, clocked export volumes of more than two million units for the 11 months of this fiscal.

Three-wheeler exports also witnessed a big rise and the total shipments are estimated at 5 lakh-plus units for FY22. In commercial vehicle exports, the shipments saw double-digit growth for companies like Tata Motors, Ashok Leyland and VE Commercial Vehicles during this fiscal.

Looking beyond India, new car sales in the United States are expected to rise this year, driven by pent-up demand. Industry consultant Edmunds estimated that 15.2 million new cars will be sold in 2022, representing a 1.2 per cent increase from its 2021 vehicle sales estimate. The US electric vehicle market will continue to see growth and will surpass 600,000 units in 2022, it predicted. Edmunds also said it expects the average transaction price for new vehicles to hit record levels.

Data firm IHS Markit said the US new car sales in 2022 will increase to 15.47 million vehicles from an estimated 15.07 million in 2021. It also said that it sees mainland China new car sales rising to 26.92 million in 2023 and 28.99 million in 2024.

Despite a record-low base of comparison due to the COVID pandemic, sales of new cars continued to decline in the EU last year because of the microchip shortage. With chip supplies expected to stabilise in 2022, the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA) now forecasts that passenger car registrations in the EU will return to growth this year, rising by 7.9 per cent to reach 10.5 million units.

Amid all these positive developments from across the globe, came the news of the Russian attack on Ukraine, which has worsened the logistical and supply chain issue. According to S&P Global Mobility, an automotive research firm, the conflict has caused parts shortages of critical vehicle components. The New York Times reported in early March that shortages of auto parts made in Ukraine had brought European automotive assembly lines, including those of BMW and the Volkswagen Group, to a grinding halt.

India's export shipments topped the 5-million-mark for the first time, driven by demand for made-in-India two-wheelers in Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia. All segments of the automotive segment ended the fiscal with strong growth

According to media reports post-Russian attack on Ukraine, BMW's production numbers are expected to be on par with those in 2021, despite early projections showing that the brand expected to surpass those numbers in 2022. Production of Mini in Oxford remains suspended. Volkswagen has said that it will ramp up production in its home turf at Wolfsburg, while its EV plants will stay shut. Porsche has also halted production at its factory in Leipzig, say these reports.

Industry consultant Edmunds estimated that 15.2 million new cars will be sold in the United States in 2022, representing a 1.2 per cent increase from its 2021 vehicle sales estimate

Europe isn't the only region affected by the strain in the supply chain. According to the reports, Toyota Motor Corp of Japan has stated that it will scale down production by up to 20 per cent due to the shortage of chips and other parts.

The effects on the supply chain are felt globally with S&P predicting a cut in North America for light-duty vehicle production by about 480,000 units. In total, the global light vehicle production forecast has been cut down by 2.6 million units, according to S&P.

According to German Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA), Ukraine is one of the most important suppliers of neon, a noble gas needed for semiconductor production. Palladium, which is required for catalytic converters in gasoline engines, has been imported from Russia, along with nickel. "These raw materials will become even more important in the future," said a VDA spokesperson.

Nickel shortages from Russia would push up electric vehicle prices, slowing Western economies' progress in reducing carbon emissions, warned the London-based consultancy GlobalData.

According to VDA, the Ukraine crisis highlights how Germany and the EU must reduce their dependency.

With no early end in sight to the Russian-Ukraine war, the global automobile industry is keeping its fingers crossed. Amid positive consumer sentiments and rising vehicular sales, it is doing the best that can be done – being prepared for any fresh eventuality.

AUTO SALES IN MARCH

Decline for some, record for others

THE last month of the FY 2021-22 brought good news for most of the automakers though the top two PV players witnessed decline in their sales. While Maruti Suzuki India and Hyundai suffered because of the loss of production caused by semiconductor shortage, Tata Motors, Mahindra, Skoda and other major carmakers posted hefty sales growth with some turning out record numbers. The two-wheeler segment, however, saw a dip whereas commercial vehicles showed double-digit recovery.

Maruti Suzuki sold a total of 170,395 cars in March 2022, which included domestic sales of 137,658 units and 6,241 units to other OEMs. The company's monthly exports zoomed 128 per cent at 26,496 units, as against 11,597 in March last year. The country's Number One player also released its numbers for the entire fiscal. In FY 2021-22, MSIL posted a growth of 13.4 per cent with sales figure of 1,652,653 vehicles. "The shortage of electronic components had some impact on the production of vehicles in FY 2021-22," MSIL said in a statement.

Hyundai Motor sold a total of 55,287 units during the month. The company sold 44,600 cars in the domestic market as against 52,600 units in the same month last year, reporting a decline of 15.21 per cent. The South Korean major's exports were also down by 11.10 per cent. It exported 10,687 cars last month as against 12,021 units in March 2021.

Tata Motors, which has been consistently stepping up the ladder in PV sales, registered an impressive growth of 43 per cent in the segment. The company sold 42,293 units in March 2022 as against 29,654 units in the same month last year. In terms of annual sales, Tata's passenger vehicle segment has witnessed a growth of 67 per cent. The company sold 370,372 units in FY22 as compared to 222,025 units in the FY21.

Mahindra was the fourth best-selling car manufacturer for March 2022. The company sold 27,603 cars during the month as against 16,700 units in the same month last year, recording a healthy growth of 67 per cent. It sold 27,380 UVs and 223 units of cars and vans.

Skoda Auto India sold 5,608 cars last month, which is the brand's highest ever in a month in its two-decade history in the country. The company had sold 1,159 units in the same month last year.





Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM), too, reported its best-ever monthly sales in five years at 17,131 units. The company's dispatches during the month rose 14 per cent compared to 15,001 units in March 2021. "We have been witnessing tremendous demand from the market and our March wholesales stand testimony to the current demand trends," according to Mr Atul Sood, Associate Vice- President (Sales and Strategic Marketing), TKM.

Kia India was another automaker that reported its best-ever monthly sales at 22,622 units. The company said its wholesales last month increased by 18 per cent compared to the same month last year.

MG Motor India, however, reported a 14.5 per cent decline in retail sales as also Nissan India. MG sold 4,721 units in March this year as against 5,528 units in the corresponding month last year. Nissan reported a 25 per cent decline in domestic wholesales at 3,007 units compared to 4,012 units in March 2021.

In the two-wheeler segment, Hero MotoCorp dispatched a total of 425,721 units of motorcycles and 24,433 units of scooters during March 2022. Bajaj Auto reported the highest year-on-year decline of about 41 per cent. TVS motorcycle sales grew to 160,522 units from 157,254 units in March last year while its scooter sales were at 94,747 units as against 104,513 units in March 2021.

The country's largest commercial vehicle maker, Tata Motors, reported a growth across the categories. Its domestic sales in March included 14,499 units of M&HCV, 7,555 units of I&LCV, 2,703 units of passenger carriers and 19,668 units of SCV cargo and pickup. Mahindra posted a major portion of its domestic sales from LCVs of 2T- 3.5T segment at 15,202 units, followed by LCVs of less than 2T at 3,806 units, and LCVs of more than 2.5T and MHCVs together clocking 829 units. VE Commercial Vehicles (VECV) said the domestic sales of Eicher trucks and buses were at 7,929 units as against 6,054 units in March 2021 while sales of Volvo trucks and buses were 222 units last month as compared to 167 in March 2021.

Tata launches *Altroz DCA*

TATA Motors on March 21 launched Altroz Dual Clutch Automatic (DCA) at a starting price of Rs 8.1 lakh. It is an advanced dual clutch transmission that is designed especially for Indian consumers, said a press release by the automotive brand. .

The Altroz DCA is an innovative technology with 45 patents and is the world's first DCT with planetary gear system. The DCA version of the hatchback is equipped with several segment-first features, said the release. It will be mated with the 1.2L Revotron petrol engine and will be available in the top four variants.

Commenting on the launch, Mr. Rajan Amba, Vice-President, Sales, Marketing and Customer Care, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd., said, "We are elated to launch the much-awaited Altroz DCA, equipped with a world-class automatic transmission, designed for the Indian customers. Since the commencement of bookings for the Altroz DCA, we are witnessing an encouraging number of queries. The Altroz DCA with its segment-first features will certainly captivate the minds of prospective buyers and provide a seamless driving experience."



Mr. Rajan Amba,
Vice-President, Sales, Marketing and
Customer Care, Tata Motors Passenger
Vehicles Ltd.



Jeep introduces new *Meridian*

'Package of power, comfort and sophistication'



JEEP India has launched a three-row premium SUV Meridian, which it says is 'Made in India' and 'Made for India'.

The Jeep Meridian, according to a press release, is the most sophisticated and capable offering in the segment. It is engineered to deliver a sophisticated experience while also delivering exhilaration and enthusiasm. The vehicle comes loaded with innovative architecture, design, and technical specifications that are ideal for the Indian market and its automotive aficionados, added the release.

It further said that the terrain proven unibody architecture for Meridian was developed with global and local experts for India, with a focus on reflecting the Jeep brand's DNA while also addressing the expectations of the customers in the segment to combine sophistication with capability.

The first-ever three-row Jeep in India accommodates up to seven passengers — theatre-style 'stadium' seating with a panoramic sunroof. The Jeep Meridian offers best-in-class off-road capabilities with precise and responsive on-road dynamics through a 2.0L

Turbo Diesel 9 speed automatic/6 speed manual powertrain. It will be available in 4X4 all-wheel drive as well as a 4X2 variant.

Deliveries of the all-new Jeep Meridian will start by June this year.

Mr Roland Bouchara, CEO & Managing Director, Stellantis India, said, "The Indian market has unique demands. With the Meridian, our engineering and design teams have delivered a striking product; with three rows while retaining the authentic Jeep DNA of adventure and capability. We are delighted with the outcome and firmly believe that the Jeep Meridian will set new benchmarks for the segment."

Mr Ralph Gilles, Chief Design Officer and Member of the Executive Board, Stellantis NV, said, "The Meridian with its distinctive demeanour, features a fresh yet iconic design, with thoroughly crafted details inside and out. A brand new member of the Jeep lineage that is emboldened by its confident stance and timeless road presence, the Jeep Meridian heralds an era of functional elegance."

TKM launches 'Cool New Toyota Glanza'

'Stylish, tech-laden, safe and comfortable'



TOYOTA Kirloskar Motor (TKM) on March 15 launched all-new Glanza, at a starting price of Rs 6.39 lakh (ex-showroom).

Dubbed as the Cool New Toyota Glanza, the premium hatchback is cross-badged version of the new Maruti Suzuki Baleno, which was launched last month. Glanza was the first vehicle shared between the two Japanese car majors under the Toyota-Suzuki business partnership

The car was launched at a virtual event, in the presence of Mr. Tadashi Asazuma, TKM Executive Vice-President of Sales & Customer Service, and Mr. Atul Sood, Associate Vice-President, Sales and Strategic Marketing at TKM.

Commenting on the launch, Mr. Asazuma said, "Over these last few years the Glanza has won many hearts in India. And yet again with the Cool New Glanza, we are delighted to be recognised as a trusted brand by our customers who have started booking this new car in good numbers. Exclusively designed by Toyota's designers, the Cool New Glanza features Toyota's signature styling and sportiness. We believe it is the perfect choice for those customers who are seeking a stylish, technology-laden, safe and comfortable car."

A cool integration of advanced technology and Toyota signature front fascia, the Cool New Glanza

boasts of an advanced connected feature, Toyota i-Connect– one app with one-stop solution of connected features, services and value-added services developed to appeal to the modern and tech-savvy customers, said a press release by the company..

Ensuring convenience to the contemporary customers, technologies such as the Head-up display, 360-degree camera and 9-inch smart play cast, will not only allow control via a smartphone (Apple and Android) but will also ensure that the user is always in control and connected on the go, said the release.

Under the hood, the Cool New Glanza features a powerful yet fuel-efficient 'K-Series Engine' and comes with a Manual Transmission (MT) as well as an Automatic Transmission (AMT). The engine capacity is 1197cc with power output of 66 KW (89 PS). The product will be introduced with two new affordable grades to the existing line-up – E (New), S (New), G, V.

The vehicle comes with an impressive set of advanced safety features that include six airbags, ABS with EB, VSC, ISOfix, a TECT body and Hill Hold Control.

It will be available in five exterior colours - Sporting Red (New), Gaming Grey (New), Enticing Silver (New), Insta Blue and Café White. The Interior is spruced up with a unique classy dual tone adding to the cool quotient.

Volkswagen launches Legend edition to mark 12 years of *Polo*



VOLKSWAGEN has launched Polo Legend edition to mark the completion of 12 years for this model in India.

With the start of production in 2009 and market launch in 2010, Polo was the first locally manufactured model at Volkswagen's Chakan plant in Pune.

Polo was also one of the first made-in-India hatchbacks in the segment that offered dual airbags as a standard offering and received a 4-star Global NCAP safety rating in 2014.

The Volkswagen Polo Legend edition is a celebratory edition to mark the journey of Polo in India. The Legend edition will be available on the GT TSI variant that is equipped with a 1.0-litre TSI engine mated to a six-speed automatic torque converter. Delivering a powerful performance of 110PS and 175 Nm torque and perfectly balancing the fuel consumption with TSI technology, Polo offers an exceptional driving experience.

To mark the legacy, the edition will come with the 'Legend' title on the fender and boot badge. It will also comprise side body graphics, black trunk garnish and black roof foil to accentuate the look of the carline.

Mr Ashish Gupta, Brand Director, Volkswagen Passenger Cars India, said "The Volkswagen Polo is an iconic carline that has evoked various emotions amongst consumers. From its market introduction till date, the Volkswagen Polo has enjoyed the privilege of being the first car to a family, an enthusiast's dream and the preferred choice for a mother owing to its timeless and sporty design, safety, fun-to-drive experience and strong build quality. The Volkswagen Polo has been the brands' much-loved product that deserves a grand celebration. For this, the brand is introducing the celebratory limited 'Legend edition' for the enthusiasts who will take pride in owning the last limited units of the iconic Polo."



Mr Ashish Gupta,
Brand Director, Volkswagen
Passenger Cars India,

Nissan rolls out 50,000th *Magnite*

NISSAN India on March 22 rolled out its 50,000th Magnite from the Renault Nissan Automotive India plant in Chennai.

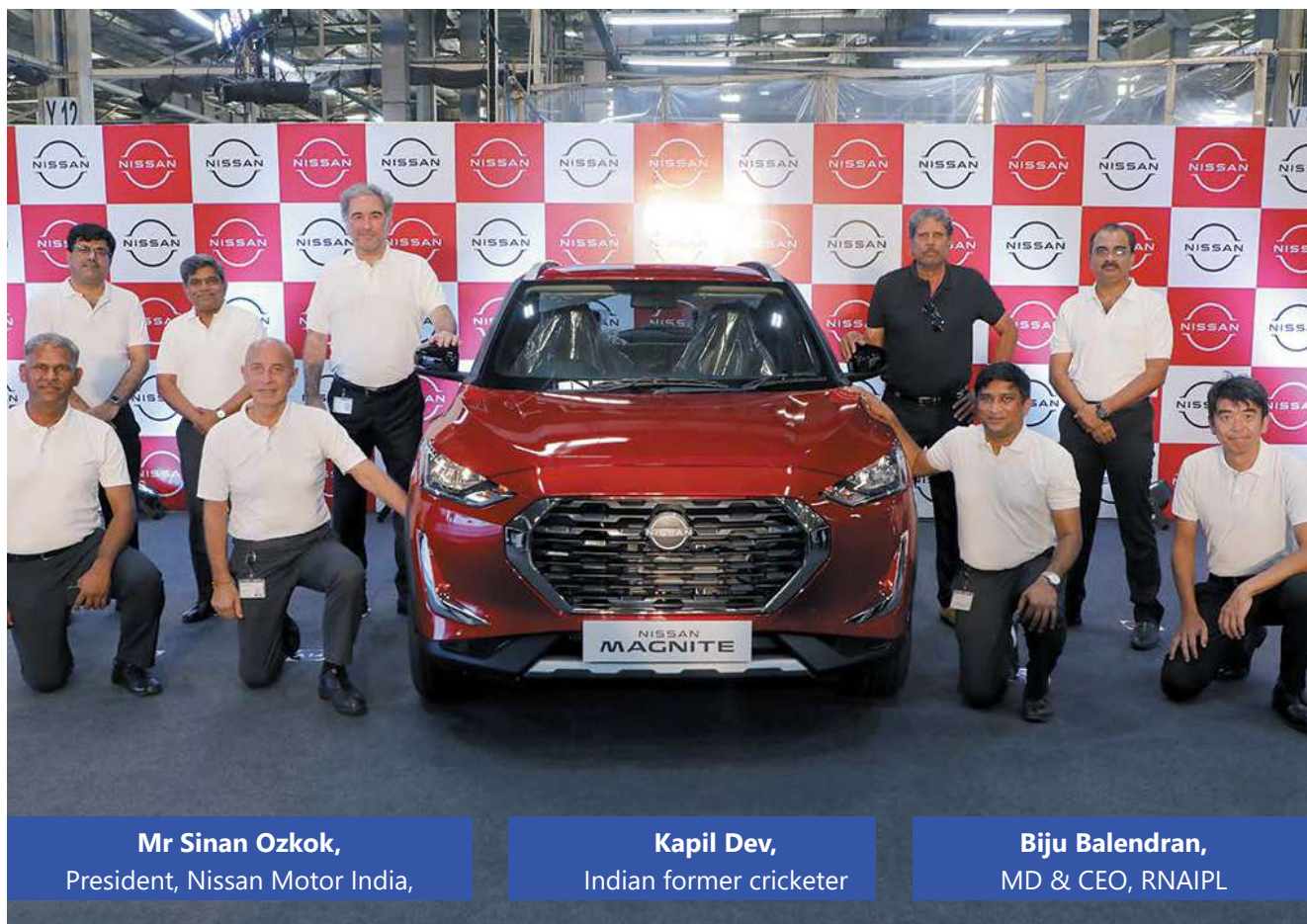
Magnite was the first global product launched under the Nissan NEXT transformation plan, said a press release. The SUV scored a 4-star safety rating in the adult occupant protection category by Global NCAP in February this year. It has also won many appreciation awards, added the release.

Mr Sinan Ozkok, President, Nissan Motor India, commented: "The 'Make in India, Make for the World' SUV has been a core model under Nissan's global transformation strategy. The Big, Bold, Beautiful SUV is playing a key role in strengthening Nissan's presence in India and overseas."



Mr Rakesh Srivastava,
Managing Director,
Nissan Motor India

Mr Rakesh Srivastava, Managing Director, Nissan Motor India, added: "Love for Nissan Magnite is phenomenal with it being the most awarded Nissan vehicle in the Indian market with strong customer demand."



Mr Sinan Ozkok,
President, Nissan Motor India,

Kapil Dev,
Indian former cricketer

Biju Balendran,
MD & CEO, RNAIPL

A Green Million milestone

Maruti Suzuki sells 1 million S-CNG vehicles



MARUTI Suzuki India Limited announced on March 15 that its S-CNG vehicles have clocked sales of 1 million units cumulatively.

The company offers the largest portfolio of nine S-CNG vehicles in the personal and commercial segment. These include Alto, S-Presso, WagonR, Celerio, Dzire, Ertiga, Eeco, Super Carry and Tour-S.

Mr. Kenichi Ayukawa, Managing Director & CEO, Maruti Suzuki India Limited, said, "We are humbled by the appreciation and positive response received by our S-CNG offerings. As a Company, our aim is to offer safe, reliable, clean, technologically advanced and environment-friendly vehicles to our customers. Our S-CNG range is specifically designed, developed and manufactured at our facilities to suit the Indian driving conditions."

The S-CNG vehicles are conceptualised, designed, developed and rigorously tested at Maruti Suzuki's R&D facility before they are made available to the customers, said a press release. These vehicles are integrated from the first stage itself to deliver unmatched safety, performance, durability and high fuel efficiency, it added.



Mr. Kenichi Ayukawa,
Managing Director & CEO,
Maruti Suzuki India Limited

Kia launches multiple sales and aftersales initiatives



KIA India has announced multiple sales and aftersales initiatives, exclusive to Kia Carens customers.

The company has introduced a 'My Convenience Plus' programme, offering comprehensive coverage and peace of mind to customers. Adding to this, it has launched attractive value-added products, exclusive to Carens' customers, giving various convenience benefits.

'My Convenience Plus' is an exclusive aftersales initiative that offers a bundled package covering periodic maintenance, extended warranty, road side assistance including tyre alloy protection. The customers are provided with options and can choose from Premium and Luxury package, which gives the coverage for four and five years respectively. The initiative gives additional benefit to customers offering

inflation protection in service cost, pan-India validity, personalisation, transparency and flexibility.

Among its value-propositions are Care Shield, which offers an almost no-question-asked accidental repair option and Care Shield+, which is reimbursement of expenses up to Rs 1 lakh, incurred while defending legal claim as result of an accident covering a maximum of two events.

Additionally, the company has introduced attractive finance schemes including 10 per cent cashback on online booking, on-road financing starting as low as 7.10 pc, and 100 pc processing charge waiver.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Brar, Vice-President and Head of Sales & Marketing, Kia India, said, "With unique sales and aftersales initiatives like My Convenience Plus and multiple new value propositions, we want to take the Kia brand experience closer to our customers."

New emission norms for tractors won't cause much hurt, says ICRA

TRANSITION to new emission norms is unlikely to be a major disruptor as it would apply only to >50 HP tractors impacting about 10 per cent of the overall industry volumes, said rating agency ICRA

As per its estimates, the cost increase because of new emission norms will be in the range of 6-8 per cent, which the OEMs will only gradually pass on to the customers

OEMs, said ICRA, are realigning their product portfolio, with tractors offering higher torque at lower HP being added to the portfolio; the same could lead to some shift in the HP wise mix

At present, TREM III A emission norms are applicable for tractors across HP categories in India and were implemented in April 2010/2011. The revised emission norms are set to become applicable for >50 HP tractors from April 2022 even as a big proportion of the overall industry (<50 HP) would continue to be governed by TREM IIIA norms.

The revised emission norms for tractors were earlier slated to be implemented from October 2020; the transition was, however, initially deferred by one year and subsequently by another six months, with the Government being cognizant of the disruption brought about by the pandemic.

Commenting on the impact of the revised norms on the tractor industry and as per a recent report published by ICRA on tractors, Mr. Rohan Kanwar Gupta, Vice-President & Sector Head, Corporate Ratings, ICRA, said, "India remains medium to high HP market, with about 80 pc of the sales coming from the 30-50 HP categories. The revised emission norms would apply only to >50 HP tractors, impacting only about 10 pc of the overall industry volumes."

He further said technological know-how is readily available with the OEMs as the export models are already meeting the evolved emission norms. "In our estimates,

the cost increase because of new emission norms will be in the range of 6-8 pc, which the OEMs will only gradually pass on to the customers. In addition, OEMs are in the process of realigning their product portfolio, with tractors offering higher torque at lower HP being added to the portfolio; the same could lead to a shift in HP wise mix with the 41-50 HP segment gaining at the expense of the >50 HP segment," he added

The emission standards for tractors and construction equipment are regulated separately from the broader automobile industry in India. While significant progress has been made for the regulation of on-road vehicles over the years, especially with the expected implementation of BS-VI norms (from April 2020), the emission control regulations for non-road vehicles have been less stringent and are behind the norms implemented in developed countries.

Even as emission norms were revised for construction equipment from October 2021, the same are slated to become applicable for tractors from April 2022.



Carmakers announce price hike

IN view of the increase in the prices of commodities like steel and aluminium and higher costs of other raw material, several automobile manufacturers have announced price hike of their various products.

An increase in the range of 2-2.5 per cent in Tata Motors commercial vehicle range came into effect from April 1. In a statement, Tata Motors said while the company has initiated actions to absorb a significant portion of the increased costs, at various levels of manufacturing, the steep rise in overall input costs makes it imperative to pass on some residual proportion via a minimised price hike.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) announced that the company will realign the prices of its models, by up to 4 per cent, effective from April 1. This hike, it said, has resulted due to the rising input cost, including that of raw material.



BMW India announced a price hike of up to 3.5 per cent across its model range effective April 1. The price increase will be brought into effect to adjust the material and logistics costs, impact of current geo-political situation and exchange rates, the carmaker said.

Maruti introduces CCP

MARUTI Suzuki India Limited on March 16 rolled out a new 'Customer Convenience Package (CCP)' for its customers.

The package will cover customer vehicles for unforeseen failures in engine due to hydrostatic lock and fuel adulteration.

Mr. Partho Banerjee, Senior Executive Director, Service, Maruti Suzuki India Limited, said, "CCP is specifically designed to give assurance to customers in case of unwarranted and unforeseen failures faced by the vehicle engine due to hydrostatic lock or fuel adulteration."



Japanese OEMs team up to form a swappable battery platform

MAJOR Japanese OEMs Honda, Kawasaki Motors, Suzuki, Yamaha Motor and energy firm Eneos Holdings will form a new company, called 'Gachaco', for battery swapping service for the new electric motorcycles.

Under the partnership, Eneos aims to work on 'BaaS' (Battery as a Service) platform for electric mobility and other battery recycling systems.

Gachaco is scheduled to launch the sharing service using Honda Mobile Power Pack e: which meets the common standards for electric motorcycle, in the second half of 2022, starting from Tokyo and other major cities in Japan.

Going forward, besides electric motorcycles, Gachaco will also promote the use of standardised swappable batteries for other applications, such as storage batteries installed at commercial facilities and private homes.

In addition, expended batteries that are generated by the sharing service provided by Gachaco will be collected via the battery-as-a-service (BaaS) platform under review at Eneos for secondary and tertiary use and finally recycling for cyclical battery usage.



Hyundai honours Infineon as 'Partner of the Year 2021'



HYUNDAI Motor Group (HMG) has honoured Munich-based Infineon Technologies AG, a world leader in semiconductor solutions, as 'Partner of the Year 2021' with the 'Special Award for Supply Competence.'

The South Korean automaker recognised Infineon's efforts to stabilise uncertain supply chains despite the challenges posed by COVID-19 and the global semiconductor shortage.

In particular, Infineon was honored for its excellent risk management working with HMG. Infineon Korea and Infineon Headquarters have provided flexible and strategic cooperation to manage the difficult situation in the market.



Mr Peter Schiefer,
President of the Automotive
Division at Infineon.

"Infineon is a reliable partner. We are honoured that our efforts to maintain our delivery capabilities in a very challenging environment are valued and appreciated by our customers," said Mr Peter Schiefer, President of the Automotive Division at Infineon.

HMG has been awarding the 'Partner of the Year' award since 2002. In early 2019, Infineon was the first semiconductor manufacturer to receive this award.

Steelbird partners with Cybellum of Israel

STEELBIRD International will facilitate Cybellum Technologies of Israel in introducing its advanced solution to OEMs and component manufacturers in India.

Cybellum is the leading provider of a product security platform that enables manufacturers and suppliers to continuously detect, manage, and remediate cyber threats and vulnerabilities.

The in-depth insight of the Indian market coupled with decades of category leadership made it pertinent for Steelbird to envision the importance of cybersecurity and make the best available for Indian OEMs, aftermarket and testing institutes, said a press release. Steelbird has become one of the first companies to provide cybersecurity solutions in the Indian marketplace, added the release.

By making the Cybellum platform available, Steelbird will enable automobile manufacturers to develop and design systems with end-to-end compliance to global cybersecurity standards.

"This is a breakthrough initiative for Steelbird International. As we move in an increasingly interconnected world, the threat of cyberattacks and the need to adopt effective solutions has also skyrocketed," said Mr Manav Kapur, Executive Director, Steelbird International.

Currently, he said, a very small percentage of vehicles, both ICEs and EVs, are protected by cybersecurity solutions while the others with

their vulnerabilities, are open to attacks via a connected network. "By using Cybellum's trusted platform, manufacturers will be able to drive the technological edge in this compelling domain," added Mr Kapur.

"As the automotive industry becomes increasingly interconnected, the attack surface for auto components continues to grow," said Mr Eddie Lazebnik, Global Partnership Director at Cybellum. "We're thrilled to cooperate with Steelbird International, an industry leader in the Indian market, and help manufacturers detect, prioritise, and mitigate vulnerabilities from the earliest stages of design and development, all the way to post production," he added.



Mr Manav Kapur
Executive Director,
Steelbird International.



BMW Group Plant Chennai celebrates crystal anniversary

BMW Group Plant Chennai completed 15 years of operations in the country on March 29. The event was celebrated at an event with all associates.

Mr. Thomas Dose, Managing Director, BMW Group Plant Chennai said, "BMW Group Plant Chennai has emerged as a centre of manufacturing excellence in the last 15 years. It is a world-class facility that locally produces 'Made in India' BMWs and MINIs with the toughest quality standards."

Mr. Vikram Pawah, President, BMW Group India said, "Big congratulations to the team at BMW Group Plant Chennai on this joyous event. The plant plays the most instrumental role in fulfilling demand for the latest, most aspirational BMW and MINI products."



Mr. Vikram Pawah,
President,
BMW Group India

On the same day in 2007, BMW Group Plant Chennai built its first car – a BMW 3 Series. Since then, it has grown in multi-fold ways, expanding the facility, increasing operations, growing manpower and increasing localisation. Recently, the plant rolled out the 100,000th locally produced car from its assembly lines.



PEOPLE



Hisashi Takeuchi is MD & CEO of Maruti Suzuki India Limited

THE Board of Directors of Maruti Suzuki India Limited, at its meeting on March 24, appointed Mr. Hisashi Takeuchi as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer with effect from April 1, consequent to the completion of the term of Mr. Kenichi Ayukawa on March 31, 2022.

In order to facilitate smooth transition, Mr. Kenichi Ayukawa will continue as a Whole-time Director designated as Executive Vice-Chairman till September 30, and will continue to provide guidance to the company, said a press release by the country's top carmaker. These appointments are subject to shareholder approval, added the release.

Speaking on the transition, Mr. Ayukawa said, "India is one of the most interesting and promising automobile markets in the world and it has been both a challenging and a fulfilling stint for me. Mr Takeuchi has an excellent understanding of the Indian as well as international markets and is placed well to lead Maruti Suzuki into the future. I wish him a successful journey ahead."

Mr. Takeuchi shared: "I thank the Board of Directors for placing this trust in me. Maruti Suzuki is a great organisation with a rich legacy and it will be my endeavor that we keep serving more and more customers both in India and the world with exciting cars that are good for them, environment and society. We will also try to build our business in a manner that strengthens Atmanirbhar Bharat and the economic growth of India."

Mr. Takeuchi joined Suzuki Motor Corporation (SMC) in 1986. With vast experience in the international operations at SMC as well as in overseas markets, he has been on the Board of Maruti Suzuki since July 2019 and as Joint Managing Director (Commercial) since April 2021.

Mr. Ayukawa has been the Managing Director of Maruti Suzuki India Limited since April 2013.



Hisashi Takeuchi

Bajaj Auto names Thapar as CFO

BAJAJ Auto Limited has announced the appointment of Mr. Dinesh Thapar as the Chief Financial Officer.

Mr Thapar joined Bajaj Auto from Reliance Retail, where he was the Group Chief Financial Officer for the last three years. Prior to that, he spent two decades with Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL), where he held a range of leadership roles. Across both the companies that he has worked for, he has been a part of the senior leadership team and on the Board of various group companies, said a press release issued by Bajaj Auto.

MrThapar is a Fellow Chartered Accountant, a gold medalist Cost and Management Accountant, and has a diploma from ACCA.



Mr. Dinesh Thapar

Torres becomes the President of Nissan's India operations

SENIOR Nissan executive Mr Frank Torres has been appointed Region Divisional Vice-President for Business Transformation in the AMIEO region (Africa, Middle East, India, Europe and Oceania) and the new President of Nissan India.

Mr Torres will be responsible for leading the brand across its operations in the country as Nissan continues to build on the success of the locally-produced Magnite, said a press release.

Effective April 1, he became President of India operations while keeping his current responsibilities overseeing Nissan's European Regional Business Unit East (Russia) and Nissan's Spanish Industrial Operations, reporting to Mr Guillaume Cartier, Nissan AMIEO Chairperson.

Mr Torres joined Nissan in Spain in 2007. He replaces Mr Sinan Özkök.



Mr Frank Torres



Mr Krishnan Sekar

Krishnan Sekar joins ElectricPe as COO

EV charging platform ElectricPe on March 22 announced the appointment of Mr Krishnan Sekar as the COO.

A proven leader, Mr Sekar has over 15 years of professional experience. He has been a part of the growing Indian startup industry and has scaled Indian and international marketplaces at Ola and BlackBuck, said a press release.

"We are thrilled to have Krishnan as part of the ElectricPe family. His proven track record of heading large, cross-functional operational teams across B2C and B2B companies in the mobility, e-commerce and logistics industries will play a critical role in strengthening the strategic partnerships that align with our growing platform," said Mr Avinash Sharma, Co-Founder & CEO, ElectricPe.

Mr Sekar said, "I am really excited to be a part of the team and look forward to building India's largest and most trusted e-mobility network."

Georgina Owens joins Ola UK Board

LEADING mobility company Ola on March 28 announced that Ms. Georgina Owens will join the Ola UK Board as an Independent non-executive Director.

Ms. Owens brings decades of senior technology and IT leadership experience from high-growth and major established businesses across multiple sectors. She will bring her significant expertise and provide corporate governance and strategic guidance as Ola continues to build world class technology and invest significantly into R&D, said a press release.

She is currently the Chief Technology Officer at Liberis Capital, a UK fintech company focused on business finance for SMEs.

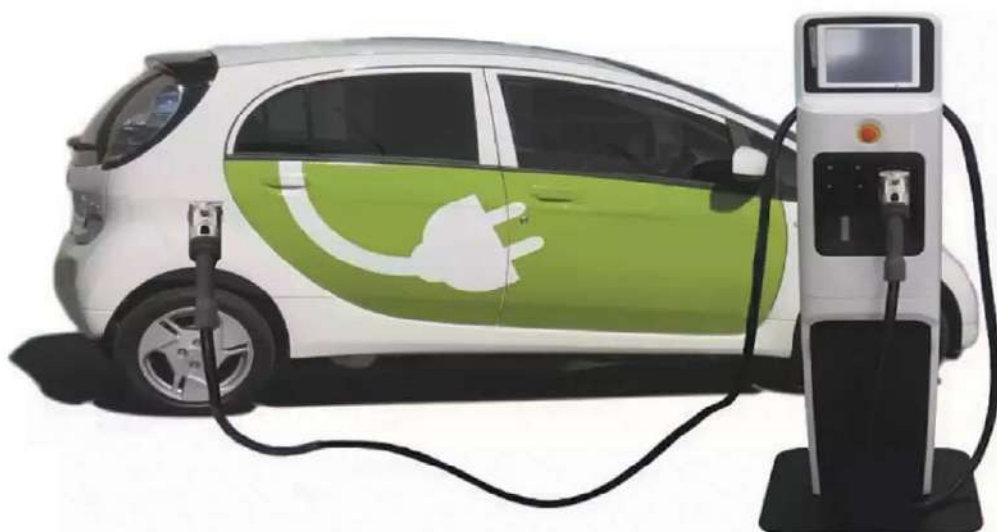
Sir Mike Rake, Chairman of the Ola UK Board, said, "Georgina joins us at a high growth phase and I believe her deep experience working with fast moving companies combined with insights on technology will be instrumental as we scale our businesses and double down our focus on building future technologies for the world."



Georgina Owens

40 pc of 2W customers willing to buy an EV this year: Survey

No change in percentage of 4W EV consumers



MOBILITY Outlook, a holistic media platform covering the mobility ecosystem, has released Indian Automotive Consumer Canvass (IACC), an in-depth survey of potential four-wheeler and two-wheeler customers.

Powered by Axis Bank and validated by Frost & Sullivan, IACC received 2,56,351 responses over the course of the survey, said a press release. It was released through a virtual panel discussion led by Mr Shashank Srivastava, Senior Executive Director - Marketing & Sales, Maruti Suzuki India.

The survey targeted people above the age of 18 years in order to provide a comprehensive picture of the consumer's behaviour.

According to the release, the study found that 40 per cent of two-wheeler customers were willing to buy an EV this year compared to 37 pc a year earlier. There has been no change in the percentage of consumers looking to buy a four-wheeler electric vehicle. One-third of the respondents said they are willing to buy an electric four-wheeler this year.

The report shows that better products are leading

to more choice for customers. Affordability was voted close to 30 pc. Customers are realising that EVs can compete with conventional vehicles while remaining affordable to own and maintain. Customers are most concerned about the lack of charging infrastructure, said the survey.

The survey further said that 74 per cent of customers are interested in purchasing new vehicles. An estimated 20 pc of respondents expressed interest in purchasing used cars as their next vehicle.

According to this year's report, 49 pc of respondents showed a willingness to buy vehicles digitally. The reasons for the popularity of online mediums were better deals and convenience. On the other side, the inability to touch and feel the vehicle was cited as the top reason for not opting for an online purchase.

Eighty per cent of respondents postponed their decision to purchase a four-wheeler vehicle and 82 pc postponed their decision to purchase a two-wheeler vehicle due to COVID-19 aftereffects.

A majority of respondents still opted for traditional preferences, when it comes to financing options.

Tata Motors launches *Tigor* EV in Nepal

TATA Motors, in partnership with Sipradi Trading, is set to excite the electric vehicle market in Nepal with the launch of Tigor EV. The deliveries of the vehicle commenced across the country on March 31.

Set to scale new heights in the dynamic world of electric mobility, Tigor EV features Tata Motors' proprietary high voltage EV architecture, Ziptron, and is built on the three strong pillars of Technology, Comfort, and Safety, said a press release. The vehicles are now on display at showrooms and have been made available for test drives across the dealer network by Sipradi Trading.

Speaking on the launch of the Tigor EV in Nepal, Mr. Mayank Baldi – Head PVIB, Tata Motors, said, "The Nepal market has been a strong propagator of EVs, which has indeed inspired us to widen our offerings here. We are ecstatic to launch the Tigor EV today, powered by the capable Ziptron technology."



Mr. Rajan Babu Shrestha,
CEO, Sipradi Trading
Pvt. Ltd.

Mr. Rajan Babu Shrestha, CEO, Sipradi Trading Pvt. Ltd., said, "With the introduction of the new Tigor EV sedan, after the overwhelming response to the Nexon EV, marks another milestone in our partnership with Tata Motors."



EKA launches first electric bus E9

EKA, an electric vehicle manufacturing and technology company and a subsidiary of Pinnacle Industries, on April 2 launched its nine-metre pure electric and zero-emission bus, E9.

The battery-electric bus features a new streamlined vehicle design, maximised power and range due to its monocoque stainless steel chassis and complete composite structure, said a press release. With a total cost of ownership (TCO) lower than existing internal combustion engine powered buses, E9 promises to deliver sustainability and profitability to all stakeholders, added the release.

The bus was unveiled by Mr Aaditya Thackeray, Minister of Tourism, Environment & Protocol, Government of Maharashtra, and Dr. Sudhir Mehta, Chairman, EKA & Pinnacle Industries Limited, at The Pune Alternate Fuel Conclave (AFC), an initiative of the Government of Maharashtra.

The AFC was organised by the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) and the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB), in association with the Maratha Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture (MCCIA).

EKA E9 comes with both front and rear air suspension with ECAS. With 2,500 mm width, 31+D +Wheelchair (equipped with wheelchair ramp), the bus offers ample space for passenger (seating + standing) movement. The low entry / exit steps are ergonomically designed with kneeling features with lowest 650 mm floor height, making them extremely comfortable and accessible for the elderly, children, women and specially-abled passengers.

The enhanced ergonomics in driver's cockpit, auto-drive feature, power-assisted with tilting and telescopic steering and all in one central console provide riders and drivers with a smoother riding experience.

Speaking at the launch, Dr Mehta said, "We are excited to launch our first electric bus EKA E9 to empower cities to achieve their zero-emissions targets. Our buses are designed and optimised to provide the best ride experience, cleaner environment, and best returns to the customers."



Freudenberg supports first zero-emission bus in India



FREUDENBERG India's client Sentient Labs recently introduced the first zero-emission bus designed and built in India.

According to a press release, the company relies on micronAir filters to keep the fuel cells running despite tough weather conditions and exposure to pollutants such as ammonia. Thanks to the hydrogen technology, the model bus can run for up to 600 kilometers before needing to refuel, it said.

"Sentient Labs reached out to us during the early stages of their project," explains Mr. Ashok Pandey, Director Automotive, Pharma, Consumer Filter, at Freudenberg in India. "Working closely together, we were able to supply them with the perfect match: a filter that protects the cells, especially from ammonia, but other pollutants such as small dust particles and hazardous gases as well."

After presenting the first model to the public in December 2021, Sentient Labs is currently looking for clients to bring the bus to roads all over India on a large scale. It additionally plans to utilise the technology for marine applications, said the release.



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| End to End Telematics & Connected Car Solutions | Horns | Seating Systems

Ola Electric invests in Israeli battery-tech firm StoreDot

OLA Electric has invested in an Israeli battery technology company StoreDot, a pioneer in batteries with extreme fast charging (XFC) technology.

The investment in StoreDot is the first of several global strategic investments planned by Ola Electric as it looks to ramp up its core R&D in advanced cell chemistry and manufacturing as well as other battery technologies and new energy systems.

As part of the investment in StoreDot, Ola Electric will have access to the company's state of the art XFC battery technology that charges a battery from 0 to 100 per cent in just five minutes. Ola will also have exclusive rights to manufacture batteries integrating StoreDot's fast charge technology in India.

The company plans to set up a gigafactory for manufacturing cells in the country to meet the demand generated by Ola Futurefactory, the world's largest 2W factory, and has already submitted a bid under the Government's PLI scheme for advanced chemistry cell battery storage.



Mr Bhavish Aggarwal,
Founder and CEO, Ola

Mr Bhavish Aggarwal, Founder and CEO, Ola, said: "We are increasing our investments in core cell and battery technologies and ramping up our in-house capabilities and global talent hiring, as well as partnering with global companies doing cutting-edge work in this field. Our partnership with StoreDot, a pioneer of extreme fast charging battery technologies, is of strategic importance and a first of many".

Dr Doron Myersdorf, StoreDot CEO, said, "We are extremely excited to be entering into this strategic partnership with Ola. Both companies are committed to delivering a zero-emissions world, breathing clean air in our cities and ensuring that EV drivers never have to worry about charging times and range anxiety."



iVOOMi launches **S1** and **Jeet** e-scooters



iVOOMi Energy on March 22 launched two electric scooters, S1 and Jeet. Powered with smart technology and packed with consumer-centric features, the scooters aim to provide comfort, ease-of-use and quick charging.

The high-speed S1, said a press release, is priced at Rs. 84,999 and is powered by a 2KW electric motor that offers a speed of 65 kmph. With a kerb weight of 75 kg, it features a disc brake. For ease of charging, the company has included a 60V, 2.0 Kwh swappable Li-ion battery that can be fully charged in three-four hours and go up to 115 km on full charge.

iVOOMi Jeet is available in two variants, Jeet Pro priced at Rs 92,999 and Jeet at Rs 82,999. Both the scooters are extremely practical and trendy, with a premium design and an ultra-powerful build, making them the right electric two-wheelers to be on Indian roads, said the release. They support swappable batteries as well. While Jeet features a 1.5kW kW battery pack, Jeet Pro has 2.0 kW battery. The scooters offer a range of up to 130 km on a single charge.

Mr. Sunil Bansal, Founder & MD, iVOOMi Energy, said, "After two years of extensive research and development, our team has developed, designed, and indigenised products that are proven in and on the Indian roads and eco-system. We understand the Indian consumers and their driving conditions which are grounds for our suspensions, high ground clearance along with an enlarged legroom."

SPREADING WINGS



ACKO Drive in Hyderabad

ACKO Drive, an online platform, has launched its services in Hyderabad. It will enable customers to find the best deals on cars with convenient delivery and financing options from the comfort of their homes, said a press release.

With a presence in Bengaluru, Mumbai, NCR and Pune, Hyderabad is the fifth city to get ACKO Drive.

Commenting on the launch, Mr Nitin Chadha, Vice-President, ACKO Drive, said, "People across India are embracing the manifold benefits of digitalisation, and expect a smooth hassle-free online experience when buying small and big-ticket items. At ACKO Drive, we recognise this need, and we endeavour to revolutionise car purchases by focusing on quality customer experiences. Being one of the fastest-growing car markets in India with a large customer base online, Hyderabad was a natural choice for us to expand our operations."



BharatBenz opens new dealership in Jabalpur

DAIMLER India Commercial Vehicles (DICV), in association with PPS Trucking, has inaugurated a new BharatBenz dealership in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh.

Spread over 50,000 sqft, the dealership features an avant-garde 3S facility (sales, service, spares), and is equipped with six mechanical bays and two accident bays with a capacity to serve approximately 2300 vehicles per annum.

The opening of the new touch-point reflects the increasing demand for BharatBenz products in Jabalpur, said a press release.

It further said that in the near future, PPS Trucking plans to open five new touch-points in the Jabalpur territory namely Satna, Chhatarpur, Chhindwara, Singrauli and Sagar.

Mr. Rajaram Krishnamurthy, Vice-President, Marketing, Sales and Customer Service at Daimler India Commercial Vehicles, said, "Fuelled by the Government's aggressive investments across industries and infrastructure projects in Madhya Pradesh, the construction sector is experiencing rapid growth. This acts as a major catalyst for rising demand for commercial vehicles, especially in the tipper segment where we already enjoy a strong customer base."

Mr. Rajiv Sanghvi, Dealer Principal of PPS Trucking, said: "Adding to our strong network in Odisha and now in Madhya Pradesh, the new BharatBenz dealership will provide comprehensive commercial vehicle solutions to vehicles plying in Jabalpur."



Euler to expand footprint

EULER Motors plans to expand its footprint in 12 new markets in the next fiscal including key delivery hubs like Bengaluru, Chennai, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Hyderabad and Kolkata among others.

These deployments will span across in the next 18 months with the company's aim to capture around 20 per cent market share by 2025.

Founded in 2018, Euler Motors is an electric vehicle company operating in the commercial segment.



MG expands in Mumbai; opens workshop at Malad

MG Motor India in March 15 announced the opening of a new service facility in Malad, Mumbai.

Dubbed as the largest MG workshop in Western India, the facility has been inaugurated to cater to the evolved mobility requirements of more customers across the city, said a press release.

With the inauguration, the carmaker operates 43 touch-points in Maharashtra and plans to expand to 45 by the year-end. It has a total of 310 touch-points across the country.

Mr Gaurav Gupta, Chief Commercial Officer, MG Motor India, said, "The inauguration of MG Malad workshop is aligned with our plans to enhance service experience for our customers in Mumbai. The facility will provide all the requirements including service, spare parts and accessories".

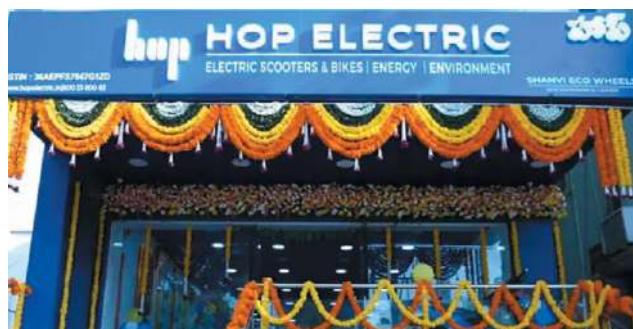
Mr. Gautam Modi, Dealer Principal, MG Malad, said, "We will leverage MG's strong British heritage and tech focus to deliver a fresh and unique automotive service experience to customers in Mumbai."

HOP opens 24 showrooms in a day

HOP Electric Mobility has inaugurated 24 new brand experience centres. With this development, HOP has set a new benchmark as an Indian electric vehicle manufacturer launching the most number of stores in a single day, said a press release.

Mr Vivek Tomar, Chief Business Officer, HOP Electric Mobility, said, "At HOP, we aim to provide an impetus to the entire e-mobility ecosystem that includes electric vehicles, Li-ion battery, charging infrastructure development and efficient aftersales service support." He said "we are pleased to announce the inauguration of 24 showrooms in 24 different cities, primarily in Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana."

Mr Avinash Chaudhary, Head, Business Development, HOP Electric Mobility, said, "The exponential rise in demand for electric vehicles not just calls for OEMs ramping up the manufacturing process, but also warrants the need to build on the number of touch-points that act as an interface between customers and our products. It is with this thought at the forefront of our efforts that we have launched 24 new experience centres."



Tata Motors opens new dealership in Chennai

TATA Motors, in partnership with PPS Motors, has inaugurated a new state-of-the-art dealership at Pallikarnai in Chennai.

The showroom has been designed and built as per the company's dealership standards and is strategically located to provide a convenient access to visitors and customers, said a press release by the automotive brand. Its employees have been trained under the supervision of Tata Motors experts, added the release.

Mr. Ramesh Dorairajan, Senior General Manager – Network Management & EV Sales, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd, said, "We are extremely happy to embark on this journey with PPS Motors as our authorised dealer in Chennai. This is the first Tata Motors showroom from PPS Motors in Chennai, which will help us penetrate deeper into the market with the support of their reach and market knowledge."

Mr. Rajiv Sanghvi, Managing Director, PPS Motors said "We are delighted to partner with Tata Motors and introduce a new dealership facility in Chennai with showrooms at Pallikarnai and ECR and state-of-the-art workshop at Chrompet and Guindy."



Mr. Ramesh Dorairajan,
Senior General Manager – Network Management & EV
Sales, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd.

Yamaha opens outlets in Coimbatore and Erode

INDIA Yamaha Motor (IYM) on March 24 announced the opening of its 'Blue Square' outlets in Coimbatore and Erode, in Tamil Nadu.

Launched under the banner of 'ORPI Agencies' in Coimbatore and 'Safety Motors' in Erode, both the showrooms are a 3S facility offering end-to-end sales, service and spares support.

The showroom in Coimbatore is spread across 1,710 sqft while the showroom in Erode covers 1600 sqft area.

Mr. Eishin Chihana, Chairman, Yamaha Motor India Group of Companies, said, "Yamaha is excited to announce the launch of two new Blue Square showrooms in Tamil Nadu, as a part of its 'Call of the Blue' brand strategy. The Yamaha 'Blue Square' outlets are established in sync with customer preferences along with a focus on providing compelling digital experiences."

Ather Energy opens third retail outlet in Bengaluru

AATHER Energy on March 30 inaugurated its retail outlet, Ather Space, at Rajajinagar in Bengaluru, in association with BIA Ventures. This is the brand's third retail outlet in the city.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Ravneet Phokela, Chief Business Officer, Ather Energy, "Karnataka is one of the largest markets for Ather Energy, with a high rate of EV adoption, and encouraging acceptance for premium electric two-wheelers. Apart from Bengaluru, we have our presence in Hubli, Mysuru, and Belgaum; and are looking at other markets like Mangalore and Udupi in Karnataka."

"We from BIA Ventures Pvt Ltd are delighted to partner with Ather Energy as an exclusive retailer to drive EV adoption in Namma Bengaluru," said Nivedita, Managing Director, BIA Ventures.



Ather Energy partners HDFC, IDFC First banks



A THER Energy has announced its partnership with HDFC and IDFC First banks to provide easy financing options to its consumers.

The partnerships will allow Ather customers to avail instant loans from HDFC and IDFC First banks at low interest rates and with a maximum LTV (Loan-to-Value), said a press release.

Mr Ravneet Phokela, Chief Business Officer, Ather Energy, said, "We are confident that our partnership with HDFC and IDFC First banks will ensure ease of purchase for customers and will boost the confidence of EV enthusiasts to join the electric revolution."

Mr. Rishi Mishra, Business Head, Vehicle loans, IDFC First Bank, said, " IDFC First bank's affordable loan offerings and end-to-end digitised customer journey will offer a distinct edge to Ather Energy's customer financing experience ."



Mr Ravneet Phokela,
Chief Business Officer, Ather
Energy

Tata bags 250-EV order from AMGM

TATA Motors will be delivering 250 EVs (175 Nexon EVs and 75 Tigor EVs) to individual customers as part of an order received from Aurangabad Mission Green Mobility (AMGM).

In the first phase of the order, 101 EVs were delivered, which included 70 Nexon EVs and 31 Tigor EVs. The remaining vehicle deliveries will be completed as a part of the second phase, in days to come, said a press release.



Mr. Shailesh Chandra,
MD, Tata Motors Passenger
Vehicles Ltd.

The handover ceremony was attended by Mr. Shailesh Chandra, MD, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd., and Tata Passenger Electric Mobility Ltd.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Chandra said, "It is heartening to see members of AMGM adopt a green and clean future, not only as individual contributors but also as a community. We are honoured to be associated with AMGM and proud to join their movement, serving a purpose for the greater good."



goEgo Network launches kerbside charging station



HOMEGROWN EV charging solutions provider goEgoNetwork has unveiled Hornbill, a kerbside charging station. It has a ground mounted base which eliminates the need of a pole or a wall for support.

Fit to be installed in high-end residential society premises and public places like parking bays and malls, Hornbill comes following the launch of three charging stations – Albatross, Eagle and Falcon.

Taking Hornbill a notch higher, goEgoNetwork has equipped the charging station with a 10-inch TFT LCD display and visual indication through LED notifying charging session status like ready, preparing, charging or fault detection, said a press release.

The charging station is equipped with a host of safety features to protect the EV against over-voltage, under-voltage, short circuit, current surge, overheating and residual current. It comes with two charging guns with five-metre-long cables on each side that can deliver a maximum power output of 7.4 kW even when two cars are connected at the same time.



Mr Sayantan Chakraborti,
Co-founder, goEgoNetwork

Mr Sayantan Chakraborti, Co-founder, goEgoNetwork, said, "goEgo is launching multiple products in the next few months to cater to every customer in the home and public EV charging space. From smart home EV charging stations to both slow and fast public charging stations designed for Indian conditions, our new range of products offers a safe and convenient EV charging experience for everyone."

NoBroker, ElectricPe tie up for EV charging points in societies

PROP-TECH company NoBroker has partnered with ElectricPe, an EV charging platform, to set up 1,00,000 electric charging points at residential communities this year.

The alliance will see charging stations set up across NoBroker residential welfare societies (societies that have on-boarded NoBrokerHood society app), including apartments, gated communities, and standalone buildings.

Residents will be able to see available EV charging options within the ElectricPe app, book slots to charge their EVs, and pay as per usage. They will also have the opportunity to request a charging station to be set up in their private parking lots after their RWA's approval.

"We are excited to partner with ElectricPe to provide our customers easy access to charging points. Through this partnership, ElectricPe charging points will be provided to residents and visitors, giving a boost to clean, affordable, and smart electric mobility. All this at the click of a button!," said Mr. Saurabh Garg, Co-Founder & CBO, NoBroker.



Mr. Avinash Sharma,
Co-Founder & CEO, ElectricPe

Mr. Avinash Sharma, Co-Founder & CEO, ElectricPe, said, "We are working towards ensuring a dense network of charging points across India to meet the Indian Government's bullish electric mobility vision. In line with this, we are delighted to partner with NoBroker, a company that's also thinking ahead to enable EV adoption by bringing EV charging infrastructure, right to consumers' doorsteps."



Pi Beam Electric raises \$1.7mn

Pi Beam Electric has raised \$1.7mn in a Pre-Series A round led by Inflection Point Ventures. The round saw participation from prominent family offices, syndicates and Industry stalwarts, apart from the existing investors, said a press release.

The funds raised will be utilised for developing the deployment platform, expanding the team, scaling operations to multiple cities and developing new products, it added.

Mr Ankur Mittal, Co-Founder, Inflection Point Ventures, said, "IPV has been closely watching the EV landscape taking shape in India and we have led many investments across the sectors right from EV to EV-infrastructure linked startups. Investment in Pi Beam is the continuation of our focus on the EV sector."



Mr Ankur Mittal,
Co-Founder, Inflection Point Ventures,

CityLink launches 100-pc EV fleet for WayCool's distribution hub

CITYLINK, a technology enabled logistics startup in Bengaluru, has deployed electric vehicles to provide last-mile logistics for WayCool Foods for its newly inaugurated fresh food distribution hub in Bomanahalli, at Bengaluru's electronic city.

The distribution hub is the first-of-its-kind to have 100 per cent EV fleet, said a press release. To start with, CityLink has deployed 20 electric vehicles.

Commenting on the collaboration, Mr. Puneet Prashant, Co-founder and CEO, City Link, said "We are excited to partner with WayCool, a like-minded responsible company, which is committed to implement profitable environment positive practices. We strongly believe that besides being environment-friendly, EVs are expected to drive ROI and bring down delivery costs when compared to existing alternatives."

Mr. Amrit Bajapai, COO, WayCool Foods, said, "This 100 pc EV fleet-powered fresh distribution hub is our third facility in Bengaluru. We will be electrifying 40 pc of our entire fleet in FY23 that operates across 500+ locations in southern and western India moving over 900 tons of food everyday".



TKM gets TERI Award for Best Water Management Practices



TOYOTA Kirloskar Motor was recently awarded with the TERI Water Sustainability Awards 2022, in collaboration with IWA and UNDP, India, under the 'Water Users in Industrial Sector' category.

The award is a testament to TKM's relentless efforts in setting-up benchmark practices in becoming 'water positive company', said a press release.

The Water Sustainability Awards recognise excellence in new approaches, technologies, and other forms of innovation in the water sector as a means of achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 6.

Mr. Raju B. Ketkale, Executive Vice President of Toyota Kirloskar Motor, said, "It is an honour receiving this award and we are extremely grateful to the jury of TERI for giving us a platform and recognising our water conservation initiatives. This has further motivated us to go forward with more energy towards conservation of the most important resource of nature, water."

Sundram Fasteners gets GM 'Supplier of the Year' Award

Sundram Fasteners Limited's powertrain components Division has been recognised as Supplier of the Year by General Motors (GM) under its 30th Annual Supplier of the Year awards.

This is the ninth time the Chennai-based auto component major has received the recognition, underscoring its consistent excellence in the quality and ability to meet global engineering benchmarks, said a press release.

The reputed American automaker honoured 134 of its suppliers from 16 countries with Supplier of the Year distinction in 2021.

Ms Arathi Krishna, Managing Director, Sundram Fasteners Limited, said, "We are pleased to receive this prestigious award from General Motors, a global leader in the automobile sector. This recognition is a validation of our commitment to quality, safety, innovation, sustainability and excellence. The fact that we have received this award for the ninth time demonstrates our ability to exceed customer expectations consistently."



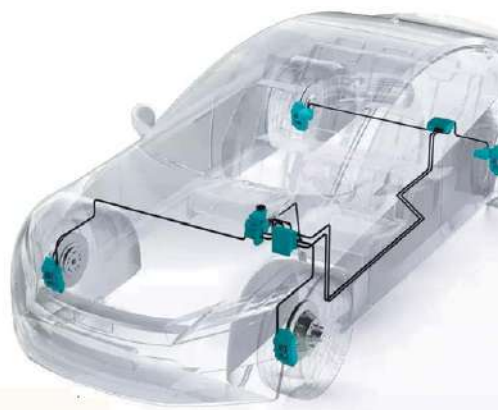
Ms Arathi Krishna,
Managing Director,
Sundram Fasteners Limited

Continental forms JV with Japanese firm Nisshinbo

CONTINENTAL has formed a joint venture with Japanese firm Nisshinbo Holdings to localise machining for valve block meant for its Electronic Brake Systems (EBS) in India.

The EBS portfolio includes Electronic Stability Control (ESC) for passenger cars and Anti-lock Brake Systems (ABS) for passenger cars and 2-Wheelers.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Prashanth Doreswamy, President and CEO, Continental India, said "The new venture is another example of Continental's commitment to manufacturing for India, in India. By partnering with Nisshinbo, we are now uniquely positioned to provide the Indian automotive sector with the latest in safety technology, completely manufactured and assembled in India."



Under the JV, Nisshinbo will provide machining for producing valve block for ABS and ESC units, which later gets assembled into a complete unit at the Gurugram plant (Continental) with the integration of ECUs that are manufactured in Continental's plant in Bengaluru.

Quiklyz ties up with BluSmart to provide 500 EVs on leasing

QUIKLYZ, the vehicle leasing and subscription business of Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services Limited, on March 22 announced its tie-up with BluSmart Mobility, a zero-emission ride-hailing service and platform.

As part of the arrangement, Quiklyz will provide customised lease for up to 500 electric vehicles which will be deployed on BluSmart's 100 per cent EV fleet. These vehicles would be deployed in the Delhi NCR region, said a press release.

Mr Anmol Singh Jaggi, Founder & CEO, BluSmart said, "BluSmart, through its all-electric fleet, provides zero-ride denial, zero-surge and zero-tailpipe emission ride-hailing service to make mobility smarter and sustainable for a better future. We needed a partner who could create bespoke financing structures, industry-best service levels and in Quiklyz we found the ideal leasing partner fulfilling these requirements."

Mr Mohammad Turra, Senior VP & Head, Quiklyz, said, "We are committed to providing innovative leasing solutions to popularize electric vehicles in India and are delighted to be the leasing partner of choice for BluSmart which has built a remarkable portfolio of EV fleet."



Mr Mohammad Turra,
Senior VP & Head, Quiklyz,

Anmol Singh Jaggi,
Founder & CEO, BluSmart

Continental hits 5-million milestone

THE Gurugram plant of Continental Automotive India has achieved a milestone of producing five million electronic brake systems (EBS).

The milestone was reached in five years, ensuring the production schedule was not impacted due to COVID-19 pandemic, said a press release.

The EBS portfolio of Continental comprises electronic stability control (ESC) for passenger cars and anti-lock brake systems (ABS) for passenger cars and two-wheelers.

Mr Krishan Kohli, Head – Segments, Vehicle Dynamics and Hydraulic Brake System, Continental Automotive India, said, "This is an excellent milestone as it complements our wide focus for safe mobility and our commitment to Vision Zero - Zero Fatalities, Zero Injuries, and Zero Crashes."

"Our target is to raise the annual EBS production capacity by 25 per cent in the next three years," he added.



Mr Anudeep Garg,
Head of the Gurugram plant
Continental

Mr Anudeep Garg, Head of the Gurugram plant, said, "It is wonderful that we have been able to achieve this number despite the ongoing pandemic. Of course, there were challenges we had to face but credit to the entire team for having persisted despite adversity to help achieve this milestone."



Easy finance options to push sale of used cars, says report

CARS24, an e-commerce platform for pre-owned vehicles, on March 24 released its Future of Mobility 2022 report. It is a culmination of interesting insights presenting a macro view of the pan-India used car buyer base, their purchasing behaviour and evolving trends, said a press release.

The report sheds light on the progressive gender shifts, rise of upcoming metro markets, growing preference towards pre-owned vehicles and a cumulative upswing in pre-owned car buyers opting for financing.

It also indicates sale of used cars to soar further in the country as buyers now have access to seamless financing. Seventy-six per cent millennial availed financing for buying their pre-owned cars with the average loan size of Rs 3.5 lakh, said the report. With easy options like no down payment on car financing, the loan disbursement in 2022 is expected to increase three-fold, it said.

The 'condition of the car' remains the most important factor for used car buyers. Today, quality cars along with trust, website reliability and honest and transparent purchase process are the top significant elements considered by potential used car buyers while making the final purchasing decision, according to the report.

The study also shows Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Ahmedabad were the biggest shopaholics for pre-owned cars. While the majority of buyers are young males, there has been an uptake in the number of women used car buyers clocking an impressive growth of 80%, said the report.

Mr Kunal Mundra, CEO, Cars24, said, "The accelerated growth of the Indian pre-owned car ecosystem has witnessed a record e-commerce adoption leading to an unprecedented impact on the consumer. Today, the Indian pre-owned car buyer isn't restricted by gender, limited by finances or confined to the metros. More importantly, this growing accessibility has opened doors for many Indians to fulfill the dream of owning a car."



GLOBAL EYE



BMW steps up tech change

THE BMW Group is speeding up technological change and pushing forward with the transformation towards sustainable mobility.

The company is preparing for a comprehensive leap in technology in its Neue Klasse and significantly upping the pace once again as it continues to ramp up e-mobility. At the same time, the BMW Group is involving its stakeholders, from employees to the capital market to society, in its successful, consistently implemented transformation strategy.

"We see 2021 as clear evidence that successful transformation pays off. The strong result we achieved in financial year 2021 is the outcome of our consistent strategy – with an open-technology approach and the right products at the right time," said Mr Oliver Zipse, Chairman of the Board of Management of BMW AG, on March 16 in Munich.

"We have laid the foundations to build on this success in the coming years: With the Neue Klasse, we are leading sustainable mobility into a new technological dimension. By extending the contract with our BBA joint venture until 2040, the BMW Group is also taking its growth to the next level," he said.



Envision AESC, Mercedes forge battery partnership



WORLD'S leading battery producer Envision AESC has announced a partnership with Mercedes-Benz as the luxury automotive brand gets ready to go all electric.

Under the new agreement, Envision AESC will supply high-performance battery cell modules to support end-to-end production of all-electric Mercedes-EQ vehicles in Alabama.

Envision AESC's new state-of-the-art battery facility will be powered by net-zero carbon energy and offer world-leading digital automation when operational in 2025.

Mr Lei Zhang, Executive Chairman, Envision AESC, said: "We are pleased to partner with Mercedes-Benz to provide high-performance battery cell modules for its new Mercedes-EQ vehicles produced in the US. This marks a significant step forward in our company's mission to be a leading technology partner to support the global transition to carbon neutral transportation."

GM honours Veoneer as 2021 Supplier of the Year

GENERAL Motors recognised Veoneer as a 2021 Supplier of the Year, at its 30th annual awards ceremony in Phoenix, Arizona.

GM's Supplier of the Year award recognises global suppliers that distinguish themselves by exceeding GM's requirements, in turn providing GM customers with innovative technologies and among the highest quality in the automotive industry, said a press release.

This year, the company recognised 134 suppliers from 16 countries with the Supplier of the Year distinction. This is the fourth time Veoneer is recipient of this award, receiving it every year since being founded in 2018. "We are proud to be recognised by our longtime partner for our commitment to performance, quality and innovation and to support their mission to deliver new levels of safety and convenience to car drivers and occupants across the globe," said Mr Jan Carlson, Chairman, President and CEO of Veoneer.



Jaguar I-Pace batteries power zero-emission energy storage unit

JAGUAR'S engineering team has worked with Pramac to develop a zero-emission energy storage unit powered by second-life Jaguar I-Pace batteries, taken from prototype and engineering test vehicles.

Called the Off Grid Battery Energy Storage System (ESS), Pramac's technology – which features lithium-ion cells from one-and-a-half second-life Jaguar I-Pace batteries, supplies zero-emission power where access to the mains supply is limited or unavailable.

To showcase its capability, the unit helped Jaguar TCS Racing prepare for the 2022 ABB FIA Formula E World Championship during testing in the UK and Spain, where it was used to run the team's cutting-edge diagnostic equipment analysing the race cars' track performance, and to supply auxiliary power to the Jaguar pit garage.

The testing and validation of the Off Grid Battery ESS by Jaguar TCS Racing is demonstration of race-to-road-to-race cyclical technology transfer. Learnings from Jaguar TCS Racing have previously informed a software-over-the-air (SOTA) update for I-Pace customers that delivered a real-world range increase of up to 20 km – and now further use cases for the Off Grid Battery ESS around the racing team's programme are being assessed.



Kia EV6 triumphs at Red Dot Design Awards

SHORTLY after being crowned 2022 European Car of the Year, the multi-award-winning Kia EV6 has claimed overall victory in the prestigious 2022 Red Dot Design Awards.

The 50-strong expert jury of the renowned international design competition awarded the EV6 with the 'Red Dot: Best of the Best' accolade for its pioneering and forward-looking design.

The all-electric crossover was also named winner of the Red Dot category: 'Innovative Products'.

As Kia's first dedicated battery-electric vehicle, EV6 symbolises the brand's new direction as it transitions into a leading sustainable mobility solutions provider, said a press release. The electric crossover was created according to Kia's new design philosophy 'Opposites United', which guarantees a powerful visual identity with contrasting combinations of sharp stylistic elements and sculptural shapes, added the release.



Mr Karim Habib, Head of Kia Global Design Centre, said: "The EV6 is a very important vehicle for the Kia brand, as it is our first fully dedicated EV with our best technology for a new era. We have the ambition to keep pushing the boundaries of automotive design and to back up product substance with inventive, bold and forward-looking designs."

Jaguar sets sustainability targets

JAGUAR Land Rover has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions across its operations by 46 per cent by 2030. In addition, the company will cut average vehicle emissions across its value chains by 54 per cent, including a 60 per cent reduction throughout the use phase of its vehicles.

The goals, which are approved by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi), confirm the company's pathway to a 1.5°C emissions reduction in line with the Paris Agreement. The commitment by Jaguar Land Rover meets the most ambitious goal set in Paris.

By the end of the decade, Jaguar Land Rover will reduce its direct greenhouse gas emissions across vehicle manufacture and operations by 46 per cent in absolute value compared to a 2019 baseline. The company has also committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions per vehicle by an average of 54 per cent across the entire value chain, including a reduction of 60 per cent in the vehicle use phase.

These targets represent Jaguar Land Rover's commitment to 2030, followed by a second-decade ambition for net-zero emissions across the supply chain, product, and operations by 2039, as part of its Reimagine strategy.

Mr Rossella Cardone, Director and Head of Sustainability Office at Jaguar Land Rover, said: "Sustainability sits at the core of our Reimagine strategy, with the aim to achieve net carbon zero by 2039, as the creator of the world's most desirable modern luxury vehicles."



Switch Mobility ground-breaking ceremony for new facility in Spain

SWITCH Mobility, the next-generation net zero-carbon electric bus and light commercial vehicle company, held a ground-breaking ceremony on March 21 to mark the upcoming creation of its new advanced manufacturing facility at Valladolid in Spain.

The ceremony was attended by Mr Raquel Sanchez Jimenez, Minister for Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda, Mr Alfonso Fernandez Mañueco, President of the Region of Castilla y León and Oscar Puente, Mayor of Valladolid. The foundation stone was laid by Mr Dheeraj Hinduja, Chairman of Switch Mobility.

With construction set to commence shortly and the first buses expected to be produced within 12 months, the 35-acre site in Valladolid – Switch's first in continental Europe – will comprise two state of the art production lines and will be entirely carbon-neutral from inception. With €100 million of investment planned for the site over the next decade, the facility will play a key role in rejuvenating the Soto de Medinilla area around Valladolid as well as creating

an estimated 7,000 direct and indirect jobs in the region, said a press release.

Phase one of the new development will house production of Switch's new 12m bus designed for the European market. Phases two and three will add battery assembly capabilities and production of Switch's zero-carbon LCV from 2024 onwards. Mr Hinduja said: "I am delighted that we have broken ground on Switch Mobility's new state-of-the art facility in Valladolid. With a rich automotive history, strong supply chain and availability of engineering talent, Valladolid is an ideal location for the facility, and I would like to express my appreciation to the national and regional governments for supporting the project."

Mr Andy Palmer, Vice-Chairman and CEO of Switch Mobility, commented: "The past year has been one of considerable progress for Switch. We have established a presence in the UK, India and now Continental Europe, have an order book of over 500 electric buses and have covered more than 50 million km with our current electric products. Beginning the development of our site in Spain is a key milestone in our global growth strategy."



Mr Andy Palmer,
Vice-Chairman and CEO of Switch Mobility,

Mr Dheeraj Hinduja,
Chairman of Switch Mobility

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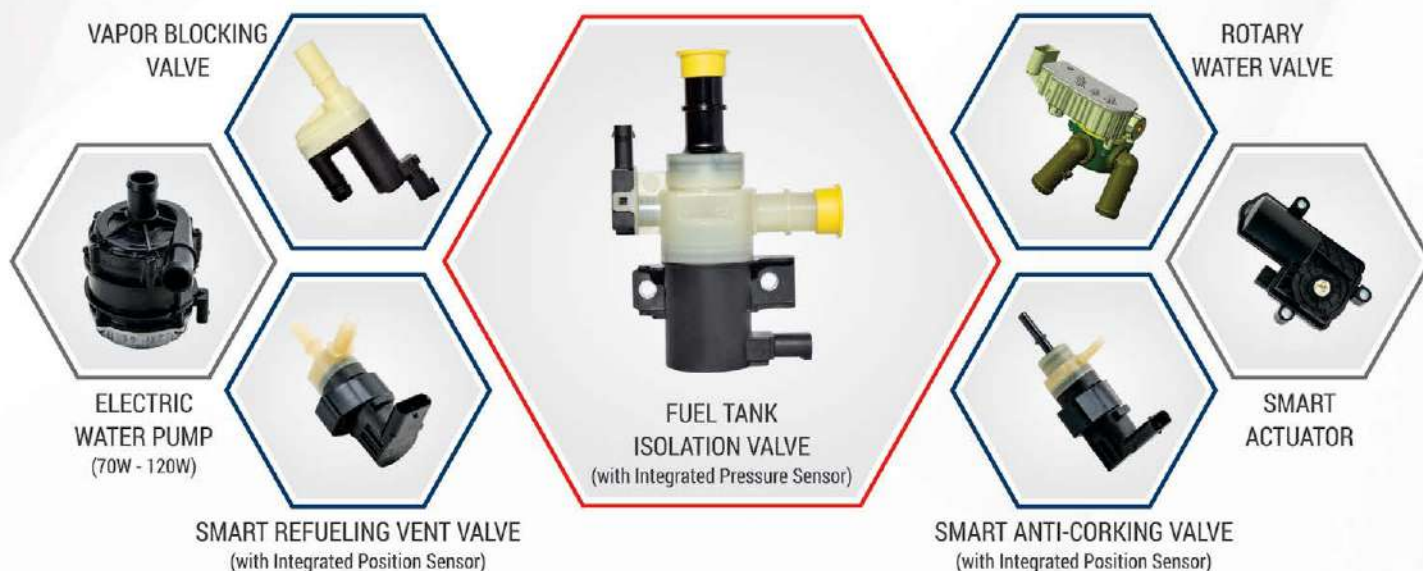
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