

TOP STORY LEAPMOTOR & STELLANTIS JV FEATURE AUTO CHINA 2024 | BHARAT DRIVE

INDIA  
TODAY  
GROUP

# Auto Today

www.autotodayindia.com  
₹ 150

RNI NO. DELENG/2015/65361

## ALL NEW SWIFT

DRIVEN

MARUTI SUZUKI

NEW HEART AND UPDATED STYLING FOR INDIA'S FAVOURITE HATCHBACK



ROAD TEST

### GERMAN COMPACT SUV FACE-OFF

BMW X1 TAKES ON MERCEDES-BENZ GLA



RIDDEN

### BAJAJ PULSAR NS400Z

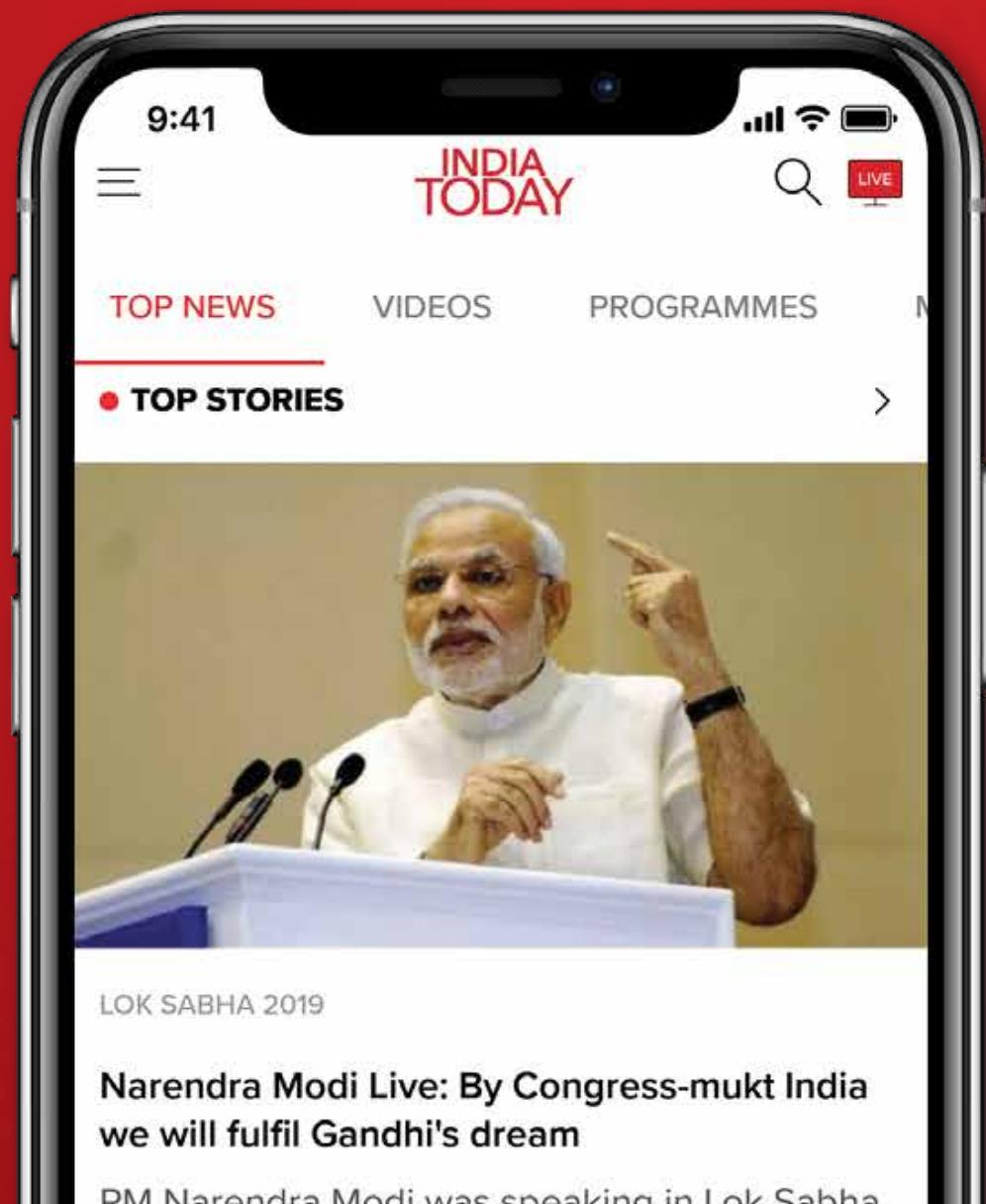
LARGEST, MOST POWERFUL,  
TECH-LADEN PULSAR EVER



INDIA  
TODAY

# BREAKING NEWS

JUST A TAP AWAY



DOWNLOAD THE APP NOW

AVAILABLE ON



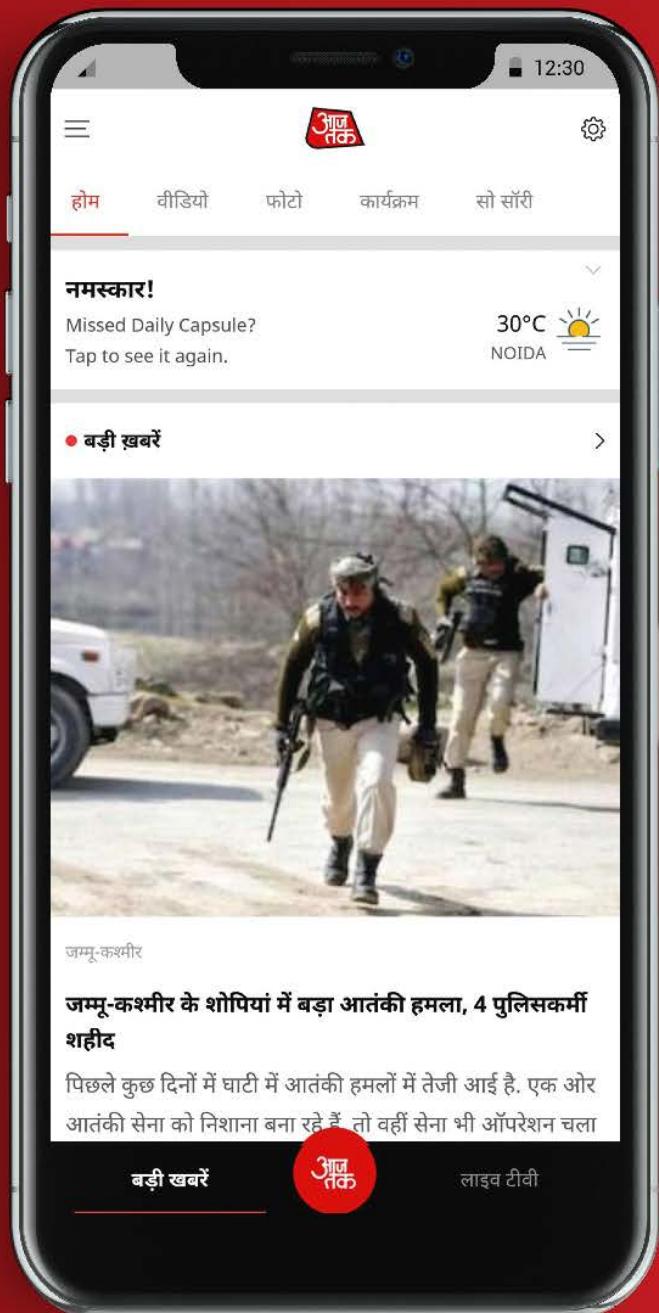
# देश का नं. 1 हिंदी न्यूज ऐप

जुड़े रहिए हर खबर से,  
कहीं भी, कभी भी

अभी डाउनलोड करें

aajtak.in/app

उपलब्ध है





**THINK. UNDERSTAND. INVEST.**

Many influencers are sharing stock tips/advice and making tall promises while educating investors about stock market investment. This may lead to major financial losses if blindly followed.

**Be a smart investor and always do your own research before investing.**

---

Visit [www.nseindia.com/invest/be-a-smart-investor](http://www.nseindia.com/invest/be-a-smart-investor)  
or Scan the QR code for more details.



GROUP EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Aroon Purie  
VICE CHAIRPERSON AND EXECUTIVE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Kalli Purie  
GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Dinesh Bhatia  
GROUP EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Raj Chengappa  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Manoj Sharma

**EDITORIAL**  
**AUTO TODAY**

India Today Mediaplex,  
FC - 8, Sector 16A, Film City, Noida - 201 301, UP  
Tel: (0120) 4807100, [www.autotodayindia.com](http://www.autotodayindia.com)

**EDITOR** Yogendra Pratap  
**ASSOCIATE EDITOR** Rahul Ghosh  
**ASSISTANT EDITOR** Dipayan Dutta  
**PRINCIPAL CORRESPONDENT** Dhruv Saxena  
**SENIOR CORRESPONDENT** Abhinav Jakhar  
**CORRESPONDENT** Anagh Bhaskar  
**ART DIRECTOR** Gurdeep Bhalla  
**SENIOR DESIGNER** Ashok Sharma  
**INTERNATIONAL EDITOR** Vitoldas Milius

**PRODUCTION** Harish Aggarwal (Chief of Production), Narendra Singh

**SENIOR ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER (IMPACT)** Suparna Kumar

**IMPACT TEAM** Senior General Managers: Mayur Rastogi (North), Jitendra Lad (West), General Manager: Syed Naveed (Chennai)

**MARKETING** Vivek Malhotra (Group Chief Marketing Officer)

**CONSUMER MARKETING SERVICES**

GL Ravikumar (Chief Mgr-Subscriptions & Distribution)

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** For assistance contact Customer Care India Today Group, C-9, Sector-10, Noida (UP) - 201301. Email: [wcare@intoday.com](mailto:wcare@intoday.com) | Phone / WhatsApp: +91 8597 778 778 (Monday to Friday, 10 am - 6 pm)

**NEWSSTAND SALES** Deepak Bhatt (Senior GM-National Sales), Vipin Bagga (GM-Operations), Rajeev Gandhi (GM-North), Yogen Godhanlal Gautam (Regional Sales Mgr-West) **Delhi NCR** Auto Today, A1-A2, Ground Floor, Enkay Centre, V.N. Commercial Complex, Udyog Vihar, Phase V, Gurgaon -122 016, Tel.: (0124) 4948 400, Fax: (0124) 4948 919 **Mumbai** 1201, 12th Floor, Tower 2 A, One Indiabulls Centre, Jupiter Mills, S. B. Marg, Lower Parel (West), Mumbai - 400 013. Tel: (022) 69193355, Fax: (022) 69193375

**Pune** Tel: (020) 2616849, Fax: (020) 26161782 **Ahmedabad** Tel: (079) 26560393, Fax: (079) 26565293 **Bangalore** 202-204, Richmond Towers, 12, Richmond Road, Bangalore. Tel: (080) 22212448/3037/4106 Fax: (080) 22218335 **Hyderabad** Tel: (040) 23400479 / 1657 / 2481, 23410100

Fax: (040) 23403484 **Chennai** 5th Floor, Main Building No. 443, Guna Complex, Anna Salai, Teynampet, Chennai - 600 018, Ph: 044-28478525, Fax: 044-24361942 **Chandigarh** Tel: 09815608630, Fax: (0172) 4661596 **Kolkata** 4th Floor, 52, JL Nehru Road, Kolkata-700 071. Tel: (033) 22825398/7726, Fax: (033) 22827254 **Kochi** Tel: (0484) 2377057,2377058, Fax (0484) 2377059

**VOLUME 9, ISSUE 08, May 2024**

Auto Today reserves all rights throughout the world. Reproduction in any manner, in whole or part, in English or other languages, is prohibited. Auto Today does not take responsibility for returning unsolicited publication material. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent courts and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only.

• Printed and published by Manoj Sharma on behalf of LIVING MEDIA INDIA LIMITED. Printed at Thomson Press India Limited, 18-35 Milestone, Delhi Mathura Road, Faridabad-121007, (Haryana). Published at F-26, First Floor, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001. Editor: Yogendra Pratap

A MEMBER OF



A PART OF  
THE INDIA TODAY GROUP



# Editorial

## Modular platforms are the future of mobility

**B**MW continues to make the transition to include an electric powertrain as an offering along with a petrol, diesel and hybrid powertrain for each product in its model line-up. While the 7 Series has demonstrated that it is a brilliant idea, the X1 and the upcoming 5 Series continue to take that philosophy further. Electric is after all one of the powertrains and cars can be the same instead of making an all-new platform to put the electric powertrain in. While that is the case with the likes of the iX, which by itself is quite a successful model, there is no harm in designing and engineering brilliant products that can be made available with all possible powertrains!



On that note we drove the iX1 this month and I was pleasantly surprised at how much I like the car. I also used it for a Mumbai-Nashik round trip and found no problems in doing inter-city runs.

But of course, the big story this month is the rebirth of the Maruti Suzuki Swift that has undergone not only a bodily makeover but also a change of heart. The good thing is the engineers at Maruti Suzuki have gone to lengths to preserve the characteristics of the car that have endeared it to us over its previous three generations that it has been in India. The car has those sporty looks and the new engine plays its part as well with gruff and raspy tones that fit in well with the character of the car. It drives well too and though the company may have gone overboard with the sporty messaging, it is still inline with Swift's inherent genes. All the previous gen cars have won ICOTY and it will be interesting to see if this one can carry forward the legacy.

As usual this issue is packed with drives, rides and adventure as we head out to the mountains not once but twice, once as a part of an AJAI (Automotive Journalists Association of India) initiative in partnership with Mahindra and supported by JK Tyre and for the second time with Zippo.

Till next month, drive and ride safe, always be buckled up no matter where you are seated in the car and always wear a helmet when you ride.

**Yogendra Pratap**

Editor

[yogendra.pratap@intoday.com](mailto:yogendra.pratap@intoday.com)

@YogenPratap



## Top Story

### Leapmotor eyes Indian market

Stellantis Leapmotor JV will expand to Europe and Asia-Pacific markets by Q4 2024

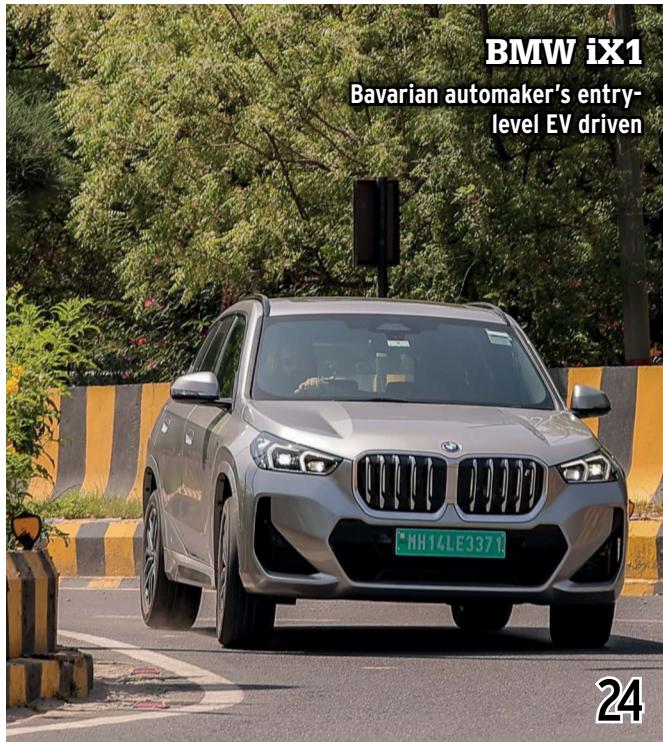
8



STELLANTIS

LEAPMOTOR

## New Cars





## Maruti Suzuki Swift

India's favourite hatch returns with a new look and engine

38

## Features



### Auto China 2024

50

**60 Zippo Adventures**  
We go off the grid to escape the rigours of city life

**82 AJAI Bharat Drive**  
Bringing forth the development story of India's road infrastructure

## Update

**10 Domestic News**  
**16 International News**

**20 Motorcycle News**  
**23 CV News**  
**114 Motorsport News**

## Road Test



### Mercedes-Benz GLA vs BMW X1

The only two diesel luxury compact SUVs fight for the crown

72

## Long Term

- 108 Maruti Suzuki Jimny**
- 110 Kia Sonet**
- 111 Hyundai Exter**
- 112 MG Comet**
- 113 Royal Enfield Himalayan**

## Motorcycle

### Ather Rizta

Family-oriented electric scooter ridden



88

### Bajaj Pulsar NS400Z

The largest, most-powerful Pulsar ever



94

### Kinetic E Luna

Iconic commuter moped makes an electric comeback



102





## ROADS OF PROGRESS

There was a time in our country when a road trip needed careful planning and this was because of road networks. Fast forward to 2024 and India's road network has become an engineering marvel, from uninterrupted expressways connecting major metropolitans, to weather-proofed roads through the most unyielding terrains. We joined the Bharat Drive, an initiative by Automotive Journalists Association of India (AJAI), Mahindra and JK Tyre in Srinagar to drive a convoy of Scorpio-Ns to Leh. Our aim? To shed light on the incredible progress our country's road networks have made. Read the full story on page no. 82. ↗

# Stellantis and Leapmotor announce joint venture

Entry into India is set for Q4 of 2024 and Leapmotor International also announced that it will begin operations in nine European countries from September 2024. **Abhinav Jakhar** has all the details

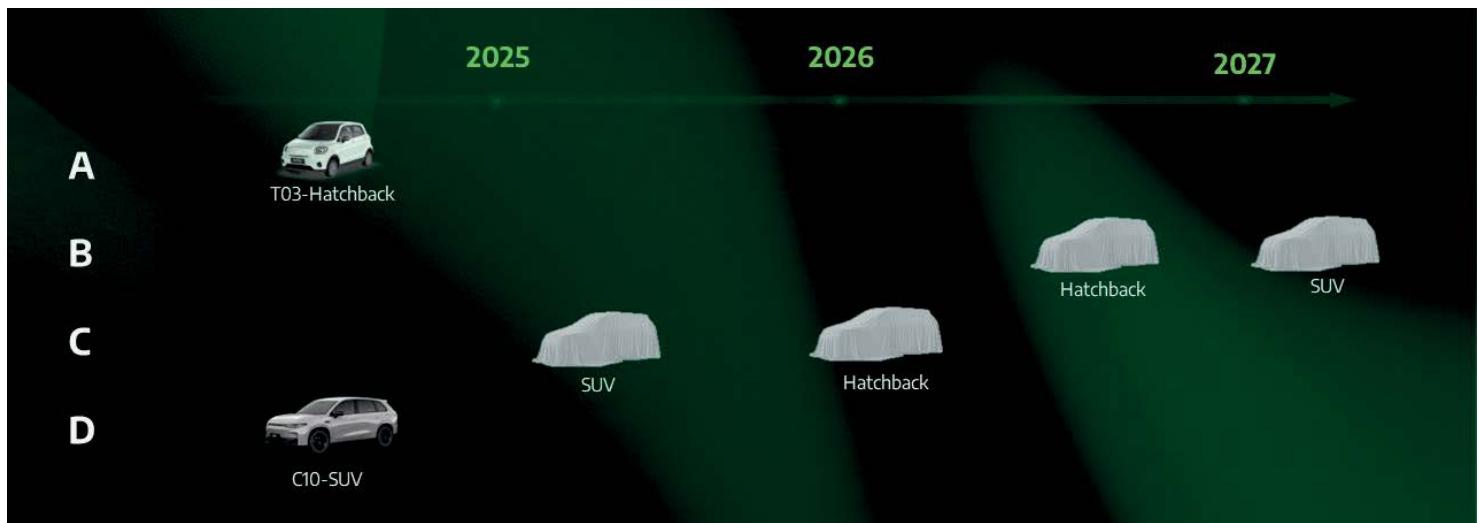


Leapmotor International, a Stellantis-led company with a 51:49 split between Stellantis and Leapmotor, has announced that it will commence operations in Europe by September 2024 through 200 points of sales by the end of the year with plans to expand to India & Asia Pacific, Middle East & Africa and South America starting in the fourth quarter of 2024. The freshly formed company hasn't laid out a concrete plan for India yet. It remains un-

clear if Leapmotor International will make use of Jeep and Citroën dealerships in India, or whether it will establish a completely new identity. Either way, it remains clear that the Indian electric vehicle sector will continue to receive attention from international automakers, looking to capitalise the growing market at home.

In October 2023, Stellantis announced an investment of €USD 1.5 billion or roughly Rs 12,532 crore to acquire approximately 21

per cent equity in Leapmotor, an automotive company ranked in the top three Chinese EV startup brands in 2023. The deal also outlined the formation of Leapmotor International, which would have exclusive rights for the export and sale, as well as manufacturing of Leapmotor products outside Greater China. Leapmotor was first established back in 2015, and was founded by Zhu Jiangming, an electrical engineer with over 30 years of technical experience. Leapmotor is head-

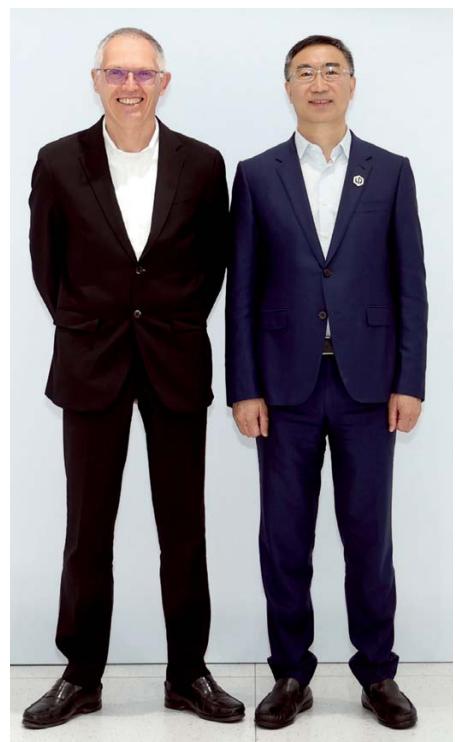


**THE FIRST MODELS TO COME TO INDIA FROM THIS NEW JOINT VENTURE WILL BE THE T03 HATCHBACK AND C10 SUV**

quartered in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China.

The first models to come from this new joint venture will be the T03 and C10 models, and Leapmotor International plans to introduce a new model every year for the next three years. The T03 is an electric hatchback which has a claimed WLTP range of 265km, while the C10 is an electric SUV with a claimed WLTP range of 240km. The C10 comes loaded with features like central integrated electronic and electrical architecture, cell-to-chassis (CTC) technology, and an intelligent cockpit. Apart from this, the C10 has also achieved a 5-star Euro NCAP safety rating, while the T03 was awarded the number one spot in the JD Power Initial Quality Study

in the small BEV segment. The Stellantis-Leapmotor JV initial launch plans will begin in Europe, leveraging Stellantis' distribution channels in France, Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Greece and Romania. In late 2024, Leapmotor will start its launch roll-out in the Middle East and Africa followed by India, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand and Malaysia as well as South America (Brazil and Chile). We expect the first product coming to India to be the T03 electric hatchback and then the C10 electric SUV. In terms of pricing, the T03 could compete with the likes of the Tata Punch EV, Tiago EV and Stellantis sibling, Citroen e-C3. The C10, on the other hand, is likely to sit closer to the MG ZS EV and BYD Atto 3 price wise.



(Top) From left, Carlos Tavares, CEO of Stellantis, and Jiangming Zhu, founder, chairman and CEO of Leapmotor. (Left) The Leapmotor C10 electric SUV is likely to arrive post the launch of the T03 electric hatchback in India. The brand could benefit from the recently announced incentives for EVs imported to India for companies looking to invest in local manufacturing in the coming years. Leapmotor could leverage Stellantis' existing network of Citroen and Jeep dealerships in India

## Fourth-gen Swift launched, gets new look and engine

**MARUTI SUZUKI** has launched the new Swift, which now enters its fourth generation. It is priced between Rs 6.49 lakh and Rs 9.65 lakh (ex-showroom), making it about Rs 30,000 more expensive on average. Visually, the new Swift still carries forward the familiar design language, but there are major changes. Every single body panel or element is new, which gives the new Swift a fresh yet familiar look. It sits on a 2,450mm wheelbase,

same as before, but it is 15mm longer, 40mm narrower and 30mm taller compared to the outgoing model. Inside, the layout is a familiar setup, as seen in the Baleno and Fronx. This means that it is more upmarket than before and gets a 9-inch infotainment display, new aircon vents and switches, and many features such as a wireless charger, rear aircon vents, LED foglamps, cruise control, automatic climate control, and electrically foldable ORVMs. The Swift now comes with the Z12E 1.2-litre three-cylinder petrol engine that produces 82bhp and 112Nm of torque, which compared to before is 8bhp less and 1Nm more. However, the Swift has a claimed fuel efficiency of 24.8kmpl to 25.75kmpl, making it one of the most efficient cars in India. 

### Variants & Price

Variant	Price
Swift LXi	6.49
Swift VXi	7.29
Swift VXi (O)	7.56
Swift VXi AGS	7.79
Swift VXi (O) AGS	8.06
Swift ZXi	8.29
Swift ZXi AGS	8.79
Swift ZXi +	8.99
Swift ZXi + AGS	9.49

\* All prices in lakh rupees, ex-showroom Delhi



## Audi Q3, Q3 Sportback & Q7 get Bold Editions

**AUDI HAS** added three new special editions to its portfolio in the form of the Q3, Q3 Sportback and Q7 Bold Edition. The Bold Edition is essentially a cosmetic pack which brings an exclusive look to these cars. The Q3 and Q3 Sportback get the sportier S Line package, and most of the exterior elements are blacked out, this includes the grille, air intakes, window line surround, wing mirrors, roof rails and the logo. The 18-inch alloys also get a dual-tone finish. Like its smaller siblings, the Q7 Bold Edition gets a blacked out grille, wing mirrors, window surrounds, roof rails and logos. There are no changes to the interiors, or the features list of the three cars. The Q3 Bold Edition is priced at Rs 54.65 lakh, while the Q3 Sportback Bold Edition is priced at Rs 55.71 lakh and the Q7 Bold Edition is priced at Rs 97.84 lakh (ex-showroom). 





(L-R) Hisashi Takeuchi, MD & CEO, Maruti Suzuki India Limited and Partho Banerjee, senior executive officer, Marketing & Sales, Maruti Suzuki India Limited with the new Swift

## XUV700 gets Blaze Edition, limited to 2,500 units



**MAHINDRA HAS** launched a new special edition of the XUV700, called the Blaze Edition. This is merely a cosmetic update, and the powertrains have been left untouched. The SUV comes with an exclusive exterior colour - Matte Blaze Red, which looks quite striking. The Blaze Edition also gets a black roof, black grille, ORVMs, alloys and B, C and D-pillars. Unlike the standard SUV, this special edition comes with an all-black interior, which gets red highlights on the centre console and the aircon vents. The seats too get red stitching. Based on the top-spec AX7 L trim, the Blaze edition is limited to 2,500 units and is available with petrol AT, diesel MT and diesel AT powertrains. Prices for the XUV700 Blaze Edition start at Rs 24.24 lakh (ex-showroom) for the diesel MT, which puts it about Rs 25,000 more than the equivalent AX7 L trim. 



## 3 Series gets new top-end M Sport Pro Edition

**BMW HAS** launched the 3 Series Gran Limousine M Sport Pro Edition priced at Rs 62.60 lakh (ex-showroom). This is a limited-run model, which sits on top of the 3 Series Gran Limousine range, and is priced Rs 2 lakh

more than the 330Li M Sport. The changes include a blacked-out kidney grille, adaptive LED headlamps with shadowline elements and a glossy-black diffuser at the rear. The only other addition to the package is the ADAS

suite. Mechanically, the sedan is the same as before and continues to use the same 2.0-litre turbo petrol which makes 258bhp and 400Nm of torque, which is the only engine option with the M Sport Pro Edition. 

# Mahindra XUV 3XO prices announced

**MAHINDRA HAS** announced the pricing for the XUV 3XO, which is the facelift for the XUV300. The SUV starts at Rs 7.49 lakh (ex-showroom) for the MX1 trim and goes up to Rs 15.49 lakh (ex-showroom) for the top-spec AX7 L trim. The update to the XUV300 brings in an all new look for the XUV 3XO, with a new face which has been inspired by Mahindra's upcoming BE range of electric cars. It gets new C-shaped LED DRLs, new

LED headlamps, a new grille, as well as a new full-width LED taillamp setup. The interiors are new for the 3XO, and include a cleaner design with fewer buttons. This is dominated by a 10.25-inch infotainment display which runs wireless smartphone mirroring and a fully digital instrument panel, similar to the one offered with the XUV400 EL Pro. There is a panoramic sunroof as well, which is first in the segment. There are

three engines on offer with the 3XO, a 1.2-litre turbo-petrol with 111bhp (TCMPFi), a 1.5-litre diesel with 117bhp and a 1.2-litre turbo-petrol making 131bhp (TGDi). All of these are available with both manual and automatic transmission options. Deliveries of the XUV 3XO have already commenced. 



(L-R) Mahindra & Mahindra's leadership team comprising R. Velusamy, president, Automotive Technology & Product Development, Rajesh Jejurikar, ED & CEO, Auto & Farm Sectors, Pratap Bose, chief design & creative officer and Nalinikanth Gollagunta, CEO, Automotive Division, with the new XUV 3XO



## Variants & Price

Engine	1.5L Diesel		1.2L TCMPFi petrol		1.2L TGDi petrol	
Transmission	MT	AT	MT	AT	MT	AT
MX1	-	-	7.49	-	-	-
MX2	9.99	-	-	-	-	-
MX2 Pro	10.39	-	8.99	9.99	-	-
MX3	10.89	11.69	9.49	10.99	-	-
MX3 Pro	11.39	-	9.99	11.49	-	-
AX5	12.09	12.89	10.69	12.19	-	-
AX5 L	-	-	-	-	11.99	13.49
AX7	13.69	14.49	-	-	12.49	13.99
AX7 L	14.99	-	-	-	13.99	15.49

\* All prices in lakh rupees, ex-showroom Delhi

# MG celebrates 100th birthday with special models



Satinder Singh Bajwa, chief commercial officer, MG Motor India with the 100 Year Limited Edition Astor, Comet, Hector and ZS EV

**MG MOTOR INDIA** is celebrating 100 years of the MG brand, and to mark the occasion has launched special editions of the Hector, Astor, ZS EV and Comet. These are mainly cosmetic updates to the vehicles, with all four cars featuring a green paint finish, which MG calls Evergreen. The interiors meanwhile get a blacked out look

and different, more premium upholstery, with green highlights and 100-Year Limited Edition lettering on the front headrests. Mechanically these cars are unchanged, and feature the same exact powertrain. The infotainment displays of all the models feature an exclusive green theme as well. Prices for the 100-Year Limited Edi-

tion models start at Rs 9.4 lakh for the Comet EV, Rs 14.81 lakh for the Astor, Rs 21.20 lakh for the Hector and Rs 24.18 lakh for the ZS EV (all prices ex-showroom). This is offered on the top-trim variants of each of these models. MG hasn't specified the number of units the brand will make for these limited edition models. 

## BMW M4 updated with a refreshed look, more power

**JUST A FEW** days after its global reveal at Beijing, BMW has brought the new M4 to India. The 2024 BMW M4 Competition is priced at Rs 1.53 crore (ex-showroom), which makes it about Rs 5 lakh costlier than before. The coupe is powered by a 3.0-litre twin-turbocharged straight-six engine which

pushes out 530bhp and 650Nm of torque, a bump of 20bhp. The power is sent to all the wheels, and the M4 can accelerate from 0 to 100kmph in 3.5 seconds. Visually, the M4 gets new adaptive LED headlamps and signature lights. At the rear, the taillamps feature a woven pattern, inspired from the limited-run

M4 CSL. It also gets a carbon roof, and some more minor changes which improve its aerodynamic efficiency. The cabin meanwhile gets a new three-spoke M steering wheel, and a 14.9-inch infotainment and a 12.3-inch instrumentation. BMW now offers more colours and trims to choose from. 



## 500bhp Porsche Cayenne GTS has arrived

**PORSCHE HAS** launched the new Cayenne GTS in India with prices starting at Rs 2 crore (ex-showroom), before options. The Cayenne GTS is offered in both SUV and Coupe body-styles, and the GTS badge means that this gets the SportDesign package as standard. This includes the gloss black side skirts, wheel arches, wing mirrors, grille and rear diffuser. The Cayenne GTS gets seven standard colours, while opting for the Legends or Paint to Sample options can set you back by almost Rs 20 lakh. The GTS gets an all black cabin, and features include 8-way adjustable front seats, 4-zone climate control, Matrix LED headlamps, panoramic sunroof, 14-speaker Bose audio system and the curved driver's display. The GTS is actually meant for perfor-

mance, and this comes from a 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8 churning out 500bhp and 660Nm of torque. Paired to an 8-speed transmission, this engine helps the SUV reach 100kmph in just

4.4 seconds. Porsche Adaptive Air suspension system is standard on the GTS. 



## Third-gen Panamera gets new look, more comfort

**THE NEW PORSCHE** Panamera has made its way to our shores, with prices starting at Rs 1.70 crore (ex-showroom). Powered by a 2.9-litre twin-turbo V6 the Panamera has access to 348bhp and 500Nm of torque, which is an increase of 23bhp and 50Nm over the older engine. This is mated to an 8-speed automatic, with a 0

to 100kmph sprint coming in 5.1 seconds and a top speed of 272kmph. Amongst the changes for the new-gen is the inclusion of the new Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM) as standard. Amongst the Panamera's standard options are the matrix LED headlamps, parking assist, drive mode selector, 12.3-inch infotainment dis-

play, 8-way adjustable electric seats and eight airbags. The changes to the exterior include a new headlamp design, new LED DRLs, while the interiors get new displays. The gear selector has been moved right next to the steering wheel, while the steering now features the drive mode selector. ☰



## BMW X3 gets M Sport Shadow Edition



**BMW HAS** launched the X3 xDrive 20d M Sport Shadow Edition, which is priced at Rs 74.90 lakh (ex-showroom), a bump of Rs 2.40 lakh over the X3 20d M Sport. This is strictly a cosmetic change over the standard SUV. Changes to the M Sport Shadow Edition include the gloss black grille, window surrounds, roof rails and tail pipes. The 19-inch M alloys come in a shade of silver. The SUV can be opted for in two colours - Brooklyn Grey and Carbon Black. Inside, the SUV gets new leather upholstery in dual-tone Mocha and Black with blue stitching. The SUV continues with the 2.0-litre four-cylinder turbo diesel which makes 190bhp and 400Nm, with power sent to all wheels via the xDrive AWD. ☰

# Updated Force Gurkha gets new 5-door variant

**FORCE HAS** launched the new Gurkha which also debuts the 5-door variant of the off-road SUV. The Gurkha can now be had with 3-door and 5-door configurations, with a host of updates over the older car. Both the variants get the 2.6-litre Mercedes-sourced diesel mill which makes 140bhp and 320Nm of torque which is a big jump from the 91bhp which it had access to earlier. Power, of course, can be sent to all the

wheels. The cabin now has more features such as a 9.0-inch infotainment display, which runs Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, a digital instrument cluster, powered ORVMs, tilt and telescopic steering wheel adjust, rear view camera and a TPMS. Prices for the new Gurkha range from Rs 16.75 lakh (ex-showroom) for the 3-door variant and Rs 18 lakh (ex-showroom) for the 5-door variant. 



## Isuzu D-Max range gets safety update

**ISUZU HAS** updated the D-Max pickup, which includes new safety features as well as certain cosmetic changes to the top-spec V-Cross Z Prestige trim. The V-Cross now comes with dark grey bits instead of chrome, and new 18-inch blacked out alloys. Manual models of the D-Max now

come with traction control, ESC and hill start/descent assist as well as three-point seatbelts for all occupants with reminders. The D-Max range starts at Rs 21.20 lakh for the Hi-Lander, Rs 25.52 lakh for the V-Cross Z and Rs 26.92 lakh (ex-showroom) for the V-Cross Z Prestige. 



## Six airbags standard for Skoda Slavia & Kushaq



**CZECH AUTOMAKER** Skoda has updated the Slavia and Kushaq and added six airbags as standard to the SUV and sedan duo. This also means that the prices have been increased, with the Kushaq priced from Rs 11.99 lakh to Rs 19.79 lakh and the Slavia priced from Rs 11.63 lakh to Rs 18.83 lakh (all prices ex-showroom). Before the update, only the top-trim Style variants were equipped with six airbags, with lower trims getting only two airbags. The increase in prices amounts to a rise of Rs 10,000 on the base variants. Other than this, both the Slavia and Kushaq remain unchanged on every front. 

## Magnite gets Geza CVT Special Edition



**TO CELEBRATE** the 1st anniversary of the Magnite Geza Edition, Nissan has launched the Geza CVT Special edition. In place of the non-turbo petrol motor, the Geza is now powered by the 1.0-litre turbo-petrol which makes 100bhp, and comes paired to a CVT. On the features front, the car gets a 9-inch touchscreen, wireless Android Auto & Apple CarPlay, JBL audio, rear view camera, ambient lighting and beige upholstery. This is the most feature packed CVT variant of the Magnite, and even gets Geza badging on the C-pillar. The Magnite Geza CVT Special edition is priced at Rs 9.84 lakh (ex-showroom). 

## First ever hybrid 911 breaks cover

**THE NEW** Porsche 911 is here, and for the first time in the 911's storied history, the sportscar is available with a hybrid powertrain. This is the second iteration of the 992-series 911, named 992.2. Now, unlike other performance hybrids, the 911 uses a 1.9kWh battery in place of a traditional 12 volt battery, and is only meant to support the ICE, and cannot

power the car on electric propulsion alone. An e-motor has been installed, which is rated at 54bhp and 150Nm of torque. The flat-six has also increased its capacity, up from 3.0-litre to 3.6-litre, which makes 478bhp. The entire setup means that the 911 GTS has access to 534bhp and 610Nm of torque. Instead of two, the flat-six has a single turbocharger, which

is also connected to the e-motor, ensuring no lag. The T-Hybrid powertrain is solely offered with the 911 GTS, and only the PDK transmission. The 992.2 also gets new active air ducts at the front, new LED DRLs, restyled OLED taillamps as well as changes to the interior with a fully digital instrument panel and more modern amenities. 



## New Continental GT with hybrid tech teased

**AS THE** iconic Bentley Continental GT phases out the revered W12 powerhouse, the brand has teased the first set of images of the new plug-in hybrid car. While the grand tourer has been camouflaged, one can discern the outline of the headlamps which feature a mix of the older circular design coupled with elements seen

on the limited-edition Batur. The new Continental GT will become the first car from the brand to use the new ultra-performance hybrid setup, which fuses the 4.0-litre V8 with an electric motor. Combined, this makes 782bhp and 1,001Nm of torque, much more than the W12 Continental GT. This powertrain also makes the new car

the most powerful Bentley of all time. The car will use dual-valve dampers, new active anti-roll bars, revised torque vectoring and a new four-wheel drive system, to put the power down on tarmac, and to replicate the performance and handling which made the Continental GT a legend for touring and track use. 



## New M4 CS is a 550bhp track-ready beast

**BMW HAS** revealed the M4 CS, essentially a more track friendly alternative to the M4. The twin-turbo 3.0-litre straight-six now makes 550bhp, which is exactly the same output the engine makes in the limited edition M4 CSL. This means a jump of 20bhp, while the torque which remains the same at

650Nm, can now be sustained up to a higher 5,950rpm. The engine has better cooling, and stiffer mounts, all to ensure that it performs during long track sessions. The CS has lost 20kg compared to the standard car, courtesy of a titanium exhaust and CFRP parts on certain areas. This results in a 0 to 100kmph

time of 3.4s, which is 0.1s faster than before. The chassis has stiffer springs and anti-roll bars to improve its steering precision and body control. All of the upgrades mean that the M4 CS laps the Nurburgring Nordschleife in 7m 21.99s, which is almost 6.8s quicker than the M3 CS. ↗



## TEST YOUR LIMITS

 **ENEOS**  
Japan's No.1 Oil Company



ENHANCED FUEL EFFICIENCY | GREATER PERFORMANCE | ROBUST PROTECTION



Scan for Website



Scan for Facebook

#TESTYOURLIMITS

## Fresh face and interiors for the Cullinan

SIX YEARS after the Rolls-Royce Cullinan made its debut, the ultra-luxury SUV has received a facelift, which the brand calls the Series II. The face of the Cullinan now gets new DRLs, which now extend lower down to the bumper, while the bumper itself has curvier lines and features new air dams. The iconic grille also gets a new look with new

bars above and below and also gets illumination. The rear bumper now comes with a steel skid plate. The dashboard inside now features a full width glass panel, with an illuminated cityscape graphic. There is also an analogue clock along with a miniature Spirit of Ecstasy inset on the dashboard. The Spirit infotainment system has been given

an update, with new colours and graphics, and more personalization than before, even allowing customers to match it to their choice of interior trim. Rolls-Royce has also expanded its personalization portfolio. Power comes from the same 6.75-litre V12, which makes 571bhp in the standard car, and 600bhp in the case of the Cullinan Black Badge. 



## All-new hybrid powertrain for Huracan's replacement

LAMBORGHINI IS all geared up to reveal the successor to the Huracan, and has given a preview of the new powertrain which will debut with the new car. Codenamed 634, this car will use an all new 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8 with a plug-in hybrid system. The combustion motor makes 800bhp and 730Nm of torque, which dwarfs the power figures of the 5.2-litre NA V10 used in the Huracan. This engine has a 10,000rpm redline, which is only seen in racing. The engine works in tandem with a 150bhp and 300Nm e-motor, integrated ahead of the 8-speed automatic, sending power to the rear axle. Lamborghini promises that the engine and its exhaust note will be up to the roaring standards of the brand. 





ENEOS HOLDINGS  
IN FORTUNE GLOBAL 500  
Rank 122  
2023

# ENEOS India

## A Decade of Excellence in the Indian Lubricant Market



### A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE FUELS THE FUTURE

As ENEOS India approaches its 10th anniversary, I am filled with immense pride in the journey we have undertaken. We entered the Indian market with a resolute commitment to excellence, and this unwavering dedication has been the cornerstone of our success.

### THRIVING PARTNERSHIPS, UNMATCHED QUALITY

Our commitment to excellence manifests in two key ways: our thriving OEM business and our strategic expansion into the broader Indian lubricant market. We have established a strong reputation for quality and professionalism with distributors and consumers across the country. Our Japanese heritage, synonymous with precision engineering and innovation, ensures that our lubricants consistently surpass industry benchmarks.

### A MARKET POISED FOR GROWTH

The Indian lubricant market itself is poised for significant growth,

according to industry reports, projected to grow at a CAGR of 4.7% during the forecast period 2022-2026. Driven by a fast-growing automotive sector and increasing emphasis on vehicle maintenance, this presents a tremendous opportunity, and ENEOS India is well-positioned to capitalize on it.

Our strong relationships with key OEMs are a testament to the exceptional performance and reliability of our products. We understand the evolving needs of the Indian automotive landscape and work closely with OEMs to develop lubricants that perfectly complement their latest technologies.

### A COMMITMENT TO QUALITY FOR EVERYONE

ENEOS India caters to every discerning driver on the road. The Indian consumer is increasingly seeking high-performance lubricants that offer superior protection and fuel efficiency. Our advanced formulations address this growing demand, ensuring optimal engine performance and reduced environmental impact.

### G SURESH BASKAR

Executive Director – Sales & Marketing  
ENEOS Tide Water Lubricants  
India Private Limited

### LOOKING AHEAD: SHAPING THE FUTURE OF MOBILITY

The Indian automotive industry is undergoing a paradigm shift towards sustainability. ENEOS India recognizes this critical trend and is committed to developing lubricants that minimize carbon footprint and enhance fuel efficiency. Our commitment to excellence extends beyond product development. We prioritize ethical conduct, transparency, and integrity in all our business practices. We foster a culture of professionalism that empowers our team to continuously innovate and redefine the standards of excellence in the lubricant industry.

As ENEOS India embarks on its next decade, we remain resolute in our commitment to excellence. We will continue to develop cutting-edge technologies, enhance customer experiences, and champion sustainability, all while upholding the highest standards of quality and integrity. Together, we are shaping the future of mobility in India.

## Bajaj Pulsar NS400Z launched at Rs 1.85 lakh



**BAJAJ AUTO** has launched the biggest and most powerful Pulsar to date. The NS400Z comes with a 373cc, liquid-cooled, single-cylinder motor which churns out 40bhp and 35Nm of peak torque. This motor is mated to a 6-speed gearbox with a slip-and-assist system. The NS400Z is priced at Rs 1.85 lakh (ex-showroom), and Bajaj hasn't confirmed if these are introductory prices. In terms of features, the biggest Pulsar to date comes with a colour LCD instrument cluster, 43mm USD fork, preload-adjustable monoshock and traction control system. Furthermore, it comes with four riding modes - Sport, Rain, Off-road and Road. Dual-channel ABS comes as standard, just like the projector headlamps. Braking duties are handled by a 320mm disc at the front, and a 230mm disc at the rear. The Bajaj Pulsar NS400Z comes with a 12-litre fuel tank, 805mm seat height and a kerb weight of 174kg. Apart from the NS400Z, Bajaj Auto currently has over 10 different models of the Pulsar family on sale in India. ☎

## Ultraviolette launches F77 Mach 2 electric motorcycle



ULTRAVIOLETTE HAS launched the updated version of its electric motorcycle - the F77. Called the F77 Mach 2, this features upgrades mainly in the software and electronics department. Prices for the F77 Mach 2 start at Rs 2.99 lakh (ex-showroom), which is applicable for the first 1,000 bookings. One of the major updates with the F77 Mach 2 is that the motorcycle comes

with 10-level regen modes. This can be adjusted either directly by the riding modes or individually. The motorcycle also gets a 3-level traction control system, and Dynamic Stability Control (DSC) system. Apart from this, the updated F77 also comes with a hill-hold feature. Prices are introductory for now and start at Rs 2.99 lakh for the base F77 and go up to Rs 3.99 lakh for the F77 Mach 2 Recon with the more powerful motor and larger battery (all prices ex-showroom). ☎

## Yamaha FZ-S Fi gets two new colours



**YAMAHA RECENTLY** unveiled two new colours for the FZ-S Fi version 4.0 DLX in India. The Ice Fluo-Vermillion and Cyber Green, which were also showcased at the 2024 Bharat Mobility Expo, are the newest colours in the lineup. There are now a total of six colour options for the FZ-S Fi version 4.0 DLX.

The other colour options include Racing Blue, Matte Grey Matte Black and Majesty Red. The motorcycle is still powered by the same 149cc, single-cylinder motor mated to a 5-speed gearbox. ☎

## KTM 990 RC R prototype revealed ahead of 2025 launch



**AUSTRIAN MOTORCYCLE** maker KTM took the wraps off of the 990 RC R prototype. The heavily camouflaged sports bike serves as successor to the discontinued RC8 and will be KTM's flagship model once it is out in the market. The 990 RC R will be powered by a 947cc, LC8c parallel-twin motor that is capable of churning out 126bhp and 103Nm. In the 990 Duke, this same motor produces 121bhp and 103Nm. KTM's upcoming flagship will sit on a steel frame and die-cast aluminium subframe. Furthermore, KTM claims to have also strengthened the stiffness of the 990 RC R chassis to add to the motorcycle's stability, agility and acceleration. There is also likely to be a track-focussed version of the 990 RC R that strips away road-legal parts of the motorcycle. In terms of competition, the bike will compete with other middleweights like the Ducati Panigale V2, Honda CBR600RR and Kawasaki ZX6R.

## Ducati unveils Senna special edition Monster



**DUCATI HAS** unveiled a special edition of the Monster which pays tribute to F1 legend Ayrton Senna. It's called the Monster Senna special edition, and it is limited to only 341 units. 3 refers to the total F1 world titles won by Senna, 41 is the number of Grands Prix that Senna finished in first place.

## TVS updates iQube lineup with new variants

**TVS HAS** revamped the iQube variant lineup, adding new entry-level and top-end variants, which means that the iQube now gets a total of five different variants. The base variant, called iQube is priced at Rs 94,999 (ex-showroom). Also as part of the update, the top-spec ST has made its debut which is offered with two battery packs, with the top-trim priced at Rs 1.85 lakh (ex-showroom). The new base variant of the iQube is paired with a 2.2kWh battery pack and comes with a claimed range of 75km on a single charge.

(L-R) Nikhil Taneja, head of sales, EV business, TVS Motor Company, and Saurabh Kapoor, vice president - marketing, EV business, TVS Motor Company with the updated iQube



## Ampere launches Nexus e-scooter

**GREAVES ELECTRIC MOBILITY** has launched the Ampere Nexus for a starting price of Rs 1.10 lakh (ex-showroom). It comes in two variants - ST and EX. The top-end ST variant is priced at Rs 1.20 lakh (ex-showroom). The electric scooter manufacturer has stated that these are introductory prices. Furthermore, bookings for the Nexus are open at Rs 9,999 and deliveries will commence in the second half of May. The Nexus comes loaded with a 7-inch touchscreen TFT display (ST variant). The claimed range from the 3kWh Lithium Iron Phosphate (LFP) battery stands at 136km.



(L-R) K Vijaya Kumar, CEO and executive director, Greaves Electric Mobility, and Ram Rajappa, COO, Greaves Electric Mobility

# BMW M 1000 XR arrives in India

**BMW MOTORRAD** has launched the M 1000 XR in India for a price of Rs 45 lakh (ex-showroom). It has arrived in the country as a completely built-up unit (CBU) and deliveries are set to commence from June 2024. The BMW M 1000 XR is powered by a 999cc, in-line four-cylinder motor that churns out 201bhp of maximum power and 113Nm of peak torque. This is the same engine as the one on the M 1000 RR albeit with some modifications. This also makes it more powerful than the S 1000 RR by 31bhp. That engine comes mated to a 6-speed gearbox with a bidirectional quick shifter. BMW claims a 0-100kmph time of 3.2 seconds and a top speed of 278kmph. Braking duties are handled by twin 320mm discs up front and a 265mm disc at the rear. The M 1000 XR rides on a 45mm upside down front fork with 10-step adjustability and an adjustable monoshock at the rear. In India, the M XR comes with the M Competition package, which translates to a bag full of M-specific gear like carbon wheels, adjustable footrests and more. All of this tech is said to make the M 1000 XR, at a kerb weight of 223kg, 3kg lighter than the S 1000 XR. The M 1000 XR is available in just one Black Storm metallic/M Motorsport paintwork with blue and red signature M colours. 

## Brixton motorcycles announces India plans



**BRIXTON MOTORCYCLES** has announced its plan to enter the Indian market soon. The brand hails from Austria, and carries a British name. KAW Veloce Motors has partnered with the brand in India, and will collaborate to manufacture its motorcycles locally. Brixton is set to launch four models in India, which will be made at a new facility in Kolhapur, Maharashtra. The partnership between Brixton and KAW Veloce aims to develop India into a major export hub for its expansion in Asian and African markets. This will be supported by a comprehensive dealer network, set to launch with 15 dealerships by the end of this year and 50 dealerships next year. 

## TVS Apache RTR 160 series gets a Black edition



**TVS MOTOR COMPANY** has launched the Black Edition for the Apache RTR 160 and Apache RTR 160 4V motorcycles. Bringing in an all black colour theme, the two motorcycles are priced from Rs 1.20 lakh (ex-showroom) for the Apache RTR 160 and Rs 1.25 lakh (ex-showroom) for the Apache RTR 160 4V. Both the Black Edition motorcycles feature a glossy black finish, with a black TVS Apache logo on the fuel tank. The black colour extends to the mudguards, body panels and the exhaust as well. Mechanically and in terms of features, the two motorcycles are exactly the same as the standard variants. 

# Tata launches Ace EV 1000 mini-truck



**TATA MOTORS**, India's largest commercial vehicle manufacturer, strengthened its e-cargo mobility solutions with the launch of the all-new Ace EV 1000. The zero-emission mini-truck boasts of a 1-tonne payload capacity. Furthermore, the Ace EV comes with a certified range of 161km on a single charge. Tata Motors claims to have updated its mini-truck after taking feedback and inputs from its customers. This new variant is said to address the evolving needs from various sectors like FMCG, beverages, paints, lubricants, LPG and dairy. The Ace EV is powered by a 27kW (37bhp) motor with 130Nm of peak torque, and comes with a 7-year battery warranty and a 5-year comprehensive maintenance package. Tata Motors refers to the powertrain on the Ace EV as the 'EVOGEN', which comes packed with an advanced cooling system and regenerative braking system. It also supports regular and fast charging capabilities. The updated Ace EV is supported by over 150 EV centres across the country and is available with versatile cargo decks at Tata's commercial vehicle dealerships.

Piaggio India introduces battery subscription



**PIAGGIO ANNOUNCED** a unique battery subscription model for its Apé Elektrik electric three-wheelers. The idea behind this model is to separate the upfront cost of the vehicle from the battery. Interested individuals and businesses can now purchase the Apé Elektrik for Rs 2.59 lakh (ex-showroom) and subscribe to a Piaggio-approved battery pack for a monthly fee, leased through the dealership.

## Tata Motors rolls out 9 lakh vehicles from Lucknow facility

**TATA MOTORS** announced a significant milestone of 9,00,000th vehicle rollout from its Lucknow facility. The celebration included a flag-off ceremony in the presence of Durga Shanker Mishra, chief secretary, Govt of Uttar Pradesh, and senior delegates from Tata Motors. The aforementioned Lucknow facility

is spread across 600 acres and is recognized as a water-positive plant by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). Since 1992, the facility has rolled out cargo and passenger commercial vehicles including light, intermediate, medium and heavy commercial vehicles, as well as electric and fuel cell electric buses.





FIRST DRIVE

# The Electrified

BMW's smallest SUV gets an electric heart that makes 313bhp and almost 500Nm of torque. It's quick but does it justify the premium? We find out



**BMW iX1**



PICTURES Harvinder Singh

## BMW iX1 xDrive30


**Motor**

Dual-motor, AWD

**Power**

313bhp

**Torque**

494Nm

**Transmission**

Single-speed


**Wheelbase(mm)**

2,692

**LxWxH(mm)**

4,500x1,845x1,642


**Battery**

64.7kWh, Li-ion

**Range**

440km (WLTP)


**Top Speed**

180kmph

**0-100kmph**

5.6s


**Price:** Rs 66.90 lakh  
(ex-showroom)

**On sale Now**

If you're manufacturing electric vehicles and haven't taken your spot in the entry-luxury space you may be missing out on a quickly burgeoning part of the market. It's a space where OEMs have figured out they could offer more for less with an EV. It's the right price point for manufacturers to equip them with enough range to make them practical, enough features to make them attractive to potential customers and finally, but perhaps, more importantly performance from a segment or two above. All at the cost of running two segments below especially if you're charging at home. That's a win-win-win for everyone involved.

So far, the Europeans have been relatively slow in the space with Volvo's XC40 Recharge being the sole offering. The big three thus far have yet to have a viable candidate to offer, that is until now. This is the BMW iX1 and yes it is a BMW X1 with an electric powertrain, and in the flesh, without the obvious green plate, I'd find it very hard to distinguish it from its ICE counterpart. The iX1 also gets M-sport badging, and while I usually frown at out-of-place marketing badges, let's not forget the electric makes almost twice the power of the petrol counterpart and more torque than the diesel.

On the inside the iX1 is fairly identical to the combustion X1s, which means that you get the massive two-screen infotainment and instrument cluster with wireless Android Auto and Apple CarPlay, massage functions on both front seats, the vertical wireless charger in the centre console that locks in after you've placed your phone, customisable ambient light and a whole lot more. As is usually the case, the quality of materials and the cabin's styling are top of the line and there are plenty of soft-touch surfaces. The cabin is also the part where you begin to understand the downsides of an electric built on an ICE platform. First, the batteries that line the floor do raise the floor height of the iX1 considerably from the ICE X1. In the second row this makes the seating position a little



### Likes

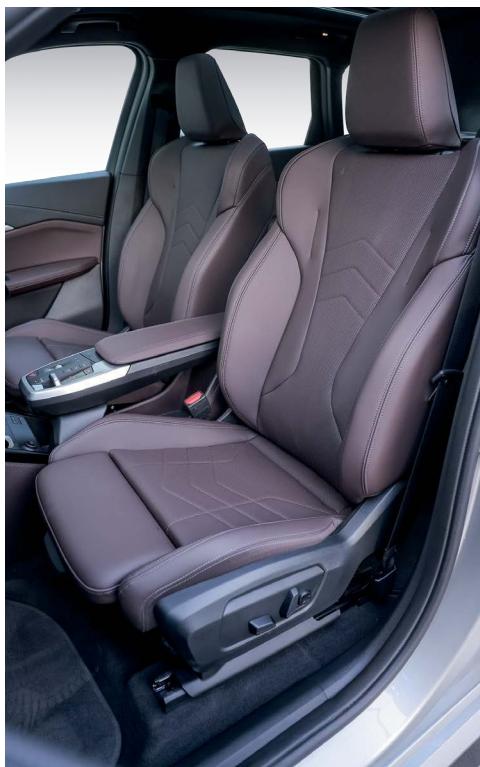
Performance, cabin

### Dislikes

Quality of plastics in the lower half of the cabin



Electrically adjustable seats with a memory function are quite nice, but they do feel a little dated to use. The fact that the memory buttons are on the side could mean for inaccurate presses and odd seating positioning





odd. Thankfully a recline function for the second row backrest does help a little but you can't help but feel the oddness of being an occupant angled towards the sky. The same thing happens in the boot where the powertrain has eaten into it meaning that the space-saver now mounts on the top in the storage area. Like the i4, there's no frunk either, because under the hood

is more powertrain componentry, so there is going to be some level of compromise on space.

The thing is though, this seemingly plaid compact SUV packs a cool 313bhp, almost 500Nm of torque and claims a 0-100 run of 5.6 seconds. That's fast by any notion. It will also give you a WLTP claimed range of 440km, which should translate to at least 350 km in

1. Dashboard layout is unconventional, specifically in the way the aircon vents have been laid out and the fancy wireless phone charging dock lower down. However, it is identical to the petrol/diesel X1. 2. The 10.75-inch instrument cluster is configurable and has mode based themes. 3. Aircon controls integrated into the touchscreen. The temperature settings are accessible along the bottom section of the screen at all times. 4. The floating centre arm rest is very intuitively placed with the controls falling exactly where you would want them to be

40:20:40 split on the second row of seats makes for very convenient space in the boot.

### COMPETITION CHECK



**Volvo XC40 Recharge Ultimate**  
**BATTERY 78kWh POWER 408bhp**  
**TORQUE 670Nm PRICE ₹ 57.90 lakh**



**Kia EV6 GT-Line AWD**  
**BATTERY 77.4kWh POWER 325bhp**  
**TORQUE 605Nm PRICE ₹ 65.97 lakh**



the real world in India. It also gets a twin motor all-wheel drive system, unlike its combustion-powered siblings that send their power to the front wheels only. All of which should make the iX1 the most enthusiast-oriented German compact luxury SUV in India.

From the driver's seat, there is a lot to love, and once you've gotten past the labyrinth that is BMW's new driving mode selection, you can select between a customisable personal mode, an efficiency mode and a sport mode. The mode se-

lection has been dumbed down since the BMW dynamic selector era, but they are very immersive. Each mode changes the theme on the screens and the mood lighting, which is pretty cool. They also remap the motors and the throttle response to match the mode. What I did like is how BMW has mapped the controller, especially in efficiency mode. I never felt like I had to relearn the throttle response or the regen modes. It doesn't sound like much but having driven several thousand kilometres in various electric vehicles, it's one of those subtle engineering aspects that you come to appreciate. Throw it in Sport mode and the iX1 comes alive, the throttle response is rapid and you feel each of those five hundred Newton metres of torque squeeze themselves out of the motors above each axle. That not enough? There's a boost mode that you can engage by pulling on the left paddle, which gives you a healthy serving of boost for 10 seconds.

Thanks to the all-wheel-drive system the iX1

“ IN SPORT MODE, THE BMW iX1 TRULY COMES ALIVE AS YOU FEEL ALL OF THAT 500NM OF TORQUE SQUEEZE ITSELF OUT OF THE MOTORS





Harmon Kardon sound is premium and rich. The second row gets individual AC vents and two type-C fast charging ports

puts power down and mitigates slip like only an electric can. It sends more power to the rear when you're exiting corners and can be rewarding when you're driving with precision. It doesn't have the playfulness of when an electronic system interacts with fundamental mechanical grip but it is very tidy. This disparity is something you feel in the steering wheel, which relays feedback inconsistently in corners and as the speed builds up. Change direction quickly when you're at speed and you

will feel the roll. The computers under the hood manage the traction and make the direction change quickly, but there is a brief lack of feedback as this is happening. Another area I feel that the iX1 struggles with is braking and you do feel like the entire system finds it difficult to contend with the almost 2-tonne iX1. It does stop adequately, but the initial brake feedback is missing. That said, despite the added weight the adaptive dampers do a good job of keeping bumps and jerks out of the cabin at city speeds.

The iX1 gets a 64.7kWh battery pack and should give you an easy 350km driving range in the real world, more if you're driving route is through rush-hour traffic. The 11kW AC charger takes about 6 hours to fully charge the iX1, though it does get DC fast charging up to 130kW, which means you can get a full charge in under an hour at most Indian charging stations that offer between 60-90kWh DC charging.

### VERDICT

The BMW iX1 sells for almost 10 lakh more than the diesel variant of the X1. Despite the fact that the iX1 can be run at a fraction of the cost of its internal combustion sibling, it does make it tougher to make the decision in favour of the electric X1. Given that there is less space on the inside and the higher floor eats into the leg room on the second row, it makes the decision even harder. That said, if you're looking for an electric german luxury SUV with strong performance and good road manners for commuting inside the city then the iX1 makes a strong case in terms of cost of running.

### Dipayan Dutta

Assistant Editor

dipayan.dutta@ajitak.com

@dipayandutta



# Super Lithe

From a gene pool that gave us the stunning SLS, the Mercedes-AMG SL 55 is a ground up convertible AMG with a 4.0-litre twin-charged V8, we get behind the wheel to see how it stacks up

PICTURES Harvinder Singh



In the context of what a two-door sport car should be, the Mercedes-AMG SL 55 is tantamount to blasphemy. In the context of Mercedes-Benz's own definition of what the SL stands for (Super Light), this almost 5-metre long 1.8-tonne behemoth is an outrage. And I was prepared, well before the car ever came to the office, to hate it.

But here's the thing from the moment I

laid eyes on the Mercedes-AMG SL 55 4Matic+ Roadster, I couldn't seem to remember what I didn't like about it. I didn't care that the bonnet stretches out for a mile ahead of the cockpit. I didn't care that with the spare wheel in the trunk, and the roof mechanism meant that you couldn't store a backpack. In the flesh the SL made me weak in the knees, and that is a feeling that stayed long after I

forgot what it was that made me want to not like it. It is drama, presence and sex-appeal manifest, and if those aren't the cornerstones of what makes a two-door drop top I don't know what is.

The SL 55 AMG was at the office for two days and despite being tucked away from sight in the basement, I think everyone in the office now has a selfie with it in their





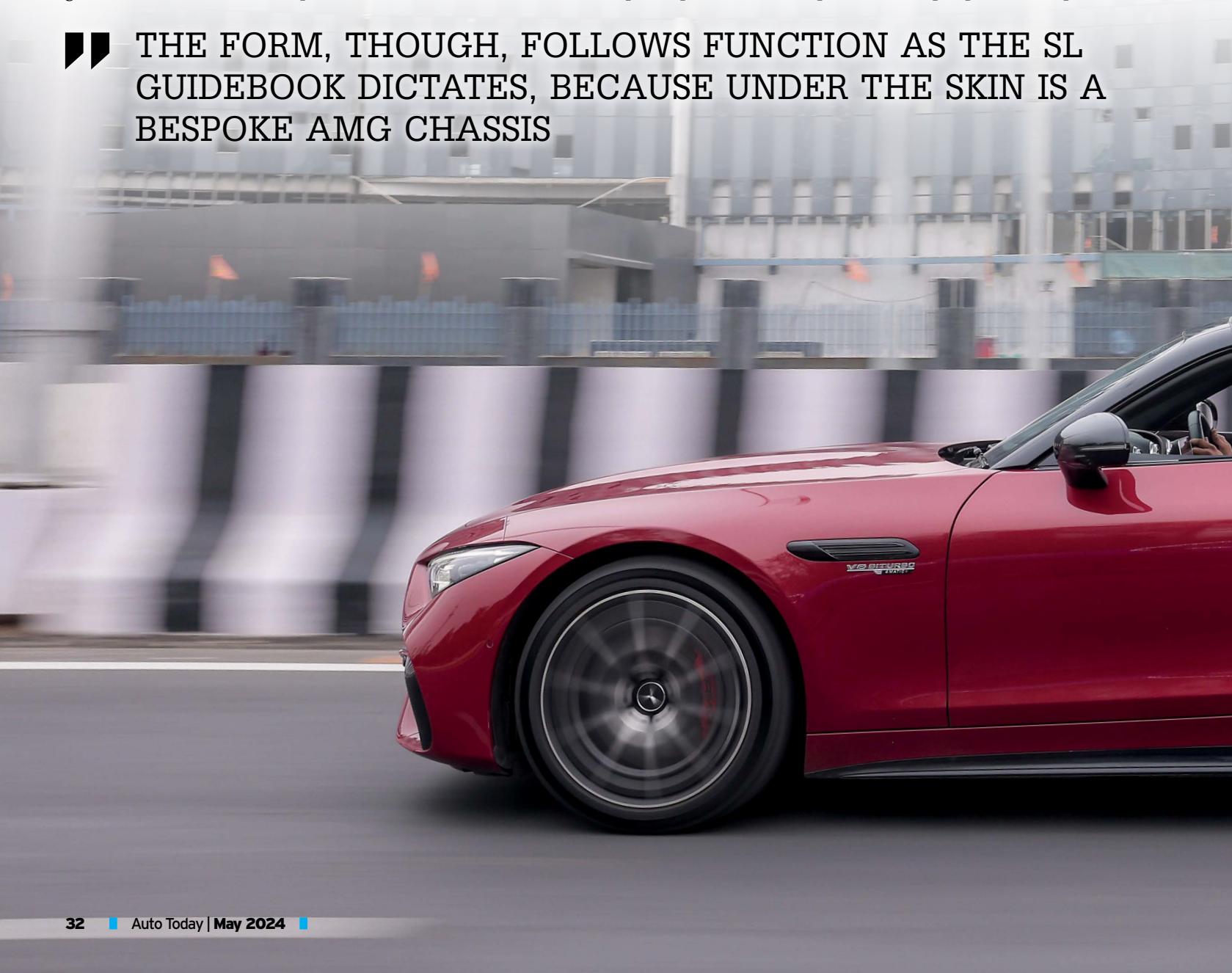
camera roll. That's how good it looks. The silhouette is striking with that long bonnet flowing into a rear set cockpit that seems to end above the stubby tail is instantly SL. Get closer and you see that 14-slat Panamericana grille, those broad shoulder lines and you're reminded of the AMG GT. There's aero-grade 20-inch wheels that help the air flow

glide over the vents concealed in the arches.

The stubby rear, the wrap-around tail-lights, the quad exhausts and of course that delectable retractable wing, all of it comes together to make the SL look absolutely stunning. The rear stubbiness and the swept up bumpers give the SL 55 that purposeful stance. Part convertible, part supercar.

The form, though, follows function as the SL guidebook dictates, because under the skin is a bespoke AMG chassis. The SL isn't based on a Mercedes-Benz platform but is built from the ground up by AMG. Which means both the SL 55 that you see here and the 63, are both designed not just to be drop top but AMG drop-top. In fact despite its in-

**THE FORM, THOUGH, FOLLOWS FUNCTION AS THE SL GUIDEBOOK DICTATES, BECAUSE UNDER THE SKIN IS A BESPOKE AMG CHASSIS**





sane weight, this might be the most communicative convertible I've ever driven. That could be in part that the cloth roof saves 21 kg over the previous generations folding hard top, or it could be the fact that it lowers

the centre of gravity sufficiently for the car to feel planted. There's rear wheel steering too which makes the 4.7m SL turn like you wouldn't believe.

But before we get to that it's worth talking

1. The 12.3-inch instruments can be customised and has mode-specific layouts with plenty of data on offer
2. AMG-dials can be customised for quick access to the spectrum of AMG specific settings
3. Burmester speakers come as standard but the 3D sound options on our test car are a Rs 7 lakh option
4. The confluence of leather, metal and piano finish works perfectly in the SL 55

about the cabin. That perfect blend of metal, leather and glass textures to be adequately luxurious without compromising on the fact that this is a drop top AMG. The interior exudes luxury with extensive leather through-



## Mercedes-AMG SL 55 4Matic+



**Engine**  
4.0-litre, V8, turbo-petrol  
**Power**  
476bhp@5,500-6,500rpm  
**Max torque**  
700Nm@2,350-5,000rpm  
**Gearbox**  
9-speed AT



**LxWxH(mm)**  
4,705x2,100x1,359  
**Wheelbase(mm)**  
2,700  
**Kerb weight**  
1,950kg



**Top speed**  
295kmph  
**0-100kmph**  
3.9 seconds



**Price:** Rs 2.35 crore  
(ex-showroom)  
**On sale Now**

1. The SL 55 comes with 20-inch wheels as standard, but oddly we couldn't find these aero wheels on their configurator. There are 21-inch options on offer if you wish to upgrade. 2. The active rear wing is a nice touch, it does weigh up the rear, but I'd be lying if I said I didn't appreciate the visual appeal of the active wing in action. 3. The 4Matic+ fully-variable AWD-system favours the rear axles which makes for fun driving

out, complemented by elegant metal work on the turbine-style vents and centre console. Adding to the high-tech feel is the impressive digital driver's display, boasting a 12.3-inch screen that offers customisable themes.

The focal point inside is Mercedes' new 11.9-inch touchscreen. Its standout feature, that it is adjustable from 12 to 32 degrees makes it glare-free visibility in any light. However, its size can overwhelm the intimate cabin. Despite its brilliance, managing everything from climate control to the roof operation via touchscreen while driving can be cumbersome, exacerbated by screen heating under sunlight. The roof can open or close at speeds up to 60 kph in about 16 seconds, provided you can maintain steady contact with the screen. There is a manual button override but even that can be glitchy from time to time. Beyond the digital interfaces, the SL 55 AMG boasts customizable ambient lighting, a handy 360-degree camera for effortless parking, and a data logger for track enthusiasts.

Although you might forget everything around you, once you've pushed the starter button and the 4.0-litre twin-turbo AMG V8 bubbles to life. If it's one of those days when the weather's just



### Likes

Handling, ride



### Dislikes

Visual heft



### COMPETITION CHECK



**Porsche 911 Carrera 4 GTS**  
**ENGINE** 3.6-litre (P) **POWER** 541bhp  
**TORQUE** 610Nm **PRICE** ₹ 2.75 crore

“

IF IT'S ONE OF  
THOSE DAYS  
WHEN THE  
WEATHER'S  
JUST RIGHT  
AND YOU'VE  
GOT THE TOP  
ROLLED DOWN  
THE AMBIENT  
THEATRE IS  
ADDICTIVE





right and you've got the top rolled down the ambient theatre is addictive. On the SL 55, the motor is tuned to make 476bhp and 700Nm of peak twist, and while this isn't the most aggressive tune this V8 is available with, it's more than enough to make this almost 5-metre spaceship suck in the horizon with surprising pace. From a standstill the SL will do a 0-100 run in just under four seconds, planting it squarely in Porsche 911 Carrera territory. What stands out to me is the way that this motor in tandem with the 4Matic+ system puts the torque down effortlessly flipping off interior forces with a boot full of mechanical

wizardry. It's this strong but steady surge through the rev-band, rather a wild rush for the redline that makes the SL feel confident and poised no matter what the situation, whether it's an overtake or you're coming around a corner the SL always seems to have comfortably more torque than you would need. The 9-speed gearbox is quick but does seem to have a few moments of playing catch up with the sheer output of the engine.

But you expect the SL 55 AMG to be fast, which you don't expect by any measure, especially for this 1.8 almost 5-metre long convertible that sits 130mm off the ground to ride and



handle. Once you're behind the wheel the SL seems to wrap around you, compacting the space it takes up. Now there's a multitude of electronics that come to make the SL handle and drive in this particular way, it's got rear wheel steering that allows for up to 2.5-degrees of steer from the rear. It's got Active Ride Control with hydraulically actuated anti-roll bars that keep the car surprisingly flat even when you're pushing almost 2gs around a corner. Then of course there is the rear-biased 4Matic+ system that sends power to the front only when needed. Add all of them together and the SL 55 is one of those cars that feels super glued to the road. The steering weighs up perfectly and is capable of precision far out of my driving skills. Even when there's a loss

of traction at the wheels, it manages to communicate that without you losing a sense of where the wheels are.

The Active Suspension does well even on the day to day, making the SL adequately comfortable, minor undulation and bumps are absorbed without even the slightest thought, and I do feel like plusher seats would have further ironed out most of the harsh bumps you feel in the cabin. But overall, considering that the SL 55 is a sports car with a drop-top, this car rides almost as good as an everyday sedan. This kind of range on a car that makes well over 450bhp and 700Nm of torque is what makes this generation of the SL so special. The mix of luxury, performance and agility is unlike anything we've driven this year. ☺

### VERDICT

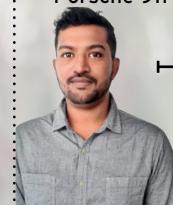
All of this can be yours for an eye-watering price of Rs 2.35 crore (ex-showroom), that is, without some of the add-ons like the Burmester 3-D audio, the Active Ride Control, paint and trim on the inside all of which add to the price by about Rs 20 lakh. Even then, the capability, the handling and sheer theatre of driving the SL, makes a strong case for itself as a two seater convertible, and since there isn't a Porsche 911 Cabriolet around yet. It might be the perfect time to consider the SL.

**Dipayan Dutta**

Assistant Editor

dipayan.dutta@ajitak.com

@dipayandutta



# Get **Swifty**

The fourth generation of the Swift gets a new styling package, a smorgasbord of new features, and a brand-new three-cylinder heart. Here's how it lives up to the legacy

PICTURES Harvinder Singh





The Maruti Suzuki Swift was launched in 2005. Everything since, as they say, is history. A history that I'm sure you don't need me to tell. The Swift was a runaway success; it has become an unrefuted icon of the Indian automotive space. The question we are asking today is what was the magic sauce that went into making the Swift the success it is today and whether Maruti Suzuki has retained that magic, 19 years, 29 lakh Swifts and four generations later with this brand new Swift that you see on these pages.

One of the things that I remember dis-

tinctly is just how the Swift pushed the envelope of what a hatchback was. Compared to the hatchbacks then, the Swift had curves, it had a shape and character that stood out as premium and up-market. Skip forward to 2024, and the car you see is still distinctly identifiable as a Swift but it pushes that envelope a little further. The front end is the most distinctive part of this new generation and it is polarising. I like the tall front bumper and the way it defines the sinewy flares of the fenders. It also gives the bonnet a clamshell-like design. What this means is that despite retaining that distinctive swept-

back headlamp design, this new Swift integrates the headlamp into the bumper and the flared fenders. The headlamps house projectors and the boomerang DRL, and the set looks modern and cohesively put together. Move to the profile and the most prominent design feature is the shoulder line that runs along the side, it gives the Swift that broad, low profile that looks so distinctive and sporty. It also gets 15-inch alloy wheels on the top-spec variant that look pretty cool and fill out the wheel wells more than adequately. The other big change on the profile is the door handle for the rear door which is



1

1. All-black interiors are accented by textures and a silver insert that divides the upper and lower half of the dashboard. 2. Climate control gets an auto-function on this generation of the Swift. 3. The analogue speedometer and tachometer flank a small but neatly integrated MID. 4. The Swift now gets the floating infotainment from the Baleno with Arkamys sound. 5. In the fourth generation the Swift also sees the introduction of wireless charging



2



5



3



4

**Maruti Suzuki Swift****Engine**

1.2-litre, 3-cyl petrol

**Power**

81bhp@5,700rpm

**Max torque**

112Nm@4,300rpm

**Gearbox**

5-speed MT/AT

**LxWxH(mm)**

3,860x1,735x1,520

**Wheelbase(mm)**

2,450

**Fuel tank**

37 litres

**Fuel economy**

24.8/25.75kmpl (MT/AT)

**Price:** Rs 6.49-9.50

lakh (ex-showroom)

**On sale Now**

SKIP FORWARD TO 2024, AND THE CAR YOU SEE IS STILL DISTINCTLY IDENTIFIABLE AS A SWIFT BUT IT PUSHES THAT ENVELOPE A LITTLE FURTHER

**Likes**

Engine, handling

**Dislikes**

Cramped second-row



1. Replacing the 1.2-litre four-cylinder is a three-cylinder with the same displacement but much more efficient. 2 & 3. You can have the Swift with either a 5-speed MT or AMT

now back on the body from the quarter panel where it was on the previous generation of the car. It is the rear though that is most familiar, with that shoulder line running right into the boot which gives the Swift that delicious ‘thicc’ rear end. The LED taillamps are smoked adding to the premium appeal and I get the feeling that the inverted ‘C’ LED element in the lights will look stunning at night.

Inside the cabin, the Swift is all new and despite the all-black theme, Maruti Suzuki has used contrasting textures like the silver inserts on the dashboard and the door panels that do well to break the monotony and add to the premium perception. There are a lot of bits that have now trickled down into the Swift from its stable-mates like the 9-inch floating SmartPlay infotainment, the Arkamys audio system, and even wireless charging. The infotainment comes with wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto which is a nice touch.

The steering wheel has been updated with a nicely sized flat-bottom unit now bringing that Sporty appeal to the cabin. Another detail that caught my eye



is the pod concept for the instruments going against the grain of modern all-digital units with an analogue tachometer, engine temperature gauge, fuel gauge and speedometer. It does get a digital MID screen at the centre, and while it isn't the most advanced MID out there, I like the way it integrates in between the dials without taking away from the retro theming. Storage too is nicely thought out without cluttering the cabin. There's a bottle holder in each door and two cup holders in the centre console.

The second row gets its own AC vents which is a nice feature to see in this segment, but that said the space is a little cramped. I did find it hard to find any knee room with the driver's seat adjusted to my

usual driving position. Although headroom and the large windows create a positive sense of space, the seats themselves could have been a little more plush. It is a stark comparison especially when you realise the front seats might just be the best ones on offer in the segment with really nice bolstering for your back and thighs. One also misses out on a rear-centre armrest although I do like the fact that the back seat gets a 60:40 split option.

Before we jump into how it drives, there are a few things that you should know. This new Swift is still underpinned by the HEARTECT platform, but there's been some work on the materials used on the chassis. 20 per cent of the chassis uses ultra-high

## THIS SWIFT DITCHES THE K-SERIES 4-CYLINDER FOR A 1.2-LITRE THREE-POT



tensile steel on key flex points, while 45 per cent of the chassis is HSS. Now that will improve the crash-worthiness of the car significantly as well, but it also gives the Swift some impressive handling characteristics. The Swift still has the 2,450mm wheelbase as on the previous generation but one can't help but feel like the tyres are closer to the edges of the car than before.

This Swift also ditches the K-series 4-cylinder for a 1.2-litre three-pot. I'll say this, don't go into this expecting a G13B or K12,

both in the good and the bad way. Both the older engines, were punchy only once they got past the 4,000rpm mark, and were plagued by a flat-spot off the line. This Z12E though turns the game on its head. It makes more torque in the lower reaches of the rev band, making it feel a whole lot quicker where it matters. If I didn't tell you that it was down 7bhp and 2Nm of torque, you'd probably never be able to guess. The only time you feel the lack of top-end performance is while pushing triple-digits where

you feel the power start to taper off. It is worth noting that despite being a three-cylinder the motor sounds quite nice from inside the cabin. It's quiet and refined when you're driving at city speed but there's a cheeky grunt from the three-pot as you get on the gas that can be quite addictive.

There is a 5-speed manual on offer alongside a 5-speed AMT. The 5-manual is set up with shorter-ratios and the crisp short throws will have anyone who loves three pedals catching feels. It also now features

**THERE'S BEEN SOME WORK ON THE MATERIALS USED IN THE CHASSIS. 20 PER CENT OF THE CHASSIS USES ULTRA-HIGH TENSILE STEEL ON KEY FLEX POINTS, WHILE 45 PER CENT OF THE CHASSIS IS HSS**





1. The 265-litre boot is sufficient for a weekend's worth of luggage. 2. The clamshell bonnet is the most distinctive identifier of the new generation of Swift. 3. The second row gets AC vents, and two USB ports for charging. 4. Rear door handles are back on the body

## COMPETITION CHECK



**Citroen C3 Shine Vibe Pack**

**ENGINE 1.2-litre POWER 82bhp**

**TORQUE 115Nm PRICE ₹ 7.92 lakh**



**Grand i10 Nios Asta MT**

**ENGINE 1.2-litre POWER 83bhp**

**TORQUE 114Nm PRICE ₹ 8.00 lakh**

a hydraulically actuated clutch which is surprisingly light and should make long hours in traffic considerably more bearable. However, if you want to do away with it all together, get the 5-speed AMT which happens to be more efficient than the manual at a claimed 25.8kmpl compared to 24.8kmpl of the manual. It does come at a cost though, the signature AMT head-nod is very much a thing every time it changes gear. It is also slower in gear and does take its sweet time to downshift, making it quite tedious on the highway. It makes a strong case for itself if a large part of your driving is in the urban jungle, but if you want to explore the extent of your Swift's performance I'd recommend the manual.

I like the way the suspension is set up too. It is on the firmer side, but there is an admirable amount of damping for bumps and ruts and it rarely bottoms out. The firm springs paired with the taut chassis make for really good handling around corners. I mean we had a very nice section of undulating corners on our test and the Swift was nothing short of impressive. This is despite the Bridgestone Ecopia low-resistance persuasion tyres that I don't rate high for grip. To sum up, the fourth-generation Swift is more engaging off the line, arguably better in corners and does a great job of balancing a comfortable ride with that stiff handling-biased set-up.

## VERDICT

Finally, the price, at Rs 9 lakh (ex-showroom) for the ZXi+ MT and another Rs 50,000 for the AMT, this new Swift isn't the most inexpensive hatch you can buy. It's at a price premium. But for the price, you get a car that pretty much does it all. It gets all the nice modern amenities and comfort you could want. It's a great handler and is pretty comfortable when the road surface isn't perfect. I think it looks striking and modern. And even though it is down on power, I think it's very engaging to drive. It makes a strong case for the hatchback even in a market overrun by faux micro-SUVs.



**Dipayan Dutta**

Assistant Editor

dipayan.dutta@ajitak.com

@dipayan\_dutta



# INNOVA LITE

Having established itself as a dominant player in the MPV space with the Innova, Toyota is now looking to democratise it with the Rumion

PICTURES Harvinder Singh

Once again we find ourselves behind the wheel of another car with Maruti Suzuki DNA but the respected Toyota badge and this time around it is the Ertiga which has donned the name Rumion. Now, Toyota doesn't exactly need to establish itself in the 3-row do-it-all MPV game considering that it is the one who has been dominating it with the Innova, and the impact has been such that fleet operators will swear by the MPV throughout its multiple generations. However, the Innova is quite expensive now, both Crysta and Hycross models, and the sub-15 lakh MPV space is something that Toyota could never tap, but now it wants to, armed with the second most successful MPV in India.

As has been the formula, the Rumion shares all the body panels with the Ertiga, hence it comes as a surprise to most people when they have already registered the car as an Ertiga in their brains in a single glance and then spot the Toyota badge. The grille is different and bigger, and looks similar to the one seen on the Crysta. There's a chrome border surrounding the grille, while the lower bumper is different too, with more chrome. This MPV rides on 15-inch alloys with a bit of black in them, which gives the Rumion quite the stance and upmarket appeal. Compared to the





1. The cabin layout and the materials used in the Rumion are the same as the Ertiga and is quite elegant. 2. The analogue dials with the blue highlights and the MID look cool. 3. The 7-inch infotainment comes with wireless Android Auto and Apple CarPlay. 4. The second row can be reclined and the bench moved fore or aft, making the space quite flexible and comfortable. 5. The third row gets enough floor depth and adjustable headrests



## Toyota Rumion V MT Neo Drive



**Engine**  
1,462cc 4-cyl NA  
petrol  
**Power**  
103bhp@6,000rpm  
**Max torque**  
136.8Nm@4,400rpm  
**Gearbox**  
5-speed MT



**Wheelbase(mm)**  
2,740  
**LxWxH(mm)**  
4,420x1,735x1,690



**Fuel efficiency**  
21.51kmpl  
**Fuel tank**  
45 litres



**Price:** Rs 12.33 lakh  
(ex-showroom)  
**On sale Now**

Ertiga, the Toyota is 25mm longer. This, though, is strictly due to the redesigned bumper, as the wheelbase is the same.

Inside, everything from the layout to the choice of colours has been lifted off the Ertiga, which means that the number of changes between the two cars inside the cabin is zero. The 7-inch infotainment system runs a UI we are all too familiar with, but does come with wireless Android Auto and Apple CarPlay, and is really easy to pair with your smartphone. In a time when most automakers have gone digital, the Rumion gets analogue dials with a blue theme and they look really good.

The second row has a 60:40 split setup, which can be reclined or moved fore and aft, allowing for very generous legroom when the seats are pushed all the way back. The seats are comfortable and also get a central armrest. The third row can be accessed by pulling on the release handle on the seat, and well, the space is actually better than what third rows in larger and more expensive SUVs feels like. As the second row can be slid forward, and the backrest adjusted, adults

can sit fairly comfortably, and you get adjustable headrests and three-point seat belts too. Amenities are plenty inside the Rumion, lots of storage, cooled cup holders, a central armrest with a storage space inside, automatic climate control and dedicated aircon for the second and third rows. I wouldn't call it loaded to the gills, but the blend of space, practicality and the fact that it isn't really missing out on any glaring needs means that the Rumion will fit the bill for a large number of buyers. I would have really appreciated if Toyota added rear sun blinds, considering the size of the windows.

Powering the Rumion is the 1.5-litre, 4-cylinder naturally aspirated petrol which makes 103bhp and 136.8Nm of torque and is available with a 5-speed manual or a 6-speed torque converter, and our test vehicle came with the former. This is a motor that we have experienced in a number of cars, and it's very refined, in fact you cannot hear or feel the motor at idle, it's that good. What this also means is that the Rumion has a lazy demeanour, and likes thrumming away in the lower reaches of its rev range. You can

**COMPETITION  
CHECK****Maruti Suzuki Ertiga ZXi Plus****ENGINE 1.5-litre POWER 103bhp****TORQUE 136.8Nm PRICE ₹ 11.63 lakh****Kia Carens Prestige (O) 7STR****ENGINE 1.5-litre POWER 115bhp****TORQUE 144Nm PRICE ₹ 12.12 lakh**

push it, but the engine just gets louder, with not a lot of speed being gained. The gearbox is my favourite part of the setup though. The clutch is smooth, and the throws are short, and even in traffic you'd not feel the pain of using the manual. The Rumion can reach triple digit speeds, although the progress in the 80-100kmph range is a bit slow unless you start encroaching on the redline. The steering is light, and well suited to the city and helps a lot in maneuvering this MPV. It weighs up at higher speeds, but doesn't carry the consistency and hence isn't very confidence inspiring.

But its drivetrain isn't really the Rumion's biggest weapon. It is the ride comfort. The suspension and the dampers are so on point that most undulations don't even filter in through to the cabin. The MPV floats on good tarmac, and doesn't lose its composure on bad roads either. The Rumion makes for a brilliant chauffeur driven car. This also means that the balance isn't as good around curves and one has to keep the speed in check. But considering that almost no one will ever drive the car in that manner, the Rumion is well balanced for its purpose as a people mover. ☺



The 5-speed MT has short throws and is really smooth, especially coupled with the light clutch

**VERDICT**

Priced from Rs 10.29 lakh (ex-showroom) to Rs 13.73 lakh (ex-showroom), the Rumion has a higher starting price compared to the Ertiga's and even the top-spec variant is a good Rs 70,000 extra. What this brings, most importantly, is the longer warranty of 3 years/1 lakh km. Its slightly upmarket looks, and the space and comfort mixed with a fair bit of tech means that the Rumion might turn out to be a better buy for a lot of customers, for a little bit of extra cash and considerably shorter waiting period.

**Anagh Bhaskar**

Correspondent

anagh.bhaskar@ajitak.com

@anagh\_bhaskar

**Likes**

Ride quality, brand value, efficiency

**Dislikes**

Handling, minor cosmetic distinction



# Best of Auto China 2024

While Chinese brands dominated proceedings in Beijing, there were plenty of exciting announcements from major global players. Here's **Dhruv Saxena** with a roundup of the best from Auto China 2024

**I**he 2024 Beijing Auto Show, or Auto China 2024, the name it goes by officially, gave the giants of the Chinese automotive industry a chance to flex their muscles, showing off the manu-

facturing and technological prowess of the world's largest car market. And while a big chunk of the vehicles showcased at the show are built specifically for the home market, there were plenty of noteworthy debuts from

some of the world's biggest car makers. This list also includes some models that are relevant to the Indian market and are expected to reach our shores over the next year or so. ☎



**VW TIGUAN L PRO**

The Tiguan L Pro showcased in Beijing is essentially a long-wheelbase version of the new third-generation VW Tiguan. It's expected to go on sale in India in 2025 with a three-row layout. According to unconfirmed reports it might be sold in India as Tayron. The Tiguan L is 197mm longer than the standard Tiguan, with a 111mm longer wheelbase. Despite the extra cabin space, this China-spec version has only two rows of seating. Visually, aside from a more aggressive bumper and the obvious increase in length, the Tiguan L is identical to the standard wheelbase Tiguan that's already on sale in Europe. Under the hood is a 2.0-litre turbo petrol producing 186bhp and 320Nm paired with a 7-speed DCT. ☎

■ Volkswagen's expansion in the Chinese market includes a new sub-brand called ID.UX and in Beijing, the company teased the first model. Called ID.Unyx, it was driven on stage with the lights turned down offering a glimpse of the production-ready model. It's an all-electric crossover with an SUV-coupe profile that VW says features a driver-centric interior with "an entirely new display and operating concept (HMI) for young customers". ☎

**VW ID.UNYX**





Auto China 2024 witnessed the world premiere of the Volkswagen ID.Code concept. This new concept not only previews a large electric SUV for the future but is also indicative of the design direction for upcoming electric offerings from the ID. sub-brand. The ID.Code shows off a very sporty stance complete with a sloping roofline and, in the company's own words, a design that is "reminiscent of a Gran Turismo." The concept features AI-assisted light and display systems and is capable of level 4 autonomous driving. The ID.Code along with the ID.Unyx highlight Volkswagen's commitment to the Chinese market through the showcase of products that exemplify its "in China, for China" strategy. Volkswagen says the ID. family will grow to a total of 16 models by 2030, including five EVs from the new ID.UX sub-brand. Additionally, Volkswagen China Technology Company (VCTC) is developing the Group's first electric platform specifically for China. ☺



■ Volkswagen-owned Audi presented the long-wheelbase version of the Q6 e-tron electric SUV at Auto China 2024. It joins a long list of models from luxury brands that have received the long wheelbase treatment specifically to cater to the needs of the Chinese market. Compared to the standard Q6 e-tron, the L features a 105mm longer wheelbase and also a bigger battery enabling a CLTC (China Light-Duty Vehicle Test Cycle) range of over 700km. China will get two versions of the Q6 L e-tron – RWD with 347bhp and Quattro AWD with 469bhp. ☺

**LAMBORGHINI URUS SE**

Lamborghini has given its super SUV a plug-in hybrid powertrain along with styling tweaks. The Urus SE pairs the 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8 with an electric motor resulting in a combined power output of 800bhp and a peak torque of 950Nm. 0 to 100kmph comes up in just 3.4s, 0.1s quicker than the Urus S and it can hit a top speed of 312kmph. The nose sports revised headlamps, a redesigned bumper and a reprofiled hood. The new spoiler and diffuser at the rear combine to help increase downforce by 35 per cent compared to the Urus S.

**TOYOTA bZ3C****TOYOTA bZ3X**

Toyota debuted two new EVs in the form of the bZ3C and bZ3X. Both vehicles incorporate Toyota's latest design language that we've seen on the new Prius, Camry and Crown models. Both are production-ready offerings derived from concepts showcased last year at Auto Shanghai. The bZ3C crossover is based on the bZ Sport Crossover Concept and targets Gen Z customers, while the bZ3X family SUV has spawned from the bZ FlexSpace Concept. Technical specifications are yet to be revealed. These electric offerings will go on sale in China within a year and there is talk of these models being considered for other markets as well.



## MINI ACEMAN

Mini presented a brand new member of its family at Auto China 2024 – Mini Aceman. It slots in between the Cooper and the Countryman in the Mini lineup. While it follows the same design philosophy seen on the new generation versions of its sibling, there is enough distinction between the new crossover and the Cooper and Countryman models thanks in part to the design of the headlamps and tail lamps. In terms of size, the Mini Aceman measures 4.07m long, 1.75m wide and 1.50m tall. Inside, the treatment is similar to other Mini models with the centrepiece being the circular infotainment display with a 9.5-inch (240mm) diameter. There's 300 litres of space in the boot. There are two all-electric variants of the Mini Aceman – E and SE. The Aceman E has an electric motor with an output of 184bhp and 290Nm and a claimed range of 310km (WLTP) from its 42.5kWh battery pack. The Aceman SE, on the other hand, has a power and torque output of 218bhp and 330Nm and a claimed range of 406km (WLTP) from a bigger 54.2kWh battery pack. ☎



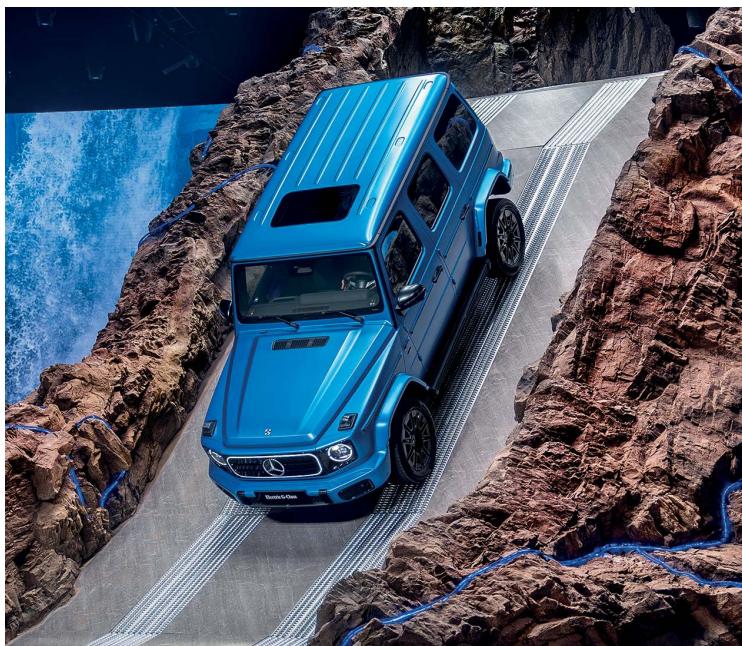
## MG EXE181

MG wowed audiences in Beijing with the public debut of the EXE181 electric supercar concept designed by the company's London Advanced Design Centre. It draws inspiration from the MG EX181 that set a land speed record of 410.5kmph in 1959 with American racing driver and Formula 1 World Champion Phil Hill at the helm. With the EXE181, MG aims to achieve a top speed of 415kmph and a 0-100kmph time of under a second. ☎

## MERCEDES-BENZ ELECTRIC G-CLASS



Kicking off a new chapter for the legendary G-Class, Mercedes-Benz debuted its all-electric version at Auto China 2024. Like its ICE sibling, the G 580 with EQ Technology is based on a ladder-frame platform with low-range off-road gear reduction, independent front suspension and a rigid axle at the rear. Its 116kWh lithium-ion battery enables a claimed WLTP range of 473km. It gets four individually controlled motors, one for each wheel, allowing it to do a full 360-degree turn at the same spot. Combined, these motors produce a maximum power of 587bhp and a peak torque of 1,164Nm. The only real visual differentiator, aside from the badges of course, is the closed-off panel up front replacing the grille which also features an LED light surround. ☺



## MERCEDES-BENZ E-CLASS L

Mercedes-Benz showcased the long-wheelbase version of the new E-Class for China. It adds 133mm to the wheelbase of the standard E-Class. The right-hand drive version will be making its way to India before the end of 2024. The rear seats get electric adjustability and a host of other features highlighting the sedan's focus on the rear half of the cabin. The dashboard gets the MBUX Superscreen comprising a 12.3-inch instrument cluster, a 14.4-inch central display and a 12.3-inch passenger display. ☺





Honda unveiled a new sub-brand for selling EVs in China called 'Ye'. The announcement included the world premiere of the Ye P7 and Ye S7, along with the showcase of the Ye GT Concept. Honda is planning to launch a total of six Ye Series models in China by 2027. Both the Ye P7 and Ye S7 will be offered in both single-motor rear-wheel drive and dual-motor all-wheel drive configurations. While in profile, both models look identical, the nose and the rear get different styling, largely in terms of the shape of LED headlamps and tail lamps. Both get cameras in place of conventional ORVMs. The dashboard layout is the same for both cars and includes a digital instrument cluster, a massive central display and a separate touchscreen for aircon controls. The Ye P7 and Ye S7 models are scheduled to go on sale at the end of 2024. The Ye GT Concept previews a sporty four-door coupe slated for launch before the end of 2025. The nose gets a treatment similar to the S7 while the tail sports sleek LED lighting. ☀





Nissan flaunted its strong focus towards the Chinese market by unveiling four new concepts. These new energy vehicles (NEVs) include two SUVs – Epic and Era – and two sedans – Evo and Epoch. Nissan also announced that it will launch one more NEV in the market than previously disclosed, bringing the total of planned vehicle launches to five by fiscal year 2026. The Nissan Epoch sedan and Epic SUV concepts are full electrics while the Era SUV and Evo sedan concepts are plug-in hybrids. These cars have been developed by Nissan in conjunction with local partner Dong Feng. Nissan has not shared any technical specifications for these models. ☺

(Top) Makoto Uchida, president and CEO, Nissan Motor Co. Ltd. presenting the new concept cars at Auto China 2024.  
 (Right) Nissan Evo plug-in hybrid sedan concept.  
 (Below) From left to right - Era plug-in hybrid SUV, Evo plug-in hybrid sedan, Epoch electric sedan and Epic electric SUV concepts



**NISSAN EVO**





Making its debut in Beijing was the Smart #5 Concept previewing a small electric SUV for the future. It's the largest car from the brand yet. The show car was equipped with AT tyres and it also gets off-road driving modes. It sports full LED lighting, front and back, along with skid plates, a roof carrier and short overhangs that further accentuate its off-road credentials. The Smart #5 Concept gets rear suicide doors and that coupled with the lack of a B-pillar makes ingress and egress for all occupants that much easier. The concept also features a built-in projector and a portable speaker tucked away neatly under the rear centre armrest. Power and torque figures haven't been shared, but AWD capability indicates a dual-motor setup. With around 100kWh of battery capacity, the #5 can do 550km on a single charge (WLTP) and its 800V architecture enables recharging from 10 to 80 per cent in 15min, although the DC fast charger rating has not been specified. ☺

■ Zeekr is a premium EV brand owned by China's Geely Automobile Holdings. It showcased the Mix all-electric MPV at Auto China 2024, debuting the SEA-M architecture, a derivative of the Sustainable Experience Architecture (SEA), designed to support vehicles ranging from robotaxis and MPVs to commercial vehicles. The Zeekr Mix features doors that slide open in opposite directions. There is no B-pillar making for easier access to the cabin which gets two-row seating with the front seats capable of a 180-degree swivel. ☺



■ BYD Ocean-M Concept previews an all-electric hot hatch that is roughly the size of a VW Golf and could transition to an electric family hatchback with performance-oriented variants. Leaked images suggest the production version is ready to go on sale as BYD Seal X. No details were shared by BYD at the concept's showcase at Auto China 2024, apart from the fact that it's rear-wheel drive. ☺

■ Consumer electronics giant Xiaomi has entered the automotive space with the SU7 electric car. This sporty four-door coupe is already on sale in China in three variants – SU7, SU7 Pro and SU7 Max – with prices starting from CNY 215,900 (Rs 25 lakh). Depending on the variant and configuration of the motor(s), power and torque range from 299bhp and 400Nm to 679bhp and 634Nm. It will do 0-100kmph in just 2.78s and hit a top speed of 265kmph. The SU7 offers a CLTC (China Light-Duty Vehicle Test Cycle) range of 700km and the SU7 Max offers 810km of range. ☺



# Hectoring in the hills

The mountains, sub-zero temperatures, and an SUV which is best known for its urban DNA, **Anagh Bhaskar** took the Hector to Manali and beyond to experience the SUV in its diverse elements



**H**e MG Hector has been around for a while and the SUV has been an important part of the transition that the automotive market has gone through, bringing in smarter tech which has found favour with a big number of customers in India. Now MG Motor India, decided to give the media fraternity a chance to experience the Hector in an environment most of us haven't driven the SUV in - the mountains. More specifically driving from Chandigarh to the Baralacha La. So having packed our winter gear, as the weather forecast for the areas was mostly sub-zero during the evenings, we took a short drive from our base in Delhi to Chandigarh, the location for the flag off of a convoy of Hectors for the MG Experience Drive.

The Hector we had for our trip was the diesel manual, and most people will agree

that this is the best powertrain offered with the SUV. This diesel is a 2.0-litre turbo mill, which makes 170bhp and 350Nm of torque, which made me quite happy about driving up the mountain range. So, post lunch, we set off towards Manali which is a journey of about 270km. We drove along the new Chan-

garh-Manali highway which is a four-lane route for the majority of the journey and makes the drive up to Manali a treat, and this is where I was able to enjoy the smooth diesel of the Hector. However, these pristine roads highlighted Hector's most endearing quality - ride comfort. The SUV just glides





THE OTHERWISE URBAN CENTRIC SUV IS ACTUALLY QUITE AT HOME WHEN IT COMES TO DRIVING ON ROUGH ROADS

effortlessly and the seats are really comfortable, meaning that almost no fatigue set in as we drove into our hotel in Manali.

The next day we set off early and just about an hour later entered the Atal tunnel, my first time traversing through the engineering marvel, and entered Keylong and the scenery changed drastically with snow capped mountains all around. Now our des-

tinyation lay about 115km ahead, but the first local checkpost informed us that the route was blocked due to extreme weather conditions and hence we were left with the option of exploring Sissu and the neighbouring areas. We found a nice trail which led to the riverbed, and considering the time on our hands we decided to do some light off-roading. The otherwise urban centric SUV

is actually quite at home when it comes to driving on rough roads, and a feature which was quite useful here was the 360-degree camera with its constant front facing view at lower speeds. Not a completely urban SUV after all, and this drive proved to be an insight into the Hector and its versatility, be it a chauffeur driven SUV or one to be enjoyed in the mountains. 





Zippo Adventures

# GOING ANALOGUE

In a bid to find an escape from his digital world **Anagh Bhaskar** takes a trip off the grid and finds a fresh new perspective on life

PICTURES Harvinder Singh



I GOT INTO THE DRIVER'S SEAT FOR THIS NICE ROUTE, WHICH IS NOW A FOUR-LANE STRETCH OF BEAUTIFUL TARMAC AND A NUMBER OF TUNNELS WHICH HAVE CUT DOWN THE TRAVEL TIME SIGNIFICANTLY



The adventurer's tool kit consists of instrumental equipment such as a knife, compass, torch and a few Zippo products such as the Mag Strike, windproof lighters, lighter fuel and hand warmers



Daily routine can be tiring, and more so if it becomes too monotonous. I for one use the digital world as my escape, diving into competitive games, giving my brain vigorous exercise. But this too can get to one's head, putting one in a state which is very close to being 'fried', and well it clearly impacted my daily life. Seeing this, Dipayan suggested a getaway which in his words would "put me through a rite of passage", and I presumed this just meant that being away from my gaming PC and constant 5G connection would teach me a thing or two. I couldn't be more wrong.

I met up with Dipayan at the office early in the morning and this was the first surprise. He showed up in an Isuzu V-Cross, a very purpose-built pickup with a trusty diesel motor and 4x4 capability that too with the load bed filled with polyester bags. We headed out of the capital and the only response I received to my directional query was, "closer to nature", and considering that we crossed Chandigarh I assumed that it was the mighty Himalayas where lay our destination.

After a few hours of driving and having started the climb into the mountains, we stopped for a meal and this is where things got a bit more interesting.

He handed over a small bag, and called it the adventurer's tool kit. Inside were a number of objects, some quite foreign to me such as a compass, knife, rope, torch, and an assortment of

Zippo products including lighters, hand warmers and a Mag Strike and it were these items which intrigued me, considering that I wasn't planning on spending much time outdoors.

Being on the road to Manali, I was getting a faint idea of the area we were headed to. I got into the driver's seat for this nice route, which is now a four-lane stretch of beautiful tarmac and a number of tunnels which have cut down the travel time significantly. The V-Cross performs quite well on highways, with the torque heavy motor giving a huge boost of acceleration when needed. The suspension is quite jump friendly as it needs to be to handle the toughest of terrains, but on nice tarmac it is quite pliant. And the best part of having such a vehicle at our disposal were the bad stretches where I could overtake everyone who struggled and had to go slowly. Unlike a lot of modern cars, the V-Cross is quite analogue, which makes it much less susceptible to failure in tough conditions.

After staying the night in Manali we headed north, and crossed the Atal tunnel and even then my secretive colleague wouldn't tell me where we were headed, and kept on driving for a few more hours until he exclaimed, "that looks perfect" and drove the car into a trail leading down to the river bed. In normal cars, this would require a certain degree of caution but in our V-Cross this was the simple case of just shifting the car into 4 low and it trundled down maintaining its rate of descent. Once we parked up near the river, we got out to click some photos, but just as I was getting into the car to





THE WINDS DIDN'T MAKE THE JOB EASY FOR US, BUT HAVING GOT THE MAIN STRUCTURE UP, THE REST OF THE PROCESS WAS EASY ENOUGH



go find a hotel, I noticed Dipayan unloading the cargo we were carrying, and well this could only mean one thing – a night in the wilderness. And that was not at all what I had in mind, especially considering that the temperatures were already nearing zero. But as I had agreed that I will follow through on this getaway and complete my rite of passage, I explored around to find a less soggy patch where we would camp for the night.

First up was pitching the tents, which was a first for me, and this meant pulling out the user manual. While the method seemed easy enough, the winds didn't make the job straightforward, but having got the main

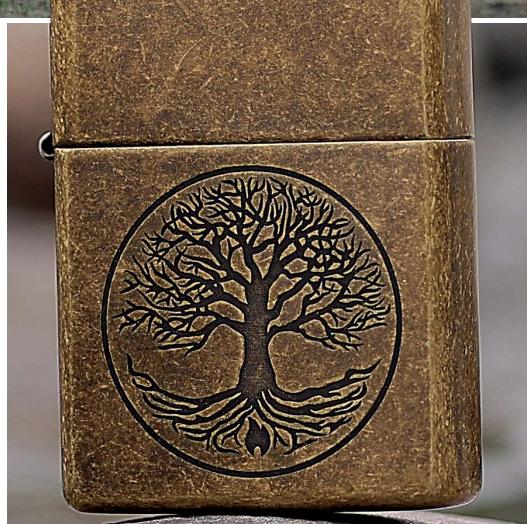
structure up, the rest of the process was easy enough, and the second tent was up much faster than the first.

The next step was building a campfire, and while we had a bit of firewood in the car, we had to forage around to find smaller wood pieces and split them and place rocks in a circle. Lighting up the campfire was supposed to be an easy task with the Zippo windproof lighter but Dipayan quickly reminded me that there was a better solution at hand presented in the adventure kit in the form of the Zippo Mag Strike. This is essentially a ferrocium rod, which when struck with steel creates a spark shower. Another

Zippo product comes very handy in lighting up campfires and that is the lighter fuel, which works miracles even when poured over wet firewood, which was the case considering the light showers from earlier that day. Just a few strikes of the Mag Strike created a huge spark shower, which caught on instantly, and well using this instead of lighters is definitely safer, and much much cooler.

With a moonless night, the sky became a beautiful kaleidoscope of stars, and we were so high up and away from the smog and light pollution, that even with our naked eyes we could spot the slight hue of our galaxy.

Gazing at the sky for so long also meant



## THE ZIPPO LIFE

ZIPPO IS a brand which has very well defined what it means to surpass its own products and industry, and is perhaps one of the most recognizable brands worldwide. The iconic name was actually inspired by the word Zipper, and the Zippo lighter was granted a patent in 1936. During the World War II, Zippo lighters were in huge demand by the military, so much so that production for consumer use ceased. The Zippo lighter is windproof, owing to its design and rate of fuel delivery and this makes it very difficult to blow out the flame. The lighter uses a replaceable wick, flint, rayon balls, which means that a Zippo can virtually last a lifetime, and if any part does get damaged, Zippo's lifetime guarantee ensures 'it works or we fix it for free'. The opening and closing of every single lighter has a characteristic click, which too is trademarked, and is instant identifier of Zippo. In 2020, the brand manufactured its 6,00,000,000th lighter.



## LEGENDS

**ZIPPO®**  
LIVE WITH CONFIDENCE

- ZIPPO MADE A CAR TO SHOWCASE ITS ICONIC LIGHTER IN 1947
- A ZIPPO LIGHTER WORKED AFTER BEING FOUND INSIDE THE BELLY OF A FISH
- THE ICONIC DESIGN OF ZIPPO IS TRADEMARKED
- THE ZIPPO 'CLICK' HAS BEEN SAMPLED IN MANY SONGS
- ZIPPO MADE MORE THAN 600 MILLION LIGHTERS TILL DATE





that one could easily spot a shooting star or two in the span of a few seconds, and I had never imagined that the sky could be so enchantingly beautiful. Lost in our observations of the sky, we were a bit late to notice just how cold it had become. With temperatures reaching five below freezing, it was really difficult to keep our hands out of our pockets, but the Adventure Kit came to the rescue. The Zippo hand warmer is nothing less of a miracle product, it is absolutely simple, archaic even, just fill in the lighter fuel, and light it up with a lighter, and the warmer comes to life. It is a perfect temperature to hold, not as hot as it would burn the skin or as cold to be not very useful. And even though we used the hand warmer right out in the open, where it was windy, it worked perfectly well keeping our hands warm and safe from freezing.

As our torch was low on battery, we had to resort to using the Zippo lighters for all illumination purposes. Despite the wind, they provided enough illumination, and

“

JUST A FEW STRIKES  
OF THE MAG STRIKE  
CREATED A HUGE  
SPARK SHOWER,  
WHICH CAUGHT ON  
INSTANTLY

“ ”

THE HOT INSTANT COFFEE MADE WITH  
A MAKESHIFT STOVE OF ZIPPO LIGHTERS  
TASTED A THOUSAND TIMES BETTER  
THAN ANYTHING FROM THE FANCY CAFES  
WE ARE USED TO IN THE METROPOLIS





were actually instrumental whenever one of us had to leave our warm spot by the campfire, to grab something from the V-Cross or the tents.

We sat in front of the waning campfire, and as it went out, so did our will to bear the harsh cold. We retreated to our tents, and were thankful for the escape from the bone-chilling winds and the warmth of our sleeping bags. But then we heard faint rus-

tling around our tents, and both of us looked out, and we looked around a bit and saw a few silhouettes of animals moving around the camp. We expected this as we were informed by locals that there were jackals and foxes in the area, which get attracted to camps as an easy source of food. Considering that we really needed rest, we came up with the idea of placing a few Zippo lighters around the camp and it actually worked wonders, with

no more undesired disturbances as we re-treated to our tents and slept.

The next morning we were up early, and this meant that the sun hadn't hit the valley floor and it was really chilly and the thermo on my watch said five points below zero. We desperately needed warmth, and as we had a few packets of instant coffee we decided to make some, but we had exhausted our supply of firewood. This is where Dipayan got

## HAND WARMING THE PROPER WAY

**ONE OF THE** most instrumental products we had at our disposal was the Zippo 12-Hour Refillable Hand Warmer. As the temperatures plummeted, our hands were freezing and it became a huge task to do any task which required our gloves to be off. This is where the hand warmer came into its own element, and while we expected it to help with our cold hands, the warmth that it provides even when one holds it in out in the open is just incredible. Using it is fairly simple, just take off the cap and the burner, fill up the cup with genuine Zippo lighter fluid and pour it into the warmer. Put the burner back on and use a Zippo lighter to light up the burner for a few seconds and put the cap back on. The incredible part is that this radiates warmth for 12 hours, that too without an active flame! While the technology might appear to be futuristic, this is fully mechanical and isn't controlled by any form of electronics.



"

MAKING A CAMPFIRE BEING INDEPENDENT FROM TECHNOLOGY AND INSTEAD TOOLS IN THEIR SIMPLEST AND MOST ANALOGUE FORM, LIKE THE ZIPPO MAG STRIKE AND WINDPROOF LIGHTERS, ENSURED THAT WE COULD REVEL IN THE BEAUTY OF NATURE



into the loading bed and started propping up the Zippo lighters. I understood the assignment and held the utensil over the lit up lighters, and just a few minutes later the water was bubbling! And oh the hot instant coffee made with a makeshift stove of Zippo lighters tasted a thousand times better than anything from the fancy cafes we are used to in the metropolis, filling us with much needed energy.

Soon we started dismantling our camp and as we went along we collected the plastics and other trash around our campsite, and put it in the Isuzu, to be carried with us and

disposed off at a proper place.

Technology has evolved so much in the past few decades that we as humans have forgotten the essence of actually using our survival skills which made Homo Sapiens the only surviving archaic humanoids which stood the test of time. We spend our days in front of screens, constantly connected to technology, in climate controlled environments. The term nature has very little meaning in our concrete jungles and the trend has become to make our airports seem more like rainforests. And in such a time, taking an escape far from any city, in a vehicle like the

V-Cross, pitching tents, making a campfire being independent from technology and instead tools in their simplest and most analogue form, like the Zippo Mag Strike and windproof lighters, ensured that we could revel in the beauty of nature, and be so close to it without the intervention of modern tech. As I got back into the V-Cross to drive back to Delhi, I just couldn't help but feel a longing in my gut. This place, the experience, the beauty and most of all the digital detox was something that I didn't want to leave behind. I decided then and there that this was something I'd do again very soon. ◁



# DIESEL DUEL

The BMW X1 and the Mercedes-Benz GLA are the only two diesel compact SUVs in the luxury space and they can go round for round in their latest avatars, but which one should you buy?



Test No.

**294 to 295**

**BMW X1 sDrive18d**

2.0-litre, 4-cyl, 150bhp

**Mercedes-Benz GLA 220d**

2.0-litre, 4-cyl, 190bhp



PICTURES Harvinder Singh

If you're looking to enter the luxury car space with your next purchase and need a comfortable, touring-ready SUV, there are only two options in the present Indian market. On the one hand, you have the all-wheel-drive Mercedes-Benz GLA 220d 4Matic; on the other, you have the BMW X1 sDrive18d. We've picked diesel because both these cars show over 1,000km range with their tanks topped up and those long legs are exactly what make these two cars exceptional tourers. The BMW X1 went on sale last year, and Mercedes-Benz was quick to respond with the updated GLA this year. But which one should you put your money on? Let's jump right into it.

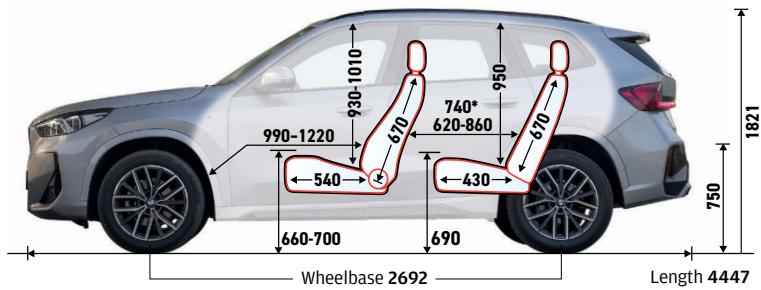
The first thing you realise the moment you set eyes on either of these cars is how much they have grown. Visually it's the BMW that appears larger, almost reminiscent of an older X5 in profile. The GLA too with this new update is instantly more substantial, not just on paper, it's curvier and more muscular giving it more presence without a doubt. Both have blended the SUV and the crossover characters perfectly, neither overtly large nor obnoxiously small. As an early compact SUV nay-sayer, I love where this segment is right now.

While they both may share their core ethos, each has its own styles and characters. The BMW is characterised by perpendicular lines, a larger glass house and the geometric

### MEASUREMENTS in millimetres

Wheel track F/R 1561/1562  
Width 1821  
Shoulder room 1400

Tyres 225/55 R18 Bridgestone Turanza T001  
Spare wheel T135/80 R17 Maxxis Spare Tyre SS

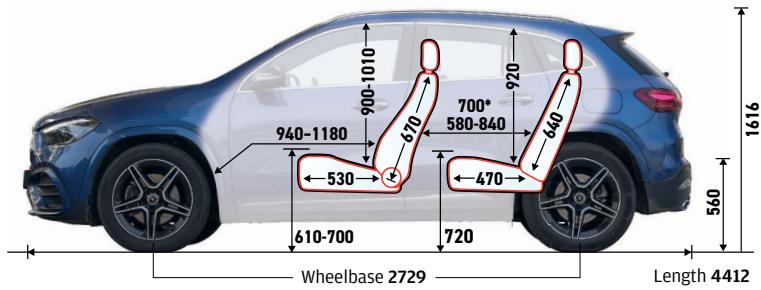


**BMW X1**

### MEASUREMENTS in millimetres

Wheel track F/R 1605/1606  
Width 1834  
Shoulder room 1320

Tyres 235/50 R19 Continental Premium Contact 655R  
Spare wheel T145/80 R19 NEXEN 402



**MERCEDES-BENZ GLA**

\*Rear knee room with standard 1m driver's leg room.



but not in-your-face kidney grille. The wraparound taillights that protrude from the bodywork add to the visual impression of the X1 from the rear. The X1 also gets the M Sport treatment on this diesel variant which means you get the sharper bumpers and M-Sport 18-inch rims. Initially, I did wish for the wheels that filled the well better but after driving the 18d for a while, I was thankful for the plush ride, especially compared to the GLA.

This updated GLA leans more towards the crossover side of the scales, and I like it. I'd argue that this more rounded-out muscular crossover is the way to go. The update gets a redesigned body-coloured apron on the bumper, a new set of headlights and reconfigured tail-lights that add to the fresh appeal of the 2024 GLA. Side by side, the X1 is marginally bigger, and it's impressive how both these companies have gone about giving their compact SUVs such individual characters without compromising on space or visual impact. It gives you a sense of just how close this road test is.

Step inside either of these cars, and whether you're buying them as an entry into the luxury space or as a second vehicle to a luxury car you already own you're going to feel that familiar sense of luxury and quality. The BMW is centred around the asymmetric dashboard layout with some individual layouts and touches like the upright wire-

## EVALUATION POINTS

### Body

Aspects points	Max	GLA	X1
Front space	15	11	12
Rear space	15	9	11
Overall space	10	7	7
Boot space	15	10	10
Visibility	5	4	4
Feel of quality	15	13	13
Payload	5	3	3
Safety features	20	13	13
<b>Results</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>73</b>

### Drive

Aspects points	Max	GLA	X1
Acceleration	15	11	9
Top speed	5	4	4
Driveability	10	10	10
Engine	5	3	3
Gearbox	10	8	8
Fuel efficiency	40	28	30
Range	5	4	4
Environment	10	7	7
<b>Results</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>75</b>





1. The cabin of the X1 feels significantly fresher than the GLA, and gets some really nice touches like the vertical phone stand with a wireless charger. 2. Harmon Kardon speakers make for a really nice audio experience. 3. There's a boost button that unlocks maximum performance for 10 seconds, although the controls on the wheel take some getting used to. 4. The digital instrument display is minimal and easy to read. 5. The floating arm rest controls are intuitively placed and easy to use

BMW HAS ALSO DONE A BETTER JOB OF MATERIALS ON THE INTERIORS WITH THE LOWER QUALITY PLASTICS TUCKED AWAY OUT OF SIGHT



Both the X1 and GLA used 2.0-litre diesel motors although the X1 is audibly more refined than the GLA's motor. The GLA makes up for the lack of refinement with better performance



less charger that makes it feel fresh, and the intuitive approach makes it very easy to love. BMW has also done a better job of materials on the interiors with the lower quality plastics tucked away well out of sight. I love the dark brown leather upholstery paired with the silver accents which looks distinguished and professional. One thing that I didn't like is the new UX, which in my opinion over-simplifies the modes and complicates almost everything else.

Weigh up the features on both cars and they could go on round after round. You get dual-zone climate control, customisable ambient lighting, wireless Android Auto and Apple CarPlay, panoramic sunroofs and powered tailgates. In terms of safety, the BMW X1 gets six airbags compared to the seven on the GLA, and both get level-1 ADAS suites, with emergency braking and blind spot warnings. Lane assist is exclusive to the BMW X1.

Relatively speaking, the GLA is more exuberant on the inside, the black-on-black aesthetic that plays on material textures rather than colour, and the red stitching that accents the borders looks sporty. The Alcantara-like micro-fibre looks and feels exceptional and adds some serious premiumness to the cabin. There's a new UX on the dual-screen setup that

is fresh, but still familiar, giving it a little bit of an upper hand than the BMW. The turbine air vents continue to be my favourite detail in the GLA's cabin and the quality of the vents is exuded by the click sound as you operate them. Like with most new Mercedes-Benz cars, the steering gets several touch buttons that take some getting used to, but post the learning curve, I found them quite effective.

The second row was always a pain point for compact SUVs, but with these two that problem seems to have been left out in the process of evolution. They aren't what you'd call palatial but there's more than enough leg and headroom in both cars for six-footers and that's a blessing. Seating three abreast would still be a little cramped and to that end the GLA's lack of a central armrest does seem a little out of place. The BMW X1 does seem to lack meaningful under-thigh support but the ability to recline the back seat does make up for it a little bit.

A family's worth of luggage for a weekend getaway will fit in either boot, and both of them have seats that fold flat in case there's more luggage than people, which is always a nice option to have. Both cars get space savers that reflect in the more than amenable boot spaces.

## EVALUATION POINTS

### Comfort

Aspects points	Max	GLA	X1
Ride quality	30	21	21
Front seats	10	8	8
Rear seat	10	8	8
Driving noise	10	8	8
Handling	15	13	12
Equipment	15	13	13
Operability	10	9	9
<b>Results</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>79</b>

### Dynamics

Aspects points	Max	GLA	X1
Steering	15	13	12
Stability	15	12	11
Manoeuvrability	20	12	12
Braking	25	20	20
Grip	10	8	8
Turning circle	15	12	12
<b>Results</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>75</b>



**THE INDIA-SPEC X1 IS FRONT-WHEEL-DRIVE ONLY, WHEREAS THE GLA COMES WITH MERCEDES' 4MATIC AWD SYSTEM AS STANDARD**

Where the two start to depart from each other is their powertrains. The India-spec X1 is front-wheel-drive only, whereas the GLA comes with Mercedes' 4Matic AWD system as standard. This is the point where the BMW starts to lose a little ground to the Mercedes-Benz, despite both of them being powered by 2.0-litre turbo diesel engines. The GLA makes a more than respectable 190bhp of max power, and 400Nm of peak twist, whereas the BMW makes only 150bhp and 360Nm of torque. What is even more interesting is despite the GLA having more power and torque on tap, larger wheels and an AWD system, both cars return almost similar fuel efficiency both in the city and out on the highway, hinting at the superior refinement of the Mercedes motor.

It's not very noticeable in day-to-day driving, I will admit. Both cars do triple-digit speeds with ease and have decent kick-down roll-ons, but the numbers are reflected in the performance section of our test. The Mercedes does have the punchier



Relative to previous generations, both the cars are much more comfortable in the second row although the recline function in the BMW (left) does make it slightly more comfortable



1. The cabin of the GLA is all black but contrasting textures and materials make it look very premium. 2. The digital instruments can be customised and are easy to read and cleanly laid out. 3. The touch sensitive steering controls can take some getting used to. 4. The drive selector stalk is easy to use. 5. The 10.25-inch infotainment does feel a little dated when compared to the BMW. 6. With the facelift, the touch pad has been replaced by a small cubby that is ideal for keeping keys and your wallet in a place that's easily accessible when you're getting in and out



X1 gets a lower boot floor that allows for a little more volume than the GLA. Both benefit from flat-folding rear seats



# RELATIVELY, THE BMW IS QUIETER AND MORE LINEAR WITH MUCH LESS FEEDBACK FROM THE ENGINE ENTERING THE CABIN

mid-range, and you do feel the AWD getting all the power down better in corners. The 8-speed DCT is great as always and is so responsive, that I never found the need to switch it to manual which is something I regularly do. NVH though is a pain point, and the fact that Mercedes-Benz is producing closer to peak performance from its two-litre

mill is audible. Relatively, the BMW is quieter and more linear with much less feedback from the engine entering the cabin. And, as I said earlier, inside the city you're rarely going to feel the lack of punch. It is only on the highway, especially expressways where everyone is doing high triple-digit speeds that you seem to notice the deficit. Thank-

fully, there is also a boost pedal, that lets you get 10 seconds of boosts for high speed overtakes. Floor it around a corner and you're likely to feel the full extent of that front wheel drive torque steer that's inevitable on a front-wheel-drive setup. The BMW does claw back some ground on the basis that it rides better as compared to the GLA which

**X1 sDrive18d M Sport** Rs 61.22 lakh (OTR, Delhi)



1,995cc, 4-cylinder, turbo-diesel
84x90mm
7-speed DCT
150bhp@3,750-4,000rpm
360Nm@1,500-2,500rpm
95bhp/tonne
74.18bhp/litre
FWD



Monocoque
5
MacPherson struts/Torison beam
Electric power assist
11.7m
476 litres
18in



sDrive18d
6
Yes
Dual-zone climate control
All four
10.7in touchscreen, Android Auto/Apple CarPlay
2 years/unlimited km
Available

**GLA 220d 4MATIC AMG Line** Rs 68.66 lakh (OTR, Delhi)



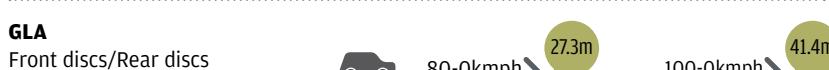
Capacity	1,950cc, 4-cylinder, turbo-diesel
Bore x Stroke	83.5x99mm
Gearbox	8-speed DCT
Max Power	190bhp@3,800rpm
Max Torque	400Nm@1,600-2,600rpm
Power to weight	109bhp/tonne
Specific output	96.4bhp/litre
Driven Wheels	AWD



Chassis	Monocoque
Seats	5
Suspension F/R	MacPherson struts/torsion beam
Steering	Electric power assist
Turning Circle	10.4
Boot Space	425 litres
Wheel size	19in

Model	GLA 200d 4Matic
Airbags	7
ABS	Yes
AC/Climatic control	Dual-zone climate control
Power Windows	All four
Audio System	10.25in touchscreen, Android Auto/Apple CarPlay
Standard warranty	3 years/unlimited km
Extended warranty	Available

### ACCELERATION



### FUEL ECONOMY

**Fuel type** Diesel

**X1** **GLA**

City	17.7kmpl	15.8kmpl
Highway	20.3kmpl	20kmpl

Overall 16.6kmpl

Claimed (RAI) 20.4kmpl

Fuel Tank 51 litres

Range 843km

CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions 160g/km

**NOISE**

At 50kmph 61dB(A)

At 100kmph 63dB(A)

At 120kmph 67dB(A)

At 140kmph 68dB(A)



Both cars get the added convenience of 40:20:40 split seats which means that there's plenty of permutations for those sparing situations when you have oversized/oddly shaped luggage

does feel significantly stiffer. The stiffness does aid the steering precision of the Mercedes-Benz GLA, and concurrently the lack thereof on the BMW which is uncharacteristic for the brand from Bavaria. The BMW X1 sways as the twists come in and you will find yourself wondering where your wheels are pointing through a cor-

ner, especially straight out of the GLA. It would seem that each car gains where the other loses out and that makes comparing them that much more difficult. This comparison did come down to the wire, thankfully the objective crucible of our comprehensive road test means I don't have to make that call. ☺

## VERDICT

This road test was one of the closest we've ever had the chance to judge, and ultimately it comes down to the end user and what they are looking for from the car. But in this test, the Mercedes-Benz GLA comes out on top just by having better performance, AWD and slightly more space on the backseats. It is a few lakhs more expensive than the BMW but gets a whole lot more under the hood and in terms of driving pleasure.

## EVALUATION POINTS

### Cost

₹

Aspects points	Max	GLA	X1
Basic price	60	3	3
Resale	20	13	12
Warranty	20	16	14
<b>Results</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>29</b>

## FINAL POINTS

GLA X1

	<b>Body</b>	<b>70</b>	73
	<b>Drive</b>	<b>75</b>	75
	<b>Comfort</b>	<b>80</b>	79
	<b>Dynamics</b>	<b>77</b>	75
₹	<b>Cost</b>	<b>32</b>	29

**334** **331**

Final Position **1st** | **2nd**

**Dipayan Dutta**

Assistant Editor

dipayan.dutta@ajitak.com

@dipayanandutta





# ROADS OF PROGRESS

The Automotive Journalist Association of India (AJAI) in collaboration with Mahindra bring forth the incredible development story of India's road infrastructure as **Rahul Ghosh** drives the Scorpio-N along the iconic Srinagar-Leh highway

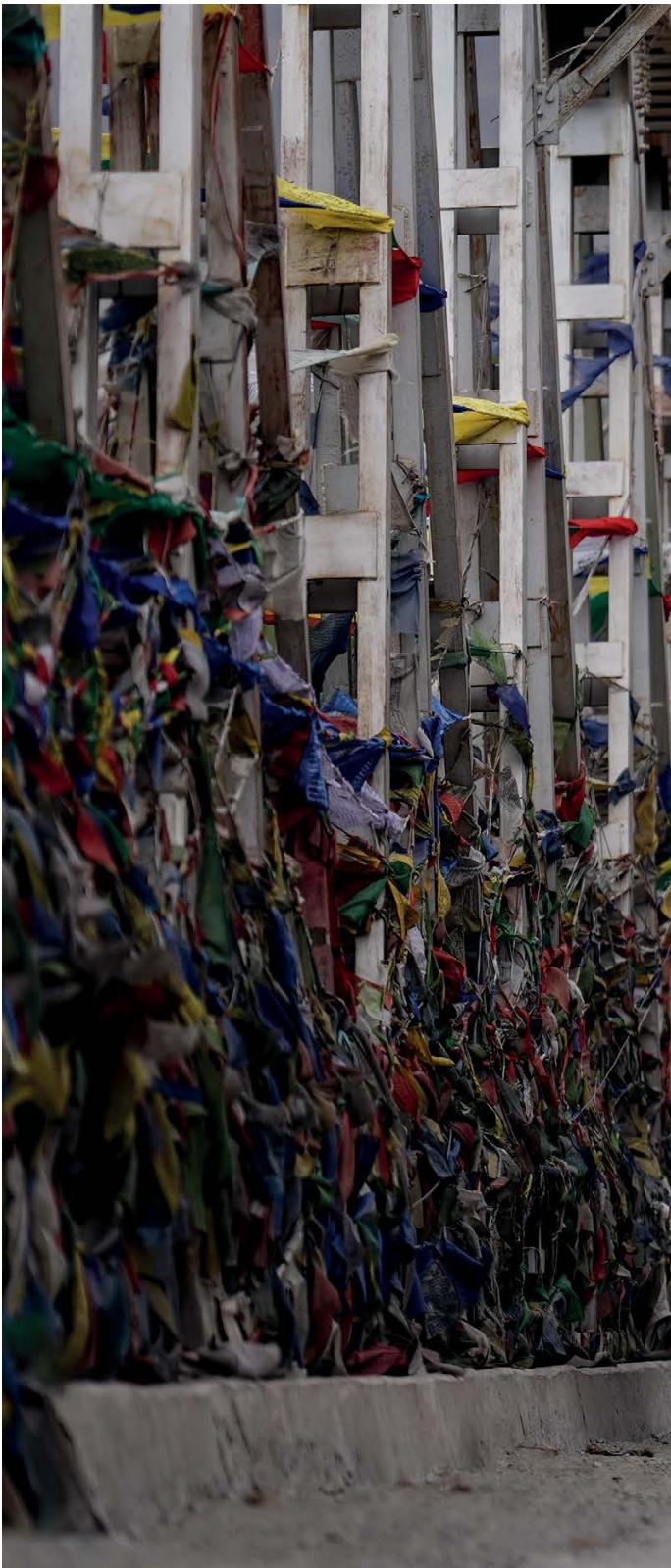


There is something divine about travelling. But then, there was a time when travelling meant involving the railways or catching a flight. But all that has changed in the recent past. The road network across the country has become so much better that people are now heading out on the highways with family and friends. To bring forward this incredible development, the Automotive Journalists Association of India or AJAI teamed up with Mahindra to showcase the 'Roads of Progress' via the Bharat Drive. Joining hands with us for this journey is JK Tyre. A convoy of Mahindra Scorpio-Ns then were flagged off from Mahindra's Mumbai facility and each crew headed across the country to showcase the freedom associated with road travel. Auto Today joined the convoy in Srinagar and headed out towards Leh, a dream destination for millions.

We were heading out from Delhi that was reeling under an intense heat wave.

A short flight later we were greeted by our convoy of Scorpio-Ns at Srinagar airport. The Big Daddy of SUVs stood gleaming in the sunlight as we loaded up. The boot of the Scorpio-Ns were already loaded up with camera equipment and all, but it still had space for our luggage. We cruised out of the city with the infotainment system playing out the route via Android Auto. Within no time we were on the highways outside the city and big wide roads meant that we could cruise comfortably heading out towards Sonamarg. The roads all along were well paved stretches of tarmac and the surroundings were nothing short of breathtakingly beautiful. The iconic Chinar trees lined the roads with glimpses of the river every now and then. We even stopped by to pick up fresh cherries from local orchards and that's something we highly recommend. Encountering heavy traffic was a sign that Sonamarg was approaching. There were plenty of tourists enjoying

the locales with their cars parked on the side of the road. We also noticed that the cars were from various parts of the country and some of them wore South Indian number plates. These were families travelling in their vehicles for days and that is what good infra-



The Automotive Journalists Association of India (AJAI) brings together the leading media professionals in the automotive sector from around the country onto a national platform to collectively and holistically address the

most pressing issues of the day. In addition, AJAI aims to encourage and mentor young automotive journalists, as well as provide support to the veterans of our industry. AJAI is also the proud custodian of the Indian Car of the Year (ICOTY) and Indian Motorcycle of the Year (IMOTY) Awards – the most coveted and prestigious awards in the Indian automotive industry, with a legacy of honouring excellence and innovation.



structure has done; offer the confidence to drive long distances.

Once past Sonamarg, the road starts winding up and that means we were climbing up the famous Zoji la located at close

to 12,000ft. The road to Zoji la at the start has tarmac, but as one reaches the top, the surface changes and is made up of concrete blocks. The surface offers good grip, and also has channels that allow easy dissipation

of water thereby reducing risks for motorists. The astonishing thing is that all through the climb to the top, there are barely any broken stretches and this means all modes of transport travel with equal ease. With the



THE ASTONISHING THING IS THAT ALL THROUGH THE CLIMB TO THE TOP, THERE ARE BARELY ANY BROKEN STRETCHES AND THIS MEANS ALL MODES OF TRANSPORT TRAVEL WITH EQUAL EASE





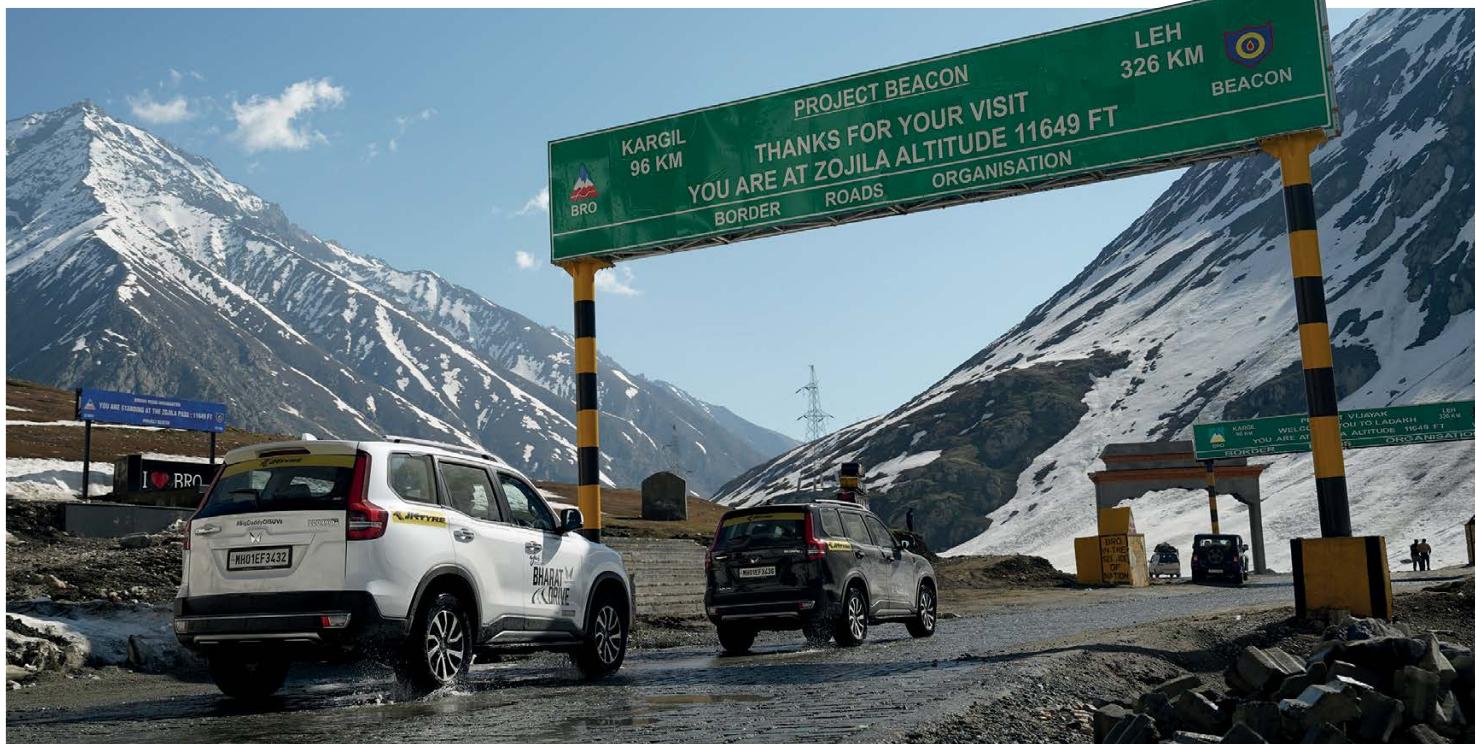
temperature dropping we reached the top where tourists were busy cooling off on the snow and ice with locals offering snowmobile rides and so on. Quite a wonderful sight to see Indians on the move.

A quick descent later, we were stopped in our tracks at the Kargil War Memorial. An incredible place where one can appreciate what our armed forces had to go through during the war. A surreal experience is to go

through the names of the martyrs that are engraved forever at the memorial. For our tomorrow, they gave up all. By this time, the weather outside had changed drastically, and we were busy putting on some warm clothes. The local food here too is something worth savouring. After a halt at Kargil, we moved on towards Leh.

Being prime season, the roads were dotted with bike gangs all heading towards Leh.

Some of the groups were even camped up by the river and were ecstatic over the fact that access to places like these was so good. Next up was another high pass interestingly named Fotu la and not surprisingly, the tarmac up there was immaculate. The winding roads up to this pass were a joy to drive on. The Scorpio-N, despite being a big SUV, kept us entertained with its strong diesel engine. We were greeted with snowfall on



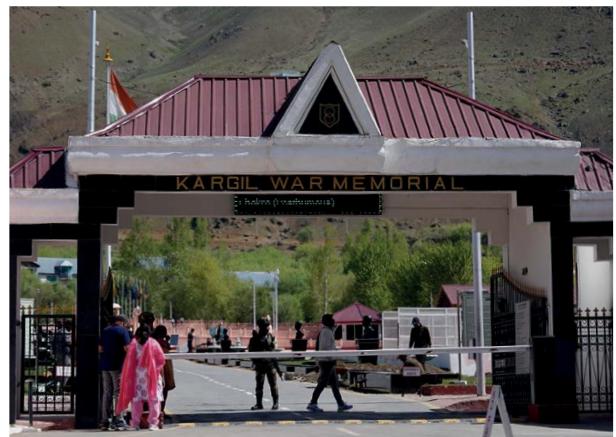


the top and the feeling was sublime. Nevertheless, we carried on towards Leh with a break for lunch at a small Tibetan outlet. The 'Pathar Saheb' Gurudwara signalled that we were nearly there and with very little fatigue, we made it to our night stop, dotted with prayer flags fluttering all around.

But our journey was not supposed to end in Leh. We were aiming to go even further towards Zanskar Valley. However, the next morning we were greeted by skies dotted with ominous black clouds. The locals instantly warned us about landslides, but we decided to move towards our intended destination anyway. On the road to Zanskar Valley, we were pleased to see pristine tarmac again. At a popular stop called Sangam Point, we witnessed the roads from atop and the view helped us appreciate the efforts of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO). It is an incredible feat of engineering to create these roads and maintain them through weather like this. A few kilometres later, we were busy creating some incredible content as the ground shook a bit. We looked ahead and the entire mountainside was crumbling! The beautiful black top was taken over by clay and stones! We ran towards our Scorpio-Ns as the noise started increasing and zipped away. We had just witnessed a landslide. We drove back to what looked like a BRO camp to inform the concerned people. The landslide was so intense that the authorities would need a day or two to clear up the mess. A day or two was a luxury we could not afford as our colleagues had already landed in Leh to take charge of the convoy. Our dreams of heading towards Zanskar were in tatters as we realised that no matter how much man progresses, nature will always have the upper hand. ☺



Among the plethora of high passes we crossed, Fotu la at 13,479ft was rather interesting. The crystal blue sky transformed in a matter of minutes and it started snowing. The landslide (right) which we encountered enroute Zanskar was rather terrifying



## RIDING ON JK TYRE

**FOR ANY** mega drive, it is vital that we have good partners and on the Bharat Drive, it was JK Tyre. The Scorpio-Ns we were driving were shod with Ranger H/T SUV tyres and we must say that they performed rather well. The route we were driving on included a mix of good tarmac and gravel roads. On tarmac, the Rangers offered good grip and instilled a lot of confidence to drive the SUV around the twisties. When the road conditions turned turtle, the tyres morphed into being tough and robust.





# Family First

Can Ather's brand-new family scooter, the Rizta, cut the mustard or is it playing the catch-up game? We rode the scooter in Bengaluru to find out

Ather's family scooter is finally here, and in case you missed our preview from our previous issue, it is called the Rizta. Fundamentally speaking, it is quite different from the 450 series of scooters. This is meant to be that one scooter for the family - practical, smart,

safe and spacious. Well, is it? We recently headed out to Bengaluru to see if this latest electric scooter from Ather has a fitting place in its family and yours.

From a design standpoint, Ather has gone with function over form, but that's not to say that the Rizta is a bad-looking scooter.

I feel it looks rather handsome in the flesh. That front end gives off a retro-ish look with that headlamp and indicator slab that sits in the middle. Around the middle, you've got plenty of space for your feet with a large floorboard, along with two parcel hooks. There's also the charging port on

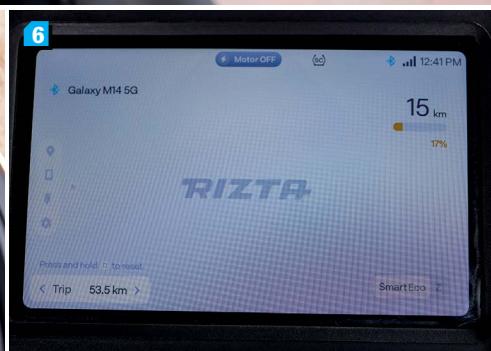
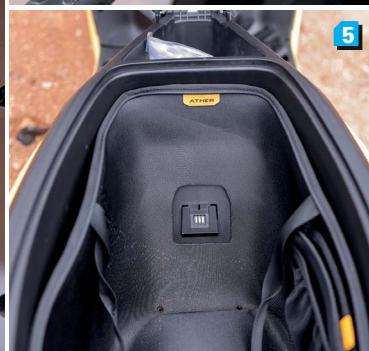


PICTURES Harvinder Singh



1. Floorboard feels slightly elevated, which results in a knees-up seating position. Side stand feels flimsy, does its job well.
2. Switchgear feels premium, tactile to use.
3. Charging socket gets a flap and there's a parcel hook right next to it.
4. Ather app can be used to access information and features on one's smartphone.
5. There's also a multi-purpose charging port present in boot space.
6. 7-inch colour TFT looks crisp and clear. It's not a touchscreen, though.

**FROM A DESIGN STANDPOINT, AETHER HAS GONE WITH FUNCTION OVER FORM, BUT THAT'S NOT TO SAY THAT THE RIZTA IS A BAD-LOOKING SCOOTER**



that has a convenient flap that automatically closes. Around the side, there's the triangular body panel that looks chic with the 'Rizta Z' badging finished in a chunky font. Around the back, it's got the slim tail lamp and turn indicators to complete the look. However, I must point out that there were a few panel gaps, which Ather confirmed will be worked on once the Rizta goes on sale. Overall, I do feel this is a good-looking scooter, especially in this Alphonso Yellow shade, which looks hip and contemporary. There's a lovely mix of retro and modern in there that I appreciate.

As far as features are concerned, Ather hasn't skimped, as was the case with the 450 series as well. The most prominent feature of all has to be the 7-inch TFT instrument cluster, which comes with a Snapdragon 212 Quadcore (1.3Ghz) processor and Android Open Source (AOSP) operating system

## Ather Rizta Z

**Motor**

4.3kW

**Max Power/Torque**

5.8bhp/22Nm

**Ground clearance**

165mm

**Kerb weight**

119kg

**Battery**

2.9kWh

**Range**

123km (claimed)

**Price** Rs 1.25 lakh  
(ex-showroom, Bengaluru)**On sale** Now **Likes**

Comfort, space, handling

**Dislikes**

Low speed ride

**COMPETITION CHECK****Ola S1 Pro****MOTOR** 5.5kW **RANGE** 180km**TOP SPEED** 120kmph **PRICE** ₹ 1.24 lakh\***Bajaj Chetak Urbane****MOTOR** 4.2kW **RANGE** 113km**TOP SPEED** 63kmph **PRICE** ₹ 1.23 lakh\*

\*Ex-showroom, Delhi, inclusive of FAME subsidy

with 16GB of storage and 8GB of RAM. It is, however, not a touchscreen. The display itself is quite clear and well-sorted, but we did encounter severe lag issues. However, Ather once again put our minds at ease by clearing the fact we were riding pre-production models and that small niggles will be taken care of once the Rizta arrives in the market. The Rizta comes packed with Atherstack 6, which is the latest version of their software,

which boasts several inventive features. One is WhatsApp preview on the dashboard, which allows notifications to pop up on the dashboard without being too distracting. Also, if you get a call, you can use the switchgear on the left to cancel the call and even send a message automatically, which I felt is a neat little feature for those on the move. I also quite like the Google Maps and Alexa integration,





1. Rizta comes with 34 litres of space under the seat. A fabric parcel tray is an optional extra. 2. There is another parcel hook just opposite the one next to the ignition and charging socket

although, the UI itself is different from the 450 series. There's also a provision for sending across your live location to preset contacts in case of a safety issue. Furthermore, the Ather app has been overhauled and the Rizta comes with 40 more Atherstack features than before, which most 450 users will also get over time.

The party piece for the Rizta, other than an abundance of software-based features, has to be the seat. Ather claims it is the largest in the segment, and to be frank I don't doubt it. I sat pillion, sat with a pillion and both times, there was more than enough space to go around. One could even fit a decently-sized bag in between. There's also a fairly supportive and handsome-looking backrest for the pillion. The boot, if not done properly, doesn't align and one has to adjust to close it properly. I personally found this slightly odd because of the quality levels we've come to expect from Ather. Either way, there is a 34-litre storage space that can hold a full-sized helmet with ease. There's an additional 22-litre trunk for storing tiny tidbits, which can really come in handy. On the whole, the Rizta is well-equipped and there isn't really a reason to complain here at all.

The Rizta we had was the Z variant with the 2.9kWh battery pack, which has a claimed range of 123km. The top-of-line Rizta Z variant comes with a 3.7kWh battery pack, which has a claimed range of 159km. Do note that this is the 'Smart Eco' riding mode, which is an optional extra in the 'Pro' pack. This works over and above the standard variants on offer and unlocks a few other features besides. The Rizta can be charged via a 350W Ather home portable charger from 0 to 100 per cent in 8 hours and 30 minutes.

The default riding mode, which is called 'Zip', is the one that feels most natural and unlocks the

5.8bhp and 22Nm of peak torque on offer. From a standstill, there isn't much of a difference between the two riding modes up until about 30kmph. After that, if you find yourself in Zip, getting up to the claimed top speed of 80kmph isn't much of a hassle. I'd call the performance brisk and smooth. There is quite a bit of whine from the motor itself, but I didn't mind it. One aspect that deserves special mention is Ather's MagicTwist throttle control. The idea is that twisting the throttle 15 degrees clockwise will decelerate the scooter to a standstill without having to touch the brakes, which I found particularly handy. It does take some getting used to, but it's worth it. The Ola S1 Pro also gets a similar regenerative braking system, which feels a little stronger than the one on the Rizta.

On the ride front, the first thing I noticed was the slight bit of jitteriness at low speeds, which is a bit of a pain point considering that's supposed to be the forte for this family scooter. But with a pillion or some load in the boot, this did seem to smoothen out. On a well-laid piece of tarmac, the Rizta has an underlying sense of stability, especially out on the highway. It feels confident and quite direct while changing directions. The Rizta is also the first electric scooter in India with a traction control system in the form of Ather's SkidControl. If there is gravel or wet surfaces, the wheel doesn't slip and keeps traction, which is a boon. In terms of chassis setup, the front half is almost the same as Ather 450X's aluminium frame, with a reworked rear section to make way for the extra bit of space. In essence, this makes the Rizta a capable handler and confident in most situations. Furthermore, the 780mm seat height is more than comfortable to swing a leg over, and the 119kg kerb weight means that the Rizta is fairly light on its feet as well. ☺

“  
IF YOU FIND  
YOURSELF IN  
'ZIP', GETTING  
UP TO THE  
CLAIMED  
TOP SPEED  
OF 80KMPH  
ISN'T MUCH  
OF A HASSLE.  
I'D CALL THE  
PERFORMANCE  
BRISK AND  
SMOOTH



### VERDICT

As we all know, in India, family is put above all else. Thus, making a scooter for the whole family can be as complicated and complex as the relationships within every family. In that respect, Ather must be commended for the Rizta for its solid fundamentals, unique design and plethora of features on board. In terms of price, the Rizta costs between Rs 1.10 lakh and Rs 1.45 lakh (ex-showroom), which is pretty much on par with the competition. In our opinion, it is a well-equipped family electric scooter that should appeal to a lot of you out there.



### Abhinav Jakhar

Senior Correspondent  
abhinav.jakhar@aajtak.com

@AbhinavJakhar



# Ship of Theseus

Does the biggest Pulsar ever made also have the chops to be the best Pulsar yet? Or is it just a motorcycle put together by using parts from other Bajaj products? We took it for a spin in search of some answers

PICTURES Harvinder Singh

The Pulsar badge has quite a cult following in India. Since 2001, it's meant that performance is accessible. Everyone can have it. Time after time, Bajaj has developed versions of the Pulsar that gave every rider a little more bang for their buck. I'm looking at you 220F and NS200. I think Bajaj may have just done it once again. But, is the Pulsar NS400Z just a sum of its parts, or does it have that unique Pulsar DNA? We rode it for a whole day to answer some crucial questions.

The first thing I noticed is the fact that this does

look very much like a Pulsar. And that is a good thing. Maybe a little more like 'N' series rather than 'NS' series, or perhaps a neat blend of both. Whether it's the single-piece projector LED head-lamp up ahead, or the design of the 12-litre fuel tank or those in-your-face graphics, it's all very much out there. The NS400Z is available in four colour options - Glossy Racing Red, Brooklyn Black, Pearl Metallic White and Pewter Grey. I personally loved the Glossy Racing Red and Pewter Grey paint job and graphics combination. Other than that, the Pulsar

Bajaj Pulsar NS400Z





RIGHT OFF THE BAT, YOU NOTICE THAT THERE'S A BUZZY NATURE TO THE ENGINE. IT SORT OF REMINDED OF ME THE FIRST TIME I RODE THE PULSAR 220F AND 200, WHICH IS A HUGE COMPLIMENT





1. Switchgear on the NS400Z feels premium. The arrow buttons on the left are fairly easy to operate, but the menu display can be slightly confusing at first. 2. The digital LCD instrument cluster has a fairly clear and crisp display, although it can be slightly hard to read under direct sunlight. There's also a smaller screen to the right of the instrument cluster to display average fuel economy, trip and odometer. It also comes with Bluetooth connectivity, turn-by-turn navigation and a lap timer. 3. The 373cc, single-cylinder motor is the same as the Dominar's



has an extremely sharp cut all along its body. The NS400Z badging on the rear fender along with the belly pan with the 400 decal gives off a rather sporty appeal. The rear section with the signature Pulsar twin LED tail lamps round off the look around the back rather well. However, some equipment like the rearview mirrors and turn indicators are borrowed from the Dominar and KTM's, respectively. But, this doesn't re-



ally feel like a compromise. Overall, to my eye, the Pulsar NS400Z looks rather handsome and butch. There has been some backlash on online forums that the bike doesn't really give off that 'big bike' feel that some were expecting, but I do feel more customers will grow fond of it once the motorcycle is in front of them in the flesh.

Bajaj has you covered, as the NS400Z comes packed to the gills with up-to-the-minute fea-

## COMPETITION CHECK

**Triumph Speed 400****Engine** 398cc**Power** 39.5bhp **Torque** 37.5Nm**Price** ₹ 2.33 lakh (ex-showroom)**TVS Apache RTR 310****Engine** 312cc**Power** 35bhp **Torque** 28.7Nm**Price** ₹ 2.43 lakh (ex-showroom)

tures. It gets a 43mm upside down (USD) fork up front, along with a 320mm front disc and 230mm rear disc. The NS400Z also gets dual-channel ABS as standard, as well as a traction control system, which can be switched off in two of the four riding modes. These include Road, Sport, Rain and Off-road. Furthermore, it gets a colour LCD digital instrument cluster which comes with Bluetooth connectivity, turn-by-turn navigation and a lap timer. It also gets a USB type-A charging port just under the tubular handlebar. The screen is quite clear and functional, but can be slightly hard to read in bright sunlight. There's also a smaller separate screen to display the riding modes along with other useful information. The switchgear, too, feels well put together and has an air of quality about it. On the whole, the newest Pulsar on the block feels rather well-equipped, and one isn't really left wanting for more. Sure, there could have been sintered brake pads for greater feel, but that's something Bajaj could add to the NS400Z's arsenal in the future.

The Pulsar NS400Z is powered by the same engine as the Dominar. We're talking about the 373cc, single-cylinder petrol motor, which produces 40bhp and 35Nm of peak torque. Right off the bat, you notice that there's a buzzy nature to the engine. It sort of reminded of me the first

time I rode the Pulsar 220F and 200, which, in my books, is a huge compliment. It has a fairly deep exhaust note and once you're on the move, it does sound rather gruff. The ride-by-wire throttle ensures that power delivery is consistent and there's a lot of it on tap. One twist of the throttle ensures that NS400Z gets a move on with a sense of urgency. Folks at Bajaj say that 85 per cent of the torque is available from 3,500rpm, and that certainly can be felt when you're out on the highway. But, in city conditions, it takes a slight bit of effort to get the Z up to speed. But, once it's there, the acceleration is instantaneous. 0-60kmph is said to come up in just 2.8 seconds, while 0-100kmph can be dispatched in 6.9 seconds. The riding modes also do make a significant difference to the nature of the power delivery - Road feels most comfortable, while Sport gives that extra zest. The Rain mode is subdued to make for a safer riding experience, while off-road is reserved for roads filled with gravel or rough patches in general. On Bajaj's test track, we were able to achieve a top speed of 165kmph, which again, is quite impressive.

The NS400Z comes with the same frame as the NS200, but with a strengthened steel perimeter frame. The swingarm is larger than the NS200 but the NS400Z is 20mm shorter, thanks

**THE PULSAR NS400Z IS QUICK. 0-60KMPH COMES UP IN JUST 2.8 SECONDS, WHILE 0-100KMPH CAN BE DISPATCHED IN 6.9 SECONDS**



1. Rear monoshock is 6-step adjustable and does a commendable job of keeping the rider comfortable. 2. Seat foam does feel slightly on the firmer side but long rides in the saddle shouldn't be a cause for concern. 3. The turn indicators are borrowed from the KTM motorcycles while the rear view mirrors are taken from the Dominar. The LED projector headlamp and those funky DRSLs give the Pulsar NS400Z a butch look from the front. 4. There's a USB-Type A charging port just below the digital instrument cluster. Both the brake lever and clutch lever are 5-step adjustable



Bajaj Pulsar NS400Z



**Engine**  
373cc, single-cylinder,  
liquid-cooled

**Power**

40bhp@8,500rpm

**Torque**

35Nm@7,000rpm

**Gearbox**

6-speed



**Wheelbase**  
1,343mm

**Kerb weight**

174kg



**Fuel capacity**  
12 litres

**Seat height**

805mm



**Price** ₹ 1.85 lakh  
(ex-showroom)

**On sale** Now



to the 1-degree difference in the rake angle. The suspension setup is also new, and overall the motorcycle weighs 174kg. On the track, it did feel slightly cumbersome around corners, but not threateningly at all. On the highway, that extra weight does mean more stability and the NS400Z sort of just rides over undulations with ease. It

may not be the most agile Pulsar out there, but it can more than hold its own in most situations. The 805mm seat height might be slightly high for shorter riders and 165mm of ground clearance may not be the best in class, but in our riding stints over different kinds of conditions, the Z never scrapped its belly even once. The 43mm USD fork

mentioned earlier and 6-step adjustable rear monoshock do more than an able job at keeping the NS400Z planted and comfortable. The seat itself felt rather supportive, and I didn't end up feeling tired after almost a whole day of riding. The seating position itself feels more upright, but the foot pegs are slightly rear set for that extra



control. Both brakes feel more than adequate, in fact they felt quite progressive. Speaking of which, the 6-speed gearbox with the slip-and-assist clutch isn't the smoothest, but it gets the job done. However, the clutch lever

feels rather light and is adjustable, just like the brake lever. Overall, performance is the NS400Z's trump card, especially when you consider the pricing. ☺



Braking duties are handled by a 320mm disc at the front and a 230mm disc at the back. Dual-channel ABS is standard

### Likes

Power delivery, ride comfort, price

### Dislikes

Engine vibration, weight around corners

### VERDICT

How does one sum up the Pulsar NS400Z? Price wise it's 1.85 lakh (ex-showroom), and if that's taken as the focal point, then this bike has absolutely no competition. It's in a league of its own. And don't forget, the Z means this motorcycle is the first of its kind. So then, it's best to sum up the NS400Z as the start of a brand-new chapter of an already storied Pulsar franchise.



**Abhinav Jakhar**

Senior Correspondent  
abhinav.jakhar@ajtak.com

@AbhinavJakhar



# FIRST RIDE



# They reminisce over you

Can Kinetic Green find the same kind of success Kinetic did with the original Luna? We took the E Luna out for a spin to find out

PICTURES Harvinder Singh

Nostalgia can be a very strong emotion for the most part, especially when it is motoring related. Now, those of a certain age, who were lucky enough to own it at the time, will remember the name Luna. Yes, I'm talking about those spartan little 50cc and 60cc mopeds from back in the day. If you're not that old, a brief history lesson is in order. It was 1972, Seeta Aur Geeta and Pakeezah were the talk of the town when it comes to cinema and in the streets, it was the Luna. It was a cross between a bicycle and a motorcycle created by the Pune-based Kinetic

group, which was a part of the Firodia family business. The idea was to create an affordable form of transportation that can appeal to a number of different kinds of individuals. In that respect, Kinetic group succeeded. It's famous advertisements, some of which featured the likes of stars like Smita Patel and Shabana Azmi, are looked back on fondly. Now, there's a whole new avatar of the Luna, and as most would've predicted, it is an electric version. Kinetic Green, which is the same company but with a new name, has decided to call it E Luna, which feels appropriate. So, does it stand a chance in the hotly

THOSE OF A CERTAIN AGE, WHO WERE LUCKY ENOUGH TO OWN IT AT THE TIME, WILL REMEMBER THE LUNA NAME



“

THE E LUNA PLAYS THE NOSTALGIA CARD QUITE WELL. THE SILHOUETTE IS REMINISCENT OF THE OLDER MODELS AND THINGS HAVE BEEN KEPT SIMPLE AND BARE BONES



1. The E Luna feels particularly spartan when it comes to design and features. Rear-view mirrors are positioned oddly. Three riding modes available. 2. LCD display for the instrument cluster is surprisingly clear and shows Distance to Empty (DTE) along with other useful information. 3. Rear shock absorbers just about get the job done, but aren't comfortable. Spoked wheels mean there aren't any tubeless tyres. Rear footrest provides ample space for the pillion rider. 4. Headlamp design is a clear throwback to the original Luna

contested electric scooter segment in India? We took it for a spin to see what's what.

First, let's get the basics out of the way. The E Luna comes with a telescopic fork at the front and twin shock absorbers at the back. It has a tubular frame, weighs 96kg and has drum brakes at each end. It rides on 16-inch spoked wheels and has a load bearing capacity of 150kg. Furthermore, it gets a digital LCD instrument console which displays useful information and even has a fire symbol to indicate if there might be a thermal runaway in the battery. It's got a USB port for charging, a bag hook for carrying parcels and a dual seat which can be removed to add more luggage space. Apart from this, there's also a side stand indicator along with a safety lock which allows one to lock the brake, similar to that on many scooters in the market.

When it comes to design, Kinetic Green has stuck to the basics. The E Luna plays the nostalgia card quite well. The silhouette is reminiscent of the older models and things have been kept simple and bare bones. The round headlamp in a square housing feels particularly retro. Around the sides, the moped stance and look is more apparent. The rounded tail lamp, front leg guard and large grab handle for the pillion rider points to what exactly the designers had in mind - rugged and sparse. All in all, the look of the E Luna has been kept simple,





## Kinetic E Luna X2

**Engine**

1.2Kw

**Max Power/Torque**

1.6bhp/22Nm

**Ground clearance**

170mm

**Kerb weight**

96kg

**Battery**

2kWh

**Range**

110km (claimed)

**Price** Rs 79,990

(ex-showroom)

**On sale** Now**Likes**

Rugged, utilitarian

**Dislikes**

Ride, performance, price

**COMPETITION CHECK**

## Ola S1X

MOTOR 2.7kW RANGE 95km

TOP SPEED 85kmph PRICE ₹ 74,999\*



## TVS XL 100 Heavy Duty

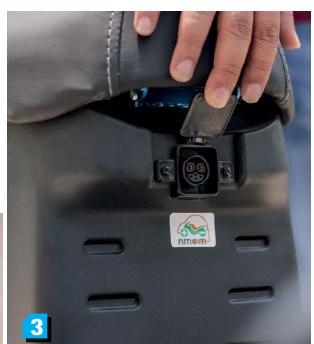
ENGINE 99.7cc POWER 4.3bhp

TORQUE 6.5Nm PRICE ₹ 44,999

\*Ex-showroom, Delhi, inclusive of FAME subsidy



ON THE MOVE, THE FIRST REALISATION IS THAT THIS HAS BEEN BUILT FOR A SPECIFIC CROWD. THE E LUNA DOESN'T BOAST RECORD-BREAKING NUMBERS IN TERMS OF RANGE OR PERFORMANCE



1. The motor sits just below the floorboard and can be heard quite clearly on the move. 2. Front seat has to be lifted to gain access to the battery pack. 3. E Luna uses a 10A portable charger

to make sure the end user can maximise it for utility. Also, there's a sense of solidity to the overall design language and should bode well for this little electric scooter.

On the move, the first realisation is that this has been built for a specific crowd. Let's clear the numbers out of the way first. It doesn't boast record-breaking numbers in terms of range or performance. The E Luna comes with a 2kWh battery pack with a claimed range of 110km. This is for the X2 variant, which comes with a larger battery pack in comparison to the X1 variant, which gets a 1.7kWh battery pack. The E Luna uses a 10A charger, but there's no storage space for it on this electric moped. Power comes from a 1.2kW motor and the claimed top speed is 50kmph. However, since the E Luna has three riding modes, the top speed in each mode is restricted to a certain amount. For example, in the first mode, which seems to conserve the most amount of range, top speed is limited to around 35kmph. In the remaining two modes, the E Luna can get up to the claimed top speed of

50kmph. There's also a neat Distance to Empty (DTE) range display on the rather simple and slightly dated LCD screen. To be honest, we never saw a range even close to the claimed 110km. The highest number we saw when the battery was fully charged was that of 95km. Although, it must be said, there's a sense that the E Luna will keep going, no matter the conditions, as long as there's enough charge. A big reason for this is the steel chassis, that is visible in the different colours available on the E Luna.

The telescopic front fork and shock absorbers at the rear do the job, but I wouldn't call the E Luna comfortable. Speaking of which, the drum brakes at each end don't really work that well either. They bring the E Luna to a halt, eventually, but they aren't confidence inspiring in any way. Another issue I found is the inconsistency in the throttle. There's a noticeable lag from when one twists the accelerator to when the E Luna actually starts moving. All in all, one can't help but categorise the E Luna's performance, ride and handling as spartan. ☺

## VERDICT

So, what is the E Luna all about? Well, I think it's meant to provide a utilitarian and cost-effective form of transportation. It has got a few niggles as we've mentioned in the story and the Rs 79,990 price tag is on the higher side. That's dangerously close to some entry-level commuter motorcycles and even electric scooters, and is significantly higher than the hugely popular TVS XL 100. The Kinetic E Luna may need a little more than just nostalgia to become a proper contender, and hopefully that will be the case in the near future. The E Luna should find more popularity in the commercial segment, where it can be used to deliver goods from point A to B.

**Abhinav Jakhar**

Senior Correspondent  
abhinav.jakhar@ajitak.com  
Twitter: @AbhinavJakhar



WRAP UP

# Maruti Suzuki Jimny

Model **Alpha MT Dual Tone**

Test Started **December 2023/10,022km**

Current ODO reading **16,201km**

Total Mileage **6,179km**

Overall Efficiency **13.7kmpl**

**Six airbags | ESP | HDC | Hill-Hold control | Automatic climate control | Electric ORVMS | Keyless entry | 9-in touchscreen with Bluetooth, USB, wireless Apple CarPlay, Android Auto | Headlamp washer | Rear camera with guidelines | Brake limited slip differential | Tilt steering wheel adjust | ARKAMYS 4 speaker audio | Front adjustable seats fore/aft | Vehicle Warranty 2yrs/40,000 km**

“  
THE JIMNY IS A CAR WHICH CONNECTS WITH THE DRIVER ON AN EMOTIONAL LEVEL LIKE NOTHING ELSE I'VE EVER DRIVEN

**A**fter six months and over 6,000km put on the Jimny's ODO, it is time to bid adieu to a car which has been loved by every single member of the Auto Today team, and is perhaps the first vehicle which I'm genuinely sad to see leave our garage.

In a world where software, futuristic aesthetics and aerodynamics dictate a vehicle's appearance, the Jimny is a welcome relief with its decades old boxy theme, replete with retro elements such as the round headlamps, the bonnet, upright doors and

windows. While dimensionally, the SUV is quite compact compared to other SUVs in the same price bracket, it does have the rugged stance and go anywhere look. Despite the actual dimensions, the Jimny doesn't lack road presence at all as its tall stance mixed with the large, chunky wheel arches give it a very commanding look.

Inside, the cabin is a mix of typical Maruti Suzuki bits and old school ruggedness. There are hard plastic elements on the dash and the amber glow analogue dials are just a treat to look at in their respective round binnacles.

There is a fair bit of tech, especially in our top-end Alpha MT, including the 9-inch touchscreen with wireless Android Auto and Apple CarPlay, climate control, reversing camera, headlamp washers, but considering the price, there is definitely scope to add a few more convenience features, such as a height adjustable driver's seat and maybe TPMS. But by far, the most enjoyable aspect of the Jimny is from behind the wheel. The 1.5-litre NA petrol is smooth, and is paired with a 5-speed manual, and the SUV is at home in urban environments. The gearbox





was sticky at first, but with regular usage it did get much smoother. The clutch isn't the easiest to use in traffic, but there is an automatic option as well. The steering is something that requires a learning curve, it's hefty and lazy, but doesn't feel as disconnected, which means that it is quite confidence inspiring. The Jimny's party piece is the ride quality. It just glides over the worst our roads can throw at it, without too much filtering inside. On the highways, the Jimny is incredibly stable, but it does drink heavily at triple digit speeds, and you do feel the need for a sixth gear. The few off-road excursions had me mighty impressed with how the advanced 4x4 system and

## 👍 Feel good

1



## 👎 Feel bad



4

4. Storage is an issue, be it the bottle holders in the centre or the slim door pockets and cubbyholes. 5. The stock tyres aren't AT, and look a bit undersized. 6. The rear seats aren't the most comfortable, no central armrest either



5



6

1. The wilderness is where the Jimny is in its element. With AllGrip Pro 4x4, the SUV is ready to take on the toughest of terrains aided by great approach and departure angles, and a suspension which keeps the Jimny planted on bumpy surfaces. 2. The amber glow analogue dials are just perfect. Not only are they reminiscent of the Gypsy, they also offer great visibility. The MID too works well, and offers a range of data. 3. The 1.5-litre NA petrol has 103bhp and 134Nm, and has been tuned to put down the torque lower down in the rev range, and is really smooth. Fuel efficiency, especially in the city has been quite respectable too

**Anagh  
Bhaskar**

Correspondent  
[anagh.bhaskar@ajitak.com](http://anagh.bhaskar@ajitak.com)  
[@anagh\\_bhaskar](https://twitter.com/anagh_bhaskar)



the lightness of the vehicle turns this into an absolute mountain goat. While the sales figures may be low by Maruti standards, the increasing number of Jimnys I have seen on our roads is an indication that people are taking to this very niche lifestyle vehicle. The Jimny is a car which connects with the driver on an emotional level like nothing else I've ever driven. ☺

# Kia Sonet

Model D1.5 6AT GTX+

Test Started April  
2024/3,533km

Current ODO reading  
**4,076km**

Mileage this month  
**543km**  
Efficiency this month  
**18.7kmpl**

Six airbags | **Hill-start Assist control** | **Automatic** climate control | **Electric** ORVMs | **Keyless** entry | **10.25in touchscreen** with wired Apple CarPlay, Android Auto | 10.25in digital instrument cluster | **360-degree camera view** | **ADAS** Level 1 | **Rake** steering wheel adjust | **BOSE** 7 speaker audio | **4-way electrically adjustable** driver's seat | **Warranty** 3yrs/Unlimited km



The ventilated seats on the Sonet were highly appreciated considering temperatures rose to 44 degrees celsius in Delhi



It has been a rather long time since we had a small diesel SUV. So when we got the chance to take charge of the Sonet in diesel automatic guise, we jumped on the opportunity. Barely a few weeks into its tenure, I took it for a longish drive and the destination was Dehradun from New Delhi. The roads to Dehradun have improved a lot with the Delhi-Meerut Expressway (DME) taking centre stage. On these beautifully paved roads, the Sonet is an extremely comfortable vehicle to be in. With temperatures climbing to upper 40 degrees celsius, the ventilated seats on the Sonet just made things so much more comfortable. Once off the DME, the roads become a lot more congested and it is here that one appreciates the automatic transmission. The box shifts seamlessly and the SUV just effortlessly overtakes traffic. Once inside Dehradun, we also got a chance to appreciate the light steering wheel setup of the Sonet. One can easily negotiate the tight roads and parking it is not much of a hassle either. But the crowning glory of the entire drive had to be the efficiency. I left with a full tank and roads included fast ones as well as some twisties. And yet, the Sonet managed a mega 18.7kmpl. This means that on a tankful, the Sonet should offer a range of nearly 841km! That, I think, is truly impressive.



AND YET  
THE SONET  
MANAGED AN  
EFFICIENCY  
OF 18.7KMPL

**Rahul Ghosh**

Associate Editor

rahul.ghosh@intoday.com

@bulletcompany



# Hyundai Exter

Model **SX(O) Connect Dual Tone 5MT**

Test Started **December 2023** / 5,545km

Current ODO reading  
**12,313km**

Mileage this month  
**3,193km**

Efficiency this month  
**13.7kmpf**

**Six airbags | Automatic climate control | Electric ORVMs | Keyless entry | Touchscreen Infotainment with, Bluetooth, USB, Apple CarPlay, Android Auto | Wireless charging | 360 Camera with guidelines | Sunroof | Vehicle Warranty 3yrs/Unlimited km**



The lack of a front centre armrest really does come in the way of making the Exter the near perfect mini-SUV for the city

Over the past few weeks, I've found myself drawn to the Exter more with each passing commute. Sure, there are more exciting cars in the Auto Today long term fleet, but none as endearing as Hyundai's humble little SUV, in my personal opinion. Since my commute is from Gurugram to Noida and back, that's a good 80km of driving through traffic and mildly open highways, depending on the time of the day. The most noteworthy point, throughout my travels, has to be the buttery smooth gear shifts. The gates are well-defined, the clutch is light, and the travel isn't too much either. On the flip side, if you find yourself in a hurry, as I often do during my morning run to the office, that smooth and easy going nature of the gearbox can be a tiny fly in the ointment. My solution? I've actually resorted to waking up slightly early and not having to deal with putting the Exter through its paces. The best way to tackle any kind of road with Hyundai's entry-level SUV is with a bag full of patience. Don't get me wrong, it'll go fast and hold speed, but it just doesn't feel content in performing the task. Another slightly larger fly in the proverbial ointment is the lack of an armrest. Since forbearance is key, providing the right tools for said duty is also a must. Maybe that would make the Exter too perfect, or rather take too close to the sun (Venue)? ☺



THE MOST NOTEWORTHY POINT, THROUGHOUT MY TRAVELS, HAS TO BE THE BUTTERY SMOOTH GEAR SHIFTS

**Abhinav Jakhar**

Senior Correspondent  
abhinav.jakhar@ajitak.com  
Twitter: @AbhinavJakhar



# MG Comet

## Model Plush

Test Started **October 2023/87km**

Current ODO reading **5,560km**

Mileage this month **1,050km**

Efficiency this month **10.6km/kWh**

**Two** airbags | **Automatic** climate control | **Electric** ORVMs | **Keyless** entry | **10.25in touchscreen** Infotainment with, Bluetooth, USB, wireless Apple CarPlay/Android Auto | **Rear camera** with guidelines | **Tilt** steering wheel adjust | **Vehicle Warranty** 3yrs/1,00,000km



The MG Comet offers three settings for energy recovery altering the intensity of regenerative braking - Light, Normal and Heavy. Toggling between the three can be done via the infotainment screen or by long pressing the button that is also used to change drive modes



Last month was my first time driving the MG Comet and I'll admit I was rather reluctant to take charge of it, but daily driving the EV has made me realise why it's such a great car for the city. My colleagues have already spoken about just how ideal it is for urban use in past reports so I'll refrain from parroting the same opinions. Regenerative braking is what I've been trying to observe closely and for the most part, it's fairly straightforward. There are three modes to choose from - Light, Normal and Heavy. They function exactly like they sound and I've found myself favouring the Heavy mode while driving in the city because it eliminates brake pedal usage to a great extent. Switching between them on the go is a bit complicated because there is a single toggle on the dash to control both the drive and the regen modes, single press to change the former and long press to change the latter. The thing is, though, at 100 per cent state of charge (SoC), even if Heavy is selected, there is no regen when you let off the accelerator, which can catch you off guard if you've just plugged it out and started driving. There's very mild regen braking once SoC drops under 96 per cent and actual Heavy regen starts when SoC is around the low 80s. I think the full effect of a particular regen mode should always be there, even if there's no place for the recovered energy to go. I've also noticed that if you're going over small bumps while braking, a rumble strip or expansion joint for example, regen cuts off for a while and that again can catch you off guard. However, it does reset to the selected setting on its own after a few kilometres of driving. Efficiency has come down since I started driving the Comet, but that's because I've been too trigger-happy, using that instantaneous torque to get past slower vehicles. Still, I've been managing 160km on a single charge on average and that's more than respectable for an EV like the Comet. ☺

I'VE FOUND  
MYSELF  
FAVOURING THE  
'HEAVY' ENERGY  
RECOVERY  
MODE WHILE  
DRIVING IN THE  
CITY BECAUSE  
IT ELIMINATES  
BRAKE PEDAL  
USAGE TO A  
GREAT EXTENT

**Dhruv Saxena**  
Principal Correspondent

[dhruv.saxena@ajitak.com](mailto:dhruv.saxena@ajitak.com)

@dhrroovv



# Royal Enfield Himalayan

Summit Hanle Black

Digital display Yes | Tachometer Yes  
Fuel gauge Yes | Electric start Yes |  
Disc brakes Both | Tyres Tubeless |  
Price Rs 2.63 lakh (ex-showroom,  
Delhi) | Warranty 3 years/30,000km

Test Started  
**December 2023/28km**

Current ODO reading  
**2,093km**

Mileage this month  
**1,098km**

Efficiency this month  
**35.5kmpf**



The 4-inch circular TFT instrument cluster, which gets Google Maps integration through RE's mobile app, is visually striking



**R**oyal Enfield motorcycles will always have a very special place in my little automotive book. Why? It's pretty simple, really. I was lucky enough to have a second hand 2009 Bullet Electra as my first motorcycle, back when I was in college. It had a red paint job with chrome bits all around, and I found it strikingly beautiful. It was the last of the cast iron engines with the gear on the left-hand side. To be honest, it wasn't the most reliable bike in the world, but it was special to me. Fast-forward almost 10 years and I got my first opportunity to head to Leh as an automobile journalist. For me, there was no doubt that it had to be Royal Enfield, but which one? The Himalayan 411 was the blindingly obvious choice. It was an experience that I cherish and hold close to my heart, and hence I've always held the Himalayan in high regard. So, when it came time to take Dipayan's long-term Himalayan for a highway run; I was delighted. Just like before, the Himalayan didn't disappoint. In fact, it surpassed my expectations. Although, I did encounter some heating issues, but that was more down to the immense heat we're encountering. One of the first things that struck, visually speaking, was the design of the round digital instrument cluster. It's crisp, clear and extremely easy to read in most situations. It also looks quite different from the previous Himalayan, and that's pretty much the case for the whole bike. ☺

**DIGITAL  
INSTRUMENT  
CLUSTER IS  
CRISP, CLEAR  
AND EXTREMELY  
EASY TO READ**

## Abhinav Jakhar

Senior Correspondent  
abhinav.jakhar@aajtak.com  
@AbhinavJakhar



# Smaller engines, stringent aero for MotoGP bikes from 2027



**MOTOGP HAS** announced major changes to the racing motorcycles, which will come into effect from 2027. The biggest change is that the motorcycles will use downsized engines, replacing the 1-litre engines that have been in

use since 2012. The volume will be reduced to 850cc, while the maximum cylinder bore will go down to 75mm from the current 81mm. This will result in a lower top speed, with MotoGP claiming that this has been done to make the

2024 Indian MotoGP moved to March 2025

**AMID REPORTS** of the 2024 MotoGP race in India being cancelled, the organisers and MotoGP have confirmed that the race will not take place this year. Originally planned to be held in September, the race, for now, has been set as the opening race of the 2025 season in March next year. The harsh weather conditions prevalent during the month of September have been quoted as the reason behind the rescheduling of the race, as March would present more moderate weather.

sport safer and more efficient. The number of engines available to each team will reduce to six per season. Aerodynamics for the motorcycles will also be simplified, and there will be more control on the size of aero elements, reducing the effect of aero overall. All ride height devices will be banned, including holeshot devices and front ride height devices. To help level the field, GPS data from all competitors will be available to all teams post each session.

## New Formula 1 regs to introduce smaller cars, active aero from 2026

**THE FIA** has revealed the new regulations for F1 which will come into effect from 2026. The new-gen F1 cars will be smaller, lighter and more nimble and include active aero, replacing the Drag Reduction System (DRS). The changes are being done to increase the dependency on driver skill, and promote better wheel-to-wheel racing. Dimensionally,

the cars will have a 3,400mm wheelbase, 200mm shorter than before while the width will be reduced from the current 2,000mm to 1,900mm. In the aero department, the changes will reduce the downforce by 30 per cent and drag by 55 per cent. Active front and rear wings will be introduced, which will be manually controlled by the driver,

switchable to Z-Mode for cornering speed and X-Mode for straight line speed. The powertrain will use the same 1.6-litre V6, but will have a greater electric power component, while the ICE makes less power. This will total about 1,000bhp for the cars.



## Daruvala scores his best Formula E finish in Berlin



**INDIAN FORMULA E** driver Jehan Daruvala scored his best points finish of the 2024 Formula E season in Berlin. The Maserati MSG driver came in seventh, extending his points tally, after opening up his account at the E-Prix in Misano. Starting the race in 13th, he gained places on the first lap itself, and he held on during the race, and made four overtakes during the race to finish the race in seventh position.

**UPGRADE**  
TO JAPANESE  
TECHNOLOGY

**ENEOS**  
MOTOR OIL



Turning every ride into a smooth escapade

## ENEOS BIKERZ & SCOOTERZ Range.

Provides superior engine performance.

Fully Synthetic range and Premium Mineral motor oil.

Enhanced Fuel Efficiency

Smooth Acceleration, Engine Protection

Elevate Your Ride! Embrace Excellence with **ENEOS BIKERZ & SCOOTERZ Range.**

In the universe of passionate bikers and their cherished rides, ENEOS BIKERZ & SCOOTERZ Range emerges not just as motor oil but as a testament to the profound bond between riders and their beloved machines. As devoted bikers navigate the sea of choices, the answer crystallizes – ENEOS BIKERZ & SCOOTERZ Range isn't merely a lubricant; it's a declaration of love for your two-wheeled companion.



JASO MA2 & MB Compliance



Protects the engine and transmission components.



Revives the engine like new



Superior fuel efficiency

### About Us

ENEOS, the premier brand from Japan's largest oil company, introduces a revolution in the Indian lubricant market. Our products, renowned for top-tier quality, incorporate advanced additive and base oil technology developed in-house. Trusted by eco-friendly Japanese and global car manufacturers, ENEOS symbolizes innovation in the automotive industry worldwide. Join us on a revolutionary journey of unparalleled engine protection with the exceptional ENEOS BIKERZ & SCOOTERZ Range.

### Contact

Website, Social Media, and Customer Support details, ensuring a seamless connection to the world of ENEOS BIKERZ & SCOOTERZ Range.



For more details,  
Please visit website



Scan for Instagram



Scan for Facebook



Scan for LinkedIn



# DRIVE THE **LEGEND**

INTRODUCING THE 100-YEAR LIMITED EDITION.  
INSPIRED BY THE BRITISH RACING GREEN.

RANGE STARTS AT  
**₹9.40\* LAKH**



**ASTOR**

**HECTOR**

**COMET EV**

**ZS EV**