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MOTOR

The Pulsating Automobile e-Magazine **VIKATAN**



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SCRAMBLER 400 X
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ELEVATING THE MIDSIZE SUV GAME?

HONDA ELEVATE

ELEVATING THE MIDSIZE SUV GAME?

HONDA

The mid-size SUV segment might be the most popular segment in the Indian market right now. In the last five years, we have seen a lot of mid-size SUVs from various OEMs and this segment was mostly dominated by the Korean auto giants Hyundai and Kia. Now, to occupy this space, the Japanese auto major Honda is all set to launch its mid-size SUV the Elevate. Elevate will be Honda's re-entry into the SUV segment as they earlier had CR-V and BR-V. Now, this Elevate is going to be pitted against the Hyundai Creta, Kia Seltos, and all of the other mid-size SUVs.

Honda Elevate's front fascia is really tall and upright. The bonnet is nice and flat and the grill is really set vertically and it reminds me of those big butch American SUVs. The front end comprises a large-squared-off radiator grille, finished in piano black. The full-LED headlamp cluster is slender-looking with whiskers for LED DRLs. It adds a premium touch to the front end. The bumper features triangular fog lamp housings, along with a slim scuff plate.

The DRL and the headlight are reminiscent of the City, and that's what the Elevate is actually based on. The platform is shared by City and Elevate; therefore, you'll find some similarities here and there. The Elevate's side profile is appealing as the black cladding, squared-off wheel arches, chunky silver-finished roof rails, and a flat profile for the roof give it a distinctive stance. The roofline is flat and it doesn't dip like a coupe or any of the new modern designs that we have seen.



ELEVATE





It's also quite plain and devoid of too much fuss around the styling. The design of the 17-inch diamond-cut alloy rims look plain, and there's a huge gap between the tyre and wheel arch. The ground clearance is 220mm and in fact the highest in its segment.

In the rear what is really popular these days is the connected light strip and the Elevate also gets the same treatment but the centre section is a reflector. The L-shaped wraparound tail lamps look classy. The rear facet looks more imposing, in fact, it features more cuts and creases than both the front and side profile. The overall design looks plain and lacks sharpness.



The exterior build quality of the Elevate is top-notch. The doors are solid and while closing, it gives you nice confidence. The cabin is familiar and the dashboard looks really nice and classy. In fact, the materials feel nice. The steering wheel is a direct lift from the City, and so is the climate control panel. In fact, the layers used on the dashboard are City-inspired. Those of you looking for something flashy and flamboyant, you're not going to find that here in Elevate, because the styling is all very straight-lined and very typical, very old school in that sense.

If you like that, you will be very happy because it's done really well through the features you've got auto climate control, wireless charging, and





two USB sockets, which are type A, not the type C that we've been seeing on the newer generation cars. The Elevate gets a 7-inch TFT LCD for the instrument cluster and a new larger 10.25-inch touchscreen infotainment unit with wireless connectivity options. It gets a Level 2 ADAS like the City, which comprises lane-keep assist, adaptive cruise control, and more.

Elevate misses the panoramic sunroof and comes only with a single-panel sunroof. It misses power-adjustable seats, a 360-degree parking camera, a rear centre headrest and ventilated seats, which are now offered in most of the SUVs top trim.

The rear seats offer adequate space. It probably isn't class-leading, but it has got sufficient legroom and headroom is actually quite good. You get an armrest and the seats really feel nice. Due to the sloping upwards floor, it provides a natural footrest and feels comfortable. Other features, you've got rear AC vents and a 12-volt power socket. The boot space too is best-in-class at 458 litres.

While looking at the engines or I would rather say engine because the Elevate is powered only by a 1.5L

4-cylinder naturally aspirated petrol engine, which is borrowed from the City. This engine churns out a peak power output of 121 PS against a peak torque of 145 Nm. There are two transmission choices on offer - a 6-speed MT and a CVT. People looking for some hybrids or diesel have to look for some other options.

Bookings for the Elevate will open next month and the sales are expected before the festive season. There is huge scope for Honda to price it aggressively, therefore we expect the Elevate to be priced between Rs 12 lakh to Rs 16 lakh. The price will play a crucial role and it will determine whether the Elevate will elevate Honda in the mid-size SUV segment.



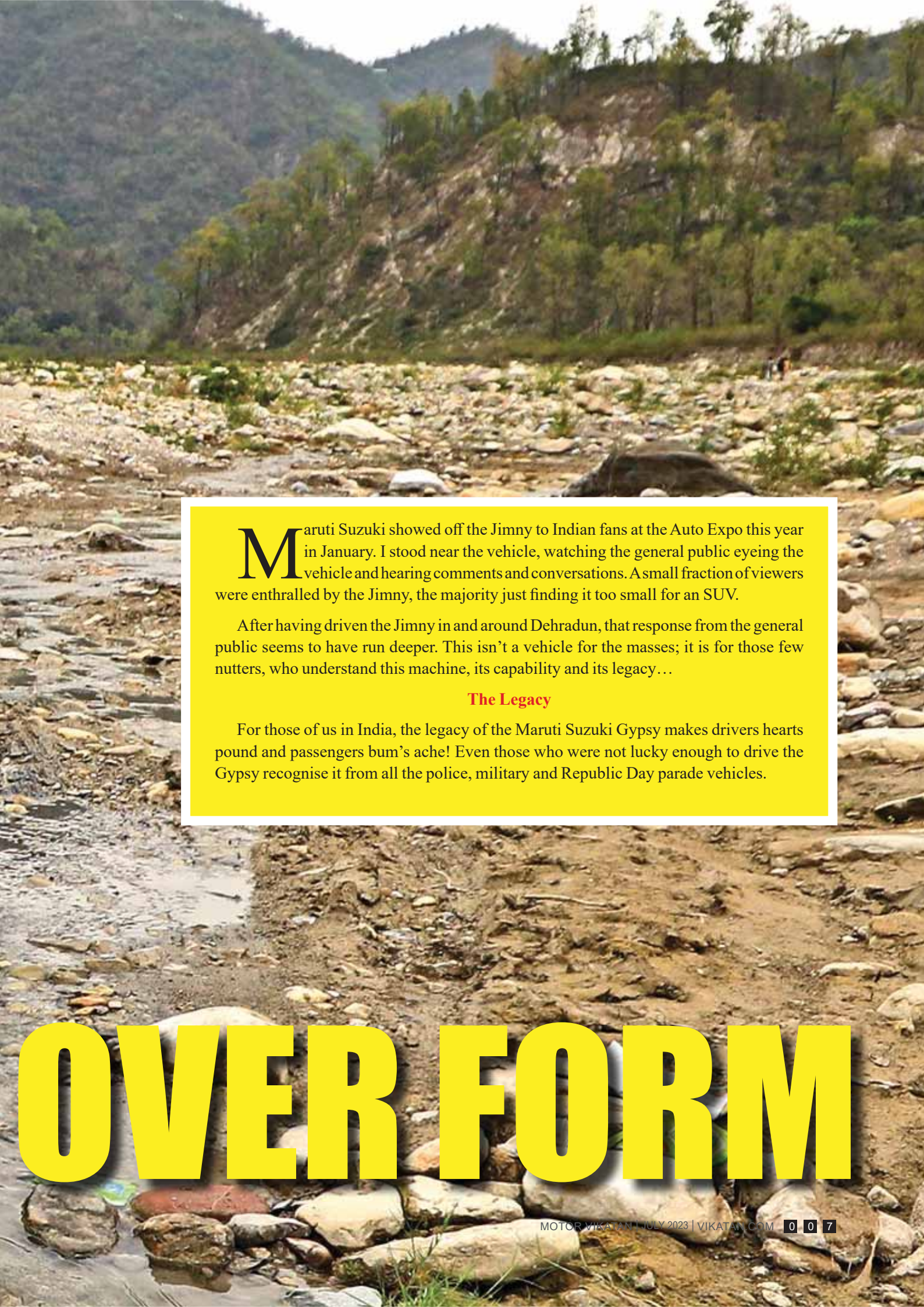
AVINASH NORONHA

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MARUTI SUZUKI JIMNY FIRST DRIVE

FUNCTION



Maruti Suzuki showed off the Jimny to Indian fans at the Auto Expo this year in January. I stood near the vehicle, watching the general public eyeing the vehicle and hearing comments and conversations. A small fraction of viewers were enthralled by the Jimny, the majority just finding it too small for an SUV.

After having driven the Jimny in and around Dehradun, that response from the general public seems to have run deeper. This isn't a vehicle for the masses; it is for those few nutters, who understand this machine, its capability and its legacy...

The Legacy

For those of us in India, the legacy of the Maruti Suzuki Gypsy makes drivers hearts pound and passengers bum's ache! Even those who were not lucky enough to drive the Gypsy recognise it from all the police, military and Republic Day parade vehicles.

OVER FORM

Yet, the legacy of the Jimny runs deeper than the Gypsy, much deeper. In 1970, Suzuki launched the LJ 10 (Light Jeep 10), a small vehicle to take advantage of the Kei Class of vehicles in Japan. The smallest class of highway legal vehicles, which enjoyed tax benefits and therefore lower prices. It was a small, cute machine which became an instant hit, outselling the domestic competition. Success was so sharp, that the company launched the vehicle in the global market. The vehicle saw sales spiral upwards globally with a fanbase for this light and capable 4x4 machine.

The second generation was launched in 1981 and sold across the globe. Even then the name 'Jimny' was not introduced in all markets. Till date, there is no clear answer about the origin of the name. In the US market it was known as the Samurai, Sierra in Australia, Katana in Indonesia, and Maruti Gypsy in India. The Gypsy continued unchanged in India visually till 2018, when the company finally stopped selling a 3-decade old model to the general public.

Car interiors have been getting progressively techy, and the Jimny does feel like a breath of fresh air for people who like it simple.

The third generation of the Jimny was launched in 1998. This was arguably the most forgettable iteration. It tried to get beefier and more 'SUV' like. Moving away from its spartan roots. This model never came close to touching Indian shores, and we ain't complaining!

2018 saw the Japanese manufacturer launch the fourth generation, going back to its origins of function over form. The global market was once again treated to the cute, small, agile, lightweight and very capable 4x4 jeep. Indian fans of the Gypsy were weeping, as it did not seem to be heading to our country. It hurt more, when in 2021, Maruti was producing the 3-door Jimny in India, but for the export market only.

2023 finally saw the Maruti Suzuki Jimny enter the Indian market, and for the first time in the world as a 5-door variant. The rampaging sales of the Mahindra Thar must have surely lent a helping hand to bring this machine to our country.

It is here and we drove it, and this is what we think of the Jimny.





Design and Exterior

Boxy, old school and functional, the first thoughts to cross your mind when you see this in the flesh. The second thought is that the designers threw the aerodynamicist out of the window and then had a field day! The final thoughts are that it is so damn cute, you can't help but fall in love with its practicality.

Rugged is the word you take home, when you see those circular LED headlights sitting on either side of the vertical slats grill. Look closer and you notice the nozzles for the headlight washer. The turn indicators act as small highlights to the grill. Look lower and you notice the black bumpers, which are made with hard plastic to protect from nicks and scratches.

The boxy stance continues in the side profile, with the flared wheel arches housing 15-inch wheels. Apparently, the arches make it easier to change wheels and install snow chains. Not a lot of people are going to be doing the latter, but still! The roof is supposedly a blueish-black shade, but in the daylight,

it just looked black. The roof also gets drip rails, so that you don't have water rolling down your head every time you get in and out. Such small details of practicality are what makes you understand the mantra of function over form.

From the rear, it is all straight up vertical. With just the spare wheel breaking the pancake flatness. The lights are housed in the rear bumper, with a brake light sitting atop the door. The door swings wide open to make it easier to get luggage in and out of the boot.

Overall, the Jimny looks perfectly balanced and poised for serious business in the mud. While still capable of smiling quietly on your commute to work.

Interior and Comfort

Step inside the 5-door Jimny, and you'll be greeted by a functional yet comfortable cabin. Despite its compact size, the Jimny cleverly utilizes space, providing adequate legroom and headroom for both front and rear passengers. The seats are supportive and well-cushioned, ensuring a comfortable ride.

One element stands out the most is the 9" infotainment screen. While the rest of the vehicle looks like a blast from the past, plastered with practicality. The screen looks too modern in the overall dashboard. The interiors are decidedly outdoorsy, with hard plastic parts used everywhere. The meter display is a reminder of the Gypsy, which is not a bad thing at all. Luxury is not what you see, it is practicality. Some will like this, others not so much. Car interiors have been getting progressively techy, and the Jimny does feel like a breath of fresh air for people who like it simple.

The rear seats can be folded down to create a generous cargo area, making it practical for carrying luggage or outdoor gear. You get 211 litres of boot space with the rear seats upright, knock them down and you get 332 litres. While the Jimny is equipped with 4 seats, it is a vehicle which will be best enjoyed with just 2. The rear bench passengers have enough legroom and headroom, but do sit considerably close to each other.



Safety Features

The Jimny comes with a host of safety features. Needed in a vehicle where you are set to go off in any direction, road or no road.

You get 6 airbags, ABS with EBD, ESP, Brake Limited Slip Differential, Hill Hold Control, Hill Descent Control, Brake Assist and rearview camera. Many of these features we enjoyed on the riverbed course created by the company for testing out the Jimny.

These features make even an average driver feel talented offroad!

Performance

The Jimny gets a tried and tested heart to power your adventures. It gets Suzuki's K15B 1.5 litre naturally aspirated 4-cylinder engine. This produces 103.4 bhp at 6000 rpm and 134.2 Nm at 4000 rpm. Figures which aren't immediately impressive, till you realise that the Jimny weighs in at just 1210 kg.

As an option, you can either get the manual or automatic transmission. The former is a 5-speed, while the latter is a 4-speed torque converter gearbox. The Jimny also gets Suzuki's All Grip Pro 4x4 system to pull you out of tight spots.

Chassis on the Jimny is a ladder frame, like most SUVs and the Gypsy. Coil springs are used front and rear to smoothen out rocks and roots. The Jimny is slightly taller than it is wider, with 1720 mm and 1645 mm respectively, this difference can be felt while cornering. At 3985 mm, it is a sub-4 metre car, but does not get the tax benefits of the class, since the engine is larger than 1.2 litres. To complete the package, you get 15-inch wheels with road biased 195/80 R15 tyres.

210 mm of ground clearance is coupled with 47 degrees of departure angle, 24 degrees ramp breakover angle, and 36 degrees of approach angle. These figures giving the Jimny some serious muscle to tackle off road sections.

On Road Drive Experience

On asphalt, the Jimny does well to hold its head high, without being overly impressive. We drove the automatic version, which accelerated well enough for laidback driving. But if you are in a hurry, the automatic gearbox just doesn't

seem to keep up. Overtaking on the undivided roads we got in Uttarakhand, needed a bit of planning and it was not about flooring the pedal and the Jimny doing the rest.

The Jimny handled corners surprisingly well. I was half expecting to get bounced around with the long travel suspension. There was body roll, but well within acceptable limits. The Jimny gripped through the corners hugging it and tackling those mid-corner potholes like they didn't exist. At no point of time did I feel uncomfortable flicking the Jimny around, as I do when driving some of the taller SUVs.

What we did not get to experience was the Jimny in urban traffic conditions and on wide divided highways. This is important since most of us spend the majority of time on such roads. The steering is a bit tight for 3-point urban turns,

but the small size and low weight makes us believe it will be a chilled out daily driver in the urban sprawl.

For those big highways, where you are cruising and overtaking at triple digit speeds, we still don't know how the Jimny will react. We can't wait to get our hands for a longer drive to check this out.

Off Road Drive Experience

A grin on your face is plastered throughout.

This is what the Jimny is born for, bred for and built for. The machine shone through everything that was thrown at it. The engine which feels a trifle underpowered on the road, has more than enough low-end grunt for the gnarly stuff. Even the automatic gearbox works well, since there isn't as much requirement to change gears at high revs.

The 4x4 systems comes to the fore and to the rescue if you get yourself into a sticky situation, by error or design. One of the best things is that you can shift to 4 High without stopping. 4H is where your gear ratios remain unchanged, just the power is distributed to all four wheels. But for 4 Low, you need to stop, shift to neutral and then press the lever down on the transfer case.

Another feature which was noticeable in the dirt, was the Brake Limited Slip Differential. If a wheel gets stuck and starts spinning, the vehicle automatically brakes that wheel and transfers the power to another wheel which has traction. This allows you to pull out of tricky spots.



It is a purpose-built machine with a functional approach to everything, while keeping things simple.



But the most important elements which help offroad is the diminutive size and light weight. The small size allows you to go on excursions and choose lines which you wouldn't consider on a big bulky SUV. The light weight allows you to climb, descend and switch lines with absolute ease. Even the braking capability of the Jimny is largely attributable to its weight. The electronic safety nets which the Jimny has, only adds on to the mechanically sound engineering which has gone into the Jimny.

What We Think

The Maruti Suzuki Jimny is not a vehicle for everyone. But it is a vehicle which an enthusiast can use for everything. It is a purpose-built machine with a functional approach to everything, while keeping things simple. Some will like this offbeat approach, while others will stay far away from it.

When Maruti revealed the prices for the Jimny, it was further evidence that the company is not looking at this vehicle as a mass market product. It is rather different from your average Maruti and will live within a niche it has built.

We also look forward to a long drive with the manual Jimny to see how it performs, as the biggest let down in the vehicles road manners was the less responsive gearbox.

Starting at INR 1274000 for the base manual model and going up to INR 1489000 for the top end automatic, the Jimny has been priced a little above expectation. With 30000 bookings even before the price was announced, we wait to see how this little packet of power will explode on Indian roads (or offroad!).



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INNOCENT-027/23

Indians are used to seeing cars in different body styles like hatchbacks, sedans, SUVs, etc. but for the first time, Morris Garage (MG) has come up with a boxy-shaped micro electric car MG Comet, which aims to solve the problem of mobility in the urban jungle. According to research, 80 percent of people drive less than 30 kilometres a day, and over 70 percent drive solo. And these are the main data points that have motivated MG to bring out a car of this kind onto our roads. MG Comet is based on the born-electric skateboard platform, which allowed MG to come up with the smallest car in India at just 2.9m long, 1.5m wide, and 1.6m tall.



MG COMET EV

A CUTE ELECTRIC JOYRIDE!



In terms of design, I will reserve my comments because it's a very subjective matter, and also that every one of you can judge for yourself whether a product looks good or not. However, I would like to mention a few things when it comes to the exterior design. It is a very quirky, very eccentric sort of design execution and a completely flat front end. Of course, it's by a lot of elements with a charging flap in the nose, and the headlamp cluster is very uniquely shaped and has lots of LEDs – in the headlamps, tail-lamps, wing-mirror indicators, and distinctive light bars at the front and rear. The lighting looks especially premium thanks to the high-quality elements within each projector unit. Even the MG logo lights up.

On the sides, you will find the doors are massive, almost feels like you are opening the door of a truck, which is necessary because it allows you to access the rear seats. The design of the 12-inch wheels looks good and considering the overall size of the car, it doesn't look small. The rear section of the car is flatter than the front end. And there are design similarities like the light bar that runs all across the width of the car. And again, the tail lamp design is similar to the headlamp design. And you find the curve which tapers at the top again.





The Comet will most certainly be used as a tiny city runabout, especially for the most basic commuting. If your workplace is not too far, dropping kids at the school, it may even actually find acceptance from the elderly. It'll be a bit eccentric enough for them to give a complete image makeover to themselves.

But I will be honest if we approach this car with a completely blank slate. We did not want any preconceived notions to spoil the party. But at the same time, we were a bit concerned because the past examples of any product of such a nature have not been great. But this thing is surprisingly refreshing.

The interior makes maximum use of its born EV architecture and tall design to free up space. Due to the said dimensions the space is very narrow inside. The seats are slim and set high and it doesn't have height adjust, however, it offers



a decent amount of comfort. The space on offer is absolutely lovely and seating four adults in the cabin is not a problem at all. The cabin quality is reasonably fine. Some plastic bits here and there are not of high-grade quality, but overall, you

can't complain too much.

Comet gets fast-charging USB ports placed under the dash, alongside two retractable hooks – ideal for hanging bags. There are ample storage rooms inside the car and the door pockets are huge



though, and extend far enough back for the rear passengers to use them too. Since there is no transmission tunnel, Comet gets a large common floor space for both front passengers. The boot space is negligible and, at best, you can store a couple of laptop bags and if you fold the rear seats down, it frees up a decent amount of space at the back.

Light colours have been used throughout the cabin, and the steering control switches look like an iPod and it is easy to use as well. Comet gets a single panel on the dash, which houses a 10.25-inch touchscreen infotainment system – it supports wireless Android Auto and Apple CarPlay – and a 10.25-inch digital instrument cluster. Other feature additions include a 12-volt power outlet, an inside rearview mirror with the day/night function, and cup holders that are placed right in front of the AC vents. The floating dash design also gives you the feeling of space.

Powering the Comet is the 17.3kWh prismatic cell lithium-ion battery sourced from Tata Autocomp, which allows it a claimed range of 230km on the MIDC cycle. And this, I think, is going to allow MG to price this product a bit more aggressively than what was thought previously; because the battery is the most expensive component of an electric vehicle that has been sourced locally. As for charging, it is claimed to get from 10-80 percent in 5 hours and up to 100 percent in 7 hours. This is achieved with the help of 3.3kW on a Type 2 AC fast charger. It also gets a re-gen braking, which captures a little bit of energy and stores it back into the battery. There are three different levels and in the strongest level, you will notice that the moment you take your foot off the throttle, it reduces speed in a big way and that's all down to the re-gen function.

Comet comes with three different drive modes, - eco, normal, and sports. MG Comet's power and torque outputs



of 42hp and 110Nm, respectively, and its motor are at the back for a rear-wheel-drive layout. The Comet is started by simply depressing the brake pedal for 2 seconds and switching off by getting out and locking the car.

The steering is nice and light, allowing for easy manoeuvrability around town. The turning radius of just 4.2 meters and it can easily take a U-turn on narrow roads and parking is also quite easy. The suspension is a bit firm, especially at the rear end. It feels like it ran out of spring travel. But for the most part, again, and especially considering the kind of application that this car is going to be used, it's not bad and you will not have any problems living with it daily.

While driving this car in the city, it behaved exactly what you'd expect—it's a purely utilitarian tool to make your everyday commute easier and cost-effective. It is not the quickest car, given its 41bhp motor, which does the job well on city roads, where cars that are three



or four times more powerful move at similar speeds.

MG Comet EV is a very specific use car and it is practical for city conditions and low running costs (MG claims Rs 519 a month), and as for the range, it is strictly an urban-friendly car. The Comet is a crazy fun sight on the road and it's a

comic experience. It does not have a pretentious personality. It knows what it is. It's a small city runabout for very basic needs. It's a funky little thing that offers reasonable practicality. It's a transportation tool in essence, but it just happens to bring a smile to your face.



BHARGAV SRIDHARAN

A NEW FRONTIER OF SUVs



The auto industry is continuously evolving and due to customer demand and preferences all the OEMs are filling the gaps in the product portfolio. Even if a company has a wide range of models in various segments, still the product development team continues to introduce a new segment. Recently we saw the emergence of a micro-SUV from Tata Motors. Now Maruti Suzuki has come up with its latest product, the Fronx.

Maruti Suzuki felt that there is a gap between the Baleno (premium hatchback) and the Brezza (compact SUV). They were convinced that there were plenty of prospective buyers who wanted something

more generous than a Baleno and at the same time not willing to pay Brezza-levels; therefore, the Fronx, an 'entry-level SUV' has born.

Fronx means the next frontier of SUVs, therefore Maruti has developed the Fronx as a coupe SUV or the crossover body style. The Fronx is based on the Baleno, but the outside body panels are all new. It's not just a cosmetic change or the bumper and the headlights, but it's the sheet metal too. The doors as well are different from the Baleno. The makeover is commendable and it's gunning for the SUV look with the tall bonnet and a very upright nose section. It's also linked to its nexus stable mate the Grand Vitara with the headlights

set below and the three-segmented DRLs above and finishing off the front is a force skid plate.

At the sides, the doors have a different section to the Baleno while the rear also gets a stronger character line, and the waistline rises at the back to meet a dipping window line which gives it a distinct look. Also, what you'd probably be able to tell from the sides are the wheel arches. There is a big gap and that's because the ground clearance has been increased from 170mm which is on the Baleno to 190 on the Fronx. So that's a handy 20mm extra, and that's been achieved with a raised and stiffer suspension, as well as a taller profile.

MARUTI SUZUKI FRONX



There isn't a centre armrest, but you do have AC vents and two USB sockets at the rear. The Maruti Suzuki Fronx shares the same safety features as the Baleno.

At the rear, I think the defining styling element or the signature element for me is the taillight, which stretches all across the width of the car. It's also similar to the Grand Vitara with the three-segmented LED lights. And for the requisite SUV character, there is a large skid plate and diffuser that's done in a contrasting colour. The number plate is also housed on the boot lid.

While compared to the boot space from Baleno, it is down from 318 litres to 308 litres, however, it is still large and deep, so you do have to haul your bags over and in, but otherwise it can swallow a lot.

While Maruti has reworked the outsides of the car, inside it is very much a Baleno and that's a good thing; because you've got a nice smart-looking dash and a whole lot of features as well. You've got wireless charging, climate control with toggle switches, and that's a good idea instead of a touch panel. The centre console gets a nine-inch touchscreen and the lower trims get a seven-inch unit and there's also the HUD from the Baleno.

At the rear, the headroom is a little tight. The rest of the space, of course, is just fine. The legroom at the rear is impressive despite pushing the driver seat slightly backward. There isn't a centre armrest, but you do have AC vents and two USB sockets at the rear. The Maruti Suzuki Fronx shares the same safety features as the Baleno. So, you get dual airbags, ESC, hill hold, and ISOFIX child seat mounts as standard. Higher variants further add side and curtain airbags, auto-dimming mirrors, and a 360-degree camera.

Onto the performance, the Fronx gets the 1.2-liter engine from the Baleno with a manual and an AMT unit. The highlight is another familiar unit that also has manual and auto options. The booster jet returns, it was there in the earlier Baleno and now it's back in the Fronx. The Boosterjet turbo-petrol engine puts out 100hp and 147Nm and is paired to either a 5-speed manual or a 6-speed torque converter automatic.

Interestingly, it is coupled to

a mild hybrid system, and that is quite simply for efficiency. If you have been noticing a lot of turbo petrol has lower efficiency in the real world, and that's because of a very peculiar thing called knocking. When you turbocharge your engine, the pressure and temperature, of course, rise and therefore they can knock quite easily.

Now to avoid the knocking, what they do is inject more fuel into the cylinder. And what that does is it lowers the temperature and the pressure. Therefore, Maruti claims 20 kilometres per litre for the automatic version of the booster jet.

What's the performance like? When you put your foot down, the automatic drops a gear or two, and it moves off quite smartly and quickly. Maruti claims zero to a hundred kilometre per hour time of 11.48 seconds for the auto and 11.4 seconds for the manual. And what's nice and interesting is that the manual and the auto are so close. So really if you want good performance, but also the

convenience of an auto for the city, you really won't go wrong with this. The booster jet engine comes with a six-speed torque converter unit, whereas the 1.2 litre comes with an AMT. I recommend the Booster Jet because you do get a much smoother gearbox. The automatic gearbox also has paddle shifters, and you can take manual control.

In terms of handling, it feels nice and planted especially in the fast corners. Fronx gets the Baleno's raised suspension and Maruti have done a good job in keeping the ride and handling as close to the Baleno as possible. You can feel the stiffness, in fact, we just went through a pothole so it doesn't bottom out, and that's something nice to have on a car like this.

The engine was quite willing, and thanks to minimal turbo lag, it didn't get bogged down anywhere. The suspension also took everything in its stride, and Maruti, of course, had some obstacles for us to get over to illustrate the increased ground clearance.





The engine was quite willing, and thanks to minimal turbo lag, it didn't get bogged down.

While driving the manual you can feel the engine's characteristics. And it's a rather interesting one because Maruti seems to have taken the boosterjet name quite seriously. This BoosterJet motor has always impressed with its rev-happy nature and its wide and linear powerband, where unlike many other small turbos there's some payoff when you rev it to its high limiter. The new version has been tuned for better low-end performance so the same energetic and easily accessed performance continues with the Fronx. Also new is mild-hybrid assistance, it's as well integrated as in other Maruti cars and should

improve efficiency to a small extent as the 21.5 kmpl of the manual and 20.01 kmpl of the auto-suggest.

Also, for the first time, you can pair the Boosterjet turbo with the six-speed automatic. This makes a very strong case that all automatics do with the convenience they offer in traffic. And besides, there's always the 1.2 litres for those who want efficiency. If you are in traffic, you aren't going to be complaining too much because the controls are all quite light. The gear lever is light, and the clutch is too light and easy. And the steering as well, it is a bit inert, not feel some in that sense, but in the city or you know, when you've got a lot of manoeuvring through.

The new Fronx is available in five trims – Sigma, Delta, Delta+, Zeta, and Alpha. The base variant Sigma starts at Rs 7.47 lakh going up to Rs 13.14 lakh for the top-spec Alpha turbo variant– and comes in seven colours, namely Arctic White, Earthen Brown, Opulent Red, Splendid Silver, Bluish Black, Celestial Blue, and Grandeur Grey. Additionally, dual-tone options are available in Earthen Brown, Opulent Red, and Splendid Silver colours.

The Fronx is certainly a very well-sorted package, but does that mean it's also just a Baleno on stilts? Technically yes, but in reality, it is not, because it comes off as something quite different. And with character too, it looks very distinct. And while I wish it were livelier, the booster jet is still fun to drive. And with the raised suspension that can take a pounding, you can keep up the enjoyment over the rough stuff too.



Efficient Performance meets Safety with a Volkswagen Tiguan



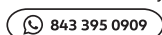
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JUNIOR

In the automotive world, the Mercedes-Benz C300d model is reminiscent of Mercedes-Benz's early sedan, the C-Class variant, and bears a striking resemblance to its older sibling, the S-Class. But does it live up to the name? Join us as we take a closer look at the Mercedes-Benz C300d and explore its driving experience, features, and practicality.

Exterior Design

The Mercedes-Benz C300d exudes a sporty aura, especially in its captivating dark blue colour. With a grille that boasts a single line, it exudes an air of dynamism. While the added aggressive AMG elements may steal the show, the C300d's double-line grille offers a slightly tamer yet equally appealing appearance.

Interior Comfort and Technology

Step inside, and you'll be greeted by vibrant orange dual-tone seats, exuding a sporty vibe. The cooled seats provide respite from the sun's scorching rays, and the memory seat function ensures a personalized seating experience. The interior layout resembles that of an aeroplane cockpit, immersing you in a world of luxury. One cannot overlook the iconic AC vents, reminiscent of



S-CLASS

**MERCEDES
BENZ C300d**

**THE STYLE, POWER,
AND PRACTICALITY
COMBINED**





windmills, a feature cherished by many Mercedes-Benz enthusiasts. Moreover, the interior ambience can be customized with 64-colour lighting, adding a touch of elegance. The user-friendly touchscreen interface complements the overall experience.

Performance and Powertrain

The C300d houses a diesel engine that excels in urban environments. With four cylinders, it delivers a smoothness that distinguishes it from its petrol counterpart. For those seeking a balance of power and efficiency, the C220d with 147kW (197Bhp) is an option, while the C300d, generating a formidable 265Bhp, offers breathtaking performance. The inclusion of the Integrated Starter Generator (ISG) marks a significant milestone for Mercedes-

Benz, and the 9G-Tronic speed gearbox ensures seamless gear shifts. Equipped with 48V mild hybrid technology, the C300d exhibits a responsive and energetic pedal feel, reaching 0-100 kmph in a mere 5.7 seconds.

Driving Experience

Driving a Mercedes-Benz is always an exhilarating experience, and the C300d lives up to expectations. The gear lever, often a search in other models, is conveniently located on the right side of the indicator stalk. Engaging the D mode unleashes the C-Class's impressive performance, propelling it forward without much effort. The mid-range power delivery is a standout feature, providing a thrilling driving experience.

Ride and Suspension

The C300d's suspension system

leaves a lasting impression, as it effortlessly tackles various terrains. Navigating narrow alleys or overcoming obstacles becomes a breeze thanks to the Passive Damping System. On highways, the C300d glides like a hawk, delivering a smooth and controlled ride.

Practicality and Space

The Mercedes-Benz C300d impresses with its practicality, offering ample space from the centre console to the glove box. The 455-litre boot space, though not class-leading, is spacious and deep, providing room for your belongings. It's worth noting that the spare tire resides beneath, explaining the generous space available.

Fuel Efficiency

Mercedes-Benz claims an impressive ARAI mileage of 20.37



Model	Mercedes-Benz C300d
Engine	Diesel
Power	265Bhp
Torque	550Nm
Transmission	9G-Tronic Speed Gearbox
Acceleration (0-100 kmph)	5.7 seconds
Fuel Efficiency (ARAI)	20.37 kmpl
Seating Capacity	5
Boot Space	455 litres
Price (On-road)	Approximately 75 lakhs

kmpl for the C300d. However, real-world feedback suggests an average of around 9-10 kmpl, indicating that the car's power may tempt drivers to push its limits more often.

Conclusion

Despite its 2022 model year, the Mercedes-Benz C300d continues to turn heads with its style and

beauty. Priced at around 75 lakhs, this "Junior S-Class" offers a compelling option for those seeking a blend of luxury, performance, and practicality. With its sporty design, comfortable interior, and impressive powertrain, the C300d provides an engaging driving experience. While its fuel efficiency may not match the claimed figures,

the car's overall performance and suspension system compensates for any minor drawbacks. So, if you're in the market for a vehicle that combines the allure of the S-Class with a more accessible price tag, the Mercedes-Benz C300d might just be the perfect fit for you.

In the realm of automotive excellence, the Mercedes-Benz C300d carves its own path, providing a taste of luxury and performance that echoes its iconic S-Class sibling. With its bold design, advanced technology, and thrilling driving dynamics, the C300d proves that being a "Junior" doesn't mean compromising on style or substance. So, if you're ready to embrace the allure of a "Junior S-Class," the Mercedes-Benz C300d awaits to whisk you away on unforgettable journeys.



Triumph Motorcycles unveiled their latest gems for modern classic enthusiasts: the Speed 400 roadster and the Scrambler 400 X. So, let's take a closer look at these beauties!

When it comes to style, Triumph knows how to hit the bullseye. The Speed 400 and Scrambler 400 X are dripping with timeless design cues that make your heart skip a beat. From their sculpted fuel tanks to their classic engine profiles, these motorcycles exude the essence of Triumph's celebrated models. But don't be fooled by their classic appeal – they've got a modern twist too, with cool details like concealed liquid-cooling and graphics that add a touch of contemporary flair.

Let's talk power. Both models pack a punch with their all-new TR-Series engines. These 398cc single-cylinder powerhouses are fuel-injected, liquid-cooled, and raring to go. With their smooth power delivery and distinctive exhaust notes, they'll have you grinning from ear to ear. The six-speed gearbox ensures seamless gear changes, so you can unleash the full potential of these machines.



NEW TRIUMPH TWINS



SPEED 400 & SCRAMBLER 400 X



Bajaj have tried hard to beat the Chennai based manufacturer with the Dominar, but without much success. We have also seen Yezdi/Jawa under Mahindra ownership trying to enter this segment.

But it's not just about power; it's about the ride. The Speed 400 is built for the open road, with its roadster-specific geometry and comfortable riding position. On the other hand, the Scrambler 400 X is ready to tackle off-road adventures with its longer wheelbase and upright riding position. Both bikes are lightweight and nimble.

Triumph hasn't skimped on the tech either. The ride-by-wire throttle system, switchable traction

control and ABS give you the freedom to ride your way, with the motorcycle looking after you! The instruments are a pretty sight, with a large analogue speedometer and an integrated LCD screen that displays all the essential info you need. There's also the convenient USB-C charging socket – perfect for keeping your gadgets juiced up on the go.

Triumph knows you want bang for your buck, and with their class-



From stylish add-ons to practical luggage options, you can make these bikes truly your own.

leading 16,000 km service interval and a two-year unlimited mileage warranty, you will hopefully get peace of mind.

But wait, there's more! Triumph offers a trove of accessories to personalize your ride. From stylish add-ons to practical luggage options, you can make these bikes truly your own.

Whether you're a seasoned rider or just starting your two-wheeled adventure, Triumph's Speed 400 and Scrambler 400 X are ready to sweep you off your feet. With their captivating design, thrilling performance, and unbeatable value, these modern classics are a dream come true for riders seeking the perfect balance of style and substance. Get ready to hit the road and experience the Triumph difference!

The British marque is entering the smaller capacity segment for the first time with these twins. The target in their sight is clearly Royal Enfield, who have dominated the market and then some. Bajaj have tried hard to beat the Chennai based manufacturer with the Dominar, but without much success. We have also seen Yezdi/ Jawa under Mahindra ownership trying to enter this segment. TVS also jumped into the fray with the Ronin. Things are hotting up in the competition for RE.

How well the Triumph Speed 400 and Scrambler 400 X will do depends a lot on the price point at which they enter. We wait and see how these two old British brands will fare in the Indian and global markets.



HONDA SHINE 100



THE JOY OF COMM



A decade and a half ago, the Japanese global motorcycle giant launched the Shine 125 in India. The goal was simple, to be at the top of the segment. A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since then, and the Shine 125 met with considerable success since.

Built on a completely new platform, the Shine 100 hopes to take advantage of the existing sheen of its elder sibling. It is the first time that Honda have brought a 100 cc motorcycle into the Indian market and it is quite surprising that the Japanese behemoth took more than a decade to bring a motorcycle

MUTING IN STYLE

to compete with the Splendor of their erstwhile partner, Hero. This segment accounts for roughly 28% of the Indian motorcycle market, which makes it even more surprising, considering Honda have made no secret of their ambition to be No. 1 in the Indian market.

If you're in the market for a reliable and fuel-efficient commuter bike, then the Honda Shine 100 can possibly tick all the correct

boxes. With its sleek design, smooth performance, and excellent fuel economy, the Shine 100 is hoping to relook your everyday commute. We found out whether the Shine 100 can stand out in the crowded commuter bike segment which we currently have in India.

Sleek and Stylish Design

A commuter isn't meant to be a head turner and the Shine 100 is a thoroughbred commuter. The

shape, style and visuals all scream comfort. A reassuring facet when throttling through crowded streets.

The stylish graphics and alloy wheels give the Shine 100 a sporty and youthful appeal, without going overboard or over budget. The front and rear get halogen lights with a clear lens. Nestled in the middle is the 9-litre fuel tank, which seamlessly blends into the saddle. The cockpit of the Shine 100 is



Bookings for the Honda Shine 100 are open and deliveries have begun. The bike is available in red, blue, green, gold and grey shades.



fairly simple with an analogue speedometer, odometer and fuel gauge.

Honda appears to have nailed the balance between practicality and aesthetics with this bike.

Smooth and Effortless Performance

Hop on the Shine 100, and you'll be greeted by a smooth and refined ride. The 99.7cc engine may seem modest but don't underestimate its capabilities. It delivers 7.61 hp of power for your daily commuting needs, effortlessly gliding through traffic with 8.05 Nm of torque. The engine's refinement is noticeable, with vibrations creeping in a bit at higher speeds, providing a comfortable and pleasant riding experience. The engine on this Honda is also designed to run smoothly on fuel with 20% ethanol. The 4-speed gearbox is Honda smooth, which makes it a pleasure to ride through stop-go traffic.

Honda still needs to reveal the fuel efficiency figures of the bike, but this will be one of the most important criteria for prospective customers in this segment.

A new diamond-type frame has been used on this bike, with traditional telescopic forks up front and twin shock absorbers at the rear. The suspension has been tuned for comfort and it handled the few broken roads we got with aplomb.

Honda's Combi Braking System is used with drum brakes front (130 mm) and rear (110 mm). In this segment, disc brakes have not been given even as an option.

At just 99 kg and a saddle height of 786 mm, the bike is easy to use for almost every rider. Throwing it around in traffic is a breeze thanks

to this. The 17-inch alloys are shod with MRF rubber, which gets the job done.

Comfort for Miles

Commuting shouldn't be a tiresome ordeal. The Shine 100 comes with a well-padded and ergonomically designed seat, ensuring that your rides are comfortable. The upright riding posture helps makes it a breeze to navigate through congested streets.

The bike also gets a self-start, so starting and stopping in traffic is now much easier.

Affordability

With the Honda Shine 100, you get exceptional value for your money. The bike's affordable price tag, at INR 64900 (ex-showroom) makes it extremely attractive. It is straightaway 9000 rupees cheaper than the market-leading Hero Splendor. We expect low maintenance costs on this little Honda, which makes it a smart buy for budget-conscious riders. Honda's reputation for reliability and quality shines through in the Shine 100. Besides the Splendor, the other competition for this bike is the HF Deluxe from Hero and the Platina from Bajaj.

Bookings for the Honda Shine 100 are open and deliveries have begun. The bike is available in red, blue, green, gold and grey shades.

Conclusion

It is an interesting and properly sorted-out motorcycle from Honda. What remains to be seen is what kind of a dent can it make in the market it has just entered, which has been dominated by Hero for decades now...



AVINASH NORONHA

**BROADENING
THE HORIZONS.**

**THE KTM 390
ADVENTURE X**



When it comes to adventure motorcycles, KTM has carved a niche for itself in the industry with its exceptional off-road prowess and exhilarating performance. The KTM 390 Adventure is testament to the brand's commitment to pushing boundaries and redefining adventure riding.

Recently, the Austrian manufacturer broadened the range of 390 Adventures, empowering riders to see many more horizons. KTM introduced the X and SW variants of the popular 390 Adventure, the former being a lower spec version, while the latter being a higher spec to the standard. What's new in them? Well, let's start with the X!

X-Files

The KTM 390 Adventure X is the more budget friendly variant of the standard motorcycle. It is a whopping 60 grand cheaper, making it significantly more affordable for a lot of orange fans. To reduce this cost, KTM has removed a few premium features from the bike. This includes rider aids and 'beauty products'!

Thankfully, the engine & chassis are unchanged, leaving the core of the motorcycle untouched. As a result, you get the real deal

and not a watered-down version.

What you don't get is a colour TFT screen to see all the data. This snazzy feature on the standard might be missed by some on the X, but honestly, the simplicity works better in our opinion. It is the same unit which does duties on the 250 Adventure, and that is not a bad deal at all.

Suspension on the X is the biggest downgrade compared to the standard. You get the WP Apex big piston fork and the not the open-cartridge forks found on the higher spec. This matters if you spend a lot of time in the dirt, but if you intend to use the bike primarily for highway touring, then you won't notice this change much.

There are also reduced electronics on the X, you don't get

The X is a great option for those riders who are experienced tourers, with sufficient skill to ride this motorcycle with minimal electronic aids.

some safety features, which is really useful for newer and inexperienced riders. What you miss out on are things like traction control, ride modes, cornering ABS, and a quickshifter. There is no IMU and sensors on the X for the electronic aids to function.

Another cost cutting item is the rubber which keeps you glued to the asphalt. Instead of the Metzeler Tourance dual-purpose tyres which are fitted on the standard, you get MRF Mogrip Meteor tyres, which are found on the 250. This is an acceptable trade-off and one which you can change whenever your stock tyres wear out.

One incomprehensible change is the lack of adjustable handlebar levers. How much money did that save KTM, we don't know, but it does stick out a bit. Though we are sure, you can upgrade these later on if you so wish at the company SVCs.

How do all these changes effect the performance and ride quality of the X?

The lower spec rubber and springs, along with the reduced electronics means the bike is a bit wilder and rawer. Which is surely not a bad thing! It reminds you of the first Dukes to hit India, where you had to be much more involved with the motorcycle and not hoping for rider aids to safeguard you. This is great if you are somebody who likes to control your motorcycle without interference and have the skills to back it up. It is something you won't notice much if you are a sedate tourer on the other hand.

Spoke Too Soon!

Moving on to the now top variant of the 390 Adventure, the SW. The Spoke Wheels variant comes with, well, spoke wheels. Duh! It





also comes with a fully adjustable suspension, which you can tweak to your weight, riding style, terrain etc. Dial it in for your specific needs, to get the motorcycle just how you like it. These twin upgrades make the Adventure now significantly more dirt friendly and is ideal for all the riders who like mud baths.

The third thing you get on this bike is tubes in the tyres along with the spokes. Not the ideal setup for a tourer. Roadside mechanics in remote areas shudder at the thought of removing the wheel of a KTM!

Since long, KTM fans have been pleading with the brand to get spoke wheels and tuneable suspension for the bike. Finally, their call has been answered. Spoke wheels are much better than alloys when jumping and bumping through rock, root and dirt. Alloys are more prone to crack under duress and are unrideable thereafter. Spoke wheels can still

be ridden home to safety, even after you have smashed a spoke or two.

The fully adjustable suspension is again perfect for riders who ride varied terrain. Of course, with everything adjustable, you need to know how to adjust it properly. Else you will be worse off than a stock bike. The forks have 30 clicks of adjustability, while the rear has 20 adjustment points.

You get all of this for around 20 grand over the standard motorcycle, which we think is great value for the additional money you are paying. You also get a Dakar KTM inspire paint scheme to help you stand out from the hordes! The SW has a lot more potential in the dirt over the standard variant, but you need to have the skills to match up to the bike's potential. Else, you will just not notice!

Conclusion

To conclude, it is an excellent decision by KTM to add these two variants for the Indian market. Now there is about 80000 between the lowest and highest spec variants, which makes this motorcycle desirable to a broader audience. But it can leave you in a quandary, which of the 3 Adventures should you head out on?

The X is a great option for those riders who are experienced tourers, with sufficient skill to ride this motorcycle with minimal electronic aids.

The standard variant is great for riders who are newer to motorcycling and need those rider aids to keep them safe in crunch situations. The extra 60 thousand is money well spent for these riders.

The SW is purely for people who are going to do minimal touring and a lot of dirt riding.



AVINASH NORONHA



HERO'S TOURING REVAMP

First launched in 2019, the Hero Xpulse 200T 4V recently got revamped with a new mill. The heart transplant sees it get the same engine which does duties on the Xpulse 200 4V. This update had been coming for some time and makes this touring machine from Hero much more potent. Here's our first thoughts about it.

What's New?

It is an incredible bike that you can get your hands on for a reasonable starting price of INR 1,35,996 (ex-showroom Delhi). Available in three colours, it gives the buyer a decent amount of option. This fantastic machine is equipped with a powerful 199.6cc BS6 engine that generates an impressive power output of 19.1 ps and a torque of 17.3 Nm. Safety is prioritized with the inclusion of front and rear disc brakes, along with an anti-locking braking system for added control. Weighing in at 154 kg and featuring a fuel tank capacity of 13 litres, the Xpulse 200T 4V is capable of handling everything your motorcycle tour will throw at it.

Hero MotoCorp has given the Indian market an upgraded version of the Xpulse 200T with the introduction of the Xpulse 200T 4V. This new model comes with significant mechanical improvements, notably the four-valve setup in contrast to its predecessor's two-valve layout. The bike is powered by a 199.6cc single-cylinder oil/air-cooled engine, mated to a five-speed gearbox.

In terms of styling, the Xpulse 200T 4V has received some

noteworthy updates. The front now features a body-coloured fly screen above the LED headlight, giving it a sleek and appealing look. Additionally, gaitered front forks have been added, contributing to the bike's overall utility. The tail luggage rack has been replaced by a tubular pillion grab rail. Three vibrant colour options are available: Sports Red, Matt Funk Lime Yellow, and Matt Shield Gold. Each colour option has a dual-tone finish complemented by new graphics.

What's Old!

While the design enhancements are impressive, the feature list remains unchanged. The Xpulse 200T 4V retains its LED headlight, LED taillight, and a Bluetooth-enabled LCD instrument cluster with features like call alerts and turn-by-turn navigation. It also includes a convenient USB charging port and a side stand sensor for added convenience and safety.

When it comes to the bike's

performance on the road, you can expect a comfortable ride. The Xpulse 200T 4V is equipped with telescopic front forks and a seven-step adjustable rear mono-shock, ensuring a smooth and controlled journey. The braking system features petal-type disc brakes on both ends, complemented by single-channel ABS for enhanced safety. The bike is fitted with 17-inch alloy wheels wrapped in tubeless tires, perfect for a road-focused adventure.

In the Indian market, the Xpulse 200T 4V competes with formidable rivals like the TVS Apache RTR 200 4V and the Honda Hornet 2.0. It's clear that Hero MotoCorp has crafted a remarkable bike that combines style, performance, and features to deliver an exceptional riding experience. So, if you're searching for a dynamic and reliable companion for your journeys, the Xpulse 200T 4V is definitely worth considering.

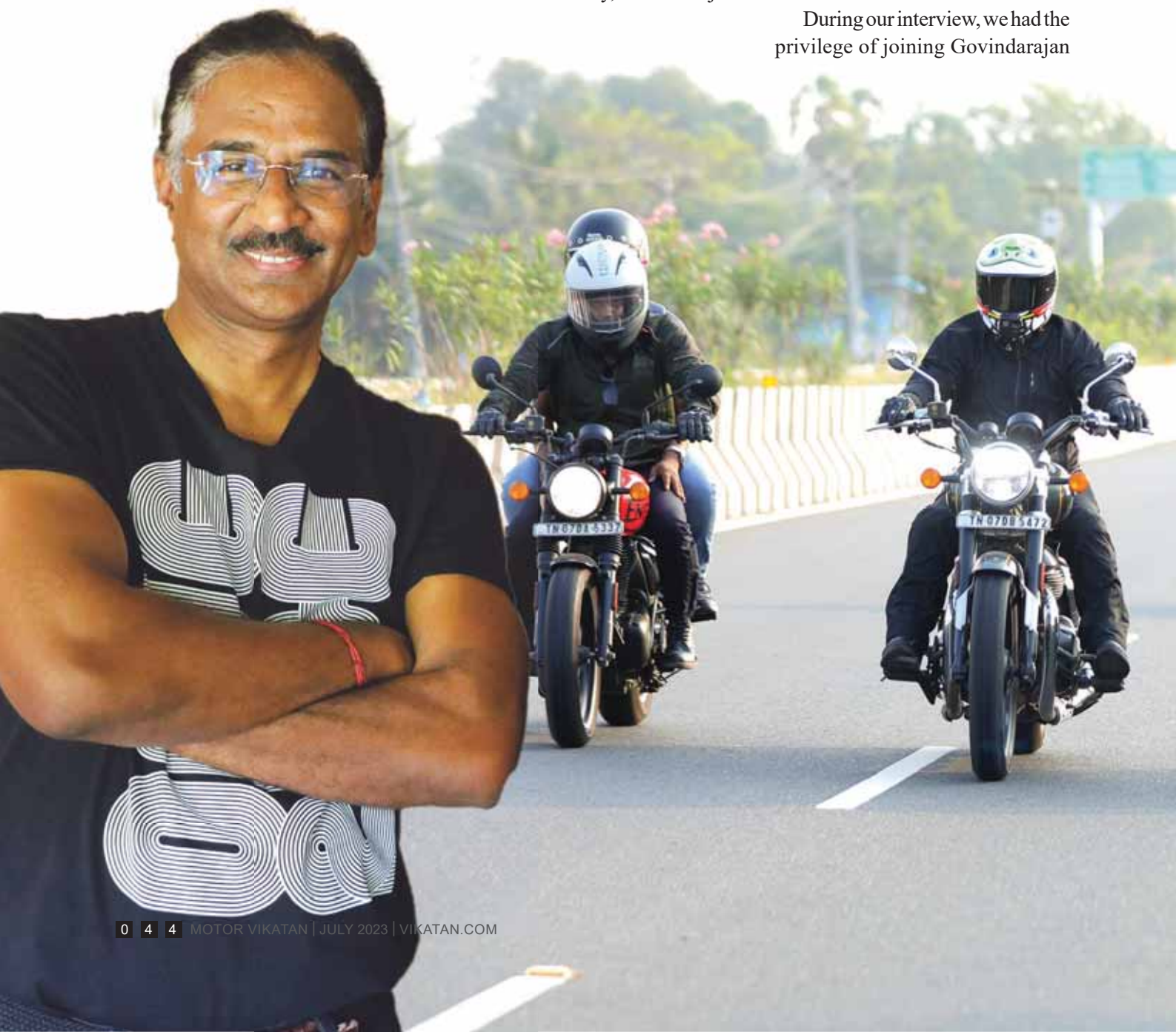


Royal Enfield CEO
Govindarajan: A
Passionate Leader
Driving Innovation and Embracing
Tradition

In this exclusive interview, we delve into the fascinating journey of Govindarajan, affectionately known as BGR, the CEO of Royal Enfield. A true visionary in the automotive industry, Govindarajan

has played a pivotal role in leading Royal Enfield to new heights of success. Born and raised in Mayiladuthurai, a proud Tamilian, Govindarajan's rise to the helm of a revered British brand like Royal Enfield is a proud moment for the Tamil community. After graduating from Annamalai University, his journey has been nothing short of inspiring.

During our interview, we had the privilege of joining Govindarajan



on a thrilling ride along the ECR (East Coast Road) on Royal Enfield's Hunter and Super Meteor 650cc bikes. It was an awe-inspiring experience to witness the CEO of a major automotive company embrace his passion for riding, donning his riding gear with enthusiasm and leading the way. As we rode alongside Govindarajan, his approach to biking was remarkable. Respecting traffic signals, adhering to speed limits, and riding sensibly, he showcased his deep commitment

A RIDE & CHAT WITH ROYAL ENFIELD CEO GOVINDARAJAN



to safety and responsible riding. It was a refreshing sight to witness a CEO who embodies the spirit of a passionate rider.

In this interview, we dive into the mind of Govindarajan, exploring his pivotal role in the development of Royal Enfield's J platform, the introduction of the Interceptor and Continental GT bikes with their powerful 650cc engines, and his relentless pursuit of breakthroughs in bike manufacturing and marketing strategies. Join us as we uncover the extraordinary journey of Govindarajan, the CEO behind the success of Royal Enfield, a brand that seamlessly blends tradition and

innovation to captivate the hearts of riders everywhere.

Let's start by talking about the journey of Royal Enfield. Could you share some insights into the company's history?

Certainly. Royal Enfield has a rich history dating back to 1901 when it was founded. Initially, the company imported motorcycles from London for military use. Over the years, we realized the need to make Royal Enfield motorcycles more accessible to both the military and customers. We focused on understanding our customers' needs by interacting with them

and experiencing the joy of riding ourselves. This customer-centric approach, along with the leadership of our president Siddharth Lal and myself as riders, has contributed to Royal Enfield's success.

When Japanese bikes flooded the market with their small, fuel-efficient models, we remained focused on producing middle-weight bikes ranging from 250 cc to 750 cc. Our mantra has always been "Less is More," meaning we prioritize fulfilling customers' needs rather than simply adding features for the sake of marketing. We believe in creating a connection between the rider, the machine, and the terrain, which has resonated well with our customers. The introduction of the Classic bike with our UC engine in 2011 was a significant breakthrough and continues to evoke a timeless appeal among riders.

When I joined Royal Enfield, we had one factory producing 4,000 bikes per month. Our boss, Siddharth Lal, challenged us to increase production to 75,000 bikes per year. To achieve this, we valued the opinions of our factory workers at Thiruvottiyur and implemented their suggestions. This collaborative approach led us to successfully produce 78,000 bikes that year. Subsequently, we expanded with factories in Oragadam and Vallam Vadakal.

Can you tell us about the innovative strategies employed in production and sales methods? Also in Quantity vs Quality game, which one do you choose?

We also pay great attention to quality control and customer feedback. For instance, we designed the riding position of the



650 cc Continental GT as a cafe racer model, taking into account customer preferences. Similarly, we introduced the Hunter with a comfortable riding position suitable for roadsters. Initially, some customers had concerns about vibrations in our bikes, so we developed the J Platform, focusing on improving the balancer shaft and delivering vibration-free bikes. Our Meteor 350, designed with a refined engine, received an excellent response as a replacement for the Thunderbird model, selling 6,000 bikes per month.

At Royal Enfield, our focus is not solely on quantity; we are committed to maintaining the highest quality standards. We conducted quality control testing based on the advice of a Japanese expert, and the results showed that our bikes had the cleanest engines with minimal contamination compared to other brands.

Could you shed some light on the reason behind launching a limited number of models each year compared to other manufacturers?

Our approach at Royal Enfield involves long-term planning rather than short-term thinking. From the initial concept on paper to the final production model, it takes approximately 48 months. We always consider the next 10 years when planning for the current year. For example, when we introduced the Classic model with the UC engine, we also focused on enhancing the showroom experience for customers. Our showrooms are more than transaction centres; they are designed to provide a complete brand experience.

Our Brand Retail Identity



(BRI) initiative aims to provide a unique and immersive experience for visitors. At our showrooms, customers can not only purchase bikes but also explore a range of accessories, and apparel, and even customize their bikes according to their preferences. We aim to deliver a comprehensive one-stop experience for our customers, from bike delivery to service.

Bajaj-Triumph, TVS-BMW...

like political parties, automobile companies also work in alliance! Does Royal Enfield have any plans for alliances, or will it continue to rule alone?

A partnership is not something we oppose in the automotive industry. In fact, as we ventured into the electric market, we formed a partnership with a company called Stark for electric technology. However, we have primarily focused



on alliances with our riders and customers. We believe that, for now, our expertise in understanding our customers' needs is unparalleled, especially in the realm of ICE engine manufacturing. So, we don't see the necessity of an alliance in that area.

There have been rumours about the Royal Enfield Himalayan 450 featuring a liquid-cooled engine. Can you confirm if this is true?

Let me share an interesting anecdote about the Himalayan. Every year, I embark on a significant ride to the Himalayas to contemplate our company's long-term plans. The Himalayas hold a special place

in the hearts of riders like me; it's like a spiritual home for us.

The idea for the Himalayan motorcycle originated during one of these rides. We wanted to create a motorcycle that would excel on rough terrains found in the Himalayas. Thus, the Himalayan 411, an exceptional adventure bike, was born.

We continue to face the challenge of making the Himalayan not only adventurous but also suitable for daily use. Surprisingly, it has been a massive hit in countries like Argentina, Brazil, and America. Riders have shared that it's the perfect bike to navigate through the Amazon jungle, among other areas.

As for the liquid-cooled engine, if our customers demand it, we will certainly consider it. We are always striving to make improvements, and once we do, we'll let you know!

Let's imagine that I have a budget of 2-3 lakhs and I'm visiting a Royal Enfield showroom with more than nine bike models available. Which bike would you recommend I choose?

Choosing a favourite bike is like picking a favourite child. As someone who enjoys off-road and adventure riding, I personally own a Himalayan. Additionally, the Classic 350 is a fantastic option. So, my recommendation would be either the Himalayan or the Scram, both of which are part of the same platform!

One thing that sets Royal Enfield apart is the iconic exhaust beat of the Bullet, famously known as 'dub dub.' However, electric bikes do not have this distinctive sound. Do you think people will readily accept electric bikes without this feature? Also, will Royal Enfield develop its own In-House Battery and BMS (Battery Management System)? Lastly, can you share any details about the first electric bike from Royal Enfield?

Indeed, we are actively working on the EV bike segment. Royal Enfield is committed to providing a pure motorcycling experience to our customers. Whether it's the colour, ride and handling, or performance, every aspect of our bikes is designed to resonate with riders. This experience will be carried over to our electric bikes as well.

To support our EV initiatives, we have allocated dedicated areas

at our Vallam and Sear plants for EV platforms and technology. Currently, a team of 62 people is working on this project. We aim to be a follower in the EV bike market while ensuring that our bikes don't lose their unique identity and characteristics, such as the iconic thump.

As for the first electric bike from Royal Enfield, we will share more information once we have made the necessary improvements and developments. Rest assured, we are committed to delivering the Royal Enfield experience in the realm of electric bikes.

Curious to know about your personal connection to Royal Enfield. What was the first bike you ever rode? Did you ride an RE Bullet during your college days?

When I was in my third year of college, I expressed my desire to ride a bike to my father. He bought me a second-hand scooter, but it didn't excite me much. However, a friend of mine owned a Royal Enfield bike. I rode it and instantly fell in love with it. In 1995, when I heard about an opportunity to work at Royal Enfield, I didn't even negotiate my salary. I joined the company right away, and it has been an incredible journey of over 25 years.

Some people believe that the service and maintenance costs of Royal Enfield motorcycles are relatively high. What would you say to them?

Previously, there was a perception that Royal Enfield maintenance costs were high, and we acknowledge that this perception existed to some extent. However, we have made significant improvements in this regard. We

have extended the service intervals for oil replacement, enhanced our quality control processes, and now offer the cleanest motorcycles. Since the introduction of the J series engine, we have implemented numerous changes that have resulted in lower maintenance costs compared to other bikes. Additionally, we provide Roadside Assistance, Extended Warranty, and Call Centre Support, ensuring peace of mind for our customers.

Some people appreciate the vintage appeal of the old Bullet models. If someone wants to buy an old vintage Bullet, does Royal Enfield have a solution for them?

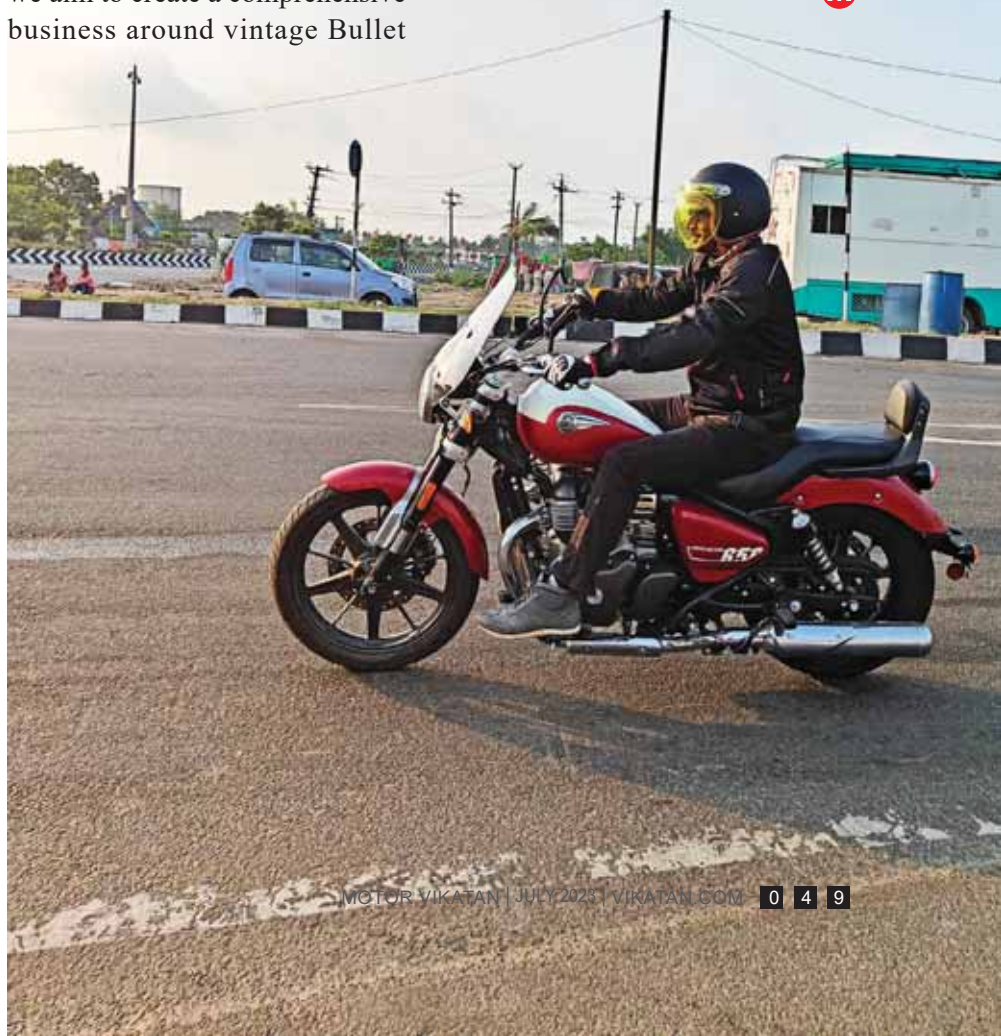
Absolutely! We understand the fondness for vintage Bullets and recognize the demand for such bikes. We are working on a solution where customers will be able to purchase second-hand bikes from Royal Enfield showrooms. Through our digital platform called RE OWN, we aim to create a comprehensive business around vintage Bullet

bikes. We plan to launch this feature on our website within the next 6 to 8 months, allowing enthusiasts to find and purchase their favourite vintage Bullet. So, they won't have to wait too long!

Lastly, I'm curious to know how you feel when you see Bullets featured in movies and hear them mentioned in songs. Do you enjoy watching movies, and what are your thoughts on the cultural impact of the Royal Enfield Bullet?

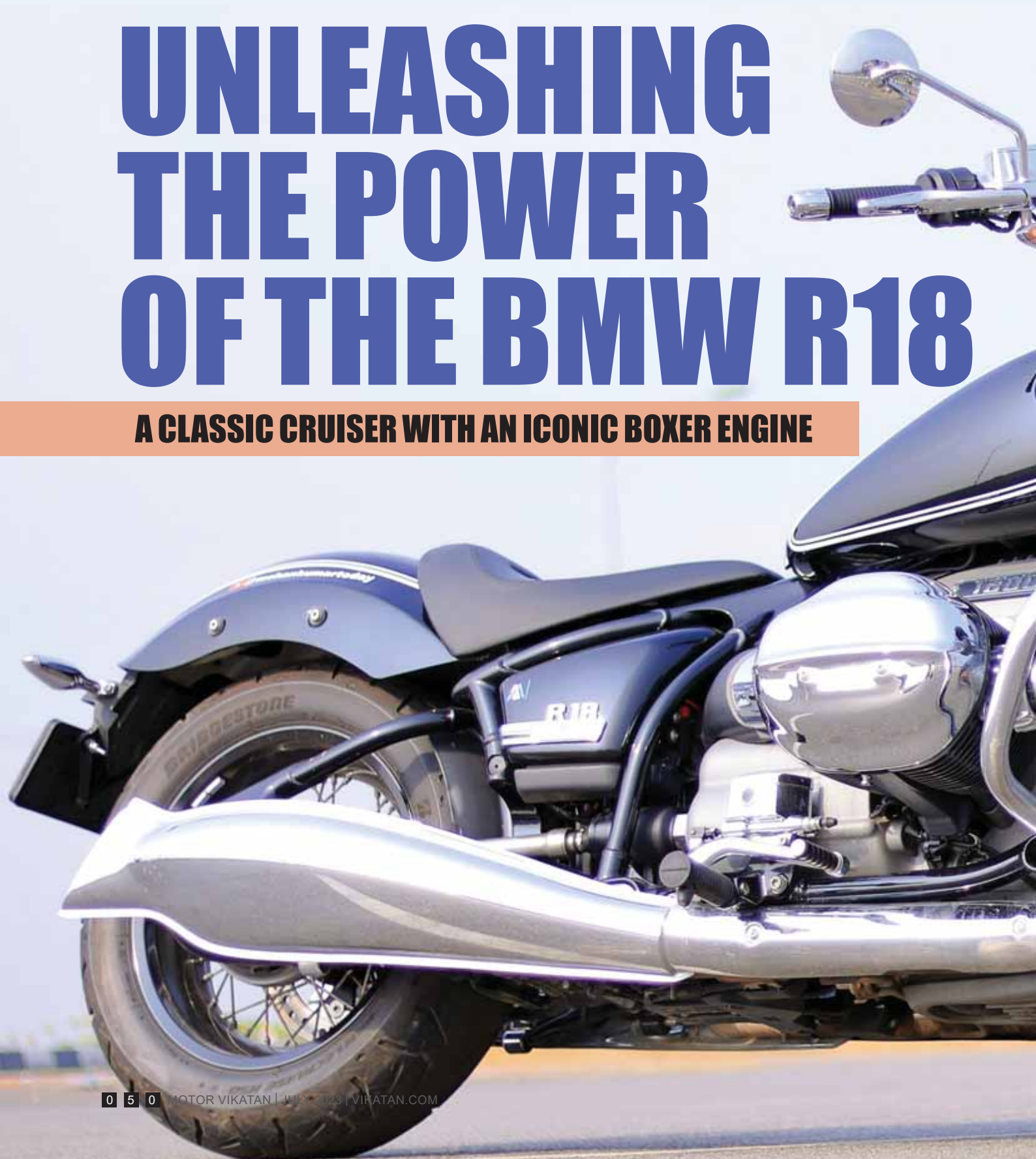
I'm a big fan of Rajinikanth movies, and watching them is always a joy. When I come across songs like "Come On Baby Let's Go On The Bullet," it fills me with happiness. It's remarkable to see the cultural impact of the Royal Enfield Bullet in movies and songs. The visuals and the sound of the Bullets in those instances evoke a strong emotional response. It's truly a delight!

M



UNLEASHING THE POWER OF THE BMW R18

A CLASSIC CRUISER WITH AN ICONIC BOXER ENGINE





Cruising down the open road on a motorcycle is a feeling that few experiences can replicate. But when that motorcycle is the BMW R18, with its iconic boxer engine and classic design, the journey becomes even more unforgettable. In this review, I will share my personal ride experience with the BMW R18, highlighting the thrill of starting up this powerhouse and the freedom it offers on the open road.

The Thrill of Starting Up the BMW R18

As I approached the BMW R18, I was immediately captivated by its commanding presence and timeless design. Let me start with how I got excited to start up a BMW R18. As I inserted the key into the ignition, I felt the excitement building up inside me. It was an experience that is difficult to put into words. Because it's a thrill that can only be felt by those who have had the pleasure of experiencing it. With a twist of the wrist, the engine roars to life, and you can feel the power of the 1802 cc boxer twin engine as it rumbles beneath you. The sound is deep and throaty, commanding the attention of anyone within earshot.

The Boxer Engine's Signature Performance

At the heart of the BMW R18 lies its iconic boxer engine, a true masterpiece. The 1802 cc twin-cylinder marvel delivers raw and exhilarating power. Its sheer size and horizontally arranged cylinders add to the R18's unique character. The R18's engine offers an impressive 91 horsepower



Specification	
Engine	1802 cc Boxer Twin
Cooling	Air-cooled
Maximum Power	91 hp Power
Maximum Torque	157 Nm Torque
Transmission	6-speed
Wheelbase	1,731 mm
Seat Height	690 mm
Fuel Capacity	16 litres
Weight	345 kg
Price	25 Lakhs * (On-road Chennai)



and a staggering 157 Nm of torque, providing effortless acceleration and passing power on demand. The deep growl of the engine, accentuated by the pushrod-actuated valves, mesmerizes not only the rider but also onlookers who are captivated by the symphony of mechanical artistry.

A Ride of Power and Control

With the engine's symphony in full swing, I embarked on my journey astride the BMW R18. Despite its substantial size weighing 345 kg, the R18's weight felt balanced and manageable. The plush suspension

absorbed the imperfections of the road effortlessly, providing a smooth and comfortable ride. The handling was precise and responsive, allowing me to navigate through traffic with confidence and ease. It's no wonder the R18 exudes a sense of stability that inspires trust in its rider.

The Joy of Freedom and Admiration

As I picked up speed, the wind embraced me, heightening the exhilaration of the ride. The BMW R18 demands attention wherever it goes. Its classic design turns heads,

and the sound of its engine announces your presence with authority. Fellow riders and passersby couldn't help but admire the timeless elegance and powerful aura of the R18. The joy of freedom that comes with riding this motorcycle is unmatched. It transcends the boundaries of time and transports you to a realm of pure bliss.

Overall, in the realm of classic cruisers, the BMW R18 reigns supreme. From the spine-tingling thrill of starting up its iconic boxer engine to the freedom it offers on the open road, every moment spent with the R18 is an adventure worth cherishing.



Efficient Performance meets Safety with a Volkswagen Tiguan



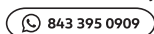
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“WE ARE PIONEERS OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY”



Mr. Ravinder Singh,
Senior Vice-President,

Yamaha Motor India Sales Pvt. Ltd.

We had the opportunity to sit down with Mr. Ravinder Singh, Senior Vice-President, Yamaha Motor India Sales Pvt. Ltd. With an impressive 30 years of experience in the automobile industry, Mr. Singh possesses a unique understanding of today's youth and communicates with refreshing realism.

Our conversation covered a wide range of topics, including Yamaha's bikes, scooters, track day events, MotoGP, and the growing trend of electric vehicles. As we delved into the discussion, it became clear that Yamaha's focus on young and millennial individuals is what sets them apart, making Yamaha an affordable and desirable choice for many.

With 30 years of experience in the automobile industry, what have you learnt about the Indian market and the people?

As far as the automobile industry is concerned, hands-on experience plays a vital role. You can never truly understand a machine unless you have direct experience with it. The connection between machines and humans is established through practical processes. I began my career as a service

engineer, progressed through various departments, and even had the opportunity to work as a coach.

Being friendly with customers and dealers is important, but being present on the field is crucial to truly grasp what's happening. This is the essence of the Japanese principle called "Genba," which means "the real place where value is created." Whenever we hire new employees, their training takes place on-site. While the office is where plans are made and strategies are formulated, the market is where the action happens. That's what I've learned throughout my 30 years of experience.

Is it this philosophy that attracts so many youngsters to Yamaha?

Indeed, Yamaha's DNA is rooted in youthfulness. Our focus on powerful performance, style, and innovation has resonated with customers. However, we realized that something more was needed. That's why we launched a new campaign called "Call of the Blue" in 2018. Excitement is at the core of this campaign, appealing to the sporty nature and interests of the youth. Considering that India has a significant young population, with 60% being youth, they form a major portion of our customer base. India's development is highly visible, and that is a positive aspect.

We provide our customers with premium technology, which might give the perception that Yamaha is costly. However, we are not expensive; instead, we are pioneers

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW!

of advanced technology in India. We introduced the water-cooled engine when no one had even thought about it. We were the first to introduce radial tires and brought many race bike technologies to India. For instance, we incorporated R1 technology into the R15 bike. This year, we have upgraded the TFT display on the R15 bike, and our Traction Control System technology ensures maximum safety. We strive to bring unique offerings to India that distinguish us from others.

Can we anticipate more surprises from Yamaha in the future?

Absolutely! That's always the expectation when conversing with our customers. Since the launch of the R15 in 2008, we have introduced 23 upgrades to date. People anticipate more than just a single step forward. Our next step is the development of 350cc models. For 2024, we are working on two different types of models, gradually

preparing them for the market. Factors such as market acceptance and purchasing power play a crucial role in our planning. Additionally, we have 700cc and 1000cc models in the pipeline.

How about the scooter segment? What can we expect from Yamaha in that regard?

We entered the scooter segment in 2013, and while it evolves each year, we have focused on our premium strategy. We introduced the first 125CC hybrid engine in the Indian scooter range. This year, we have new upgrades coming, including OBD and E20. Yamaha scooters are the only 125CC scooters that offer better mileage. We also have the AEROX 155 scooter. Whenever better technology emerges, we will bring it to the market. Our aim is to move upward, not downward!

Currently, the scooter segment accounts for 45% of the market, while bikes make up the remaining 55%. However, there is always a supply shortage due to high demand. We are ramping up production to meet the demand, especially with the upcoming festive seasons. Our expectation is to achieve a 50-50 split between scooters and bikes.

What are Yamaha's plans regarding the electric vehicle trend?

Electric vehicles currently account for 5% of the total Indian market, and we are closely monitoring the EV trend. While our EV vehicles are already being marketed in Europe and Taiwan, entering a market like the Asia Pacific region, particularly India,





requires thorough testing of various parameters. India experiences diverse weather conditions, from cold in Delhi to hot in Chennai. Customers are facing numerous challenges with the EV vehicles available in the market. As always, our priority is the customers, and our products are designed to provide maximum safety potential. That's also part of Yamaha's DNA. However, battery technology still needs further improvement, and there's still a long way to go in that regard.

Let's talk about Yamaha Track Day. What is it all about?

Many people buy sports bikes, but they can't truly experience the thrill of biking on normal public roads. That's why, unlike other bike companies, we initiated the Track Day event. It allows everyone to receive professional training and fully experience the capabilities of our bikes. Currently, we have tracks in three cities in India, namely Chennai, Bengaluru, and Coimbatore. However, due to limited capacity, we can't

accommodate a large number of participants. Nevertheless, we are striving to increase capacity and expand the event. The one-day event may extend to two or even three days. The objective behind Track Day is to provide an exceptional experience to our customers, and it's the racing DNA that has contributed to Yamaha's success.

Lastly, could you share some insights on MotoGP in India?

MotoGP will be held in India for the first time in September 2023, featuring Yamaha International riders. One of the most renowned riders, Valentino Rossi, has been a part of the Yamaha team. We have hosted various engaging programs related to motorsports, which have generated significant interest among young people. As a special gesture, we will be taking 100 Yamaha customers to watch the MotoGP race. There are many more projects in the pipeline, and time will reveal their outcomes. We hope that MotoGP will develop in India and establish itself in motorsports, just as the IPL has done in cricket. Only time will tell!



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A MEMORABLE VOYAGE



MY UNFORGETTABLE JOURNEY ON THE CORDELIA CRUISE

CHENNAI TO SRI LANKA



As I look back on my 5-day voyage on the Cordelia Cruise from Chennai to Sri Lanka, I can't help but feel a deep sense of gratitude and awe. From the luxuriously designed cabins to the captivating entertainment shows, every aspect of this cruise was meticulously crafted to provide an unforgettable experience. Exploring the historical sites of Hambantota and immersing myself in the beauty of Trincomalee left me in awe of Sri Lanka's rich culture and natural wonders.

The launch of India's first international cruise vessel has not only opened doors to exciting travel opportunities but has also paved the way for a thriving maritime trade and cruise tourism industry in India. The commitment of the government to develop world-class infrastructure and boost the



demand for cruise services was evident throughout this remarkable experience. The future holds great promise as new terminals in Mumbai, Vishakhapatnam, Mormugao, and Kolkata are set to amplify the country's cruise ship tourism. Additionally, the upcoming international cruise terminals in Andamans, Puducherry, and Lakshadweep circuits will further enhance the allure of India as a captivating cruising destination.

Picture this: a luxurious cruise ship gliding through the glistening waters, ready to embark on a 5-day adventure from Chennai to the enchanting land of Sri Lanka. As I stepped on board the MV Empress, excitement surged through me. As an enthusiastic traveller and adventure seeker, the launch event of India's first international cruise vessel, MV Empress, was an experience I eagerly awaited.



The anticipation grew, as I stood among the bustling crowd at the International Cruise Terminal in Chennai, witnessing the historic moment when Shri Sarbananda Sonowal, the Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and Ayush, flagged off this remarkable journey to Sri Lanka.

Day 1: Setting Sail from Chennai

The moment I set foot on the ship, I was greeted by a warm and welcoming crew, ready to make my voyage unforgettable. After completing the check-in formalities, I entered my lavishly designed cabin, adorned with modern amenities that promised true comfort. I couldn't help but be amazed by its grandeur. The party at the dome was an absolute blast, and as the sun dipped below the horizon, I found myself captivated

by the mesmerizing view of the endless ocean. Indulging in a mouth-watering dinner, I knew that this was just the beginning of an incredible adventure.

Day 2: A Day Amidst the Sea

Waking up to the gentle rocking of the ship, I knew I was in for an extraordinary day. With a delightful breakfast to fuel my energy, I dove into the multitude of entertainment activities available on board. From thrilling casino games that kept me on the edge of my seat to captivating theatre performances and shows, the experiences never ceased to amaze me. As the day unfolded, I found solace in the ship's library and was delighted with the variety. Indulging in exotic cuisine and basking in the comfort of my cabin, I drifted off to sleep, eagerly anticipating what the next day would bring.

Day 3: Discovering the Beauty of Hambantota

Awakening to the anticipation of exploring a new destination, I enjoyed a delectable breakfast before disembarking in Hambantota, one of Sri Lanka's most renowned cities. The rich history and stunning beaches beckoned me, and I embarked on a shore excursion to discover the hidden gems of this captivating place. From wandering through historical sites to relishing the sun-kissed beaches, Hambantota truly stole my heart. As the day turned into a balmy evening, I ventured back to the ship, immersing myself in the vibrant atmosphere of its bars, lounges, and restaurants. Content and filled with joy, I surrendered to a restful slumber.





Day 4: Exploring Enchanting Trincomalee

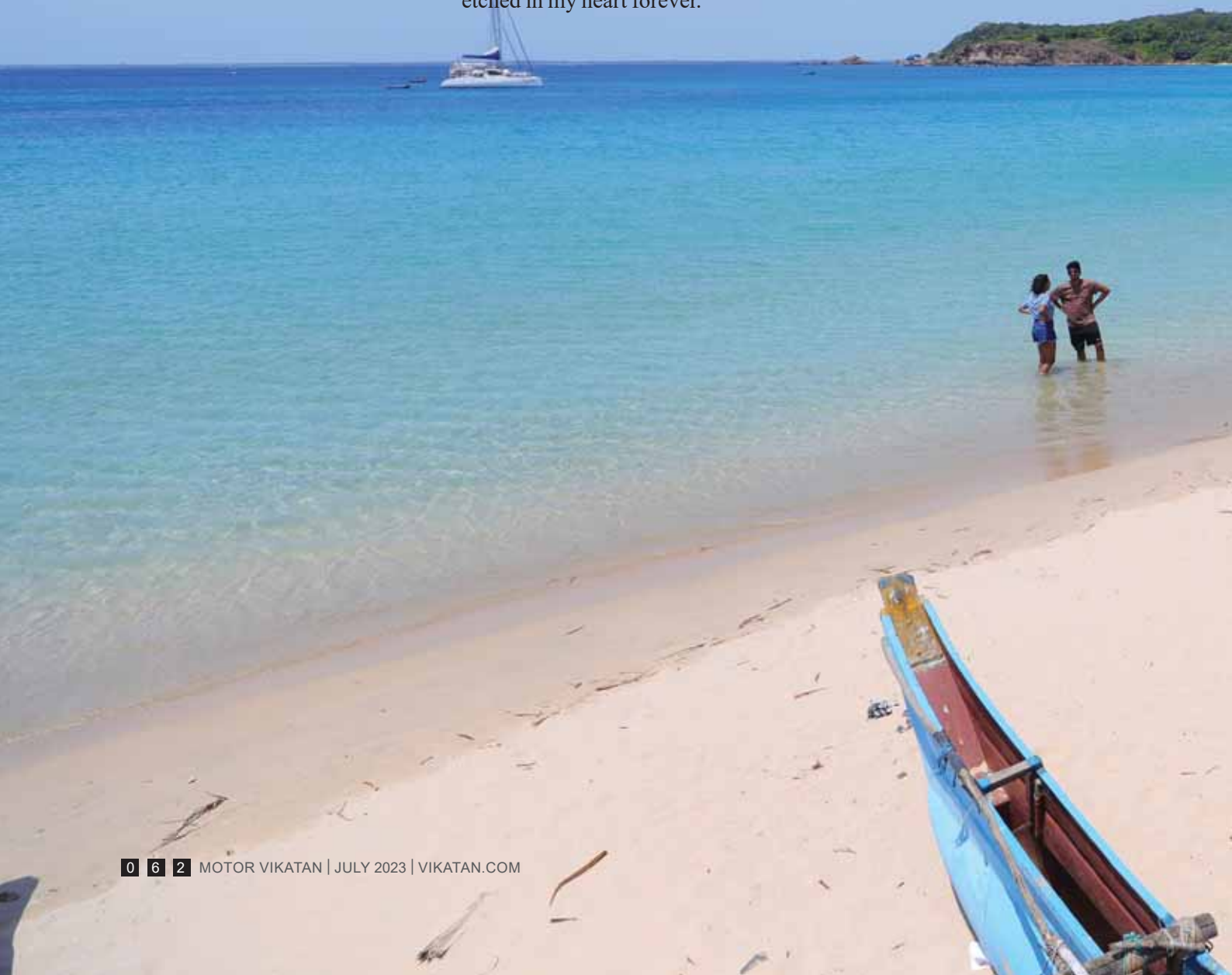
I found myself at Trincomalee, a city bursting with colours and vibrancy. Greeted by another delightful breakfast, I prepared myself for an adventure like no other. Trincomalee unfolded before me, revealing its water sports,

pristine beaches, and captivating history. From thrilling water activities to immersing myself in the mesmerizing beauty of the surroundings, each moment brought new excitement. As the day drew to a close, I bid farewell to Trincomalee, knowing that the memories I made there would be etched in my heart forever.

Day 5: Returning to Chennai

With a tinge of bittersweet emotion, I woke up on the final day of my journey, knowing that it was time to bid adieu to the Cordelia Cruise. However, not before savouring a delightful breakfast and relishing the last few moments on the ship. As we docked in Chennai, I disembarked, carrying with me unforgettable memories of Sri Lanka's extravaganza. The cruise had been more than just a trip; it had been a journey of discovery, luxury, and boundless joy.

As I disembarked from the cruise, I carried with me a treasure trove of memories, a longing to return, and a newfound love for the world of seas. The 5-day voyage on



the Cordelia Cruise from Chennai to Sri Lanka was nothing short of a dream come true. It was a journey that exceeded my expectations, offering a seamless blend of luxury, adventure, and cultural exploration. I eagerly await the countless journeys that lie ahead, where I can continue to immerse myself in the beauty of our coastal regions and create memories that will last a lifetime.

Important highlights about the MV Express Cruise:

The MV Express cruise takes travellers to three ports in Sri Lanka, specifically Colombo, Galle and Trincomalee.

The cruise offers a range of

package options, including two nights, three nights, four nights, and five nights, allowing passengers to choose the duration that suits their preferences.

The tour packages for the MV Express cruise start at INR 86,383 for a three-night stay for two people, offering a variety of affordable options for travellers.

The MV Express cruise was inaugurated from the newly constructed International Cruise Terminal in Chennai, which was built at a cost of INR 17.21 crores, emphasizing the government's commitment to developing Chennai as a prominent cruise tourism hub.

While on board the MV Express cruise, guests have the opportunity to enjoy casino games. However, these games are only available when the ship is in international waters, adding to the excitement and allure of the cruise experience.

The government's vision for cruise tourism is focused on transforming Chennai into a thriving hub. To achieve this, plans are underway to construct three new international cruise ports by 2024. These ports will enable additional ferry routes connecting India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Myanmar, further enhancing the cruise tourism potential of the region.



For the majority of motorcycle tourers in India, riding to Ladakh is a dream. Even if getting stuck at times in snow and slush can become a nightmare!

Riding to this frozen desert multiple times gives you a different perspective of the place. You never get 'used' to the land, where you

take the landscapes for granted. Every single time you navigate this gorgeously treacherous terrain, you are overawed by the magnificence of the mighty mountains. From the never-ending More Plains to the visually spectacular Baralacha La, you are always left with your jaw hitting the floor. On a motorcycle you don't just see these landscapes,

you become a part of it, you absorb it; where you can feel it in every breath you take.

On this occasion, we rode a KTM 390 Duke to the high lands with a pillion. The Duke isn't built for touring or for pillions. But when you see people in the country touring on 100cc motorcycles, you know you can head up there with

THE DUKE OF



HIGHLANDS...



We descended from there gradually all the way to Sarchu, where we exited Himachal and entered the Union Territory of Ladakh.

practically any machine!

The plan was simple to ride from Delhi to Leh via Manali and return via Srinagar. Riding the classic circuit which is primarily filled with good roads.

Day 1: Delhi to Manali

We made the classic mistake of leaving Delhi on a Saturday morning, perfectly in tune with the corporate calendar. Add to that summer holidays for schools in north India and we had a veritable cacophony of traffic from start to end.

Post exiting the city, we stopped at Murthal for the famous breakfast of aloo paratha served with white butter. A feast for those of us who visit these places rarely. From thereon, it was a mundane high-speed highway till Chandigarh. Rather than entering this excessively policed city, we bypassed it before

hitting the foothills. Till that point of time, it was hot, incredibly hot. Once in the hills the roads oscillated between being stupendous and horrible. We got brand new 4-lane hill highways as well as potholed infested narrow roads. The one thing which remained constant was the volume of traffic. The endless stream of traffic culminated in a traffic jam in Manali. It took us 40 minutes to ride the last 4 km into Manali. We couldn't tell whether we were in Chandni Chowk or the mountains!

Day 2: Manali to Rumpste

The second day of riding saw us climb from the get go. It was a Sunday morning and all the tourist traffic was climbing up towards Rohtang La for photographs in the snow. Fortunately, we turned off towards the relatively new Atal Tunnel and from there the beauty of the mountains started in earnest.

The engineering marvel of Atal Tunnel sees you cross from the Kullu valley in the south to the Lahaul valley in the north via this 9 km stretch below the mountain. It not just saves a lot of time, but also reduces the number of kilometres. Most importantly, it removes the need of crossing Rohtang La, which is almost always a traffic jam at high altitude!

The tunnel exits at Sissu, from where we rode to Tandi, the last fuel bunk for the next 320+ km. We filled the tank to the brim and carried 4 litres of spare fuel in a jerry can for the thirsty Duke.

Post Tandi, we crossed Keylong which has a new fuel bunk, but no fuel available. Darcha is the last place in Himachal where we got phone network and from there began the climb to the mighty Baralacha La. This pass is the gateway between the greenery of Lahaul and the high-altitude desert of Ladakh. The road is mostly complete, with minor bad stretches around the pass. We descended from there gradually all the way to Sarchu, where we exited Himachal and entered the Union Territory of Ladakh.

A few kilometres post Sarchu, we reached the base of the famous Gata Loops. Which is fearsome on a bicycle, but a breeze on a capable machine like the Duke. The good roads end atop Nakee La, from there we descended on broken roads till Pang, crossing Whiskey Nullah and Lachung La along the way.

At Pang we could see the weather was getting worse, thanks to the unending skies which holds no secrets. We made a mad dash over More Plains to Debring and the base of Tanglang La. Crossing this



extremely high pass on two wheels after 4 PM is never a good idea. But we desperately needed to cross and get to lower altitudes to get a good night's rest. So onwards we pushed.

Tanglang La invited us to enjoy the climb as we made good time. Till we were a couple of kilometres from the top, where gentle snowflakes wafted into our helmets. In the next

5 minutes all sense of gentleness disappeared as we got engulfed in a full powered blizzard around 7 PM. Visibility dropped to 5 metres and we descended at 5 kmph, hoping not to drop dead from the cold and altitude! Finally, we descended to Rumpste, for a piping hot cup of tea to revive our frozen spirits.



Day 3-7: Leh

After the arduous route from Manali to Leh, we took the next few days easy. Roaming around through the picturesque villages of Choglamsar, Spituk, Angling, which are along the Indus River and sit in the shadow of the mighty Stok Kangri.

We also had the opportunity to visit the Leh Palace, Shanti Stupa, Tsemo Gompa, all three places which overlook the city of Leh and give you picturesque views of the bustling city nestled in the brown mountains of Ladakh. One can of course visit all these places in a vehicle, but the real joy is going there on foot. Being breathless with excitement and altitude is quite an experience!

In the city, we roamed the Leh main market, enjoying the food, spectacle and vibe. For the very first time we also visited the museum in Leh, which is a wonderful portal into the days which have long passed. It is highly recommended for getting a better understanding of the culture of the place.

Day 8: Leh to Kargil

On the 8th day after lunch, we left from Leh towards Kargil. The winds out there pick up crazily post noon and our motorcycle and us were thrown around like rag dolls on perfectly smooth asphalt.

Along the way we passed through the gorgeous village of Lamayuru and its magnificent monastery. After that it is all climbing till Fotu La, before you descend and once again climb to Namik La. The descent from this pass brings you to the city of Kargil. A perfect place to stay the night, with good food, warm hospitality and many stay options.

The roads we got on the 8th day were brilliant and the Duke and us had maximum fun.

Day 9: Kargil to Jammu

The next morning, we started early and headed to Jammu via Srinagar.

Along the way we passed Dras, where the Kargil War Memorial is located, honouring the war heroes from the 1999 war. After Dras we started the climb to the lovely Zozi La. A beautiful mountain pass as we ascended. But at the top of the pass, it was mayhem. Vehicles parked everywhere, tourists running around jumping in the snow, stalls selling noodles and tea. Completely shattering every element of peace in the mountains!

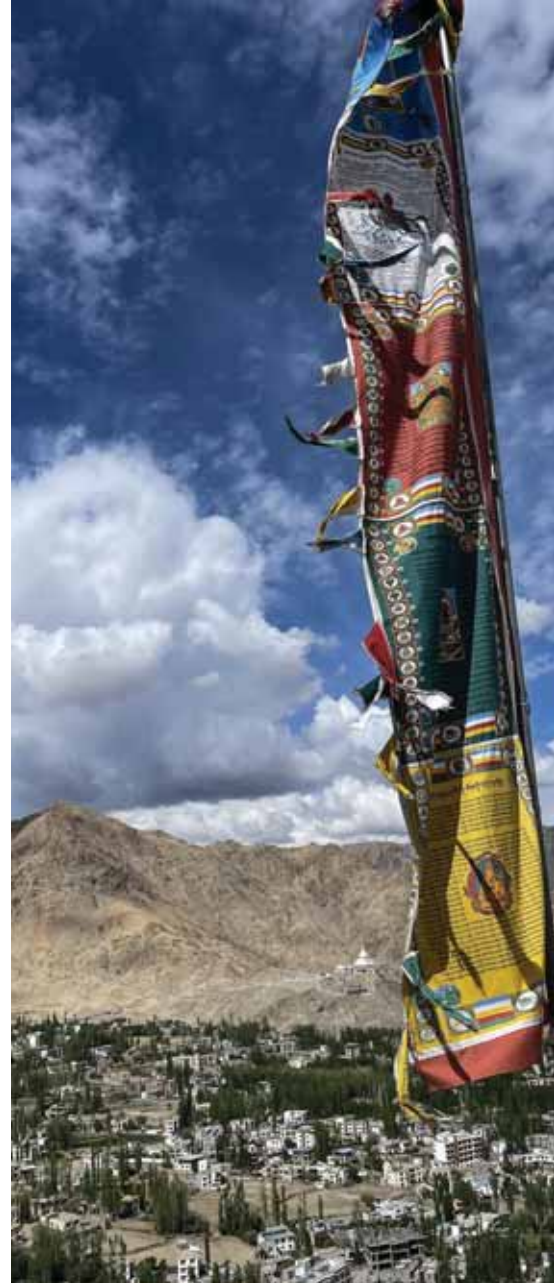
From Zozi La, it was a steep descent to Sonamarg, a beautiful part of the country and the entry into the Kashmir Valley. The mountains were spectacular and green, in stark contrast to the brown and bleak mountains of Ladakh. Only one thing was bad, the traffic! Cars, both local and tourists, were zipping along the narrow mountain roads, overtaking each other on blind turns, honking away, aggressively pushing each other to the edge. Completely robbing us of the pleasure of a hill ride and making us feel like we were back in urban metro traffic.

From there it was a scenic descent to the city of Srinagar, which was getting roasted under the hot sun. Incredible that it can be so hot in the mountains, as we rode around the Dal Lake, which wasn't quite as spectacular in the hot sun. One marked scene in the Kashmir valley is the presence of military personnel all along the road.

From Srinagar we rode along flat roads till the Banihal Tunnel before crossing to Ramban and then towards Patnitop. The farther away from Srinagar we got, the less military personnel we saw. The roads were mostly good on this route. But there are limited stay options along the highway. After Srinagar, the next places to stay we found were in Ramban and Patnitop. One needs to plan their night halts accordingly.

Day 10: Jammu to Delhi

From Jammu it was hot sun, straight 4-lane roads and boring traffic to be navigated. Along with a smattering of traffic jams as we entered Delhi on a Sunday evening.



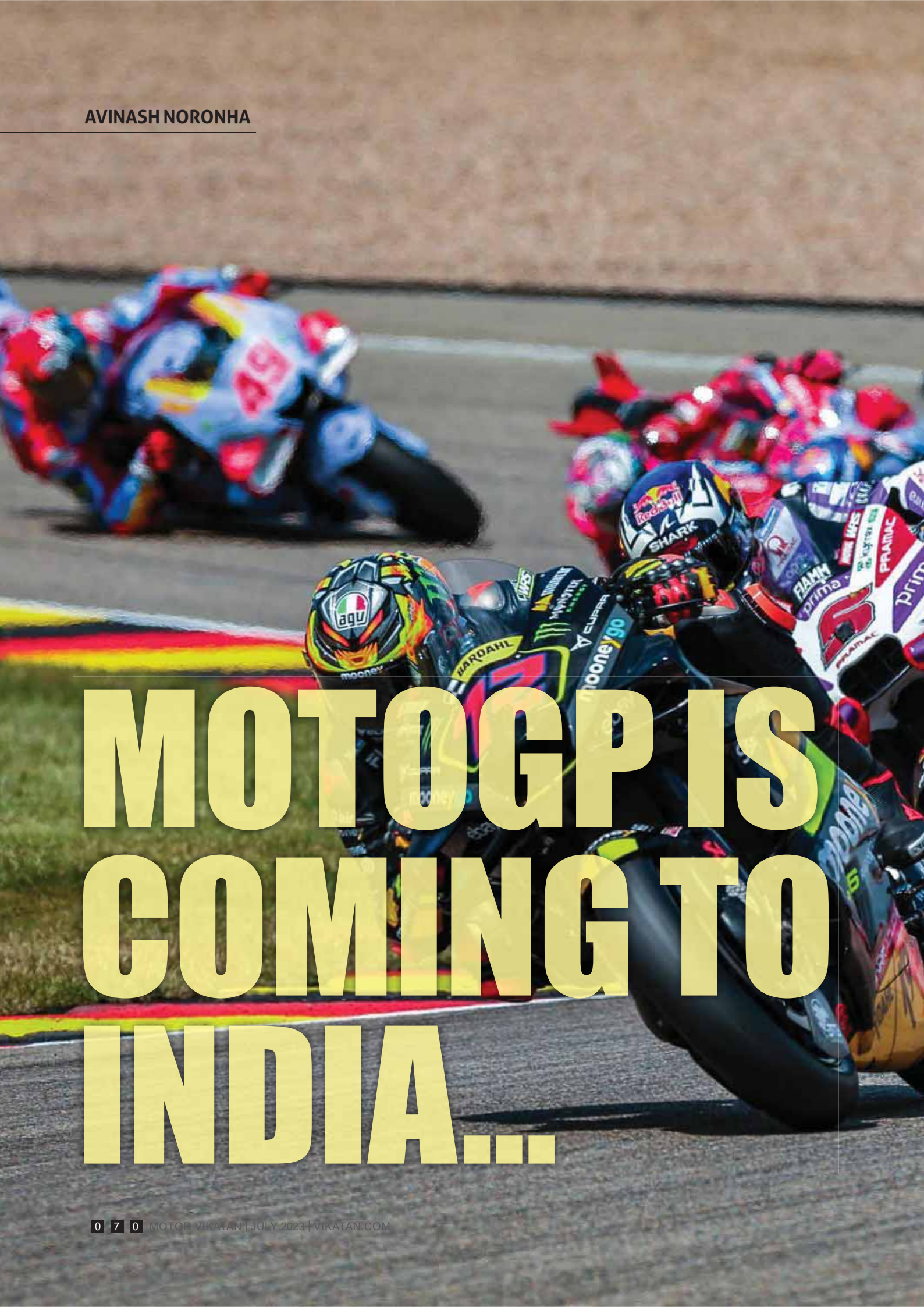
The ride from Delhi to Leh and back was just what the doctor ordered. A relaxed ride on a motorcycle which not perfect on the spec sheet, turned out to be an amazing machine to tour on.

The KTM 390 Duke is light, turns well, handles broken and non-existent roads with aplomb. Waded through streams like a boss and climbed the never-ending Himalayas with a pillion, as if it was no big deal.

When we first thought of riding the Duke to Leh, we were sceptical. Now we are converts...



AVINASH NORONHA

A dynamic photograph of a MotoGP race. In the foreground, a rider on a blue and yellow Yamaha YZF-M1 is leaning into a turn, wearing a helmet with the AGV logo. Behind them, another rider on a red and white Honda is visible, wearing a helmet with the Shark logo. The background shows other riders further down the track, all leaning into the curve. The track surface is asphalt, and there's a red and yellow curb on the left.

MOTOGP IS COMING TO INDIA...



Well, almost. Ticket sales have begun for the MotoGP Bharat race to be held in September this year. The race promotions have not just started in our country, but on the official MotoGP platforms as well. There is only one thing which stands in the way, homologation of the Buddh International Circuit by the FIM. Once that 'little' piece of the jigsaw falls in place, we will be ready to go wroom wroom!

It will be the first time that the country will play host to the pinnacle of motorcycle racing. The track previously having held the Formula 1 grand prix, before they pulled

out due to low attendance figures and government red tape. We are excited for MotoGP and hope it will fare better than its 4-wheeled counterpart.

Now back to the business of racing. MotoGP currently sits at the start of the summer break. 8 rounds have been completed so far, starting with the Portuguese GP, then it moved to South America with the Argentina GP, going north to the Americas GP, returning to Europe with the Spanish GP, followed by the French GP. Then it was 3 back-to-back races at the Italian GP, German GP and Dutch GP, before wrapping up for the 5-week long summer break.

The next Grand Prix will be held in Silverstone where the

championship becomes frantic, as a lot of racing has been packed into very tight dates.

After 8 races how is the championship looking?

Ducati

The clear leaders in the championship. They currently hold the top 3 positions in the rider's championship with Francesco Bagnaia, Jorge Martin and Marco Bezzecchi. They also have a firm grip on the manufacturers and team championships. Reigning MotoGP champion Bagnaia, looks well placed to repeat his feat and go on to take his second title. He is riding extremely well and consistently. But you never can be sure, last year he trailed Fabio Quartararo at this point of time in the season, and then

RIDER CHAMPIONSHIP (TOP 10)

Francesco Bagnaia (Ducati)	194
Jorge Martin (Ducati)	159
Marco Bezzecchi (Ducati)	158
Brad Binder (KTM)	114
Johann Zarco (Ducati)	109
Luca Marini (Ducati)	98
Jack Miller (KTM)	79
Aleix Espargaro (Aprilia)	77
Fabio Quartararo (Yamaha)	64
Alex Marquez (Ducati)	63





it all turned on its head.

Ducati has 8 bikes on the grid and is making full use of it. They are not just winning, but the lower rung bikes are also getting in the way of the competition. It would take nothing short of a miracle for anybody to beat Ducati in 2023.

KTM

The Austrian manufacturer is hoping to pull off such a miracle with Brad Binder, who is 80 points adrift in the championship. Similar to the position in which Bagnaia was last year. The difference being that this year with the addition of the sprint races, every race weekend now has 35 points on offer compared to the previous 25. This allows any competitor to close the gap much faster, but they first need to be faster on the track.

Binder is getting good support from his teammate Jack Miller. Unfortunately, Miller tends to fall off his bike far too often. Nonetheless,



he is having a good first season with KTM. The satellite team of KTM are not as yet being able to provide the support which Ducati is enjoying in the championship. It will take another small step up, before the orange can force the issue with the big red.

Aprilia

The other Italian in the championship, Aprilia had great hopes for this season. Those hopes have so far not materialised. The riders have been full of praise about the bike, except when they



need to scrap on track. The bike is good in qualifying, but not great when you need to overtake another rider. Which sees Aleix Espargaro's championship challenge not having the punch he had last year. Teammate Maverick Vinales had a good start to the season, but has since then been

missing in action. The satellite team of Aprilia has also had a mixed bag of results, form and luck.

Aprilia doesn't look to have the capacity to win a championship in the 2023 season. They will be hoping to get onto the podium

more often after the summer break though.

Yamaha

Yamaha is fighting the MotoGP championship with one hand tied behind their back. With only 2 motorcycles on the grid, the Japanese manufacturer is greatly hampered with data. Data which is the king currently for Ducati. Yamaha have pinned all their hopes of Quartararo, but that isn't enough. The bike this season has just seen a solitary podium position. It will take a lot more effort for them to fight again for podiums and wins.

2023 appears to be a lost cause for Yamaha, they will be hoping to turn things around next year.

Honda

The manufacturer which finds itself in the absolute doldrums is the motorcycle global giant, Honda. At one point of time, this Japanese manufacturer ruled the roost and would win consecutive titles. Now they are struggling for consecutive top 5 race finishes. Their highest placed rider is Alex Rins in 13th place in the championship on a satellite bike. Their star, Marc Marquez is nowhere close to showing his true potential. The motorcycle just isn't allowing the riders to be competitive. To make matters worse, Honda has 3 out of their 4 riders injured. Along with Marquez and Rins, Joan Mir is also nursing an injury he picked up in a crash on track.

Honda desperately needs to do something drastic to claw their way back into this year's podium battles and the 2024 championship. Else they will have to say goodbye to their goose which lay the golden eggs.



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FORMULA 1 MID-SEASON UPDATES



Just one third of the 2023 Formula 1 World Championship is done and we all know who's going to be crowned at the end of the season! Max Verstappen is roaring on the back of his Red Bull and no one can stop them from sweeping the title this year. But that doesn't mean this season is getting dull or predictable. Except for the top prize, there are fights all over and we've seen some incredible performances so far. Let's take a look at how the season is going on for the teams this season.

Red Bull - 321 points

Unmatchable: That's the only word to describe the performance of Max Verstappen & Red Bull. The Austria based team has won all 8 races with Verstappen winning 6 of them. The Dutch racer has won the last 3 races by leading from start to end. With the victory in



Drivers' Championship Table

1. Max Verstappen	195
2. Sergio Perez	126
3. Fernando Alonso	117
4. Lewis Hamilton	102
5. Carlos Sainz	68
6. George Russell	65
7. Charles Leclerc	54
8. Lance Stroll	37
9. Esteban Ocon	29
10. Pierre Gasly	15
11. Lando Norris	12
12. Alex Albon	7
13. Nico Hulkenberg	6
14. Oscar Piastri	5
15. Valtteri Bottas	5
16. Zhou Guanyu	4
17. Yuki Tsunoda	2
18. Kevin Magnussen	2
19. Nyck de Vries	0
20. Logan Sargeant	0

Canada, they registered 100 wins in Formula 1. But it's not all great at Red Bull. Until Miami, Red Bull enjoyed four 1-2 finishes in 5 races. But Sergio Perez's form dipped after that, the Mexican failed to stand on the podium in the last 3 races. When Verstappen is lapping faster than everyone else, his teammate failed to even enter Q3 after Miami. Perez who was just 6 points off of Verstappen after Azerbaijan is now 69 points adrift of the championship leader. The talks of 'Who's going to replace Perez in Red Bull?' has already started and it's important for Checo to rediscover his form, to get back on the podium and to save his seat as well.

Mercedes - 167 points

Mercedes is getting better race after race. In the first six races, they had only one podium - Lewis Hamilton in Australia. But in the last 2 races, they've roared well to take 3 podiums. In Spain, Mercedes registered their first double podium of the season, and the seven-time champion Hamilton finished third in Canada. The veteran showing good pace and even George

Russell is making much off his car in the race. For the youngster, qualifying seems to be a little tricky though, but with momentum on their side, Mercedes will be confident of holding on to the second spot. Yeah, they have jumped Aston Martin on the table and are 13 points ahead.

Aston Martin - 154 points

Aston Martin is on a dream run and the ever-young Fernando Alonso has taken charge of making them a giant. The Spaniard made the podium in all but 2 races (Azerbaijan & Spain). He's getting the most out of the Aston Martin car and the 80 points difference between him and Lance Stroll clearly indicates the way the 2-time world champion is performing. Alonso is showing his hunger on the biggest stage even at 41. After failing to achieve a podium in his home GP, he made a

statement that would be the last race without a podium. He turned up to Montreal and started delivering on his promise with a second-place finish. They've lost the second place in the constructors' table to Mercedes and the team will be expecting Lance Stroll to step up and target the podium in the upcoming races.

Ferrari - 122 points

The same old story continues. Some weird strategy calls, drivers being unhappy about that and mix ups on the track. Ferrari achieved just 1 podium (Leclerc - Azerbaijan) in the 8 races so far. But Canada GP should give them the confidence to turn things around. Their strategy calls during the race were perfect and it gave them a good haul of 22 points despite their two drivers starting from 10th and 11th. But still, they have to be more cautious with the way they handle themselves during qualifying. In Monaco, Leclerc received a 3-place penalty for impeding Norris and in Canada, his teammate Sainz got the same penalty for impeding Pierre Gasly!

Alpine - 44 points

Alpine is standing firmly in fifth position with the top 4 having a good enough lead over them and McLaren still struggling to score consistent points. After a disappointing start to the season, Esteban Ocon scored in all 4 races. More importantly, his outstanding drive in Monaco accounted for his third podium in Formula 1. He had an incredible qualifying which put him in P3 and he managed to maintain that position till the end. Not just Ocon, even Gasly has had a few good qualifying sessions. He qualified P4 in Spain only to be pushed to tenth after getting two

3-place penalties for impeding Sainz and Verstappen. With their good one-lap pace, they should be looking for better results in the upcoming races.

McLaren - 17 points

They are closer to Alfa Romeo than to Alpine which should worry them. Lando Norris is trying to get the best out of his car but luck isn't

going his way. After an incredible drive, he qualified P3 in Spain. But it didn't last long. Contact with Lewis Hamilton damaged his front wing because of which he had to stop and change it. A promising race ended in 17th place for the Britisher. Bad luck followed him to Canada as he got a 5 second time penalty for unsportsmanlike behaviour which cost him 2 championship points.





But the young star is continuing his aggressive approach and showing real promise. It's time for his rookie teammate Oscar Piastri to step up and add to his tally of 5 points.

Alfa Romeo - 9 points

After 6 pointless races, Valtteri Bottas scored points in Canada with an incredible race and some help from the penalty given to Norris. "I am pleased with our race today. I made up four positions during the race, and it's always a good day when that happens, especially when you get a top ten finish, which had been our main goal all weekend long. The team will be happy with back-to-back point finishes in Spain & Canada. Since Monaco, we have been making decent progress, and it's proof of all the hard work put in by the team back home in Hinwil" said the Finn after the race. The arrival of James Key as technical

director (who will start his duties on September 1) should boost their chances of winning the bottom 4 race.

Haas - 8 points

When you finish P2 in qualifiers, you'll be hoping for a huge points haul. That's what Nico Hulkenberg and Haas would've hoped on the Canadian GP race morning. But it didn't go as expected. First, a 3-place penalty for red flag infringement brought him down to fifth in the grid and lost places to Ocon and Piastri early in the race. The one-stop strategy of a few teams and some good driving from the likes of Bottas means Hulkenberg finished 15th. From fifth to fifteenth! This is their season altogether, with some sparks here and there and more disappointments. Get ready for the good first episode of next season's Drive to Survive starring Guenther

Steiner.

Williams - 7 points

Max Verstappen is ruling this season, but the entire Formula 1 world is singing this name: Alex Albon. The Thai driver delivered a masterpiece performance in Canada on both Saturday & Sunday. The bold call of going on with soft tyres for his first run in Q2 helped him enter Q3. He couldn't do any magic in Q3 and settled for P10, but the penalty to Sainz placed him ninth in the grid. From there he drove a brilliant, faultless race. One, he managed to keep himself out of the walls in the tricky circuit and kept the speedy Ocon behind throughout. Beyond that, he managed the hard tyre very well for 58 laps which helped his and his team's cause. The talks of 'What he would've done in the RB19 had Red Bull kept him' started already and Albon is making a case for that! Logan Sargeant will find it difficult to get out of that last place.

Alpha Tauri - 2 points

It's been a very tough season for Alpha Tauri as they are struggling to put cars even to Q2. They don't have the pace in the car nor the drivers are experienced. Still, Yuki Tsunoda is pulling all his weight and delivering good performances week in and week out barring some mistakes. In the first 5 races, he finished in P10 twice & P11 thrice. A brake problem held him in Monaco and a 5-second penalty for pushing Zhou, pushed him from P9 to P14. All said the young Japanese driver could come up with some good points haul if it was his day. On the other hand, his teammate Nyck de Vries is still looking for his first point. But to be fair, he's far away from scoring it!



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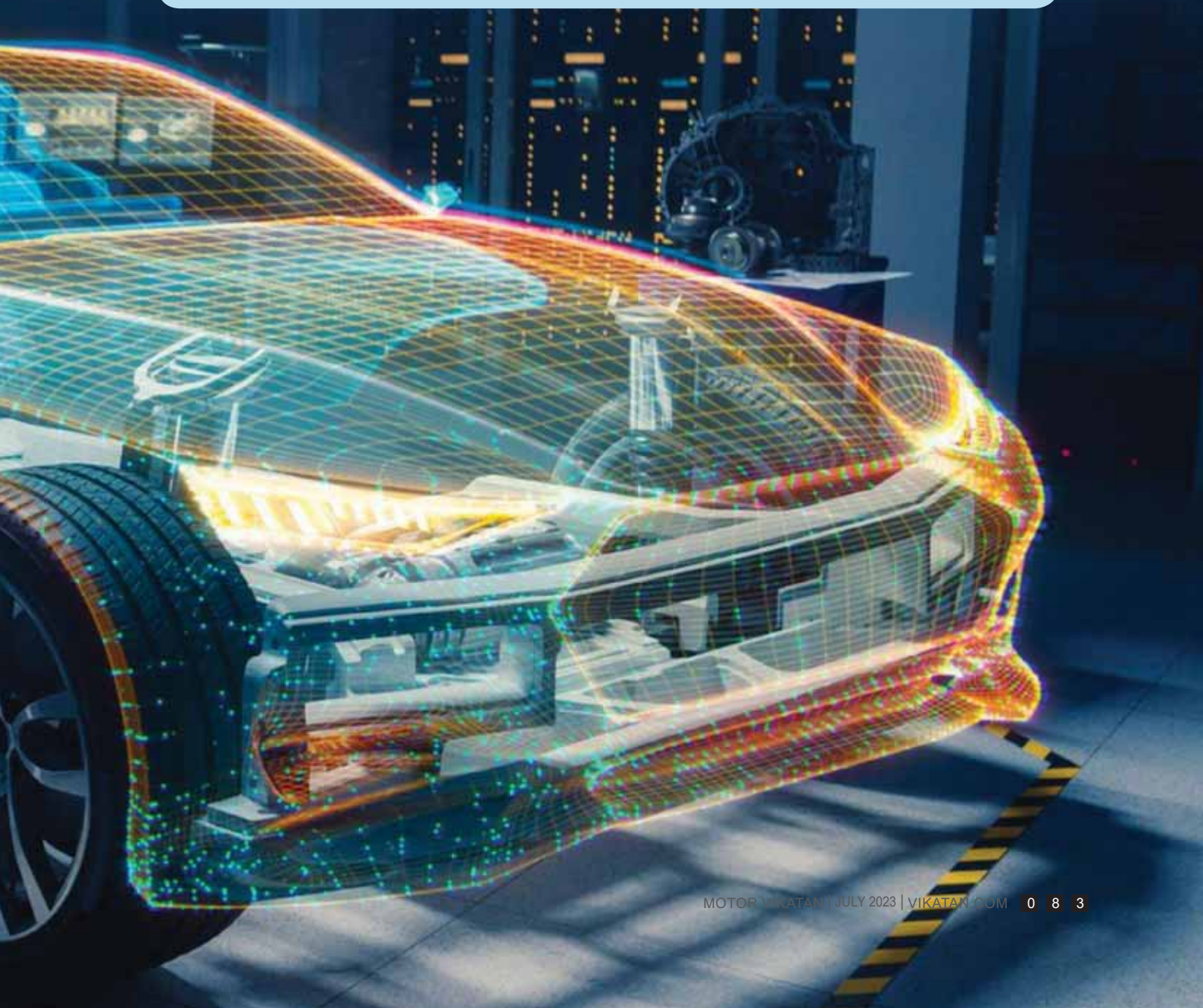
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HOW SOFTWARE-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS ARE REDEFINING THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY?

Vehicles are no more a mechanical device; it has started thinking like humans and performing beyond what it is expected to do. Thanks to the emergence of software, which is transforming the automotive industry where vehicle manufacturers are increasingly dependent on software to deliver a wide range of capabilities that improve everything from entertainment experiences to driver safety. It's already apparent the most innovative features of most vehicles, from head-up displays (HUDs) to advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) that enable autonomous driving, are now driven by software.

Vehicle developers today face obvious challenges in terms of technological advancement, but longstanding obstacles are also presenting new problems. It's clear that on-board processing power and data flow capacity needs to increase massively, mostly to process data from advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS), in-vehicle infotainment (IVI), and information systems (such as head-up displays), as well as manage battery and energy levels. But as automated driving functionality ascends even further (Level 3 and higher), this processing workload will demand even more. Near-universal connectivity in future mobility scenarios will require vehicles to communicate with other vehicles, infrastructure, and cloud





services with minimal latency. Additionally, this connectivity must show vigilance with regard to cyber-security threats.

For the automotive industry, most of the software-developing companies are becoming tech enablers. Software companies are working closely with automotive, mobility, and transportation companies as they evolve into data and software-driven mobility services providers. Names like Google, and Microsoft might not appear on a vehicle or mobility service anytime soon, but more often than not its technology is underpinning an essential part of it.

While looking at the solutions provided by the software companies, they bring advanced capabilities around intelligent cloud and edge computing to support the needs

of the automotive industry. They are focusing on building solutions around manufacturing, developer productivity, the software-defined vehicle (SDV), and the sustainability of supply chains. Instead of pushing their brand into mobility services, software companies help vehicle manufacturers to build their brands using their technology. This entails partnering with a large ecosystem of other companies. For this, multiple players need to come together to drive innovation given the complexities that exist today.

The automotive industry is in the transformation phase where connected, autonomous, shared and electric (CASE) mobility is taking a new share. Everyone is building a digital platform to support an online presence, connected services, or a mobility service. Once it takes a new

shape and autonomous vehicles (AVs) come into full fledge, the software industry will dominate the vehicles with all its capabilities.

On the other hand, the software industry also realises the role of the metaverse especially in an immersive car-buying experience using a metaverse showroom. With this technology, someone can sit at home and still have a full 3D experience with the car using only a browser on a PC. Users can ask questions and converse with a human or an AI bot. This is game-changing, and the technology is here and available today. The industry is also working on the industrial metaverse, which involves using our IoT and AI within manufacturing, to help people through production processes and to train factory floor workers.

On the other hand, software architectures in the automotive industry are also prone to higher cyber security risks. There are more potential points of entry for malicious actors to exploit. This can make it harder to keep the system updated with the latest security patches and to detect and respond to security breaches. To overcome these challenges, OEMs have significantly increased their budget allocation towards

If the software industry brings down 20 percent of the expenses from manufacturing using some of its technologies, it will offset other service costs rendered in the vehicle.

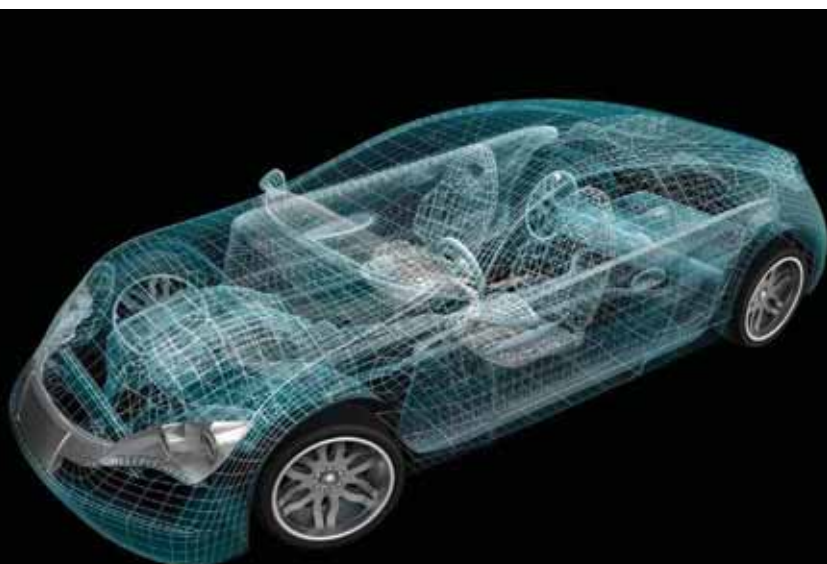
R&D for automotive software. However, with reduced entry points of attack with a consolidated E/E architecture, cyber security risks are minimized. Additionally, the centralised architecture enables an easier rollout of timely security updates to patch vulnerabilities while also allowing for easier implementation of fail-safes and redundancies, further alleviating cyber security concerns.

With shifting OEM strategies, suppliers and automobile software companies should consolidate their capabilities for in-vehicle software and computing to offer

cross-functional products and services that suit software-defined vehicles (SDVs). Overhauling their existing business models, where they manufacture and sell hardware and software products, suppliers will need to closely collaborate with OEMs and provide specialised software engineering management services.

With a host of developments in the software industry, the auto industry has to look at them as their technology partner and not a competitor. In the short term, the software industry will be focusing on driving innovation across the five elements of the automotive industry: the supply chain, manufacturing, retail, employee productivity, and inside the vehicle. In today's economic environment, the challenge is to figure out how the software industry can help vehicle manufacturers do more with less. Driving costs out of the system is a priority for everyone. If the software industry brings down 20 percent of the expenses from manufacturing using some of its technologies, it will offset other service costs rendered in the vehicle.

The key consideration relates to which players will continue to play dominant roles in the software stack. Will it be controlled by OEMs, a collection of partners, and open-source applications? Will the vehicle software be proprietary to a specific hardware chassis or universal to many chassis across brands and companies? As these dynamics play out, the next major race will be around the commercialisation of technology and which OEMs play in the sand together or look to capitalise on their investments.



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- SUPERVOOC 100W
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- Dual LED Flash
- 16 MP Front Camera
- Bluetooth 5.3
- Codex supported: aptX HD, aptX, LDAC, LHDC, AAC, SBC
- Dual "Reality" Speakers

COLOUR

Eternal Green, Titan Black

PLUS

Premium Finish
One of the fastest charging in industry

MINUS

No info on IP Rating

ONE LINE REVIEW

OnePlus 11 offers impressive performance and fast charging at a competitive price, but its camera and waterproofing capabilities are not as advanced as its rivals. Samsung Galaxy S23 is a strong competitor to the OnePlus 11.

SAMSUNG GALAXY S23 ULTRA

SPECS

- 6.8" 3088 x 1440 (Quad HD+)
- Dynamic AMOLED 2X
- 233g
- 5000 mAh
- Snapdragon® 8 Gen 2 Mobile Platform
- 200.0 MP Wide Angle + 10.0 MP Telephoto camera 1 + 12.0 MP Ultra Wide + 10.0 MP Telephoto Camera 2 Rear camera
- Optical Zoom at 3x and 10x, Digital Zoom up to 100x
- 12.0 MP Front Camera

COLOUR

- Green, Phantom Black, Cream

PLUS

- Unique Design
- Brilliant Cameras. The best in Market

MINUS

- Expensive

ONE LINE REVIEW

The phone's four rear cameras, including a mammoth new 200MP main camera, and the fan-favourite S Pen stylus are some of its standout features. Overall, the phone has smooth, fast performance, great battery life, superb cameras, and a top-notch display, but it is expensive and charging speeds aren't up to par with the price.



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- INPUT VOLTAGE 100–240 V
- Bluetooth 5.2

COLOUR

- Black, Cream, Brown

PLUS

- Power Amplifiers
- Friendly to use
- Brilliant Sound quality

MINUS

- A bit expensive
- No water resistance

ONE LINE REVIEW

Marshall became viral after the movie vikram in Ktown. The Stanmore III has a brilliant-sounding default profile with low-end resonant bass and sparkling, clear treble, and it encourages tweaking of the EQ with physical controls, but its stereo sound separation is almost non-existent compared to other consumer options.

OPPO FIND N2 FLIP

SPECS

- 191g
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- Main screen: FHD+ (2520 × 1080)
- Secondary screen: (720 × 382)
- 50MP Main Camera + 8MP Ultra-wide Angle Camera
- 32MP Front Camera
- Dimensity 9000+ Chipset
- 4300mAh
- 44W SUPERVOOC
- Bluetooth v5.3

PLUS

- Bigger Screen in Foldable Devices
- Build design is good

MINUS

- Bloatwares

COLOUR

- Astral Black | Moonlit Purple

ONE LINE REVIEW

The OPPO Find N2 Flip Phone is a modern take on the classic flip phone design, with a lightweight and thin build. Flip Phone is a powerful and unique device that is worth considering.



PRICE
₹89,999

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