

AUTOGUIDE

India's Automotive Industry & Trade Journal

56
YEARS
SINCE 1966

CHARGING PUSH

Draft battery-swapping policy



Mr. Nitin Gadkari
Minister of Road Transport and
Highways of India

Quality checks soon for 2W batteries, cells

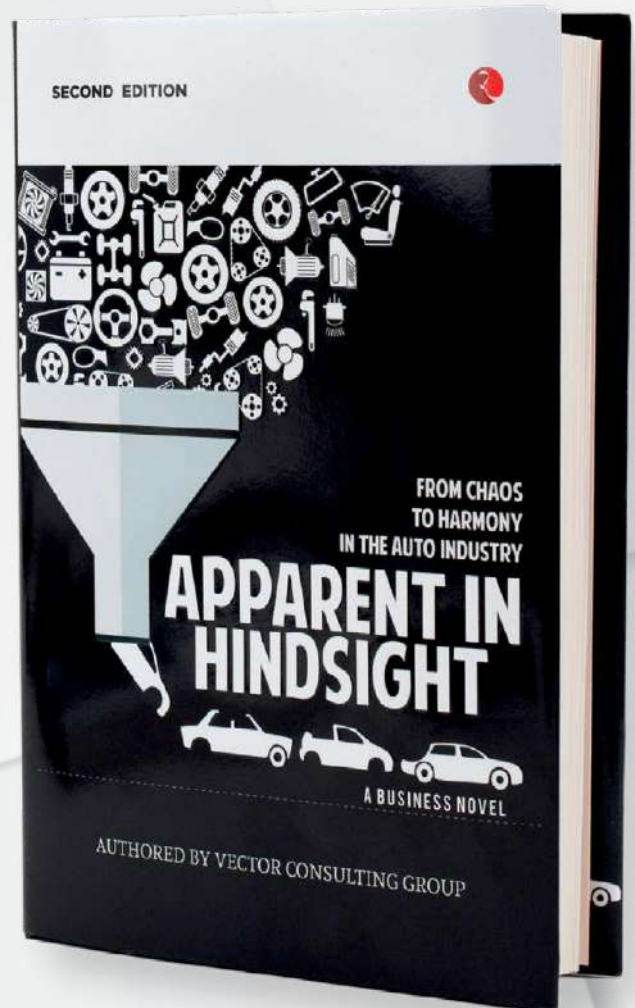


From Chaos **to harmony** in the **Auto Industry**



Written from the perspective of the CEOs, MDs, and Heads of Production & Sales of a medium sized tier 1 supplier to an auto OEM. The narrative follows their personal and professional struggles as they deal with conflicts and contradictions that work and life throw at them. This book delves deep into the chronic problems faced by almost all companies in the Indian Automotive Industry and challenges the fundamental assumptions that have held firm since time immemorial about procurement, operations, distribution and sales.

With positive reviews from senior leaders of companies like Tata Motors, Fleetguard Filters Pvt. Ltd., Kirloskar Oil Engines Ltd., JK Fenner (India) Ltd., and SKF India Ltd., *Apparent in Hindsight* is a compelling read for managers of all companies engaged in production and distribution of consumer products.

We, Vector Consulting Group, have over the last 16 years implemented transformational solutions in more than 200 companies. This book is our attempt to spread the knowledge and highlight the trials and tribulations of the countless well intentioned managers in corporate India.



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Vimlanchal, Harinagar, Gopalpuri
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Editor's Viewpoint



LATE JOGINDER P. MALHOTRA
Founder



M.P. MALHOTRA
Chairman - Editorial board



SHILPA MALHOTRA
Executive Editor

EV batteries the new focus

Having won the first round by making electric vehicles popular among the consumers, the Government and the private sector have now directed their efforts towards strengthening the entire e-mobility ecosystem. While new charging stations are being set up with regular frequency, coping up with the requirements of a large number of EVs in the market is no easy task. The answer lies in battery swapping and that's where the focus has shifted now. Our Cover Story deals with the draft battery-swapping policy put out by Government think-tank Niti Aayog as a sequel to the Finance Minister's announcement in the Union Budget. The policy draft is the outcome of an inter-ministerial discussion the Aayog held in February. It also interacted with a wide spectrum of stakeholders representing battery-swapping operators, battery manufacturers, vehicle OEMs, financial institutions, think-tanks and other experts.

Niti Aayog's draft policy proposes offering incentives to electric vehicles with swappable batteries, subsidies to companies manufacturing swappable batteries, a new battery-as-a-service business model, and standards for interoperable batteries, among other measures. Once in force, the policy is set to prove a game-changer for EV adoption in the country. The Government's new focus is also reflected in its plan to make it mandatory for two-wheeler EV manufacturers to undertake stringent quality checks of batteries and their cells. The move comes against the backdrop of growing concerns over the poor-quality batteries and imported cells being used by the industry. We cover this news development in a supporting story.

In this regard, we also give due coverage to Tata Motors' announcement that the company will kick-start investments for making batteries and semiconductors in the country. A research report by ICRA saying expansion of charging infrastructure will play a critical role in achieving healthy EV penetration is also included as part of our focus on batteries in this issue.

Our regular story on monthly auto sales shows that supply side constraints continue to impact passenger vehicle manufacturers. As the first month of the new fiscal is generally a dull month for sales, April 2022 turned out to be no different. While some of the top players in the four-wheeler segment suffered decline, the good news is that two-wheelers showed signs of recovery and 3Ws, CVs and tractors also remained positive in April.

Over to you!

**Once in force,
the policy is
set to prove a
game-changer
for EV
adoption in the
country**

A push to EV adoption

Draft battery-swapping policy is here

A concerted push by the Government coupled with active stance displayed by the automobile industry have resulted in electric vehicles (EVs) finding increased acceptance in the country. The last few months have witnessed a healthy rise in the sale of EVs despite pending concerns over several issues, including the inadequacy of charging infrastructure. Though efforts to strengthen the charging infra have also picked up of late, it's certainly a long haul. To keep pace with the rising EV sale and give it further momentum, battery-swapping is the only solution and that is where the Government has shifted its focus now.

Following up on the Union Budget announcement that the Government was set to roll out a battery-swapping policy in a bid to reduce upfront costs of purchasing EVs and drive adoption among buyers, Niti Aayog came up with the policy draft on April 21. It has invited comments on the draft from all stakeholders until June 5. Once in force, the battery-swapping policy is sure to prove a game-changer for EV adoption in the country.

The draft policy is the outcome of an inter-ministerial discussion that the Government think-tank held in February this year. It also held an extensive pre-draft stakeholder discussion with a wide spectrum of stakeholders representing battery-swapping operators, battery manufacturers, vehicle OEMs, financial institutions, think-tanks and other experts.

Battery swapping is a mechanism that involves exchanging discharged batteries for charged ones. This provides the flexibility to charge these batteries separately

by delinking charging and battery usage, and keeps the vehicle in operational mode with negligible downtime. Though it is generally used for smaller vehicles like 2Ws and 3s and e-rickshaws which have smaller batteries that are easier to swap, solutions are being explored to make it viable for four-wheelers and e-buses as well.





Niti Aayog's draft policy proposes offering incentives to electric vehicles with swappable batteries, subsidies to companies manufacturing swappable batteries, a new battery-as-a-service business model, and standards for interoperable batteries, among other measures.

Apart from the batteries themselves, major battery providers will be encouraged to sign data-sharing agreements to provide information on battery health and performance, and to enable more flexibility to consumers

reducing the differential across the tax rates on lithium-ion batteries and electric vehicle supply equipment. Currently, the tax rate on the former is 18 per cent, and 5 per cent on the latter. The policy also proposes to offer the same incentives available to electric vehicles that come pre-equipped with a fixed battery to electric vehicles with swappable batteries. "The size of the incentive could be determined based on the kWh (kilowatt hour) rating of the battery and compatible EV," the draft policy states.

"An appropriate multiplier may be applied to the subsidy allocated to battery providers to account for the float battery requirements for battery swapping stations in different battery swapping ecosystems,"

the draft policy said. The Government will also specify minimum contract duration for a contract to be signed between EV users and battery providers to ensure they continue to provide battery swapping services after receiving the subsidy.

The policy also requires state governments to ensure public battery charging stations are eligible for EV power connections with concessional tariffs. It also proposes to bring such stations under existing or future time-of-day (ToD) tariff regimes so that the swappable batteries can be charged during off-peak periods when electricity tariffs are low.

Transport Departments and State Transport Authorities will be responsible for easing registration processes for vehicles sold without batteries or for vehicles with battery swapping functionality, the draft says. Municipal corporations will be

responsible for planning, zoning permissions and land allocation for battery swapping stations.

It has suggested that the GST Council consider reducing the differential across the tax rates on lithium-ion batteries and electric vehicle supply equipment. Currently, the tax rate on the former is 18 pc, and 5 pc on the latter

The policy also proposes to assign a unique identification number (UIN) to swappable batteries at the manufacturing stage to help track and monitor them. Similarly, a UIN number will be assigned to each battery swapping station. It also proposes to install battery swapping stations at several locations like retail fuel outlets, public parking areas, malls, kirana shops and general stores etc.

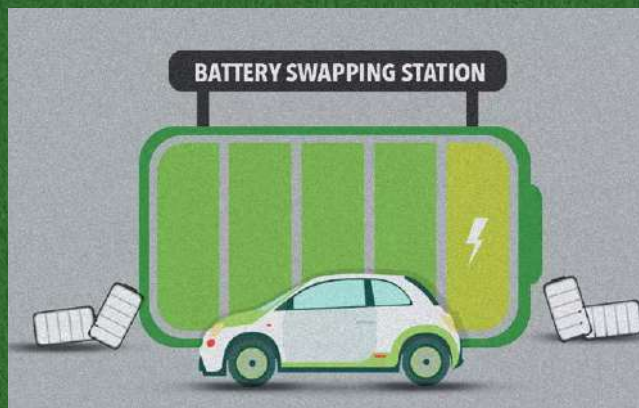
Niti Aayog said the battery swapping will fall under the battery-as-a-service (BaaS) business model, and such models would have to ensure interoperability between EVs and batteries for a successful mainstreaming of battery swapping as an alternative.

"Given the nascency of battery swapping, interoperability between EV batteries and other components within a battery swapping ecosystem is adequate for eligibility under the policy, as long as all components within the ecosystem adhere to the technical and performance standards defined for BaaS and battery swapping services," the draft policy says.

Apart from the batteries themselves, major battery providers will be encouraged to sign data-sharing agreements to provide information on battery health and performance, and to enable more flexibility to consumers through peer-to-peer roaming networks. "For the classification of collected data under the broad categories of proprietary, restricted-access, private and open-data, a non-restrictive detailed guideline will be developed for adherence by all industry players," the draft adds.

"This policy requires ecosystems to be 'open' to allow participation from other market players in order to be considered for support under the policy". The policy will only support batteries using Advanced Chemistry Cells (ACC), with performance that is equivalent or superior to EV batteries supported under the government's FAME-II scheme.

To ensure a high level of protection at the electrical interface, a rigorous testing protocol will be adopted, the draft said, to avoid any unwanted temperature rise at the electrical interface. The battery management system, which is a software that controls battery functions, will have to be self-certified and open for testing to check its compatibility with various systems, and capability to meet safety requirements, it added.



"Batteries shall be tested and certified as per AIS 156 (2020) and AIS 038 Rev 2 (2020) standards for safety of traction battery packs, as well as additional tests that may be prescribed for swappable batteries which are subject to multiple coupling/decoupling processes at the connectors," the draft said.

Additionally, for better protection of assets, swappable batteries will have to be equipped with advanced features like IoT-based battery monitoring systems, remote monitoring and immobilisation capabilities.

The Aayog has proposed that all metropolitan cities with a population of more than 40 lakh will be prioritised for the development of battery swapping networks under the first phase, which is within one or two years of the draft policy getting finalised. Other major cities such as state capitals with a population more than five lakh will be covered under the second phase.



Mandatory checks soon for EV 2W batteries and cells

THE Government will soon make it mandatory for two-wheeler EV manufacturers to undertake stringent quality checks of batteries and the cells in the batteries as well, measures aimed at ensuring safety and restoring confidence in such vehicles.

The move comes against the backdrop of growing concerns over the poor quality batteries and imported cells being used by the industry to push manufacturing of electric vehicles.

A senior Government official, quoted in a media report, said the Road Transport Ministry has set up an expert committee, which will soon come out with the standards, and the quality check at cell level will be made mandatory.

The Government will also enforce the conformity of production (CoP) of EVs. "We will come up with a new Automotive Industry Standard (AIS) to meet the requirement. We will notify fresh rules to enforce the quality checking at all levels," said the official.

Currently, the tests are conducted for battery packs and the manufacturers have been selling the batteries as a part of the package of the EVs



"Cells are the basic component of the batteries and if we are not checking the quality of cells, we can't ensure that the quality of batteries will be good. Most of the manufacturers are importing cells and simply assembling them to make batteries. The Government's fresh move is in the right direction," according to an industry insider quoted in the media report.

Sources further said to ensure that the manufacturers are complying with the approved standards and designs of the EVs, the Government will enforce stringent CoP norms.

As per the Motor Vehicle Act, the Government approved testing agencies can pick up the vehicles even from dealers to check whether these are compliant with the approved models, also known as type approval of a vehicle.

Recently, Union Road Transport Secretary Giridhar Aramane had told two-wheeler EV manufacturers to send the standard operating procedures (SOPs) and testing norms for quality check of batteries and other equipment. He had also flagged how some companies have barely 12-15 employees, raising questions over the quality control mechanism they have.



Tatas plan to make batteries

We'll be launching the initiative very soon: Chandra

TATA Motors on April 29 announced ambitious plans to expand the line-up of electrics in its portfolio, with the unveiling of a new concept, Avinya.

While unveiling the concept, Tata Sons Chairman Mr N Chandrasekaran also said the company will kick-start investments for making batteries and semiconductors in the country.

He said the company, which has witnessed a massive surge in demand and market share over the past few years, expects electrics to be the backbone of its business in future. "We expect sale of electrics in our portfolio to be over 30 per cent by the year 2030," he said.

Unveiling Avinya (based on a Sanskrit word which means innovation), which will be launched in 2025 and boast a mileage of over 500 km on a single charge, Mr Chandrasekaran said this is the first pure electric platform that will also give birth to different body styles and variants going forward, all of them greens. "We are designing the car with a global benchmark. I see enormous possibility for us to go global," he said.

On the plans for investment-heavy semiconductor manufacturing in line with the Government's wish-list, he said, "We are looking at that space... and we are looking at manufacturing of semiconductors. We have got into precision manufacturing and related assembly and other areas of semiconductor space."

Regarding manufacturing of batteries he said, "We have finalised plans. We will be launching our initiative to produce batteries very soon. We are definitely on it."

The group plans to involve various in-house companies into the EV project and Mr Chandrasekaran said apart from front-facing Tata Motors, the others would include TCS, Tata Power, Tata Chemicals, and Tata Elxsi. "We want to produce cars that people love and would like to drive and want to have an experience with during buying, driving, charging, and servicing," he said.

Speaking about Avinya, Tata Motors MD Mr Shailesh Chandra said the car comes packed with new-age technology, software and artificial intelligence.



Tata Motors showcases its electric SUV concept, CURVV

DEFINING a new era of SUV design, Tata Motors on April 6 showcased its electric SUV concept, CURVV.

Conceptualised to offer practicality and elegance, all whilst exuding dynamism and unmatched road presence, CURVV is Tata Motors' rendition of the modern SUV typology.

Expected to storm the market within the next two years, the concept will introduce India to a unique, edgy and sporty coupe body style which in the past has only been prevalent in the high end luxury segment, said a company press release.

The concept CURVV in its production-ready avatar will first enter the market as an extension of the company's ever evolving electric vehicle (EV) portfolio which will subsequently be followed by its Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) counterpart.



Mr. Shailesh Chandra
Managing Director,
Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles
Ltd., and Tata Passenger Electric
Mobility Ltd

Mr. Shailesh Chandra - Managing Director, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd., and Tata Passenger Electric Mobility Ltd, said, "With a fantastic year gone by, it gives me immense pleasure to announce a flying start to the New Year, with a brand new 'promise', a brand new 'thought' and a brand new 'design' – all put together in this magnificent electric SUV concept - CURVV. Our focus here has been to enable customers with a product option that is the perfect amalgamation of modern functionality and design."



(L-R) Mr. Martin Uhlarik, Head of Design, Tata Motors, Mr. Shailesh Chandra, MD, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd., and Tata Passenger E-Mobility Ltd., Mr. Anand Kulkarni, VP, Product Line & Operations, Tata Passenger E-Mobility Ltd. and Mr. Vivek B Srivatsa, Head, Marketing, Sales and Service Strategy, Tata Passenger Electric Mobility Ltd. unveiling the Electric SUV Concept - CURVV



Kia makes e-foray with EV6

KIA India, the fastest-growing carmaker in the country, announced its entry into the Indian EV market with EV6.

The first BEV from Kia, the EV6, is globally acclaimed for its design, quality, and features and was first unveiled globally in March 2021, according to a press release.

The vehicle is built on Kia's new dedicated EV platform E-GMP and is pegged to offer premium mobility solutions to its customers. The most hi-tech Kia ever made, the EV6 is a true game-changer, designed from the ground up to make electric mobility fun, convenient, and accessible, added the release.

EV6 combines a highly impressive real-world driving range, ultra-fast charging capabilities, and a spacious high-tech interior.

The company will bring only limited units of the car to Indian market and the bookings will commenced on May 26, followed by its launch soon after.

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Honda begins India e-journey with electric hybrid *City e:HEV*

Car production commences at Tapukara facility

HONDA Cars India has commenced the production of its electric hybrid, new Honda City e:HEV. It is being manufactured at the company's manufacturing facility at Tapukara in Rajasthan.

Mr. Takuya Tsumura, President & CEO, Honda Cars India Limited, said, "It's a delight to share that we are commencing the production of the City e:HEV from our Tapukara facility in the state of Rajasthan. The milestone also marks our commitment to bring advanced technologies for Indian customers and beginning of our electrification journey in India."

A press release by the company said the New City e:HEV features Honda's unique self-charging and highly efficient two motor e-CVT hybrid system connected to a smooth 1.5-litre Atkinson-Cycle DOHC i-VTEC petrol engine, intelligent power unit with advanced lithium-ion battery and an engine-linked direct coupling clutch.

The e:HEV electric-hybrid system uses three driving modes - EV Drive, Hybrid Drive and Engine Drive, along with Regeneration mode during deceleration. A clever power control unit ensures seamless and automatic switching between the three modes based on various driving situations.

The New City e:HEV's strong hybrid electric system produces System Combined Max Power of 126 PS, Outstanding Fuel Efficiency of 26.5 km/l and Maximum motor torque of 253 Nm @ 0 - 3,000 rpm. An advanced Electric Servo Brake system with all four wheel disc brakes that contribute to fuel efficiency and provide a smooth brake feel have been adopted for the New City e:HEV.

The new City e:HEV will also come with Honda's advanced intelligent safety technology 'Honda SENSING' for the first time in India. Honda Sensing signature safety features include Collision Mitigation

Braking System (CMBS), Adaptive Cruise Control, Road Departure Mitigation (RDM), Lane Keeping Assist System (LKAS) and Auto High-Beam.

The New City e:HEV will provide enhanced Connected car experience with 37 Honda Connect features, smartwatch functionality along with Alexa and OK Google integrations.

The City e:HEV exterior features a New Honda Solid Wing Face, signature Blue H-mark logo in front and rear, new Claw-type Fog Light Garnish, an e:HEV emblem on the rear, new Black Painted Diamond-cut Alloy Wheels, new Trunk Lip Spoiler and new Rear Bumper Diffuser with Carbon Finish.

The interior of the car packs a plush, premium and spacious cabin with new luxurious Two-Tone Ivory & Black Interior Colour Theme. It boasts Contemporary Seats with Premium Leather Upholstery and many exciting features. Honda City e:HEV comes fully equipped with advanced safety technologies and features.





Maruti launches all-new **XL6**

'An immersive and indulgent driving experience'

AUGMENTING Nexa's value statement of 'Create Inspire', Maruti Suzuki on April 21 launched all-new XL6.

The most premium offering from Nexa, the all-new XL6 with a bolder design, enhanced comfort features, in-built connected technology and next-gen powertrain offers an immersive and indulgent driving experience, said a press release by the carmaker. .

Speaking at the launch, Mr. Hisashi Takeuchi, Managing Director and CEO, Maruti Suzuki India Limited, said, "The XL6 has been a very successful model for us at Nexa. It has managed to carve a space for itself as the premium MPV in a short period. The evolving customer's aspirations for a bolder, feature-packed, premium utility vehicle have led us to introduce the all-new XL6. This premium MPV has enhanced comfort and convenience features, which are bound to delight the today's modern buyer."

The all-new XL6 is the second model to feature Nexa's crafted futurism design language. A work of art inspired by the future, the design language is exclusively crafted to match the refined tastes of Nexa customers.

The all-new XL6 embodies the aspirations of urban buyers looking for a vehicle that matches their style and complements their aspirations. It stands out with its imposing stance, bold front fascia and all-around body cladding with front & rear skid plates along with a host of key design updates.

The powerful exterior design of the car is complimented by its plush interiors, which engulf one in utmost comfort. The all-new XL6 is equipped with advanced comfort and convenience features, which includes ventilated seats in the front row, designed to keep the occupant cool and comfortable no matter what the temperature is outside.

Ertiga comes in a refreshed avatar

'More stylish, elegant and comfortable'



MARUTI Suzuki India on April 15 announced launch of the next-gen Ertiga in a refreshed new avatar. It is now more stylish, elegant and comfortable, said a press release by the carmaker.

The vehicle is powered by an all-new next-gen K-series 1.5L Dual Jet, Dual VVT engine with Progressive Smart Hybrid Technology and driven by an all-new advanced six-speed Automatic Transmission with Paddle Shifters.

The launch, said the release, also marks the tenth anniversary of Maruti Suzuki Ertiga which pioneered and created the compact MPV segment in the country.

Mr. Hisashi Takeuchi, Managing Director & CEO, Maruti Suzuki India Limited, said, "The next-gen Ertiga with advanced technology features will also come with a new engine and an all-new transmission. As it stays true to its brand vision of providing comfort, technology, and safety features, while being fuel-efficient for customers, the Next-Gen Ertiga will surely continue to be India's go-to MPV. We are confident that the Next-Gen Ertiga will be widely embraced by our customers."

The K-series 1.5L petrol engine offers a peak power of 75.8kW@6000rpm and a max torque of 136.8Nm@4400rpm. Available both in petrol and CNG option, next-gen Ertiga offers a mileage of

20.51 km/l (petrol) and 26.11km/kg (CNG).

The new powertrain provides a refined driving experience with a focus on improved NVH (noise, vibration and harshness) and reduced emissions.

All this is further complemented with an all-new s-speed automatic transmission and the proven five-speed manual transmission.

Ertiga is now more stylish and elegant with dynamic chrome winged front grill, new machined two-tone alloy wheels and back door garnish with chrome insert. It is available in six colour options with the introduction of two new colors.

The refreshed new interior complements elegance through sculpted dashboard with a new metallic teak-wooden finish, plush dual-tone seat fabric while enhancing the look, feel and overall premium-ness of Ertiga.

To enable easy ingress and egress to the third-row, the second row seat comes equipped with a proven one-touch recline and slide mechanism. The 50:50 split third row seats with seatback recliner and flat fold option further add to the convenience and flexibility.

The roof-mounted AC for rear passengers with multiple adjustable air vents and three-stage speed control ensures that Ertiga's roomy cabin is comfortable on the inside even when things get extremely hot outside.



MG ZS EV gets a facelift

MG Motor's new ZS EV has been restyled with striking exterior design elements, comfortable & premium interior and first-in-segment features.

According to a press release, the EV now comes with bigger 50.3 kWh battery with IP69K and ASIL-D, replacing the 44.5 kWh. With new battery, the car now returns ARAI-claimed range of 461 km in single charge. The car is also equipped with a powerful motor 360-degree camera, Hill Start/Decent Control and Tyre Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS). It is also offered with Rear Drive Assist features.

The new ZS EV features MG's latest i-SMART connected system which now comes with more than 75 connected features. It has an updated 10.1-inch touchscreen infotainment system in place of the older 8.0-inch unit. Along with that, it gets new 7.0-inch digital instrument cluster replacing the analogue dials.



Refreshed Seltos and Sonet from Kia



KIA India on April 8 launched refreshed versions of Seltos and Sonet. These new versions come with multiple updates and additional features that further enhance the value propositions of both these products, said a press release. In addition, many existing features from higher variants are now being extended to lower variants, it said.

With an enhanced focus on safety, Kia India will now offer four airbags, standard across all lower variants, by adding side airbags to refreshed Seltos and Sonet. The company also announced that it will introduce two new colours, 'Imperial Blue' and 'Sparkling Silver', on these refreshed versions.

The vehicles come equipped with the completely revamped Kia Connect app to offer advanced connectivity to its customers. The company has also introduced first-in-India Intelligent Manual Transmission (iMT) technology paired with a diesel engine on the refreshed Kia Seltos.

The refreshed versions of Seltos and Sonet have been launched at a starting price of Rs 10.19 lakh (ex-showroom) and Rs 7.15 lakh (ex-showroom), respectively.



Mr Myung-sik Sohn,
Chief Sales Officer, Kia India,

Jeep drives in the all-black Compass Night Eagle trim

JEEP India has announced the launch of a Night Eagle trim for its Compass range, which comes in a 'black' theme.

A distinctive version of the Jeep Compass, the Night Eagle gets a gloss-black finish for the grille, grille rings, 18-inch alloy wheels, roof rail, ORVMs, fog lamp bezels, etc. Inside, this new Compass trim gets a piano black interior complemented by black cloth/vinyl seats with light tungsten stitching and black vinyl inserts for the door trim and IP.

The new trim's aesthetics and distinctive style, elevated by Night Eagle-exclusive elements, are complemented by Jeep's signature driving dynamics, zero compromise-safety, and unparalleled connectivity.



Mr Nipun J Mahajan,
Head of Jeep Brand
– India

Commenting on the launch, Mr Nipun J Mahajan, Head of Jeep Brand – India, said, "The Jeep Compass Night Eagle brings a new level of boldness and elegance with its all-black styling. The high demand for the Trailhawk, which was sold out in two months of launch, is testimony to the excitement for the Jeep Compass range and we expect to see similar enthusiasm for the Night Eagle."



April sales a mixed bag

Supply curbs hit PVs; 2Ws recover



THE first month of the new financial year continued to witness supply side constraints for PV-makers although two-wheelers showed own signs of recovery with a double digit growth. Three wheelers, commercial vehicles and tractor segments remained positive in April.

Maruti Suzuki reported a 10 per cent decline in domestic sales in April this year over the same month previous fiscal. "The shortage of electronic components had a minor impact on the production of vehicles, mainly domestic models," said the carmaker in a statement.

Domestic sales for Tata Motors were up 66 per cent to 41,587 units, including the sales of Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles (TMPV), a wholly owned subsidiary of Tata Motors Limited. Sales for the company's ICE vehicles stood at 39,265 units in 2022, up 60 pc over 24,514 units in April 2021. EV sales for the carmaker grew four-fold to 2,322 units in the month under review, as against just 581 units in April last year.

Kia noted that Seltos remained its top contributor to overall sales with 7,506 units, while Sonet and Carnival contributed 5,404 and 355 units, respectively.

In the two-wheeler segment, market leader Hero MotoCorp reported a double-digit growth in sales for the month, riding on the back of its motorcycle sales which grew to 3,92,627 units this year as against 3,39,329 units in the same period last year. Scooter sales for the company declined to 25,995 units in April 2022 when compared to 32,956 units in April 2021.

Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India (HMSI) noted that

recovery for the April month leveraged support from market relaxations, favourable harvesting period and gradual opening of schools, colleges among other factors. Mr. Yadvinder Singh Guleria, Director - Sales and Marketing, HMSI, said, "April marks the beginning of a positive period pillared by surge in market operations and the onset of marriage season. As per initial estimate, we anticipate a double-digit growth in Q1."

According to TVS, the shortage in the supply of semiconductors has impacted the production and sales of premium two-wheelers. Its motorcycle sales grew by 4 per cent to 139,027 units in April 2022, from 133,227 units in April 2021. Scooter sales of the company stood at 102,209 units in April 2022, marking a growth of 57 pc, as compared to 65,213 units in April last year.

In the CV segment, a major portion of Tata Motors sales came from SCV cargo and pickups which stood at 14,711 units in April 2022. For M&HCV category, the automaker clocked 8,489 units, followed by I&LCV at 4,543 units and passenger carriers at 2,137 units.

Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M)'s largest share is in the LCV category of 2T to 3.5T, where it clocked 13,768 unit sales in April 2022. Sales of LCVs less than 2T stood at 2929 units, followed by combined sales of LCVs more than 3.5T and M&HCVs at 705 units

VEVC, a joint venture between Volvo Group and Eicher Motors said sales of Eicher brand of trucks and buses in the domestic market were at 4,766 units last month as against 1,555 units in April 2021. Volvo trucks and buses sales were at 109 units as against 49 units in April 2021.



Maruti partners with Indian Bank

TO facilitate easy financing for customers, Maruti Suzuki India Limited (MSIL) on April 27 partnered with Indian Bank. With this partnership, Maruti Suzuki now has retail finance tie-ups with 37 financial institutions including all 12 public sector banks, 11 private banks, seven NBFCs and seven regional rural banks.

Maruti Suzuki customers, under this exclusive scheme, can avail loans up to 90 pc of the on-road price of the car besides getting benefits of zero processing charges, free accidental insurance cover up to Rs. 30 lakhs, free fastag and repayment tenure up to 84 months on their loans. The scheme is open till June 30 this year.

Rolling out the initiative, Mr. Shashank Srivastava, Senior Executive Director (Marketing & Sales), Maruti Suzuki India Limited, said, "Customer centricity and convenience are at the core of all our operations. With this partnership with Indian Bank, our valuable customers will be able to finance 90 pc of the on-road price of the car from over 5700+ branches across the Indian Bank network. This will help our customers get an attractive rate of interest and customized EMI options as per their requirements."

Commenting on the partnership, Mr. Shanti Lal Jain, Managing Director & CEO, Indian Bank, said, "We are delighted with our partnership with Maruti Suzuki, India's largest passenger vehicle manufacturer to provide attractive and easy car finance options for their customers. Indian Bank has a wide presence all over the country and we are confident of offering best-in-class services to Maruti Suzuki customers for meeting their aspiration of owning a car."



Mr. Shashank Srivastava,
Senior Executive Director (Marketing & Sales),
Maruti Suzuki India Limited

PEOPLE



Sudarshan Venu elevated as MD of TVS Motor Company

TVS Motor Company has announced the elevation of Mr. Sudarshan Venu as Managing Director of the company.

A press release by the company said, Mr. Venu has been charting the future of one of India's leading two-wheeler manufacturer and has made it the most awarded two-wheeler company. He has played a pivotal role in the company's growth in India and key international markets.



Sudarshan Venu

Lakshmi Venu takes over as MD of Sundaram-Clayton

Dr. Lakshmi Venu has taken over as the Managing Director of Sundaram-Clayton Limited (SCL). She was the Joint Managing Director of Sundaram-Clayton till now.

Dr. Venu has been leading Sundaram-Clayton from the forefront and has been the lead architect of establishing its global footprint. She managed the turnaround of Sundaram-Clayton to make it a competitive foundry in the world, and has built deep customer relationships with Cummins, Hyundai, Volvo, Paccar and Daimler, said a press release by the company challenging and presents new opportunities."



Lakshmi Venu

Hyundai appoints Muñoz to Board of Management

Mr. José Muñoz, President & COO of Hyundai Motor Company, has joined the Board of Management of the company.

With his expanded role, he will be based in the United States and South Korea. "Muñoz will be a Member of the Board of Directors of Motional, a joint venture between automotive technology company Aptiv and the Hyundai Motor Group effective May 10, 2022. He will also become a Member of the Hyundai Motor Company Board of Directors following the approval of the general shareholder's meeting in March 2023," said the company in a statement.



José Muñoz



Thomas Müller joins

Thomas Müller joins JLR as ED

JAGUAR Land Rover has announced the appointment of Mr. Thomas Müller as the Executive Director of Product Engineering.

He begins his role immediately, taking responsibility for the technical development of all new Jaguar and Land Rovers, including both hardware and software.

His expertise in technology, agile leadership and digital capabilities will bring significant benefits to the efficient delivery of the next generation of modern luxury vehicles, said a press release by the company.

Toyota achieves two million cumulative sales-milestone

TOYOTA Kirloskar Motor (TKM) on April 28 announced that the company has achieved a significant milestone of two million cumulative wholesale units, ever since its inception in the country.

The company registered the feat this month while handing over the Cool New Glanza as the two millionth vehicle from its dealership, Nippon Toyota at Trichur, Kerala.

Over the years TKM has continued to expand its world-class lineup to provide a wide range of options, tailored to meet the evolving needs of Indian customers, according to a press release by the company. It said while cult offerings like Innova Crysta and Fortuner have fortified the brand's dominance in the MPV and SUV segments, new launches like Urban Cruiser and Glanza have further reinforced Toyota's commitment to India. The recently launched Legender has also carved a special place for itself and has become a flagship model in the SUV segment, added the release.

Mr. Atul Sood, Associate Vice-President, Sales, and Strategic Marketing, TKM, said, "We are thrilled that two million customers trust Toyota for their mobility needs. In this journey towards two million happy customers, we have come a long way. Over the last two decades, Toyota has developed a solid foundation of renowned Quality, Durability, and Reliability (QDR) and we hope we will be able to cater to more segments as well as newer markets in 2022 and beyond, helping us achieve our ultimate goal of delivering 'Mass Happiness to All'.



TOYOTA



Hyundai puts up 'Namaste' installation near IGI Airport



HYUNDAI Motor India on April 8 unveiled a 'Namaste' installation near the IGI Airport in New Delhi. Inspired from the brand vision of Progress for Humanity, the 'Namaste' installation is designed to represent the sustainable future of mobility, said a press release by the carmaker.

Mr. Unsoo Kim, MD & CEO, HMIL, said, "Twenty-five years ago, India welcomed Hyundai as a gracious host. Now, the symbolic 'Namaste' installation is a testament to our global vision of Progress for Humanity, wherein technology and human values come together to deliver path-breaking innovations and sustainable technology thereby manifesting the future of mobility in to a welcoming gesture. With this installation we at Hyundai welcome the Future of Mobility and the visitors of IGI Airport with great optimism and positive energy."

The 30-feet tall installation comprises a robotic hand that symbolises the advanced technology along with human hand in a wheel representing the integral role of humanity in long-term sustainability and progress for humanity. It is centrally located on the approach road to IGI Airport and will cater to visitors coming from New Delhi and Gurugram to IGI airport as well as those coming from the airport side to enter Delhi.



Mr. Unsoo Kim,
MD & CEO, HMIL

Expansion of charging infra key to healthy EV penetration: **ICRA**



EXPANSION of charging infrastructure, which is currently at a nascent stage, will play a critical role in achieving healthy EV penetration in the country, said a recent research not by ICRA.

It said several policy measures are being undertaken to speed up EV charging infrastructure penetration. The Central Government, it said, issued revised guidelines in January this year to proactively promote more EV charging stations. A few states have also provided capital incentives for EV charging infrastructure under their policies, apart from subsidised electricity tariffs for EV charging stations.

To capitalise on the potential opportunity in the space, several PSUs and private players have also announced plans to foray into charging infrastructure. ICRA expects addition of about 48,000 chargers over the next three to four years at an investment of about Rs. 14,000 crore.

ICRA Research expects a healthy electric vehicle penetration in India over the next five years, especially in the e-2W, e-3W and e-bus segments. The penetration of e-2Ws is expected to be at about 13-15 per cent of new vehicle sales by FY2025. Likewise, the e-3W and e-bus segment penetrations are expected to be greater than 30 per cent and about

8-10 per cent of new vehicle sales respectively by FY2025.

In the research note, the agency stated that in order to achieve healthy EV penetration, expansion of charging infrastructure will play a critical role.

Currently, there are only less than 2,000 public charging stations in India with concentration in a few states and that too primarily in urban areas.

Giving more insights, Mr. Shamsheer Dewan, Vice-President and Group Head, ICRA, said, "India remains a laggard in EV charging infrastructure penetration. However, like most global counterparts, the policy push has been strong in India as well, to increase the number of EV charging stations. To capitalise on the potential opportunity in the space, several PSUs and private players have also announced plans to foray into charging infrastructure."

He said that battery-swapping is an alternative solution instead of developing EV charging infrastructure, especially for commercial applications. This is also currently in nascent stages in India. "Battery swapping is advantageous – it is a quick way of recharging a vehicle and is cost and time-efficient," he added.



ICRA dealership survey

Favourable demand in select segments



ICRA conducted a survey recently on 22 dealers of PVs, 2Ws, commercial vehicles and tractors spread across rural, semi-urban and metro areas to assess the on-ground sentiments of the automobile dealers and to understand the current demand and supply trends for various segments.

The survey indicated recovering demand in select segments, said a press release issued by the rating agency. Eighty per cent of 2W dealer respondents indicated that demand remains weaker than last year. Extended work and education from home has impacted scooters demand, whereas undistributed rainfall affected demand for rural-centric motorcycles.

However, retail demand for PVs remains healthy and demand for CVs has been improving after two years of downturn. Fifty-three per cent of the respondents indicated that demand in PV and CV segments is better compared to previous year.

The automobile industry has been grappling with supply constraints as semiconductor shortage has impacted vehicle production. The PV segment was affected the most as demand for PVs remained healthy and exceeded supply. However, semiconductor availability has been improving on a sequential basis over the past few months. Around 41 pc of the survey respondents indicated that supply situation across the dealership segments has witnessed improvement in the recent months, while

27 pc reported that supply remained constrained.

Supply constraints have resulted in increased waiting periods and lower inventory levels at the dealerships. Ninety-two per cent of PV dealer respondents indicated that waiting periods have increased compared to the last year on account of supply constraints. While supply has been better in other auto segments, 40 pc of the 2W, CV, and tractor dealer respondents have also pointed out that waiting period increased compared to the last year.

Nevertheless, 60 pc reported that high waiting period has not resulted in increased cancellations. Around 2/3rd of both PV and CV dealers indicated that current inventory holding is less than a month (2-4 weeks). However, 80 per cent of 2W dealer respondents reported that they have around 4-8 weeks of inventory. Due to low inventory levels, dealer discounts have also been minimal.

Mr Nithya Debbadi, Assistant Vice-President and Sector Head, ICRA, said, "While dealership segments are witnessing varied headwinds, supply is improving on a sequential basis and demand has been improving in select segments. The stable financing environment also augurs well with improving demand. Lower inventory is expected to reduce working capital borrowings and accordingly interest costs for the dealers and support their net margins."

CII's construction equipment fair to be held in Bengaluru



EXCON, South Asia's largest construction equipment and construction technology trade fair, organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), is scheduled to be held from May 17 to 21 at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre, Bengaluru.

According to a press release, EXCON will spread over 3,00,000 square meters of display area and is expected to attract over 1,000 exhibitors from India and abroad, including countries like the USA, the UK, France, Germany, Italy, the UAE, South Korea, Singapore, Turkey and Sri Lanka.

The five-day exhibition would attract over 40,000 business visitors from all over the world, said the release.

Mr Anand Sundaresan, Member, EXCON 2021 Steering Committee & Managing Director, Ammann India, "This is the eleventh edition of the EXCON and our theme this year is on 'Building India for a New World: Competitiveness, Growth, Sustainability, Technology'. EXCON will exemplify the role of smart technologies and innovation in India's infrastructure development to achieve the vision of making India the global hub for Construction Equipment Manufacturing by 2030."

Some of the highlights of EXCON include exclusive focus on alternate fuels, AI Pavilion, Finance Plaza, women operating construction equipment and machinery, Equal Opportunity awards for women, MSMEs and digital transformation besides sustainability and safety among others.

Mr Varun Jain, Council Member, CII Delhi State, and Director, PPI Pvt. Ltd, said, "Encouraging the adoption of world-class technologies for speedy implementation of infrastructure projects is the current need of the state. EXCON with the presence of world-class players in the construction equipment sector, will not only deliver the best-in-class technologies along with cost-effective solutions, but will also bring more awareness amongst all stakeholders on the latest developments in CE Industry."

SPREADING WINGS



Bridgestone launches sixwalk-through stores

Bridgestone India on April 22 launched six walk-through educative tyre stores that help customer make an informed choice on tyre purchase and related services.

With this launch, Bridgestone has moved a step forward on its aim to the digitise its dealership stores. The first of these stores was launched in Pune in 2021.

Based on a digital platform, the new Bridgestone Select+ stores feature digital-led experience in choosing tyres, understanding various tyres and their relevance to the consumers' driving needs.

Mr. Parag Satpute, Managing Director, Bridgestone India, said, "Bridgestone is making headways in the mobility space globally. In India, the Select Plus store is a unique and educative concept that allows us to enhance the retail experience and engage with our customers."



HOP expands to over 100 stores

HOP Electric has achieved the feat of having 100+ experience centres across the country in a span of less than one year, said a press release by the company.

It is planning to expand its retail footprint in more than 300 cities by the end of this year, added the release.

Mr. Ketan Mehta, Founder & CEO, HOP Electric Mobility, said, "HOP Electric has once again proved its mettle. We are thrilled to become the fastest in the electric vehicle sphere to achieve this feat."



Volkswagen launches a new facility in Chennai

VOLKSWAGEN Passenger Cars India on April 7 launched a new state-of-the-art customer service touch-point at Arcot Road in Chennai.

The new expansive facility of 36,980 sq. ft. area will be operated under the leadership of Mr. Sharath Vijayaraghavan, Executive Director, Sundaram Motors.

The brand has further strengthened its presence in Southern market with the inauguration of the new service facility, taking it to 22 sales and 16 service touch-points present in the Tamil Nadu and Puducherry region.

Mr. Ashish Gupta, Brand Director, Volkswagen Passenger Cars India, said, "With the introduction of the new service touch-point, we have further strengthened our presence in the Southern market, which is an important region for the brand in India. The new state-of-the-art service facility is designed to ensure qualitative service for customers, convenient and hassle-free service experience and a host of service products that offer peace of mind to our customers in this region."

Mr. Sharath Vijayaraghavan, Executive Director, Sundaram Motors, said, "Last year we achieved a significant milestone by completing 10-years of partnership with Volkswagen India and I am delighted to further strengthen our relation with the addition of the new state-of-the-art service facility at Arcot Road, Saligramam, Chennai. Through this new service facility, our three touch points will continue to offer world-class services and ownership experience to all our customers in this region."



Yamaha opens 'Blue Square' outlets in Delhi and Kochi

INDIA Yamaha Motor on April 15 announced the opening of its first 'Blue Square' outlet at Dwarka in Delhi. On April 27, it opened its second 'Blue Square' outlet in Kochi.

While the 3S facility in Delhi is launched under the banner of 'Sawhney Automobiles', the Kochi facility has come up under the banner of 'Peringhat Motors'.

The concept-driven showroom in Delhi is spread across 1,940 sqft and embeds Yamaha's racing DNA of excitement, style and sportiness, said a press release. The Kochi showroom is spread across 1,451 sqft, it added.

Speaking at the Delhi launch, Mr. Eishin Chihana, Chairman, Yamaha Motor India Group of Companies, said, "As a part of 'The Call of the Blue' brand campaign, Yamaha is excited to announce the launch of the 1st Blue Square showroom in Delhi. The

northern region is an extremely important market for Yamaha. Through these premium outlets, we aim to offer captivating digital and personal experiences while keeping in mind the customer preferences."

In Kochi, he said, "The southern market is extremely important for Yamaha and these premium outlets will further support in expanding our reach in the region."



Porsche opens dealerships in Chennai and Bengaluru

GERMAN sports luxury car manufacturer Porsche has appointed two new dealerships, one each in Chennai and Bengaluru, as part of plans to expand its footprint in the country.

The two business partners -- KUN Premium Cars in Chennai and VST Supercars in Bengaluru, with whom Porsche India has signed pacts for these dealerships -- have initiated operations out of interim facilities that provide a full suite of assistance to existing and future Porsche customers, including sales, service and spare parts, the company said.

Brand-new and state-of-the-art facilities are under construction and are planned to open next year, it added.

This announcement marks an important step for the company's presence in Southern India and is vital to Porsche's growth strategy across the country, said Mr Manolito Vujicic, Brand Director for Porsche India.

"The appointment of both partners to cater for our customers in Bengaluru and Chennai, respectively, concludes the first phase of our ambitious plan for the year. With these new facilities, we confirm our commitment to the market, and we plan to establish a Porsche network of nine locations by next year," he added.



Mr Manolito Vujicic,
Brand Director for
Porsche India.

Tata expands its service network

TATA Motors has announced the addition of 160 new service workshops for passenger vehicles in FY 21-22 to reach a total of 705 operational workshops as on April 1, 2022.

This expansion has helped increase the service coverage across 485 cities, increasing the number of cars serviced in FY22 by 30 pc as compared to the last fiscal.

Furthermore, the company has announced the introduction of EzServe – a unique customer-friendly two-wheeler-based service concept that aims to provide a safe and hassle-free service experience to customers at their doorstep. EzServe offers numerous benefits to the customer, including carrying out basic service, quick repairs, and resolution of concerns at their preferred location.

According to, Mr. Dimple Mehta – Head, Customer Care, Domestic and International Business, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles, "We at Tata Motors have extensively expanded our service network in the last 12 months to cater to our customer needs pan-India. Our endeavour is to enhance service touch-points with focus on shorter formats to make us adequately close to our Tata Motors customers."





Force Motors ties up with ASDC to enhance skillset at dealerships

PUNE-based auto major Force Motors has tied up with the Automotive Skills Development Council (ASDC) to recruit and to enhance skillset of the workforce at its dealerships. A service agreement in this regard was signed on April 7.

Mr. Ashutosh Khosla, President – Sales, Service and Marketing, Force Motors, said, "Through this strategic service agreement, we will work with ASDC to further up-skill the workforce at all our authorised sales and service outlets".

Mr. Arindam Lahiri, Chief Executive Officer, ASDC, said, "We are extremely happy to partner with Force Motors Limited as it will allow us to reach a large number of youth, who can be up skilled and subsequently gainfully employed at their dealerships."

The programme will enable all the candidates to develop relevant skills on futuristic vehicles too and become self-reliant, thereby, empowering the youth for a brighter future and at the same time fulfilling the broader vision of Skill India, he said.

ASDC is an industry-led initiative promoted by ACMA, SIAM and FADA jointly with NSDC and the Government of India to enhance the skill of the automotive industry to compete with international standards.



Mr. Arindam Lahiri,
Chief Executive
Officer, ASDC

ACMA hosts first farm equipment & implements localisation expo



(Right to Left)- Mr. Ujjwal Munjal, Managing Director at Rockman Industries Ltd and Founder Director at Hero Electronix, Mr. Vikrampati Singhania, Chairman- NR, ACMA & MD- J.K. Fenner (India) Ltd., Mr. Sunjay J Kapur, President, ACMA & Chairperson- SONA COMSTAR, Mr. T R Kesavan, Immediate Past President- TMA & Group President (Corporate Relations & Alliances) Tractors & Farm Equipment Ltd., US Ahuja, CMD, New Swan Group, Mr. Anmol Jain, Co-Chairman- NR, ACMA & MD Lumax Auto Technologies Ltd. and Mr. Vinnie Mehta, Director General, ACMA.

THE Automotive Component Manufacturers Association hosted the first- ever edition of farm equipment & implements localisation expo, in Ludhiana on April 6 and 7. It was aimed at showcasing latest development and excellence in auto component technologies for farm equipment by domestic component manufacturers.

The expo witnessed participation by more than 50 leading component suppliers with their latest products and technologies at display. It evinced keen interest from leading farm equipment manufacturers and OEMs such as TAFE, Mahindra & Mahindra, John Deere India, Escorts Group, Swaraj, CHN Industrial, JCB India among others.

A press release by ACMA said, the expo will be an annual feature as it endeavours to provide a unique platform to all the stakeholders for better business prospects and to develop a highly localised, resilient and robust supply chain.

Commenting on the need for sustainable development of the industry, Sunjay J. Kapur, President ACMA & Chairman, Sonacomstar, said, "The farm equipment industry across the world is transforming itself in light of the challenges on the

front of energy security, concern for the environment and reducing carbon footprint. With India declaring to achieve carbon neutrality by 2070, the automotive and the farm sector, together with all other verticals of the industry will have to work in unison towards the realisation of this national goal. Further, I am confident that the component manufacturers, with their eye on the changing landscape of the industry, are suitably investing to stay on the cutting edge of technology and relevant."



Mr Vinnie Mehta,
Director General
ACMA

Mr Vinnie Mehta, Director General, ACMA, said, "The agricultural sector has shown promising growth despite the pandemic, it recorded a sale of 9.6 lakh units in FY20-21 and another over 9 lakh units in first 11 months for FY21-22. Indeed, we are very proud of our tractor industry as it is world no.1 in terms of units produced as also a significant exporter. That apart, although the farm implements sector is at a nascent stage in our country, however it also holds great potential."

JLR opens bookings for Discovery Metropolitan

JAGUAR Land Rover India has opened bookings for the all-new Discovery Metropolitan edition.

The Metropolitan edition is available with the P360 Ingenium petrol engine delivering a power of 265 kW and 500 Nm of torque, and the D300 Ingenium diesel engine delivering a power of 221 kW and 650 Nm torque.

The new top-of-the-range Metropolitan edition is designed to offer a host of exterior and interior upgrades that add to its on-road urban appeal. It builds on the purposeful R-Dynamic HSE specification with Bright Atlas detailing for the grille and Discovery script.

Mr Rohit Suri, President and Managing Director, Jaguar Land Rover India, said: "Land Rover Discovery is perhaps the most versatile seven-seater SUV in the Indian market. The Metropolitan edition ups the value proposition for our customers with many upgrades, enhanced new age features and options as standard inclusions."



Mr Rohit Suri
President and Managing Director,
Jaguar Land Rover India



It provides a host of generous standard specifications like a 31.24 cm (12.3) interactive driver display, wireless charging with phone signal booster, front cooler compartment, four-zone climate control and heated steering wheel. It also comes with heated and cooled rear seats, powered seat recline and an intelligent seat fold technology. The cabin is further enhanced with Titanium Mesh trim detailing.

The Metropolitan edition also features Land Rover's advanced Cabin Air Purification with PM2.5 air filtration which monitors air quality inside and filters out harmful particulates for a healthier interior environment.

Omega to set up e-3W manufacturing facility

ON the occasion of World Earth Day on April 22, Omega Seiki Mobility (OSM) announced that it will be setting up the world's largest electric three-wheeler manufacturing unit in Karnataka with an investment of \$250 million.

The new facility will be built in three phases and will have a production capacity of one million electric three-wheelers per annum.

The company will be raising funding in the form of equity as well as debt to build the OSM mega factory which is slated to commence production by FY24, said a press release.

The facility, it said, will be supplemented by its own supply chain of powertrains and battery packs. OSM is also in active negotiation with existing as well as new suppliers for setting up ancillary manufacturing facilities in the vicinity of the OSM mega factory which will be built over an area of 250 acres.

Mr. Uday Narang, Chairman and Founder, OSM, said " We want to be the market leader in the three-wheeler market, not just in India but the world and the new OSM mega factory with a capacity of 1 million units is the first step towards this goal."



Mr. Uday Narang,
Chairman and
Founder, OSM



Hero Electric partners ElectricPe

HERO Electric has announced its partnership with EV charging platform ElectricPe to set up charging points for its customers.

The collaboration entails Hero Electric riders to access ElectricPe's charging network, as the company recently committed to setting up 1,00,000 charging

points by the end of this year, said a press release. The charging point network will be based in residential complexes, offices, malls, and other establishments.

Mr. Sohinder Gill, CEO, Hero Electric, said, "A robust charging network is crucial for the growing EV sector for faster adoption of EVs across the segment. This association will provide a seamless charging and EV riding experience to customers by easing the accessibility through ElectricPe's charging points that are getting installed on a large scale across the country."

Mr. Avinash Sharma, Co-Founder & CEO, ElectricPe, said, "We are thrilled to partner with the biggest players in India - it validates the trust we bring to the market. The association with Hero Electric will further our goal to bring clean and affordable access to charging to a billion Indians, right at their doorstep."



TVS partners with Rapido

TVS Motor Company announced a strategic partnership with Rapido, a leading on-demand delivery and mobility platform, by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

As part of the MoU, TVS Motor and Rapido will collaborate by leveraging synergies of their respective businesses in the fast-moving mobility market, said a press release.

Mr. Sudarshan Venu, Joint Managing Director said, "Rapido has built a strong user base of Captains and Riders and is the leading bike-taxi platform in India today. We believe we can expand our reach in the mobility and hyper-local segments using high-quality, connected products from the TVS Electric portfolio and financing from our Group. We believe that TVS Motor, TVS Credit and Rapido can be long-term strategic partners as this ecosystem matures further."

Mr. Aravind Sanka, Co-founder at Rapido, said, "Rapido has envisaged plugging first and last-mile daily commuting gaps in India, not just in metros, but beyond in Tier-2 and 3, as well. We are delighted with this strategic partnership with TVS Motor Company, which is an extension of our vision and will bring us a step closer to our goals."



Sonae EV launches universal charging station at Pune

SONAE EV, an upcoming electric mobility company, recently launched a universal charging station for electric two-wheelers.

It was unveiled by Mr Aaditya Thackeray, Maharashtra Minister of Environment and Tourism and Dr. P. Anbalagan, CEO, MIDC, at Pune.

Mr Subhash Desai, Minister of Industries & Mining; Mr Anil Parab, Minister of Transport; and Mr Uday Samant, Minister of Higher & Technical Education, also witnessed the demo of the charging station, said press release by the company.

The charging station features a compact, portable and universal 3.3KW AC charger with a 5 Amp/15 Amp plug that can be installed on a single phase 230 volt electric supply to power any electric two-wheeler, three-wheeler and four-wheeler hassle-free.

The charging station can be wall mounted or arranged on a pedestal and displays safety features such as auto cut-off for an over/under voltage situation, over temperature and earth disconnection; including an emergency stop button



GreenCell unveils NueGo, its intercity e-mobility coach brand



GREENCELL Mobility on April 22 announced NueGo as the brand name of its first pan-India intercity electric mobility coach.

NueGo, said a press release, is aimed at the new-age traveller and is India's first intercity electric mobility bus brand with initial plans of having services across 24 cities.

The company announced plans for rollout of 750 premium AC e-buses across key intercity routes pan-India. The bus services offering will be available across major cities in the country. The gross CO2 emission avoided over the lifetime of these buses would be 56,154 tonnes while 4,125 new jobs will be created, said the release.

Mr Ashok Agarwal, MD & CEO, GreenCell Mobility, said, "NueGo as a brand is committed to serving global citizens of India by ensuring every stage of their journey feels nothing less than 'world class'."

Erisha signs MoU with ARAI

ERISHA Agritech, a Rana Group company, has entered into an agreement with The Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI), towards design and development of advanced powertrain systems and components for electric vehicles, and hydrogen fuel cells.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was inked to this effect between the two companies. Dr. Reji Mathai, Director of ARAI, and Mr Sudhir Rana, Director Operations of Erisha Agritech Private Limited, signed MoU



According to Mr. Sudhir Rana, "The MoU with The Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) is a major step for us, as it would immensely benefit the design and development projects we undertake. The concept of design and the development of advanced powertrain systems and components for EVs, and also hydrogen fuel cells we would work on would actually be propelled to a whole new level with the agreement."

Greaves Electric partners Mesha Energy Solutions

GREAVES Electric Mobility has entered into a partnership with Mesha Energy Solutions, an energy storage technology company based in Bengaluru.

With this association, the company aims to improve the battery technology for its products across the portfolio and expand its presence, said a press release.

Mr Ram Rajappa, Chief Technology Officer, Greaves Electric Mobility, said, "Battery is an integral part of EV and this association with the company is part of our strategy to create an enabling and robust EV ecosystem."

Mr Kannankote Sriram, Founder of Mesha, said, "We are excited about our partnership with Greaves Electric Mobility as the wide network of the company will help us to take our solutions to millions, hence establishing a stronger integration for Indian and



Tata rolls out 4,00,000th Tiago

TATA Motors on April 21 commenced celebrations of its brand Tiago achieving the 4,00,000-sales mark with a signature rollout from its home ground, the Sanand facility in Gujarat.

The company has launched #Tiago4ever campaign to celebrate with its employees and customers across all Tata Motors offices, plants and customer touch-points.

Launched in 2016 under the Impact design philosophy, Tiago has redefined the hatch segment with its sporty design, superior drivability, and best-in-class safety features, said a press release by the automotive brand.

Mr. Rajan Amba, Vice President, Sales, Marketing and Customer Care, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd, said, "This is indeed a historic milestone for Tata Motors as Tiago is the first car to complete this milestone in a short span. Tiago has been a key product in our Turnaround 2.0 strategy and since its launch has been successful in grabbing a sizeable market share in the most crowded segment in the auto industry."



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

Solis hits 13-k milestone

SOLIS Yanmar, one of the world's leading tractor brands, has achieved a milestone of 13,000th tractor rollout in FY22, just two years after its Indian debut.

Speaking on the milestone, Mr. Raman Mittal, Joint Managing Director, Solis Yanmar, said, "It gives me immense pleasure to share that all our hard work over the last few years built a strong platform for us to achieve historical milestone of 13,000th tractor rollout in just two years of Indian market presence. Our joint venture with Yanmar continues to be fruitful and we are well positioned to capitalise on the 100 years heritage of Japanese technology and will keep innovating for 100 years ahead."



Mahindra ties up with CSC Grameen eStore



MAHINDRA & Mahindra on April 12 announced its partnership with CSC Grameen eStore for its small commercial vehicle (SCV) range of products. CSC Grameen eStore is a subsidiary of CSC eGovernance Services India.

As a part of this association, the CSC Village Level Entrepreneur (VLE) network will serve as M&M touch-point in over seven lakh villages across the country, further aiding and simplifying the process of enquiries and purchases. This will be processed digitally by the VLE to facilitate information, test drive and/or delivery by an authorised Mahindra dealer. The service is available pan-India.



Mr Amit Sagar,
Business Head – SCV at
Automotive division,
Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd.,

Mr Amit Sagar, Business Head – SCV at Automotive division, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., said, "With the growing internet penetration facilitating better access to information, this partnership is a suitable step to further strengthen our rural foothold and there is no better partner than CSC Grameen eStore to help us improve our customer experience."

Mahindra delivers over 500 Bolero units in J&K under 'Project Mumkin'

MAHINDRA & MAHINDRA announced handover of over 500 Bolero Pickup vehicles in Jammu and Kashmir under 'Project Mumkin', a customised livelihood generation programme by the J&K Administration.

The Mission Youth J&K and the vehicle manufacturers are providing financial assistance to the youth in the region to acquire new small commercial vehicles (SCVs) to create avenues for sustainable livelihood.

By participating in 'Project Mumkin', M&M is supporting the J&K youth with entrepreneurial opportunities to earn a livelihood, promote business ownership and strengthen their trade practices.

Mission Youth, J&K, is implementing the scheme through district-level committees constituted for the purpose. Under this initiative, it is offering a special incentive of Rs 80,000 or 10 per cent of the on-road price of the small commercial vehicle (whichever is lower). Additionally, the vehicle manufacturer is offering a discount, matching the incentive as contributed by Mission Youth.



BMW launches BS-VI versions of its adventure bikes in India

THE new BMW F 850 GS and the new BMW F 850 GS Adventure were launched in India on April 14. The BS-VI avatars of the popular adventure motorcycles will be available as completely Built-up Units (CBU) in the country, from June this year.

Mr. Vikram Pawah, President, BMW Group India said, "The world has no limits, and the GS has been built for riders to embark on a journey into the unknown. Experience the 'Spirit of GS' with a companion that lets your curiosity run free – regardless of where your travels take you. The BMW F 850 GS and BMW F 850 GS Adventure bikes are perfectly streamlined for quenching your off-road riding ambitions."



Mr. Vikram Pawah

President, BMW Group India

According to a press release, the standard equipment has been immensely enhanced compared to previous version in the market. The new BMW F 850 GS will be available in 'Pro' profile with the Style Rallye Package. This profile offers power and torque, featuring even more distinctive touring characteristics coupled with ultimate off-road ability.

The new BMW F 850 GS Adventure on the other hand is designed for long trips and demanding terrains. With enhanced standard equipment like the TFT display and BMW Motorrad Connected, the USB charge port as well as ABS Pro and DTC, this dual-sport motorcycle is even better prepared for long tours around the globe. The new BMW F 850 GS Adventure will be available in India in the 'Pro' profile with the Style Rallye or Style Triple Black Package.





Yamaha launches YZF-R15M WGP 60th anniversary edition

NDIA Yamaha Motor on April 11 launched the World GP 60th anniversary edition of its flagship 155cc super-sport motorcycle YZF-R15M.

With the launch of this edition, YZF-R15M has got even more enticing with the iconic white and red 'speed block' colour scheme which includes the gold alloy wheels, Yamaha factory race-bike gold tuning fork emblems, black levers and special commemorative badging on the fuel tank, said a press release.

The new edition is powered by a 155cc, 4-stroke, liquid-cooled, SOHC, 4-valve engine that produces maximum power of 18.4 PS at 10,000rpm, with a torque output of 14.2 Nm at 7,500rpm. The fuel-injected motor with variable valve actuation (VVA) is mated to a six-speed gearbox.



Mr. Eishin Chihana,
Chairman, Yamaha Motor
India Group of Companies

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Eishin Chihana, Chairman, Yamaha Motor India Group of Companies, said: "The YZF-R15M in the WGP 60th anniversary livery is more than just a reminder of our racing legacy, it's a milestone showcasing more than 500 World Grand Prix wins that Yamaha has achieved since 1961."

Apollo Digital Innovation Hub in UK

APOLLO Tyres has announced the launch of its Digital Innovation Hub in London. As part of the company's digital strategy to implement Industry 4.0, the Innovation Hub will use Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning technologies to solve complex manufacturing problems, said a press release by the tyre-maker.

The hub is partnering with Glasgow University and is also implementing an ongoing internship programme for STEM students (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) as part of the UK Government strategy.

The Innovation Hub is a result of Apollo Tyres' five-year growth plan which involves significant investment in technology and cloud infrastructure. The strategic digital applications for the Digital Innovation Hub are being engineered and architected in the UK, and specialist companies in London are being consulted to help with complex application development.



Michelin first brand to get 4-star rating from the BEE

MICHELIN has become the first tyre brand in the country to be accredited with the recently-introduced star labelling programme of the Government which is aimed at improving sustainability and performance standards for tyres.

Michelin X Multi Energy Z tyre has been awarded the industry's first fuel savings label with a 4-Star rating by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE).

The tubeless truck and bus tyre is manufactured and designed by Michelin in India and offers robust fuel savings, longevity with multiple re-treads and safety on Indian terrain, said a press release by the tyre-maker.

Mr Ranganathan Bhuvaramurthy, Executive Director, Michelin India Chennai Plant, said "As a champion of high performance and fuel-efficient tyres throughout our innovation history, we are delighted to receive the first star labelling for our made-in-India tyre, reinforcing our leadership in both innovation and manufacturing."



Mr Devender Singh, Commercial Director B2B, Michelin India, said: "Fuel is number cost for any fleet owner and fluctuation fuel price is major concern in recently. This first 4 Star rating for Michelin X Multi Energy Z opens a greater opportunity for us with fleet customers, who are environment and total cost of ownership conscious."

Bridgestone opens institute for mobility solutions in India

BRIDGESTONE India on April 12 inaugurated its Mobility Solutions Institute in the country. Through this state-of-the-art facility, the company aims to enable its various stakeholders, employees, dealers and partners to enhance their knowledge on tyre technology and related mobility solutions, said a press release.

This Institute will assist stakeholders in staying updated on mobility solutions and tyre technology advancements respectively. This corporate university will also focus on educating employees and external stakeholders about mobility solutions trends and new product features. As a result, their potential to create, sell and service the industry and the consumer will be enhanced, said the release.

The centre would showcase an AR/VR experience

that allows real time solutions that can be provided for damaged tyres or any assistance for technicians at remote locations. It would also include a tyre shop in a virtual world where products, its application and advantages can be viewed.

The faculty for the institute currently comprises of leaders and domain experts from within the organisation.

"As one of the global leaders in the mobility space, we want to bring in worldwide best practices for up-skilling relevant stakeholders in the business. This will help us further integrate with them through learning and knowledge sharing in tyres, related services and solutions in mobility," said Mr Parag Satpute, Managing Director, Bridgestone India.



Spinny launches luxury platform

SPINNY, a full-stack used car buying and selling platform, has launched its luxury segment Spinny Max.

The platform, said a press release, marks the first used luxury cars offering that operates at a national scale and offers an assortment of over 500 cars - including marquees such as Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi, Jaguar and Land Rover with pan-India delivery service through 250 cities.

Mr Niraj Singh, Founder & CEO, Spinny, said: "Spinny was founded on the principle that everyone deserves a quality car. Six years down the line, seeing young India's aspirational consumption and its appetite for luxury vehicles, Spinny Max aims to create a niche in the market for luxury automobiles - making accessible luxury a reality for young men and women."



Tata bags 1,300-CV order from VRL

TATA Motors has bagged an order of 1,300 commercial vehicles from VRL Logistics Limited, a leader in surface logistics in the country.

The order comprises vehicles from Medium & Heavy Commercial Vehicle and Intermediate & Light Commercial Vehicle range.

Mr. Rajesh Kaul, Vice-President, Sales & Marketing, Commercial Vehicle Business Unit, Tata Motors, said, "We are delighted to secure the prestigious order of 1,300 vehicles from VRL Logistics Ltd. I'm confident that our vehicles will bring great value to their operations."



Mr. Rajesh Kaul,
Vice-President,
Sales & Marketing, Commercial
Vehicle Business Unit, Tata
Motors,



TKM launches 'Hum Hai Hybrid' campaign

Towards faster adoption of electrified vehicles, Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) on April 19 launched a campaign, titled 'Hum Hai Hybrid', through specially curated web video series.

It is an initiative to create awareness among consumers and the larger society about the overall benefits of self-charging hybrid electric vehicles (SHEVs) and its potential contribution to national objectives, said a press release. With this digital campaign, TKM's efforts are to foster a faster shift towards 'mass electrification' across the country, it added.

Mr. Atul Sood, Associate Vice-President (Sales and Strategic Marketing), TKM, said, "As global pioneers of electrified vehicle technologies, our aim is to drive awareness about mobility solutions which are practical and sustainable, thereby immensely contributing to the overall social benefits of the consumers and environment at large."



HMIF telemedicine clinics in Gujarat

HYUNDAI Motor India Foundation (HMIF), the philanthropic arm of Hyundai Motor India, on April 11 announced the inauguration of three more telemedicine clinics Gujarat, expanding its public health initiative 'Sparsh Sanjeevani'.

According to a press release, 'Sparsh Sanjeevani' is a nurse-assisted satellite clinic that serves patients through technology. It focuses on treatment and preventive healthcare & creating awareness towards following a healthy lifestyle.

Mr. Puneet Anand, AVP & Group Head - Corporate Affairs, HMIL, said, "These three additional telemedicine clinics in the rural Gujarat will significantly strengthen the medical ecosystem in the state. Through Sparsh Sanjeevani, we intend to make India healthier, which will lead to a motivated workforce, with increased economic output."

HMIF already has two satellite clinics operational in Alwar district of Rajasthan.



GLOBAL EYE



Audi e-tron GT wins at World Car Awards

THE Audi e-tron GT quattro1 was a big winner at this year's World Car Awards, which were presented for the 18th time in New York.

Nominated in the categories World Electric Vehicle of the Year, World Performance Car, and World Car Design of the Year, the e-tron GT quattro1 took home the title of World Performance Car at the world's biggest and most prestigious new car awards ceremony, dubbed the 'Oscars of the automotive world.'

More than 100 auto journalists from around the world thoroughly tested the cars that qualified and then voted on them for the 2022 honours.

"We're happy that the fully electric Audi e-tron GT quattro1 was a finalist in three categories only a year after its world premiere," said Mr Oliver Hoffmann, Member of the Board of Management for Technical Development, after the awards programme. "The fact that the Audi e-tron GT quattro1 takes the title of 'World Performance Car' and thus this award goes to Audi for the fifth time makes us particularly proud, of course."



Autoliv backs UN Road Safety Fund



AUTOLIV, Inc., the worldwide leader in automotive safety systems, is supporting the United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF) to strengthen insights into road safety challenges, contribute to safer mobility and help deliver Autoliv's goal of saving 100,000 lives a year.

By exchanging valuable insights, knowledge, and data, Autoliv and UNRSF will actively support the Global Plan for the Second Decade of Action 2021-2030, which seeks to prevent at least 50 pc of road traffic deaths and injuries by 2030.

"Cross-sector collaboration is key if the world is to advance its positions on the Sustainable Development Goals. Supporting the UNRSF is a way for Autoliv to share our expertise while gaining additional insights into the main road safety challenges facing the world today," said Mr Mikael Bratt, CEO & President, Autoliv.

Bridgestone develops tyres for Mercedes' Vision EQXX



BRIDGESTONE has been selected by Mercedes-Benz AG as the development partner for tyres for its technology programme, the Mercedes-Benz Vision EQXX.

The futuristic electric vehicle is the car manufacturer's answer to making EVs more efficient and increasing electric range to a new level. Bridgestone engineers collaborated with Mercedes-Benz to create custom-designed tyres that have contributed to increasing the vehicle's efficiency and thus driving range to a real-world 1,000km on a single charge.

Bridgestone designed bespoke Turanza Eco tyres that combine its proprietary and lightweight Enliten technology to reduce tyre rolling resistance and weight by up to 20 per cent. In collaboration with Mercedes-Benz's aerodynamic department, the tyre also comes with optimised sidewalls and a bead area design that match the covers mounted on the 20-inch, forged-magnesium wheels, greatly improving the tyre's aerodynamics.

Vemo of Mexico buys 1,000 units of BYD D1

VEMO, the largest new energy transport operator in Mexico, recently purchased 1,000 units of BYD D1 from BYD Mexico, among which 200 units have been put into operation. The 1,000 units of D1 formed the largest EV taxi fleet outside of China, said a press release.

D1 is equipped with BYD's Blade Battery, providing a driving range of up to 418 km. Its right rear door is designed as a side sliding one, which is easy for passengers to get on and off the car and can avoid blind spot accidents. Its wide backseat space also provides passengers with comfort.

Mr Alejandro Rosette, Co-Director of Mobility Platforms of Vemo, said, "Having BYD's D1 models as part of the VEMO's electric fleet will allow us to increase our operational capabilities with mobility platforms and the availability of our recharging infrastructure. The fleet can save 20,000 tonnes of carbon emissions each year, which is equivalent to planting one million trees."



Hyundai Ioniq 5 wins big at the World Car Awards

HYUNDAI Motor's Ioniq 5 won big at the prestigious 2022 World Car Awards, with the all-electric crossover named overall World Car of the Year, World Electric Vehicle of the Year and World Car Design of the Year.

World Car Awards results were announced at a ceremony held at the New York International Auto Show (NYIAS).

According to a press release, the innovative battery electric vehicle (BEV), which has already won numerous international accolades, was considered alongside 27 competitor models launched in 2021, ultimately claiming victory over other finalists in all three categories in which it was nominated.

"We are truly honored to receive these prestigious awards, which recognise the talent and hard work of all our people and business partners at Hyundai Motor Company. Our vision is to enable Progress for Humanity, and this endorsement of our approach will serve to embolden our commitment to make this vision a reality," said Mr Jaehoon Chang, President and CEO of Hyundai Motor Company.



JLR Open Innovation Strategy

Jaguar Land Rover on April 27 announced a new Open Innovation strategy, to accelerate next-generation technology and sustainability to support its modern luxury vision for the business, its partners, and customers.



Open Innovation will drive collaborations with start-ups, scale-ups and like-minded external organisations on electrification, connectivity, digital services, metaverse, intelligent enterprise, manufacturing, supply chain and sustainability, said a press release.

As part of the new global strategy, Jaguar Land Rover will launch a first-of-its kind innovation hub in the UK, in partnership with the corporate innovation platform and investor, Plug and Play. In addition, two separate partnerships with Cubo Itau and Firjan will provide access to the vibrant Latin American start-up ecosystem.

Kia bags multiple wins at iF Design Awards 2022

KIA secured multiple high-profile accolades at the prestigious iF Design Awards 2022. The EV6 all-electric crossover played a central role in all four of Kia's iF Design Award wins.

As well as securing the 'Automobiles/Vehicles' design award, the EV6 was in the spotlight for three other category honors: 'Shops/Showrooms' (for the EV6 Unplugged Ground brand space), 'Product Interface' (for the EV6's Infotainment System) and 'Textile/Wall/Floor' (for the GEONIC three-dimensional hybrid material used in the EV6's cabin).

With these latest accolades, the design-led Kia EV6 maintains an extraordinary winning streak, said a press release. Since it premiered in 2021, the vehicle has been the subject of critical acclaim from media around the world, it said.

This year, the iF Design Awards attracted over 11,000 entries from 57 countries and highlighted an array of outstanding achievements in the field of design.





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+91-9871106090, +91-9911002299 hitesh@kklights.com, hitesh@krisstallight.com