

turbocharged

INDIA'S YOUNGEST AUTOMOTIVE PUBLICATION

KTM 390 DUKE



₹150 • OCTOBER 2023

• VOLUME 03 • ISSUE 10



MERCEDES-BENZ EQE SUV
#ELECTRICELEGANCE
GERMAN LUXURY ELECTRIC SUV THAT'S A TECHNOLOGICAL TOUR DE FORCE!



TATA NEXON EV
INDIA'S FAVOURITE EV GETS SERIOUS

TVS APACHE RTR 310
DYNAMIC THRILLS NOW IN A
NAKED PACKAGE



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Electric dreams

It's all about EVs, SUVs and the mountains this month!



—

**NEW AGE EVS
ARE TRULY
CAPABLE OF
LETTING YOU
EXPLORE
BEYOND THE
REALM OF THE
ORDINARY**

Just last month I was talking about the new horizons that EVs are heralding. And here I am, with our October 2023 issue that has me delve deeper into the EV multiverse, driving battery electric vehicles (SUVs to be precise!) across terrains and some of the most diverse driving conditions! In fact, this month we've just accomplished something not imagined by many – driving an electric vehicle to India's hottest and coldest borders! The Hyundai IONIQ5 braved it all – I drove it to Longewala in Rajasthan in the month of May when temperatures were hitting 50 degrees Celsius and now, we've taken the very electric SUV to India's coldest border at the Siachen Base Camp where temperatures dip below the -50 degrees Celsius mark during winters.

The Siachen Base Camp is also the world's highest battlefield as it sits at over 12,000 feet above sea level and getting there involved driving across some of the world's highest motorable roads, and the IONIQ5 was not left gasping for air! This is a new record, but more importantly it represents the versatility that modern-day EVs offer. They're no longer limited to being driven in urban jungles or simply bolting across Expressways dotted with fast charging stations. Given their range, ground clearance, practicality and comfort, new age EVs are truly capable of letting you explore beyond the realm of the ordinary.

Quick on the heels of driving the IONIQ5 to Siachen, I went back to the rooftop of the world to drive the latest EV from Mercedes-Benz, the EQE SUV, our cover star this month. The EQE SUV is more than just the fourth luxury EV from Mercedes-Benz in India though – it also packs in some of the newest technologies to come to our shores packaged in an automobile. The story with the updated Tata Nexon EV is not very different either. It may be the smallest electric SUV in the country but represents big aspirations and is a huge step-up over the outgoing version. Not only does the updated Nexon EV distinguish itself very well from the Nexon's updated petrol and diesel counterparts (you'll read about them in this issue too), but it also sets new benchmarks with its equipment levels and will have other car makers sit up and take notice.

On a different tangent, this month we also got our hands on two streetfighters that represent a lot for motorcycle aficionados – the new generation KTM 390 Duke and its newest rival, the TVS Apache RTR 310. But there's more to this issue than just the latest reviews – the past month was one of the most hectic ones of my career and this month we've also put together some really engaging feature stories that I'm sure you will enjoy reading! So go on, read through this issue and let me know whether we're hitting the mark as an enthusiast publication or not! **tc**

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INDIA'S YOUNGEST AUTOMOTIVE PUBLICATION

PUBLISHED & DISTRIBUTED BY

Supercharged Publishing LLP

304, Shaileshwar Apartments, Opp Fatima Convent, Fatimanagar,
Pune, Maharashtra, India - 411013. Tel. +91 7020196361

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This magazine contains 124 pages. Cover price: ₹ 150

www.turbocharged.in

Volume #03 | Issue #10

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color



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It's a fantastic month for the budget performance motorcycle enthusiasts as Aprilia brings in the RS 457 while KTM and TVS launch the all-new 390 Duke and Apache RTR 310. We ride the TVS Apache RTR 310 in Thailand and the 2024 KTM 390 Duke on the racetrack while Arjun Parmar takes us through all the happenings of the 2023 Harley-Davidson Outback Festival.

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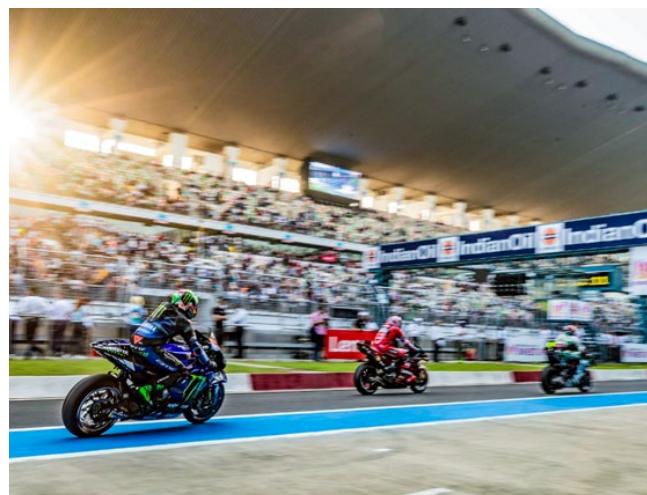
The Indian tricolour is flying high with pride as MotoGP's first-ever race in the country became a reality. There's also been some big moves from the Indian presence in Formula E and TVS Racing introduces electric two-wheeler racing in the country.

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Our longterm garage is dominated by turbocharged cars, but two naturally aspirated-engined models join our fleet in the form of the Hyundai Exter and Renault Triber. Ed bids an emotional farewell to the Hyundai i20 N Line while Ben professes his love for the Maruti Suzuki Jimny.

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Hot products this month include the newest Apple products, the reincarnated Honda Motocompacto and more. We sample the DSG ADV jacket and pant set as well as an eco-friendly jacket from Royal Enfield. All this and a lot more inside!



{COLUMN}

**VIR
NAKAI**

*Traveller and
co-founder of
Helmet Stories*

✉ **virnakai**



**IF YOU TIME
YOUR TRIP RIGHT
YOU CAN MAKE
IT THERE WHEN
IT IS RELATIVELY
DEVOID OF THE
HORDES**

EL PRESIDENTE

Despite an influx of tourists, Ladakh still has a lot more to explore

It's easy to rant these days more than anything else, especially if you spend too much time on the interweb, you can always find something that will irk you. A pet peeve of mine is other's need to try and make everything we do a first. The first big bike of this European brand with a dent in its tank to do this trail verified very scientifically by accosting some local walking down the road and asking them have you ever seen 'this big bike of this European brand with a dent in its tank' here before? Once the bewildered local says no, the claim is locked down and announced to the world. It's a real shame because to me, if you truly were first then imagine all the stories you would have to regale us with while we watched in awe of how amazing this 'new' part of the world is.

After spending 25-odd days in Ladakh and Zanskar in August and September I realised that after ranting about how roads and better connectivity to Ladakh have ruined the area for us adventurers (it's still true) we can only carry on ranting because we have seen the other side. When Leh was so far away even a day after you had left Manali. It was still at least two if not three days away from the morning you woke up in Tandi to head out to refuel for the last time till you got to Leh. We were and are the lucky ones now. We are the ones who spin tales and keep those memories alive for the next generation of two-wheeled adventures.

After spending this time in Ladakh I have found my love for the region again. How? Why? Because only a fool would stop marvelling at the beauty of Ladakh and the development is not going away in the area as it is important to the forces of our country, so it's only in our interest to develop infrastructure. But if you look carefully at a map, speak to the locals and chat with the elder generation of adventurers they will tell you of roads they explored which are once again forgotten because everyone is running to Umling La. That's what we did this time in Zanskar. Harsh had put together a list of places and roads we needed to take and explore off the main road. After a week of riding these roads my mind has totally changed. If you time your trip right, you can make it there when it is relatively devoid of the hordes and then use the brilliant new roads to get deeper into the ranges to find these amazing smaller roads that still exist. It may not be as wild and crazy as it used to be, but I'll take whatever I can get.

And now the captain has put on the seatbelt sign as we near our destination - Kathmandu. The next 25 days shall be spent riding on some brilliant Helmet Stories adventures in Manang which is on the other side of the Annapurnas where I spent much time riding around this summer. So stick around, see you next month, but for now, the Yak burgers of Braga are calling. **tc**

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{COLUMN}

**HALLEY
PRABHAKAR**

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THIS OCTOBER
ALSO SEES THE
RELEASE OF
THE EAGERLY
ANTICIPATED
INITIAL D ANIME
SERIES SEQUEL

HANDBRAKE

The story behind 86...

The number 86 is special to me. It's not just the year I was born but iconic thanks to the Toyota Corolla Levin / Sprinter Trueno aka the AE86, one of the last Toyota Corollas that put down power to the rear wheels rather than the conventional FWD layout. If you have known about or heard of this car, it most probably is because you've watched a lot of Japanese drift videos or followed *Initial D*, the Japanese anime that features the AE86. In fact, Keiichi Tsuchiya, also known as the Drift King, began his drifting exploits behind the wheel of an AE86. Tsuchiya is credited with popularising drifting as a motorsport.

Due to its lower cost and front-engined rear-wheel drive layout, this car was also the preferred option for drifting and competition. Although the engine was a small 1.6-litre unit, many enthusiasts and motorsport privateers replaced it with more potent engines or added forced induction for improved performance. It appeared to be the underdog and shocked many with its light and competent chassis and increased power. In fact, the *Initial D* anime draws inspiration from this quality, making it the hero car that competes against more powerful and larger sports cars while racing downhill through Japanese mountain passes.

The car has developed into a worldwide cult in modern times. There have been a number of successors to the fourth-generation model, but none of them are as adored as the AE86. There haven't been many inexpensive RWD cars that are enjoyable to drive. Toyota was one of the few automakers capable of making this happen. In 2013, Toyota and Subaru teamed up to create a brand-new two-door coupe that wasn't expensive but was capable and entertaining to drive. Toyota just called it "86" and "GT86" in a few places, and it became a worldwide sensation and the first affordable sports car in decades. The car also featured a Subaru Boxer engine and offered great tuning potential. Unfortunately, it didn't make it to India, but the model did bring back a practical and fun sports car.

This October also sees the release of the eagerly anticipated *Initial D* anime series sequel, *MF Ghost*, which suitably stars the first-gen Toyota 86! Just like the earlier show, this series follows the theme of entry-level sports cars taking on more powerful supercars. The anime is based on the manga series of the same name and is set in a future where only autonomous vehicles are permitted on public roadways. The only place where human-driven automobiles are still visible is in the *MF Ghost* racing series, and we follow an unexpected participant driving a Toyota 86. Fans of JDM cars and anime are living in a very exciting moment. **tc**

**SIDDHRAJ
SINGH**

*Classic car collector
and co-founder,
Historic Auctions*

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**IT IS THE
PERIOD JUST
BEFORE THE
SECOND WORLD
WAR THAT IS
HOTLY CONTESTED**

CLASSICALLY SPEAKING

The Monterey Car Week should be in the bucket list of car enthusiasts!

If you missed my column in last month's issue, I spoke mainly about Pebble Beach Concours and how it is one of the greatest car shows in the world. As much as I like and enjoy Pebble, I don't always agree with their choice of 'Best of Show', the most coveted award in the classic car hobby. This year a 1937 Mercedes-Benz 540K Special Roadster took top honours. Don't get me wrong, this is a fantastic car that is not only one of the most desirable pre-war Mercedes, a 540K, but a factory Special Roadster that once belonged to the Shah of Afghanistan, but the competition on the field this year was tremendous, and I feel a fair few could have easily taken 'Best of Show'.

The process to get to the 'Best of Show' is a bit tedious. Class judges, usually specialists in the subject, carefully go over the cars and select the top three, with the winner being awarded the 'Best in Class' award. To win this means your car is already something special. The class winners are the ones who are then eligible for the 'Best of Show'. This is decided by a secret ballot by a selection of judges, once all the class awards have been presented. Not every judge gets a ballot, only those who have enough experience and expertise are allowed to carry out this crucial vote. The 'Best of Show' is an elegance award; the cars eligible have already crossed the technical, authenticity and condition hurdles when they win their class. It is now purely on aesthetics.

This year there were an astonishing 27 classes; and 27 class winners. That number comes down very fast once you start eliminating certain 'non-aesthetic' classes. This generally means very early cars – the Edwardians, the antiques. They are not flamboyant and get looked over for the top award. Classes for closed formal cars, hot rods, and any newer cars are also generally passed on. It is the period just before the Second World War that is hotly contested. This was the heyday of avant-garde styling and bespoke coachwork. There have been only a few instances of a post-war car winning the show.

Out of all the class winners, four are selected as finalists and lined up before the winner's ramp. And in an almost cruel fashion, only the winner is announced, with the other three all left sitting, quickly forgotten behind smoke, confetti and fireworks. The winner gets all the accolades, and the runners-up? They have to be content with what they have won. For some, it's a once-in-a-lifetime attempt, for others, it's a lifelong mission.

Coming back to the Mercedes, I felt there were far more special cars there that could/should have won. Within the four finalists, there were a one-off preservation Alfa Romeo 8C Corto Figoni Cabriolet and a truly wonderful 1939 Delahaye 165 Cabriolet by Figoni with an all-enveloping body. With a secret ballot system, there is no debate, no points to be made, it's the majority's choice. And just as we find in politics, it is not always your choice that wins. **tc**

**ABHIMANYU
BANSAL**

*Enthusiast,
petrolhead and
sportscar tuner*

© a_____bansal



**IT'S A
REMINDER
THAT DREAMS,
WHEN REALISED,
BECOME
MORE THAN
POSSESSIONS**

EVERYTHING CARS!

What is a sports car?

Owning a sports car is like holding the key to a dream, a portal to a world where the senses come alive, and the ordinary transforms into the extraordinary. It's an exhilarating journey that transcends the tangible, intertwining thrill, ownership, and intangible emotions into a symphony of desires fulfilled. First, there's the exhilaration – a sensation that courses through your veins each time you approach your prized possession. As you slip into the driver's seat, the low-slung cockpit wraps around you like a tailored suit, creating an instant connection between man and machine. With a gentle push of the ignition button, the engine awakens with a growl, like a beast unleashed from its slumber. The moment you press the accelerator, there's a surge of power that pins you to the seat, a tangible manifestation of pure adrenaline. Every twist of the wheel, every tap of the pedal, becomes an intimate dialogue with the road, a dance of precision and power.

Ownership is more than just possessing a vehicle; it's a testament to the realisation of a dream. Your sports car becomes an extension of your identity, an emblem of your passion for the open road. It's a canvas upon which you paint your adventures, each journey a unique stroke in the masterpiece of your life. When you park it, you can't help but turn back to admire it, not as a machine but as a work of art that you are fortunate to call your own. It's a reminder of your commitment to excellence, a symbol of your dedication to the pursuit of perfection. Yet, there's an intangible element to owning a sports car that transcends the tangible joys of speed and ownership. It's the feeling of freedom – the sense that the road is an open canvas, and you are the artist. It's the feeling of escaping the confines of the everyday and entering a universe where time slows and blurs into a kaleidoscope of sensations. It's the knowledge that you possess a piece of machinery so finely crafted that it feels like an extension of your very being.

Owning a sports car is an invitation to live in a perpetual dream, where the thrill of the drive, the pride of ownership, and the intangible emotions it evokes converge into an enchanting amalgamation of experiences. It's a reminder that dreams, when realised, become more than possessions; they become a part of your soul, a source of inspiration, and a testament to the boundless possibilities of the human spirit. Each moment behind the wheel is a chapter in a story of passion and adventure, a reminder that life's most profound experiences are often the ones that take us to the edge of reality and into the realm of dreams. So would you buy one? **tc**

S P E E D

SHIFTING

ALL ABOUT FOUR WHEELS

Expectedly, EVs dominated this year's Munich Motor Show. Aston Martin's DB5 turns 60, SIAM hosted its 63rd annual convention. We caught up with Tata Motors' Global Design Head, Martin Ulharik and also drove the facelifted Tata Nexon in ICE and EV guises, drove Mercedes-Benz EQE SUV and took the previous generation Mahindra Scorpio and Scorpio N on a road trip. And you simply cannot miss our roadtrip to Siachen in the Hyundai IONIQ 5!



IAA[»] MOBILITY

WORDS GAURAV DAVARE

MUNICH'S BEAUTIES

It's an all-electric onslaught at the IAA Mobility 2023

There's always a certain point of the year for us enthusiasts when there's one grand event showcasing everything automotive, while also giving us a glimpse of all the cool cars we can expect in the future. The IAA Mobility, where IAA stands for Internationale Automobil-Ausstellung, German for International Automobile Exhibition, is exactly that. The 2023 edition was held in Munich and it certainly didn't disappoint, featuring plenty of cool showcases. Here are the ones that stole the limelight:

►► Volkswagen ID. GTI

Volkswagen has given a preview of the legendary GTI nameplate getting an electric personality with the ID. GTI concept, set to hit production in 2027. Based on the ID.2 concept, which is set to replace the Golf, it's got looks that befit a GTI and should pack more than 223PS which has been assured for the top-spec ID.2. Underpinned by the new MEB Entry platform, it is FWD like Volkswagen iconic Golf models.



►► Mercedes-Benz Concept CLA Class

Another glimpse into the future comes from Mercedes-Benz with the Concept CLA Class. As the name suggests, it previews an all-electric Mercedes-Benz CLA and is based on the new Mercedes Modular Architecture (MMA). Other than stunning looks, it boasts a highly illuminated cabin with the MBUX Superscreen, can run up to 750km on a single charge and is capable of Vehicle-to-Home and Vehicle-to-Grid charging.



►► BMW Vision Neue Klasse

BMW's showstopper in Munich was none other than the Vision Neue Klasse EV, boasting a lot of firsts for a BMW. Highlights include horizontal kidney grilles with plenty of illumination, BMW's Panoramic Vision that will project graphics across the windshield and a unique parallelogram-like touchscreen. It will run on BMW's sixth-generation eDrive technology. Also, this concept will spawn six models with the first one going into production in 2025.



►► Renault Scenic E-Tech

Renault has brought back the Scenic nameplate in the form of the all-electric family car, called the Scenic E-Tech. Aside from the sharp looks, it's got cool features like a glass roof with adjustable shades for each row and swivelling device holders for rear-seat passengers. It can be specced with the option of a 170PS motor with a 60kWh battery pack or a 215PS electric motor paired to an 87kWh battery pack. The electric MPV can go up to a WLTP-claimed range of 620km on a single charge.



►► 2024 Mini Cooper Electric

The latest iteration of the Mini Cooper Electric is here and the hatchback gets a sleeker look. That's not all that's new as there's new tech which includes a 9.44-inch round display running the carmaker's latest Operating System 9. Powertrain options include a 184PS motor paired to a 40.7 kWh battery pack as well as a 218PS motor, paired to a 54.2 kWh battery pack. This is enough for a 0-100kmph sprint in 6.7 seconds in the top-spec SE variant with a WLTP-claimed range of up to 402km.



►► 2024 Mini Countryman Electric

Joining the 2024 Cooper is the Countryman which has received a similar generation upgrade over its predecessor. This one can be specced with either a 204PS motor paired to a 66.45kWh battery pack or the SE ALL4 variant that packs in a 313PS dual-motor AWD setup. The new Countryman can hit 0-100kmph in 8.6 seconds in the standard E variant while the SE ALL4 variant achieves the same in 5.6 seconds. As far as range goes, the former offers a WLTP-claimed range of 462km, whereas the latter can go up to 433km on a single charge.



►► 2023 Tesla Model 3

It was a long time coming and the Tesla Model 3 has gotten a midlife refresh. The biggest visual change is an overhauled front end that Tesla claims reduces drag compared to the outgoing model. Other changes include aero-optimised wheels, as well as a more responsive 15.4-inch touchscreen infotainment system. There are also upgrades to the driving range, with the EV offering 554km in the standard variant, while the Long Range version is capable of going up to 677km. **tc**



LEAP FORWARD

Tata Motors delivers Hydrogen Fuel Cell buses to IOCL

Taking a giant leap in sustainable mobility, Tata Motors delivered two Hydrogen Fuel Cell-powered buses to Indian Oil. The two buses were flagged off by Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Hon'ble Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas and Housing & Urban Affairs, Mr Rajendra Petkar, President & Chief Technology Officer, Tata Motors, along with delegates from Government of India, Government of New Delhi and Tata Motors. FCEV buses carry the potential to be an eco-friendly mass transit solution for inter- and intra-city transport. Back in 2021, Tata Motors had won a tender from IOCL to deliver 15 FCEV buses to evaluate the potential of the technology. The buses are developed and built at the manufacturer's R&D facility in Pune and come with a passenger capacity of 35. It has a low-floor design for easy ingress and egress. Tata Motors says it has worked on adapting the hydrogen-based proton exchange membrane (PEM) fuel cell technology to Indian conditions.



NEW TO THE T

The new generation Volkswagen Tiguan breaks cover



The Volkswagen Tiguan is now in its third generation and the updates are aplenty! It now features a curvier aerodynamic design compared to its predecessor. The front looks more aggressive, while the rear features a sleek connected LED tail lamp and there are new alloy wheels. It is also 32mm longer and 5mm taller than its predecessor. Inside, there's a large 15-inch touchscreen infotainment system taking centre stage. Other bells and whistles include a digital driver's display, massaging front seats, a head-up display, automatic climate control and ADAS. The SUV will come with turbo-petrol, turbo-diesel, a mild-hybrid, and a plug-in hybrid engine option. The India-spec model will most likely get the petrol powertrain only, just like the current model.

CHARGED UP!

The Volkswagen ID.X Performance is the ID.7 EV on steroids



The Volkswagen ID. GTI concept teased an all-electric GTI, but the carmaker hasn't stopped there and has revealed another racy electric concept called the ID.X Performance. Sure, it is based on the ID.7 electric sedan and even shares a similar silhouette, but there are a lot of exciting differences in the concept. For starters, its dual-motor powertrain setup pushes a combined 558PS to all four wheels. There's also 200kW of DC fast charging capability. It sits 60mm lower than the ID.7 and has received a more dynamic makeover. The visual changes include an aggressive front bumper, 20-inch alloy wheels, sporty black cladding, a massive rear wing and a prominent carbon fibre diffuser. While it is yet to be seen whether the Volkswagen ID.X Performance concept makes it to production, it is a cool teaser of the potential of performance-focused electric Volkswagens of the future. Volkswagen hasn't had a performance sedan in a long time, this may soon change that.

E FOR ELECTRIC

There's more than what meets the eye with the Lotus Emeya

The Porsche Taycan and Tesla Model S could be looking over their shoulders as Lotus has taken the wraps off the Emeya electric sedan. This is the carmaker's first crack at a performance sedan since the Carlton and it arrives 18 months after the carmaker unveiled its first SUV, the Eletre. Also, don't let the sedan proportions fool you as there's a lot of aerodynamic wizardry in focus. By that we mean active aerodynamics on the grille, rear diffuser and rear spoiler for optimal downforce generation. As far as performance is concerned, there's a 905PS dual electric motor powertrain, juiced by a 102kWh battery pack, enough for a 0-100kmph sprint in 2.78 seconds and a top speed of 256kmph. A 350kW DC charger will do 10 to 80 percent charging in 18 minutes. Lotus hasn't revealed the range yet.





STORM ALERT

After the Gloster earlier this year, the Astor is the latest MG SUV to get a 'Blackstorm' limited edition, priced at ₹ 14.48 lakh ex-showroom onwards. As the name suggests, the overall theme for the midsize SUV is black including the honeycomb-pattern grille, alloys, roof rails and even the headlamps, which get a black finish. To add contrast brake calipers are finished in red. Inside, you get black upholstery with red stitching, Sangria red-themed AC vents, an all-black floor console, steering wheel and doors with red stitches as well. In terms of features you get JBL speakers now, along with a panoramic sunroof. It is only on offer with the 1.5-litre NA engine, paired with a five-speed manual or CVT.



THREE MUSKETEERS

Getting on the bandwagon of special edition models with an all-black theme are the Urban Knight Editions of the Renault Kwid, Triber and Kiger, priced at ₹ 5.94 lakh, ₹ 8.37 lakh and ₹ 8.95 lakh ex-showroom onwards respectively. Limited to 300 units each, all three get a black shade complemented by silver accents on the bumpers, doors, as well as the roof rails. An interesting addition to the Kiger and Triber is a 9.66-inch digital IRVM that doubles up as a dual-camera dashcam and allows smartphone connectivity to download recordings.



MAG-NIGHT

The Nissan Magnite is set to get a black-themed model called the Kuro Special Edition, named after the Japanese word for black. The sub-four metre SUV will get an all-black exterior and interior, including a gloss black instrument panel, black interior accents and black door trims. It will get features like a 360-degree camera system, wireless charging, a bigger IRVM and a centre armrest. The SUV will be available in the following trims - XV MT, XV Turbo MT and XV Turbo CVT. Engine options will include the same 1.0-litre three-cylinder petrol engine in both naturally aspirated and turbocharged forms.



ACCESSIBLE JEEP

Jeep India has updated its Compass and Meridian SUVs with minor cosmetic updates but bigger news is a new 2WD diesel AT powertrain option for the Compass which makes the automatic variant more accessible. The Compass automatic variant was earlier only available with a 4x4 drivetrain after the petrol engine was discontinued. Prices for the Compass start at ₹ 20.49 lakh and ₹ 23.99 lakh onwards for the the 4x2 AT (both prices ex-showroom). The Compass diesel 4x2 AT gets five variants, including a Black Shark special edition model.



QUITE SPECIAL

The Audi Q8 facelift was recently unveiled at the Munich Motor Show and it will be coming to our shores soon. Meanwhile, the german marque has launched a Q8 limited edition model based on the outgoing version in India, priced at ₹ 1.18 crore ex-showroom. It gets an S-line exterior package, blacked-out grille, ORVMs and roof rails and also 21-inch alloys. Inside, you get a B&O premium audio system and four zone climate control as standard. Under the hood is the same 3.0-litre, 6-cylinder turbocharged petrol engine that also uses a 48V mild hybrid system for additional boost and efficiency.



SILVER SAMURAI

Lexus India has launched a limited edition model of the marque's sports coupe, the LC 500h at ₹ 2.50 crore, ex-showroom. The special edition model comes in an exclusive white paint called the 'Hakugin', with black elements on the front grille and diffuser. It also gets a fixed carbon-fibre rear wing and canards on the front bumpers for better airflow. The interior is swathed in Alcantara finished in 'Kachi Blue' shade. It also features a scuff plate with the inscription 'Lexus LC limited edition'. It remains mechanically unchanged with a 3.5-litre naturally aspirated V6 petrol engine coupled with an electric motor and self-charging battery, with a combined output of 359PS and 500Nm. It has an automatic transmission inside a CVT, which is quite unique.





WORDS SAYANTAN DE

BOOSTED

The Suzuki Cultus Pikes Peak: when one engine is not enough

In our recent feature on Pikes Peak (July '23 issue) we talked about the many wild creations of Nobuhiro 'Monster' Tajima, but his journey really started with a twin-engined Cultus. You may find the face of the Cultus familiar, as the second-generation Cultus and our very own Maruti 1000/Esteem share the same platform. However, Monster's Cultus was a bit more vicious, packing not one but two turbocharged 1.6-litre G16 engines pumping out over 800PS and 900Nm combined.

Other than the similar-looking body panels, the Suzuki Cultus Pikes Peak shared nothing with the stock car. It was essentially a silhouette race car, built on a custom tube-frame chassis, with carbon-fibre reinforced plastic body panels. This resulted in a kerb weight of just around 860kg.

The two engines were controlled simultaneously by a single custom ECU. Power was routed through two different transmissions operating on the same linkage via a centre differential and it also had an electromagnetic clutch. Double-wishbone suspension at all four corners were supported by

remote electronically adjustable dampers.

As with most obscure Japanese cars of the 90s, the Suzuki Cultus Pikes Peak was immortalised by Gran Turismo racing game series, in this instance it was Gran Turismo 2 which came out in 1999.

Most race series have strict rules and regulations, but Pikes Peak has long been the home of no-rules racing, and it is hardly surprising that this was not the only twin-engined car to end up there! **tc**



TURBOCHARGED THIS MONTH

WORDS SAYANTAN DE

The Dakar rally has always been home to some crazy stuff

CAR HELD HOSTAGE

In 1988, Ari Vatanen's Peugeot 406 T16 was stolen and team principal Jean Todt received a call for a ransom of 25 million French francs (roughly ₹ 7.5 lakh). Though it reappeared before the start, it was excluded as it needed to be there 30 minutes beforehand.



DIY ATTITUDE

Jean-Louis Schlesser is the only person ever to win the Dakar rally in a homemade vehicle. In 1999 and 2000 he won the event with the Schlesser Buggy, a tube-framed monster powered by a Ford V8. It is also the only two-wheel-drive car ever to win the event.



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

While no woman driver has won an F1 championship or the 24 hours of Le Mans overall, Jutta Kleinschmidt became the first woman to win the Dakar rally overall in 2001. She drove for the Mitsubishi factory team and claimed victory in a Mitsubishi Pajero.



THOSE TRUCKS BE CRAZY

Jan de Rooy, a Dutch businessman, wanted to win Dakar in a truck, and his creations progressively went crazier until in 1988, he managed to overtake Ari Vatanen's Peugeot 405 T16 at 200kmph with his Daf F3300 Turbo Twin, a twin-engined truck with 800+PS.





ABOVE: Special Plenary Session 1 L to R - Mr. K N Radhakrishnan, Director & CEO, TVS Motor Company Ltd., Mr. Rajesh Jejurikar, Executive Director (Auto & Farm Sectors), Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., Mr. Baba Kalyani, Chairman & Managing Director, Bharat Forge Ltd., Mr. Shailesh Chandra, Vice President of SIAM and Managing Director of Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd. and Mr. PK Banerjee, Executive Director SIAM

WORDS **GAURAV DAVARE**

SUSTAINABLE FOCUS

SIAM's 63rd annual convention sees a renewed focus on sustainability

It is that time of the year again when automobile manufacturers convene to discuss the best way forward for the Indian automobile industry. This is where new policies are conceptualised, discussions are made regarding the progress that's been made over the past year and future roadmaps are charted out. We're talking about the annual convention held by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), and this year was its 63rd edition and like every year, we were all ears this time too! The theme this year was "Balancing Growth Aspirations with Sustainability".

This year's Annual Convention was moderated by Shailesh Chandra, Vice President of SIAM and Managing Director, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles.

The gathering saw Hon'ble Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Shri Nitin Gadkari, urge the automobile industry to work on expeditiously increasing the share of green technologies such as biofuels, electrification and hydrogen. Shri Gadkari also believes that higher use of biofuels will lead to aligning the industry's approach with the global biofuel alliance that was announced during the G20 summit.

The inaugural session had the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi note the Indian automobile industry's decarbonization efforts via the introduction of vehicles with a wide range of powertrains with a vision to build a sustainable, self-reliant, strong and developed India by 2047. Hon'ble Union Minister of Heavy Industries, Shri Mahendra Nath Pandey announced an extension of the PLI scheme initiated by the Government by another year to help the automobile industry reap the benefits of incentives being offered on manufacturing advanced automotive technologies. He also claimed that India's aim to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2070 and reduce one billion tonnes of carbon emissions by 2030 aligns with the Amrit Kaal: Vision @ 2047.

Vinod Aggarwal, CEO of Volvo Eicher Commercial Vehicles Ltd and Vice President of SIAM highlighted the six pillars of sustainability — biofuel,

electrification, gaseous fuels, green hydrogen, recycling and safe journey on which the automobile industry and SIAM are focusing on in association with the Government of India.

Kamran Rizvi, Secretary, Ministry of Heavy Industries proposed to the automobile industry to launch campaigns on lowering the total cost of owning EVs to promote electrification and EVs further. Finally, Anurag Jain, Secretary, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways stressed on the need for the automotive industry to prioritise quality, sustainability, safety and also research on high-end technologies as integral components of their business operations besides urging for a push for requisite infrastructure for vehicle testing and scrapping facilities across the country to have a sustained scrapping and recycling ecosystem and also a stronger focus on localisation. **tc**

BELOW: Inaugural Session L to R- Mr. Shailesh Chandra, Vice President of SIAM and Managing Director of Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd, Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey, Hon'ble Union Minister of Heavy Industries, Government of India, Shri Nitin Gadkari, Hon'ble Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India, Mr. Vinod Aggarwal, President, SIAM, CEO & MD, Volvo Eicher Commercial Vehicles, and Mr. Rajesh Menon, Director General, SIAM





POSTER CAR

The Alfa Romeo 33 Stradale that was sold from 1967-1969 holds quite an important place in automotive history, being one of the world's first-ever supercars. Now, the legend is back in a modern, gorgeous avatar. It is heavily inspired by its stunningly pretty ancestor with a similar slender, low-slung nose and curvaceous fenders. It can be specced with either a 620PS 3.0-litre V6 engine or a tri-motor electric setup pushing over 750PS. The 33 Stradale in both ICE and EV forms can hit 0-100kmph in under three seconds and top out at 333kmph. The electric setup offers a WLTP-claimed range of up to 450km. It utilises a carbon fibre monocoque and aluminium H-frame. Only 33 units will be produced and they're all sold out.



TIMELESS BOND

We all know the world's most iconic spy on the big screen, James Bond, but there's one thing that's been as iconic as the spy, and it's his trusty chariot, the Aston Martin DB5, which turns 60 this year! It made its debut at the Frankfurt Motor Show in 1963, before starring alongside Bond for the first time in the 1964 film, Goldfinger. The DB5 came with a 282PS 4.0-litre straight-six engine and had features like electric windows and optional air conditioning. Aston Martin celebrated the occasion by pairing it up with the India-bound DB12.



GREEN HOT PEPPERS?

The folks at Stuttgart have set a new power benchmark in the Cayenne lineup with the new Cayenne Turbo E-Hybrid. And the answer to how it has achieved it is in the name itself - hybrid power. Available in both SUV and Coupe body styles it has a 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8 engine and a 176PS electric motor making a combined 739PS, allowing it to hit 0-100kmph in 3.7 seconds, with a top speed of 295 kmph. A 25.9kWh battery allows for 82km of pure electric driving, with other performance wizardry comprising adaptive air suspension, torque vectoring, dynamic chassis control and rear axle steering.

ELECTRIC HORNS



ELECTRONIC HORN



BACKUP ALARM



DC-DC CONVERTER



SMART USB CHARGER



BRAKE PAD



BRAKE SHOES



AUTOMOTIVE BATTERIES



INVERTER & SOLAR BATTERIES



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**2023 HYUNDAI
i20**

₹ 6.99 lakh - ₹ 11.01 lakh

The i20 gets minor cosmetic updates, inside-out. You can only have it with the 1.2-litre naturally-aspirated petrol engine now, as the 1.0-litre turbo-petrol is now being made exclusive to the N Line variant, which you can finally buy with proper a six-speed manual besides the DCT option!



**BMW 2 SERIES GRAN COUPE
M PERFORMANCE EDITION**

₹ 46 lakh

A 'Black Sapphire' body shade, new bespoke M Performance grille as well as fog lamp inserts and ORVMs finished in Grey headline the changes. Inside, the drive selector lever gets a M Performance Alcantara finish. Unfortunately, no extra performance is on offer in the M Performance Edition.

**VOLVO
C40 RECHARGE**

₹ 61.25 lakh

Volvo's second all-electric offering in India, the C40 Recharge is ₹ 4.35 lakh dearer to the standard XC40 Recharge. For the extra money, you get a stylish coupe bodystyle, higher range of 530km per charge and a claimed 0-100kmph time of 4.7 seconds. We'd pick this one over the XC40 Recharge for sure!



**HONDA
ELEVATE**

₹ 11 lakh - ₹ 16 lakh

Honda may have been late to the party but for its price the Elevate packs in a boxy SUV stance with ample space along with a 10.25-inch infotainment screen, automatic climate control, the reliable 121PS 1.5-litre i-VTEC petrol engine and most importantly the highly revered Honda badge, making it a strong contender.





HONDA CBR 650F/R
RACING LINE FULL SYSTEM



BMW S1000RR 2020+
RACING LINE FULL SYSTEM



KAWASAKI ZX-10R/RR 2022+
RAC LINE FULL SYSTEM



WEBSITE : www.performanceracing.in
E-Mail ID : sales@performanceracing.in

SUZUKI HAYABUSA 2022+
RAC LINE FULL SYSTEM



KAWASAKI NINJA 1000SX 2020+
SLIP-ON SYSTEM



TRIUMPH SPEED TWIN
DUAL SLIP-ON SYSTEM





FUTURE PRESENT

"We have a huge responsibility from the sustainability point of view"

says Martin Ulharik, Global Design Head, Tata Motors

It's a little over two years since you took over as Global Design Head, how's the journey been?

It's been fantastic, we've been flat-out busy, you've seen some of the work over the last 12 months, the Nexon premier is now and we are overhauling the entire portfolio and also introducing several new products, so it's very exciting.

The Nexon is one of the most important products in Tata Motors' portfolio, so was it a challenge to retain the visual identity?

Yes, it was a challenge and the main responsibility. As you rightly said, the Nexon is the backbone of our portfolio. It's the core of our SUV range and has been very successful so you don't want to mess with the recipe, but at the same time, introduce a new aspect and freshness to the design.

When comparing designing an ICE vehicle to a pure EV, do you get more of a free hand with EVs?

In certain ways, yes. I would say with this generation of products it's the same because they share the same platform fundamentally as it uses the same hardpoints. It's only once you get to a third-generation EV, like the Avinya concept, where you are no longer shackled by the ICE powertrain that you can stretch your legs, but in these cycles of products, it's still the same in terms of restrictions and hardpoints.

Sustainability is a big buzzword today, how do you relate to that as a designer?

We have a huge responsibility from the sustainability point of view, actually the company is invested in this heavily and we're at the beginning of a long journey. So design has a role to play, and it's not

just the surface stuff like fabrics and materials and more. For instance, you'll notice that the Nexon here does not have chrome now. You will see that in the next couple of launches as well, as we go forward. Everything, every material being used is looked at for its role and we are constantly auditing even how the cars are made at the factory, what happens to the materials after the car finishes its usage and more, so it's all a big part of the design.

The Tigor is the only sedan in Tata Motors' portfolio. Are you looking at more sedans or is the brand moving further towards SUVs consciously?

We're always looking at which segment is the most competitive and the most relevant for us. Many people we have, we showed you the Curvv at the Auto Expo, which was already a sort of pre-production version, to be honest, when we launch the production version next year, you'll be hard-pressed to see the difference, some people are saying that that's actually our new sedan, so it depends on which angle you look at it, you know from a sort of a segment point of view, is that the new sedan, is that a crossover, or is it something else? It depends on how you interpret it.

When starting with a new project, what's more challenging, smaller cars or something big and more luxurious?

I would say the smaller cars are more challenging because you have a far more restrictive budget.

I AM A BIG BELIEVER IN 'LESS IS MORE', AS CLEAN A DESIGN AND AS TIMELESS A DESIGN AS POSSIBLE

The envelope for creativity is far more restrictive in terms of size, materials, what you can play with and even the manufacturing technology. Of course, the higher the segment the price point changes, giving designers a far bigger bandwidth to play with. So throughout my career, I've done more smaller cars than larger cars, so I'm pretty used to that.

As a designer what do you choose: form over functionality or functionality over form?

Always form over functionality! Absolutely. The beauty of a car comes from the purity of the design, nothing superficial should be on the vehicle. I am a big believer in 'less is more', as clean a design and as timeless a design as possible. So, you'll see in pretty much everything that has my fingerprints on it, you'll see that sort of aesthetics and ethos.

From a personal standpoint, what do you prefer more as a body style: sedans or SUVs?

Well actually, me there, I would say sports cars. Okay, wow! I really like that. That's nice to know. And this is just a purely personal point of view

Lastly, what's the one car in your career that is the best design, or your personal favourite?

In terms of my resume, I would say the Tata Sierra or the Avinya, it's either one of those two. To be honest, both were a huge responsibility but I think actually the execution and the response that we've got all round has been very, very good. The Avinya is a once in a career project where you get a blank sheet of paper - it's literally one of those times when the management calls you and say, "Do whatever you want, it's a 'Gen 3' car and that's the only brief." We then came up with the concept in just three weeks! It's a kind of a dream come true, so I'm always reminding the design team that we really enjoy these opportunities that don't come up very frequently in your career. **tc**







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WORDS ABHAY VERMA

MERCEDES-BENZ EQE SUV

The German luxury carmaker continues its EV assault in style



MERCEDES-BENZ EQE SUV 500 4MATIC

- **Engine:** Permanently-excited synchronous motor
- **Power:** 408PS
- **Torque:** 858Nm
- **Battery:** 90.56kWh
- **Range:** 550km (WLTP)
- **0-100kmph:** 4.9 seconds (claimed)
- **Price:** ₹ 1.39 crore ex-showroom



It's been three years now since Mercedes-Benz pioneered the luxury EV space in India, with the EQC. And last year, the German luxury carmaker launched not one but two luxury EVs in the country, the EQS sedan and the EQB SUV. Actually three, if you count the AMG EQS 53 as a separate model. Mercedes has been clear about its product offensive in the EV space and has been making steady progress on the front – not just in India but globally as well. In keeping with its vision of going carbon neutral by 2039, the German luxury carmaker has been expanding its EQ line-up of luxury EVs at a feverish pace and has just launched its EQE SUV in India, its fourth EV for the market. To find out what it is like to drive, we spent half a day driving the EQE around picturesque Gulmarg in Kashmir.

There is a lot to talk about the design because the EQE looks very distinctive. I mean, the grille does remind me of the EQS, but the headlamps look different and are rather unique. Overall, I really like this front end for its futuristic feel. The headlamps are more rectangular as compared to those we've seen on the EQS sedan, which makes the EQE ones look more appealing. The star-studded panel housing the

three-pointed star in place of the conventional grille adds the futuristic feel to the face in heaps, while the bumper design is clean, without too many curves or creases. The hood also gets the power bulges we've seen on other Mercedes cars, adding a sense of familiarity and muscle to the front end.

The EQE is rather flat from the sides like other EQ models but gets an interesting detail in the form of illuminated running boards. It gets the same wiper fluid filler cap on the left side that pops out like the EQS, as well as the same flush-fitting door handles that you swipe to pull out. The EQE runs on 20-inch alloy wheels that have a very distinctive and futuristic-looking design. I also like how curvy the SUV is from the sides in a bid to ensure it boasts the best possible drag coefficient to make it more aerodynamic, aimed to aid efficiency. The EQE's rear end is my favourite though, particularly thanks to the tail lamp design. The tail lamps use the same distinctive design we've seen on the EQS and these aren't just the most unique-looking tail lamps, they're also the best-looking tail lamps in the business in my opinion. What's more, the tail lamps are connected by an LED strip that adds to the EQE's looks and also makes it instantly identifiable.

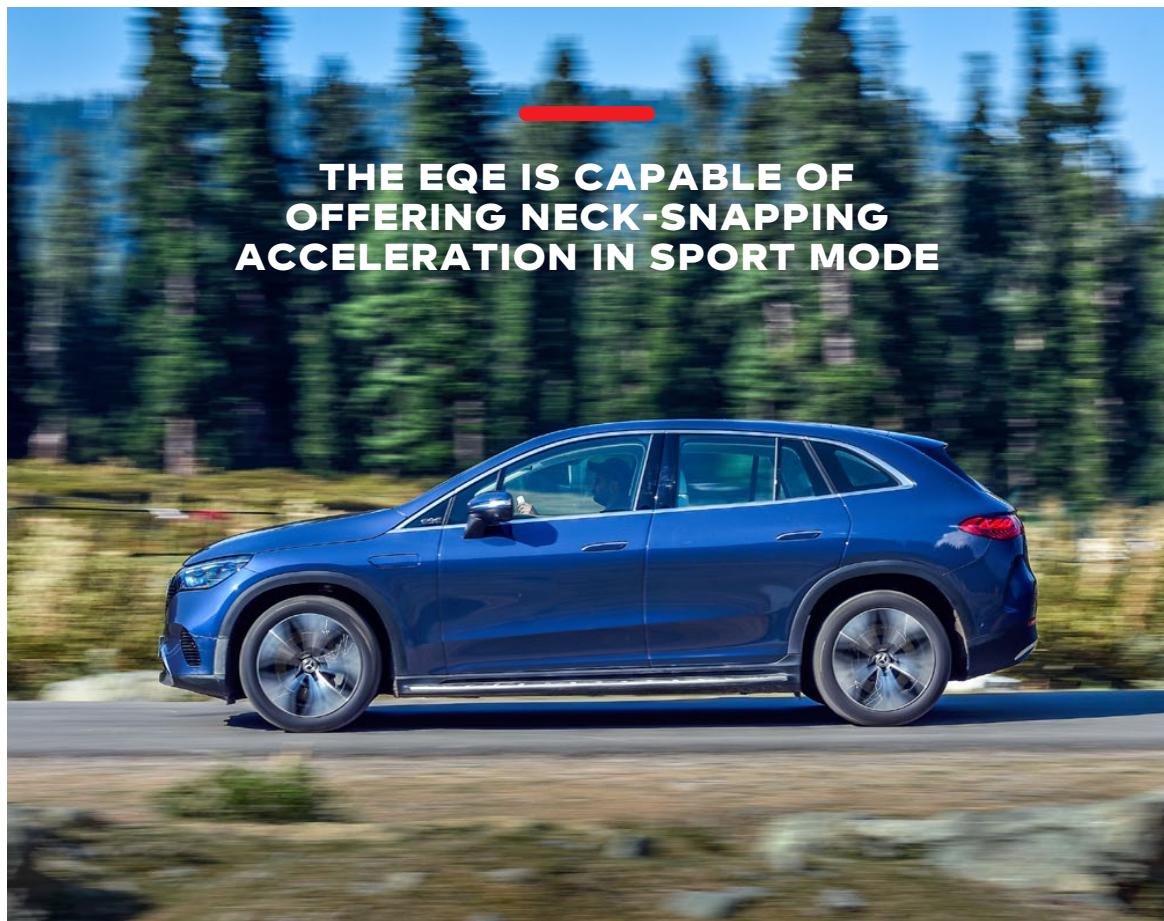
The EQE continues to offer the gaming console-like feel inside, just like we have seen in the EQS. This is courtesy of the same 56-inch Hyperscreen, housing three different displays. The massive infotainment screen is a delight with its size, ultra-sharp resolution and bright colours. Same is the case with the instrument cluster display and the one in front of the front passenger – both look very crisp and bright. The instrument cluster arranges information neatly, making it easier to consume it all while driving and also shows maps in a widescreen format. Another highlight inside is the white theme and the open-pore magnolia wood with aluminium inlays, which accentuate the classy feel of the cabin. That said, I am concerned about the white seats starting to look brown and the open-pore wood accumulating dust, given the typical Indian conditions and usage.

The steering wheel is a familiar-looking unit too and looks nice with its white rim and brushed metal finish, though it does feel a little too large in size. An LED strip runs right through the top of the dashboard across its width and of course, you can choose from a range of colours for the ambient lighting too. The EQE also features what Mercedes calls active ambient lighting – open the door and

the lighting inside the door panels will turn red and flash, as a safety measure, to let you know the door is open. The door panels have the same design as other new-generation Mercedes cars, including the S-Class, adding to the sense of familiarity. The cabin is very spacious and the white hue inside only adds to the sense of airiness, which should help the EQE appeal to chauffeur-driven buyers as well, especially given the excellent kneeroom and legroom at the rear. Overall, the cabin marries the luxurious appeal of traditional Mercedes-Benz cars with the futuristic feel of the EQ models really well.

When it comes to features, EVs have given manufacturers an opportunity to offer some of the most cutting-edge tech and just like the EQS, the EQE is loaded to the gills. More so, since Mercedes has chosen to only offer the top of the line EQE 500 version in India. So besides the three high resolution screens you get massaging and ventilated seats front seats, a 15-speaker surround sound system from Burmester and a HEPA air filter which Mercedes claims can eliminate 99.65 percent of airborne pollutants. Additionally, there's an Attention Assist function as well, for alerting drivers who drive with just one hand on the steering wheel or take both

**THE EQE IS CAPABLE OF
OFFERING NECK-SNAPPING
ACCELERATION IN SPORT MODE**





ABOVE: EQE makes its weight felt around corners but offers a confident feel. BELOW: Star-studded gloss black panel housing the Mercedes-Benz logo looks classy and futuristic. BOTTOM: EQE 500 supports up to 170kW DC fast charging, though buyers will get a 11kW AC charger at the time of purchase



hands off. Sensors on the wheel and cameras embedded into the instrument cluster display constantly monitor the driver and also detect if the driver does not have both hands on the wheel - it then alerts you and also starts bringing the car to a halt within seconds. Besides Level 2 ADAS, the EQE is also equipped with nine airbags on the safety front, which is very reassuring, to say the least.

A 90.56kWh battery pack along with two electric motors, one at each axle, perform duty as the 'powertrain'. Combined outputs are 408PS and 858Nm, sent to all four wheels via the 4MATIC all-wheel drive system. The claimed range-per-charge as per the WLTP cycle is 550km and the EQE supports up to 170kW of fast charging, resulting in ultra-quick charging times, though the EQE will be offered with a 11kW AC home charger to buyers. The claimed 0-100kmph time is a scant 4.9 seconds, very impressive for an SUV weighing over two tonnes. Torque delivery is instant and you also have the usual set of driving modes to help you tailor your driving experience.

The EQE is thus capable of offering neck-snapping acceleration in Sport mode and can be quick to turn into a large projectile. Paddles behind the steering let



ABOVE: EQE 500 uses the same 56-inch Hyperscreen as the EQS, open-pore wood with aluminium inlays looks very classy.
CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW LEFT: Instrument cluster is the same as other EQ models. Main infotainment screen is ultra-sharp and huge! All crucial controls sit on the centre console. Steering touch panels are excellent to use



RIDE QUALITY IS IN LINE WITH WHAT YOU WOULD EXPECT OF AN SUV THAT HAS THE THREE-POINTED STAR ON ITS HOOD

you choose regen levels and overall, this is quite a potent package as far as performance is concerned. Effectively, the EQE is one of the quickest-accelerating EVs on sale in the country today. This is even more impressive when you consider the fact that this is not the AMG version of the EQE sold abroad. It is however the top spec EQE 500. The narrow mountain roads were barely any match for the SUV's strong performance though I can imagine the EQE 500 allowing one to cover distances at a rapid pace and thus making for an excellent set of wheels for driving long distances.

The EQE 500 is suspended on adaptive air suspension, which means the ride quality is as good as it gets and in line with what you would expect of an SUV with the three-pointed star on its hood. What's more, you can also raise the ride height by 25mm for times when you need to tread off-tarmac and need that extra ground clearance. The suspension soaked up broken roads impressively around Gulmarg, though some of the larger potholes and ruts did make themselves felt at slower speeds. Overall ride quality is very good though, especially as you go faster, which should further add to the EQE's feel as

an able mile muncher. Handling is impressive too, given the sure-footed feel but the EQE does make its weight felt around corners. The steering offers good feel and feedback but given its size and heft, the EQE is happier being driven in a laidback manner in the mountain twisties. Another impressive fact is that Mercedes is offering the Off-Road package as standard in India and while this is no 4x4, the EQE will offer a lot of confidence, should you decide to get adventurous.

In a nutshell, the EQE is an interesting addition to Mercedes-Benz's EV portfolio in India and an SUV that will take on the likes of the BMW iX, Jaguar I-PACE and also the Audi Q8 e-tron. The EQE 500 4MATIC is priced at ₹ 1.39 crores ex-showroom, which might sound expensive to many, but Mercedes is known to only launch fully-loaded versions of its top-end models in India and the EQE 500 here is the top of the line version of the SUV. You also get an industry-first, 10-year or 2.5 lakh kilometre warranty on the EQE's battery pack, which is pretty phenomenal. This should help in convincing a lot of buyers looking for a plush, comfortable and feature-rich luxury EV that will also help them make a statement. **tc**



WORDS **ABHAY VERMA**
PHOTOGRAPHY **VAIBHAV DHANAWADE**

TATA NEXON

Tata Motors' workhorse gets yet another comprehensive refresh, which makes it feel almost all-new



TATA NEXON FEARLESS + S PETROL

- **Engine:** 1.2-litre three-cylinder turbo-petrol
- **Power:** 120PS @ 5,500rpm
- **Torque:** 170Nm @ 1,750 - 4,000rpm
- **Weight:** NA
- **Gearbox:** 7-speed DCA
- **Price:** ₹ 14.70 lakh ex-showroom



TATA NEXON FEARLESS + S DIESEL

- **Engine:** 1.5-litre four-cylinder turbo-diesel
- **Power:** 115PS @ 3,750rpm
- **Torque:** 260Nm @ 1,500 - 2,750rpm
- **Weight:** NA
- **Gearbox:** 6-Speed manual
- **Price:** ₹ 14.90 lakh ex-showroom

The Tata Nexon has proved to be a game changer – not just for Tata Motors, but the entire compact SUV segment! It's a product that has made competitors sit up and take notice with its success while also raking in serious volumes for the manufacturer. Its electric version has proved to be a runaway success too and is now a lot more than just a derivative of the ICE-powered Nexon, which you will read about in the following pages. Heck, the Tata Nexon has been India's best-selling SUV for two years, which should give you a fair idea of its popularity and success. For now though, let's focus on the petrol and diesel versions of this uber-popular compact SUV.

Admittedly, it's the bold purple colour that really makes this updated Nexon look and feel a lot more upmarket. A lot of the cool quotient comes from this new hue, besides the design of course. The DRLs look a lot more upmarket now, even reminding me of the Lamborghini Urus, especially on the purple version. In fact, the front end looks all-new and you would be forgiven to assume this is a generation change, even

though it isn't – that's how extensive the updates are! Of course, given its importance, the design team at Tata Motors, led by Martin Ulharik, seems to have poured its heart and soul into ensuring the updated Nexon is a class apart.

The DRLs sit higher while the grille is all-new and does its bit in upping the Nexon's premium quotient. The bumper has been redesigned too, housing the headlamps and overall, the front end looks heavily inspired by the Curvv concept. The stance from the sides remains the same, including the coupe-like roof, though the 16-inch alloy wheels are new. The rear end gets extensive changes too – there's a large roof spoiler that conceals the rear wiper now, revised tail lamps and an LED strip connecting them, with a dynamic motion. The Nexon looks more SUV and less hatchback now thus, especially from the front, while retaining its class-leading ground clearance of 208mm.

There are serious updates inside as well. It starts with the new steering wheel that has a massive piano black panel housing an illuminated Tata logo. It looks cool but the gloss black plastic is a fingerprint magnet

and also prone to scratches. The dashboard design is cleaner, while a faux carbon-fibre finish lends the cabin a sportier feel. The biggest highlight inside the cabin are the two high-resolution, 10.25-inch displays for the instrument cluster and infotainment system.

There's a wireless charging pad too, to augment the wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto connectivity. Talking about features, there's a long list of additions that put the Nexon right on top of the features game. Besides the aforementioned wireless smartphone connectivity, you get 360 degree view, for which the infotainment smartly uses AI and offers a very detailed view of the car. Cameras all round also result in turn-indicator activated left and right views, another useful addition. The instrument cluster display looks brilliant and also integrates Google maps navigation in a full-screen format.

The centre console houses a large touch panel, finished in piano black, for climate control which looks cool. Reaching the USB port is a challenge like before, given the narrow recess the ports sit in. The seating, cabin space and boot space haven't really

changed as the Nexon is still largely the same car. Rear passengers do get AC vents and USB ports now though. You can also opt for body-coloured seats like the purple one you see here. Another highlight is the brilliant 9-speaker Harman music system with a subwoofer. You also get voice commands, Alexa support, an AQI index, tyre pressure monitoring, connected tech and over-the-air updates.

The petrol and diesel engines meet latest emission norms but are largely the same to say so. You can now opt for a 7-speed DCT with the 1.2-litre, three-cylinder turbocharged petrol engine which puts out 120PS and 170Nm and I certainly enjoyed using the paddle shifters too. There's a likeable feel to the performance given the sprightliness and how quick the engine is to rev. Driving modes help and the City mode suffices, though Sport mode does hasten things up nicely. Overall, the turbo-petrol and DCT are quite the combination thus. The diesel on the other hand is the same tried-and-tested 1.5-litre four cylinder unit putting out 115PS and 260Nm and is likeable for its torquey feel, which begins as you close in on

I'VE ALWAYS LIKED HOW WELL-CONTROLLED BODY ROLL IS AND THAT'S A CHARACTERISTIC THAT HASN'T CHANGED





ABOVE: The new interior layout in the Nexon plays a big role in making it feel more upmarket. BELOW: The 10.25-inch digital instrument cluster looks crisp and even integrates Google Maps navigation. BOTTOM: The floating touchscreen infotainment system is the same size as the instrument cluster and offers tons of options



the 2,000rpm mark. We only drove the manual version though, where I felt throws for the gearbox are still long, albeit light.

Dynamics haven't really changed as the chassis is the same and the suspension has only received minor tweaks. There's a hint of stiffness at low speeds but the ride gets better as you go faster and tackling bad roads is one of the Nexon's strengths, like before. I've always liked how well-controlled the body roll is and that's a characteristic that hasn't changed and makes for lots of confidence when going fast around corners. Overall, the Nexon continues to feel like a very competent package on the ride and handling front.

Prices begin from ₹ 8.10 lakh for the base petrol and go up to ₹ 15.50 lakh for the fully-loaded diesel AMT and admittedly, pricing is brilliant considering the Nexon's packaging. The updates really help it feel more premium besides making it a far more compelling package given the new feature list. Overall, the Nexon looks set to continue its success story for Tata Motors without batting an eyelid. **tc**

WORDS **SANEET DSILVA**

PHOTOGRAPHY **SIDDHANT GADEKAR**

TATA NEXON EV

*Will the new upgrades help the Tata Nexon EV maintain
its reign as the king of the hill?*





2023 TATA NEXON EV EMPOWERED + (LR)

- **Engine:** PMSM (AC)
- **Battery:** 40.5kWh
- **Power:** 145PS
- **Torque:** 215Nm
- **Range:** 465km (claimed)
- **Weight:** NA
- **0-100kmpf:** 8.9 seconds (claimed)
- **Price:** ₹ 19.94 lakh ex-showroom

The Tata Nexon EV has been making waves as far as the country's EV scene is concerned. It is the highest-selling electric car in the country and was an instant hit when it was launched back in 2020. Timely updates, including the option of a more powerful version with a larger motor and longer range has seen the Nexon EV continue to do well. But this time, Tata Motors has given the Nexon EV a set of updates that are so comprehensive, you would be forgiven for calling this one an all-new model!

In fact, it's very interesting to see how Tata Motors is now distinguishing the Nexon EV from its internal combustion engine-powered siblings. Apart from the green number plate there was little to tell the EV apart from the ICE version, until now! And that's what makes the Nexon very interesting as a model, because it is remarkable how Tata Motors is balancing the development of both versions!

Heck, the updated Nexon EV has broken cover just a week after the petrol and diesel versions and clearly, both models were being updated in parallel, with

serious efforts to set them apart! We spent a fine, but rain soaked morning driving the Nexon EV in our very own Pune, and there's a lot to talk about.

Of course, you'll be quick to spot the design changes – a revamped face with a more angular and aerodynamic front end, split headlamps, sleek LED tail lamps and stylish alloy wheels. But what also caught my eye was the fact that Tata Motors has done away with the blue accents we're used to seeing on Tata's EVs. Viewed head on, the biggest distinction between the ICE and electric versions is the LED strip spanning the front end and connecting the DRLs. It integrates a 'welcome' function as well as a 'goodbye' one wherein the LEDs showcase an animation that's quite pleasing to look at as the LEDs turn on and off sequentially. This LED strip also doubles up as a charge indicator, which is a rather nifty feature.

Get behind the wheel and Ed confirms the dashboard design is identical to the ICE versions we drove earlier. Even the two-spoke steering wheel is the same but with a white-hued rim inside to distinguish the EV. That said, while the illuminated Tata logo does look cool, the gloss black panel it sits on is a



ABOVE: Interior is similar to the ICE Nexon, which is excellent news in our books. **BELOW:** The 10.25-inch driver's display boasts crisp resolution and detailed information about the car. **BOTTOM:** The Nexon EV comes with Vehicle-To-Load and Vehicle-To-Vehicle charging capabilities, a segment-first

fingerprint magnet and highly prone to scratches too. I also experienced that it was very easy to trigger the cruise control function button placed on the steering wheel while taking tight turns. You have a 10.25-inch digital display for the instrument cluster like the ICE variant, but the EV flexes its muscles with a larger, 12.3-inch touchscreen for the infotainment system. And guess what, there's an app suite exclusive to the EV that lets you download games, OTT apps and more!

Of course, you'll only be able to watch videos or engage in some gaming when the car is parked. This should help curb the boredom associated with waiting at a charging station for your car to juice up. We even heard the steering wheel could double up as a game controller for racing games in the future! What isn't different from the ICE versions is the sharp resolution of the screen, the brilliantly detailed and crisp 360-degree views and of course, the 9-speaker Harman audio system with eight different modes. There's the usual voice commands and other connected technology. Of course, you also get wireless Android Auto and Apple CarPlay and touch-sensitive HVAC controls. The navigation support on the instrument cluster is neat (it was a bit finicky during our tests but Tata assured us it'll be sorted out in the production version).





Taking centre stage is the second generation or Gen2 electric motor as Tata calls it. There's juicier battery packs on offer too and you can opt for a 30kWh or a more powerful 40.5kWh pack. You get 129PS with the former, while the latter offers 144PS, which is higher than a lot of bigger and more expensive ICE cars! What's also exciting is the range that gets bumped up courtesy the mechanical er...electrical changes. The Nexon EV boasts an ARAI certified 325km per charge with the smaller battery pack and a very impressive 465km with the larger one.

The Gen2 motor feels snappier and more responsive off the line. Regen modes have been tweaked too, besides which you get paddle shifters now to adjust regen levels. We're also told regen efficiency is up by a significant 10 to 15 percent now. On the road, there's quicker acceleration every single time you step on the throttle and the Nexon EV is even more convincing

now if you're looking for a really quick urban SUV minus the fuel bills. We're hoping to get more seat time in the Nexon EV, but for now, let's just say the 2023 model conceals serious upgrades beneath its modern exterior.

The Nexon EV also packs in V2L and V2V tech – the former was demonstrated by a coffee machine powered by the car, while the latter will allow you to charge another EV, a feature only seen in far more expensive EVs like the Kia EV6 previously. In fact, the Nexon EV is the first Indian EV to get this feature!

To sum it up, the Nexon EV is more than just a facelift. It's a testament to Tata's commitment to the electric revolution. The price bump of ₹ 50,000 to ₹ 1.5 lakh (depending on the variant), might feel significant, but is worth it, given all the updates. Nonetheless, we feel the Nexon EV will continue to lead the way in the Indian EV space as it has done so thus far. **tc**





WORDS SANEET DSILVA

JEEP COMPASS

A new powertrain makes the Compass AT variant more accessible. Is there a caveat though?

The Jeep Compass has been a successful product in the American SUV maker's India lineup and now gets a powertrain combination most buyers have been waiting for. Previously, Jeep provided an automatic transmission option in a 4x2 setup, albeit only with a petrol engine, which has since been discontinued. With the introduction of the MY24 lineup, Jeep India has added a 4x2 configuration featuring the 2.0-litre diesel engine, paired with a 9-speed automatic transmission. Does this new addition enhance the appeal of the Compass or misses out on its charm?

Not much has changed on the Compass' exterior design except for a new grille and fresh 18-inch alloys. However, the American marque adds more flair to the MY24 lineup with the Jeep Compass Black Shark edition. Swathed in a bold red-and-black theme, it

is an attention grabber! Look closely and the unique details become apparent – a black Jeep logo, Black Shark badges adorning the front fenders, glossy black alloy wheels, and gloss black inserts to the lower fascia. The blacked-out treatment extends to the roof rails and ORVMs as well. Step inside, and the all-black theme continues, creating a sophisticated ambience, while the red accents on the dashboard and steering wheel add a touch of vibrancy to the cabin without feeling flashy. The Compass Black Shark edition also boasts special contrast stitching on the upholstery.

In terms of features, this variant, based on the Limited model, packs an array of tech and comfort, including LED headlamps and fog lamps, a panoramic sunroof, a 10.1-inch TFT touchscreen infotainment panel with Uconnect 5 UI, wireless Android Auto and Apple CarPlay, a wireless charger, a semi-digital instrument cluster, and more. When it comes to



TOP: The Black Shark logos are subtle, but there are enough visual differences to set it apart.
ABOVE: The only SUV in this segment to get a nine-speed automatic gearbox

safety, the Black Shark edition gets up to 60 standard safety measures, including ABS, EBD, ESC and hill start assist.

The 2.0-litre turbo-diesel motor even in the 4x2 AT guise churns out 170PS and 350Nm. Sans the added weight and mechanical resistance of the 4x4 drivetrain, the front-wheel-driven Compass offers better fuel efficiency and feels a tad quicker as well (Jeep claims a 0-100kmph timing of 9.8 seconds). The motor, like the 4x4 version is mated well to the 9-speed automatic gearbox and offers impressive low-end torque.

It's off-roading prowess has not declined significantly either. Jeep India has a dedicated testing ground within their Ranjangaon facility, complete with challenging obstacles. The Compass 4x2 proved itself as a capable off-roader on the track, though it faced some challenges on low-traction obstacles where having a 4x4 powertrain would have helped. Even in 4x2 trim, the Compass continues to offer a fine balance of ride and handling which makes it a brilliant vehicle to go cross-country touring in.

Prices for the MY24 Jeep Compass MT start at ₹ 20.49 lakh ex-showroom and ₹ 23.99 lakh for 4x2 AT. That's a difference of nearly six lakh rupees compared to the base 4x4 AT variant. The new Jeep Compass 4x2 AT variant is a compelling alternative for customers who want the Compass' positive traits, the signature Jeep ruggedness and the convenience of an automatic transmission without having to spend for the 4x4 hardware which they might rarely use. **tc**

JEEP COMPASS 4X2 AT BLACK SHARK

- **Engine:** 2.0-litre four-cylinder turbo-diesel
- **Power:** 170PS @ 3,750rpm
- **Torque:** 350Nm @ 1,750rpm
- **Weight:** NA
- **Gearbox:** 9-speed automatic, FWD
- **Price:** ₹ 28.49 lakh ex-showroom onwards



[FEATURE]

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY **VIR NAKAI**

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

*Two generations of enthusiasts, out on a road trip in
two generations of the Mahindra Scorpio!*





t was my daughter who came up with the idea for a road trip. A good plan indeed, as the wife and I have been waiting for years for her to grow up enough to show her the country by road. No better way to learn about a place and its people than a road trip. While I was left to tend to the logistics behind the trip, it was easy because I had been waiting for this day for a long time. The plan was formed to drive to Spiti and spend a few lazy days in Kaza with no real agenda. As the plan was being finalised my parents and their friend - intrepid road trippers themselves - joined the fray. It was perfect as I had been waiting a long time to head on a road trip with Dad like we did in my school days. Now that we had a plan, we needed to address the small issue of transportation.

My parents have the last generation Mahindra Scorpio they drive all over India. The mountains are mostly their playground but two years back they became a viral sensation when they, along with my aunt, drove across the country in the Scorpio. Once we knew the parents were in a few strings were pulled, favours asked and the new Scorpio N was arranged to accompany the Scorpio on our road trip.

It was fantastic, as it would be like two father-son duos heading out on a road trip - Robin and Vir Nakai and the Mahindra Scorpio and Scorpio N!

In today's world of fast-paced social media people seem to have forgotten what it is like to plan for a long road trip other than where will you stop, eat and what sights you will take in. For a road trip, getting your vehicle ready is very important. Of course, I did not have to worry about the brand-new Scorpio N other than arranging to have it picked up, whereas my dad's almost decade-old Scorpio needed some work. New tyres were required as the last set was changed by me when I drove it back from Chennai to Chandigarh. After 1.5 lakh kilometres, the seats needed new upholstery and re-padding too, while the brakes needed overhauling in the form of new brake pads.

As I rolled into the parents' home in Chandigarh and parked the new Scorpio N next to the older-generation Scorpio, the visual differences were apparent instantly. The N looks massive. The design is an evolution but there are a lot of apparent visual similarities between the old and new too. Parked side by side you can see the family resemblance. I can't



TOP: Usually the longer routes are the scenic ones. **BELow:** Scorpions, regardless of the generation, do not shy away from the rough stuff

help but compare them to my father and me. More than two decades separate us but we both have a similar wild side. It's genetics, I guess.

Of course, friendly comparisons between the two were inevitable with Dad backing up his trusted steed while I was on the side of team N. Loading up the Scorpions for the trip it was evident that the father's Scorpio can take in a hell of a lot of luggage and gear while my N, owing to its funny-shaped interior cladding for the boot and forward-facing third-row seat was not so accommodating. Between the two the score was already 2-0 in favour of the Scorpio. The N's white paintjob was disapproved by the family the moment I pulled up home, though I think it looks striking even in this shade. If it was a serious competition the Scorpio N would claw back two points in the entertainment/music system department. After all, what's a road trip without music and the N with its Sony 3D sound system is a banger! Its 12 speakers deliver crystal clear sound and with the daughter's playlists we felt like we were attending a live concert together. So now the score is 2-2.

The first day's stretch was to be till Kothgarh ahead of Shimla but news had reached us that a bridge was being built so there was a bit of a snag in traffic just around Fagu. So we decided to take a detour just after Shimla. One that would take us to Sainj. From there, we could climb up the mountain back towards Kothgarh. I have done this route on my motorcycle. It's longer but quite a scenic drive. To enhance our adventure we stopped in a rain shelter to open our picnic lunch just as it began to rain. Not heavily, like most of Himachal has seen this season, but enough to soak you in minutes.

As the roads got narrower and merged into a single lane we soon found out that my brilliant plan to bypass





**AS WE MADE OUR WAY UP TO SPITI,
THE DRIVE WAS COMFORTABLE AS BOTH
THE SCORPIOS WERE IN THEIR ELEMENT**

the snarl on the other road was on the minds of many of the locals and truckers. This gave us an opportunity to try out our reversing skills. After years of driving, Dad knows every inch of his Scorpio so reversing many meters and then squeezing his Scorpio to the side of the road so the trucks can inch past is easy for him. With the N it took me a while to get used to, despite the front and rear camera assisting me. At first, I stubbornly decided to not listen to the the N telling and showing me what's happening in reverse and rely on my instinct. That's when I realised how large the N is in comparison to the older generation. After the 15th odd time, I got the hang of it. All this reversing and finding spots to park two Scorpions so opposite traffic could pass took all day. Later in the evening, as we sat on the balcony taking in the blooming apple orchards of Kothgarh, I marvelled at how even after a whole day behind the wheel I was not tired. My old man seemed fresh too but maybe that's because he is a lot fitter than I am!

90 percent of the road to Kaza is now wide and smooth two-lane tarmac. Where it is not tarmac it's all well-trodden hard-packed mud. It's been like

that for years and as good as a road can be in these regions. The next few days, as we made our way up to Spiti, the drive was comfortable as both the Scorpions were in their element. Even though my Scorpio N was two-wheel-drive, I didn't feel the lack of it anywhere. This could be due to us sticking to the roads and not attempting anything dramatic and stupid for Instagram because as adventurers we know better than to destroy the spots we visit. The older-generation Scorpio was our mobile cafe, since its boot easily accommodated the thermos full of hot water and all the essentials needed to brew a pot of fresh coffee. We would find a place to pull over and admire the vistas, get the Scorpio's boot open and brew a pot.

What's an adventure without a flat tyre? I was driving along the river just 10-odd kilometres from Tabo and the Scorpio N informed me of the misfortune through a warning light on the dashboard. I parked on the side of the road and checked out the huge gash in the rear tyre caused by a huge nail. It was a first for me, changing a huge tyre at this kind of altitude. Thankfully between Dad and me, we made



THE SCORPIOS NEVER MISSED A BEAT DESPITE THE THIN AIR AND TRANSPORTED ALL OF US UP AND DOWN THE MOUNTAINS

short work of the tyre change. 15 minutes later, we were on the road back heading to Kaza.

The idea was to do nothing in Kaza. We'd planned to spend four days there and were staying at a friend's hotel so the agenda was to sit, eat, watch the world go by and acclimatise before even trying any of the touristy things. Since our crew's ages ranged from 12 to 74, we needed to be sure everyone was fine with the altitude. It took a day or two for everyone to start feeling like themselves. The little headaches and the breathlessness from walking soon started to fade. That's when we started driving around to see some of the sights. At higher altitudes the crew, despite being acclimatised, started showing symptoms of AMS so we turned back down to spend the rest of the days in Kaza doing what I had planned all along. Nothing but eat, laugh, hang out and watch the world go by. The Scorpions, on the other hand, never missed a beat despite the thin air and transported all of us up and down the mountains without a hitch.

On the return journey, the father ripped his rear tyre as well on the climb up to Nako. By the time I reached them, the older generation family members had got the spare tyre out, the SUV jacked up and most of the lug nuts off except one. During the previous tyre swap, the mechanics seemed to have rounded off one lug and had not replaced it. A truck stopped to help us with his kit but any attempt to get the nut off just made it worse. So I backtracked a few kilometres to the nearest village where I found the only mechanic. Raju, the one-armed mechanic hopped into his Santro with his tool kit and followed me up the mountain. We reached the spot where the family and the Scorpio lay parked on a turn under the hot sun. Raju hopped out of his car, examined the wheel, took out his tool kit and got to work. A minute later the tyre was off and the spare wheel was on. With a broad smile on his face, he cursed the mechanics who used power tools to replace the tyres, lamenting that if you have to do it well you need to use your own

strength. He bid us adieu, hopped back into his car and was soon a speck in the vast nothingness.

I have been to every inch of the Himalayas in the past 15 years - so much so that I consider it my third home. I have been leading tours or simply looking for adventure on my motorcycles to the deeper Himalayas. This was the first time I was heading here on four wheels and I am glad about my choice of wheels. The Scorpios were the perfect companion but if the truth be told and if this was a competition, I feel the older generation Scorpio feels more adventurous than the N. It's more compact with a larger field of vision with its larger windows. It feels more at home out in the outdoors and you feel like you are on top of everything you are traversing. The Scorpio N seems to cocoon you and feels very apt for urban adventures where you need to travel from one state to the next. It feels well-planted on the highways and super safe. Of course, it gets all the bells and whistles and creature comforts one needs. Don't get me wrong, Given the Scorpio N's performance in Spiti, I am sure the 4WD variant is capable of taking you to the ends of the earth but I feel it is happier in an urban environment where I spend most of my life. It is so comfortable that I am considering the Scorpio N as an upgrade for the family vehicle in Mumbai, that is as soon as I can find a place to park it! **tc**



GLOBAL STAR

The Volkswagen Tiguan has amassed a global fanbase and for good reason



Yes, it's a rare thing, but in the auto industry, there are certain models that tick just the right boxes that make them the perfect all-rounder. These models garner a fan following that transcends generations. Volkswagen is no stranger to such a phenomenon with many models, including the Golf and Polo that have attained a cult status the world over. Another such model is the Tiguan, one of Volkswagen's most successful models globally with more than 7.6 million SUVs sold since its debut in 2007. The Tiguan is Volkswagen India's flagship SUV and there are plenty of reasons why it commands a fan following in India as well.

For a model to really stand out as a global bestseller, first impressions are paramount. The Volkswagen Tiguan scores well here with a strong

presence, helped by its tall SUV stance, just the right dosage of chrome accents, snazzy 18-inch alloy wheels and well as sharp creases all over that give it a sporty look. The sleek adaptive Matrix LED headlamps use 24 adaptive LEDs that adapt to weather and driving conditions which adds a nice modern touch to the Tiguan.

Another stellar attribute is the Tiguan's approach towards its interior design. It's uncluttered and functional with all the switches in the right places, and the materials that offer a sense of solidity along with a rich, tactile feel typical of German cars. The eight-inch touchscreen infotainment system and 10-inch all-digital instrument cluster contribute to the clean approach which translates to easy useability. The large panoramic sunroof helps accentuate the Tiguan's spacious cabin, while the 615-litre boot offers plenty enough space to hold essentials for



TOP: The cabin is minimalist and functional, an attribute typical of German cars. ABOVE: The eight-inch touchscreen infotainment system has a clean layout and is easy to navigate through

a week-long excursion. It's one of the attributes that make the Tiguan a fantastic tourer.

The Tiguan's pièce de résistance sits under its hood. Volkswagen India's lineup feature TSI turbo-petrol engines that are known for their fine balancing act of performance, driveability and efficiency. The Tiguan's 190PS 2.0-litre four-cylinder TSI engine complements the TSI reputation, with quick acceleration despite its size and weight. The refined and powerful motor lets you effortlessly cover distances in a short time. Mated to a seven-speed DSG with paddle shifters, you can cycle through the gears seamlessly or let the well-tuned gearbox select the right ratio for you. German cars are known for their sporty dynamics and the Tiguan is no different. Its direct steering and sporty suspension make it feel almost car-like to drive. This is complemented by minimal body roll, fantastic high-speed stability and a suspension that filters out road imperfections effortlessly. Volkswagen's 4Motion AWD system detects slip and distributes power between the front and rear axles allowing it to get through large obstacles in true SUV fashion. There are also four driving modes on offer - Snow, Road, Off-Road and Off-Road Custom, that change steering responses and engine and drivetrain characteristics to suit the terrain.

Its combination of a powerful and refined powertrain, comfortable interiors and a fine balance between ride and handling makes the Tiguan an all-rounder SUV and justifies the cult following it enjoys in India and the world over. **tc**



WORDS ABHAY VERMA
PHOTOGRAPHY VAIBHAV DHANAWADE

PUSHING BOUNDARIES: PART II



*After India's hottest border, we conquer
India's coldest border with the Hyundai IONIQ 5!*



Amongst all the cars I have driven this year, I think it's the Hyundai IONIQ 5 that I have driven the most and in the most varied of conditions. Driving it to Longewala in Rajasthan had me drive the IONIQ 5 for well over 2,000km, effectively, also making the IONIQ 5 the first EV to be driven to the country's hottest border, in peak summers, with the temperatures hitting a scorching 50 degrees Celsius! Following that, the plan was to conquer India's coldest border at the Siachen Base Camp in the IONIQ 5, to have it become the first EV to be driven to India's hottest and coldest borders both, another round trip of nearly 2,500km! Of course, then there's the fact that driving to the Siachen Base Camp, which sits at about 12,000 feet above sea level (and is also the world's highest battle camp!), was also going to be very different from driving to Rajasthan. Rajasthan is all about flat and vast, arid landscapes that have arrow-straight highways cut through them. Not much of a task in an electric vehicle with not much to worry about except for the searing heat. In hindsight, the IONIQ 5 aced it, delivering an excellent range per charge despite the extreme heat.

In comparison, driving to Siachen meant battling colder climes, and we all know how quickly batteries – smartphone, cameras or EV batteries

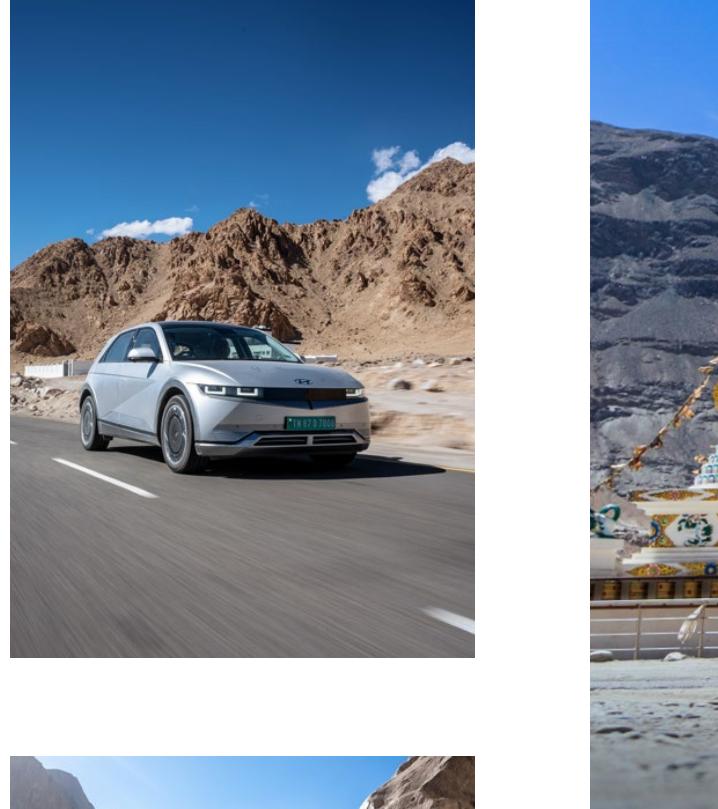
– deplete in the cold. And that's besides having to climb thousands of feet to cross mountain passes, including the formidable Khardung La at almost 18,000 feet! Of course, you don't need me to tell you how EV batteries despise inclines! When we sat down to plan, I realised this was also going to be one of the most challenging drives I've undertaken till date. Because not only is Ladakh cold, it's also one of the most sparsely populated regions of the country, due to the altitude and extreme weather in winter. For me, this translated to a severe lack of charging infrastructure. The recent floods had wreaked havoc in Himachal Pradesh, particularly around Manali which was on our route, meaning I had to think of an alternate route. The next option was to head up north via Jammu, Srinagar and Kargil to Leh and then towards Siachen. I also figured there are larger cities on this route, meaning more charging stations!

Armed with a battery of charging apps on my phone and a plan in place we set off to conquer India's coldest border that has temperatures dip below -50 degree Celsius during winters. It's also a testimony to our soldiers' resolve to protect the nation, come what may, and besides my own sense of accomplishment I was also looking forward to meeting soldiers posted at the critical location. Driving up to Srinagar was a piece of cake courtesy of the abundance of DC fast

charging stations en route, besides which the IONIQ 5 was consistently returning over 450km per charge, with air-conditioning on! The drive to Srinagar made me realise that with a bit of planning, multi-day roadtrips spanning thousands of kilometres are easily doable in EVs like the IONIQ 5 as the excellent range and rapidly growing charging infrastructure quell range anxiety. The weather was amicable, allowing me to turn the air-conditioning off and enjoy the clean air, thus conserving some charge too.

Srinagar to Leh is about 420km and given the IONIQ 5's ARAI-certified range of 631km per charge, I was confident of making it on a single charge. But let's not forget, these are not 4-lane highways in the plains, I was driving in the Himalayas and would be climbing higher altitudes continuously, risking quicker charge depletion! The good news though was that the roads were smooth and allowed rapid progress. Soon after we were climbing up to Zoji La, our first mountain pass, at 11,649 feet and climbing up was a cinch with no loss in performance. The lack of oxygen at these altitudes is the biggest reason behind internal combustion engines losing power. And that means you need to work engines harder, which in turn bumps up exhaust emissions too. That was not the case with the IONIQ 5. As a battery electric vehicle not only are losses in performance zero, tailpipe emissions are zero too as there is no combustion or tailpipe! Another good news was that the other side of Zoji La had me descend towards Drass, driving downhill towards Kargil, meaning I would recover some of the charge lost climbing up to Zoji La!

This was made possible by the IONIQ 5's strong regenerative braking which has three levels, besides



ABOVE: The BRO (Border Roads Organisation) is always hard at work in Ladakh repairing roads. **BETWEEN:** Making it to the mighty Khardung La, situated at 17,982 feet above sea level, in an EV was a bucket list item for sure!





which you can turn it off or choose i-Pedal. i-Pedal is the 'single pedal driving mode' where regen is strong enough to bring the car to a halt when you take your foot off the throttle, meaning you don't need to use the brake pedal while also recovering range very quickly. I crossed Kargil with 58 percent charge left, despite having driven for 200km! The IONIQ 5's energy-efficient powertrain and strong regen were a boon besides the fact that Kargil sits at just 8,700 feet. That said, I was to start climbing up post Kargil to cross Lamayuru that sits at 11,000 feet. Crossing Lamayuru was not a challenge though, I guess, also one of the advantages of having a large, 72.6kWh battery pack. Leh also sits just 400 feet above Lamayuru, which meant I was not going to consume too much charge going forward as I would not be climbing more inclines. What's truly noteworthy is that the IONIQ 5 is packaged really well as a fully-electric premium SUV and I'm not referring to just the battery pack or regen modes.

It looks very futuristic as the front end and the distinctive-looking headlamps help the IONIQ 5 stand out, as do the 20-inch alloy wheels and unique tail lamp design. And guess what, besides turning heads with its design the IONIQ 5 was doing the same with its green number plates. That's because not many people expect seeing an electric car in some of the remotest parts of the country and at some of the highest altitudes possible! Its interiors impress too, especially with their spaciousness, futuristic design and practicality. The



TOP TO BOTTOM: Ladakh is home to beautiful Buddhist structures, monasteries and more. A 7.2kW charger in Leh helped us charge the car overnight, while a 60kW charger did it in an hour!



LEFT: 11,649 feet above sea level, Zoji La was our first mountain pass. BELOW LEFT: Sitting at over 12,000 feet above sea level, the Siachen Base Camp we took the IONIQ 5 to is also regarded as the world's highest battlefield. BELOW: One of the umpteen times we waited by the side even as the BRO was repairing the road





single glass slab housing the high resolution displays for the instrument cluster and infotainment screen looks classy, while the steering wheel has a unique design. The IONIQ 5 is also high on features and is equipped with electric adjust for both front seats, also recline and slide functions for the rear seats. You also get ventilated front seats, heated rear seats, multiple USB ports at the front and rear, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto connectivity, a panoramic sunroof with a unique central opening, Hyundai's Bluelink connected technology, Level 2 ADAS and six airbags to round it all off.

I finally made it to Leh, with 16 percent charge and a range of 48km left! It's the strong regenerative braking that had made it possible, without me having to worry about charge. That was stage 1 of our mission accomplished successfully! I'd marked out charging stations in the city of Leh beforehand, of which the Hyundai dealership (Togo Hyundai) was my best bet, armed with a 7.2kW charger that would recharge the battery pack overnight. I drove in, plugged the charger and heaved a sigh of relief knowing the IONIQ 5 will be charged fully overnight before our big day. I'd be lying if I said I wasn't tossing

and turning that night in my hotel room – I've been to Khardung La several times but this would be the first time in an EV, besides the plan to drive up to Siachen! The next morning, with a little prayer on my lips, I was on my way towards Khardung La. Roads leading up to the mountain pass that sits at 17,982 feet used to be non-existent but the BRO (Border Roads Organisation) has worked very hard for years and the drive up is a piece of cake today. The IONIQ 5 was complimenting the hill climb well, sitting on Hyundai's E-GMP platform. It doesn't just look sporty, the IONIQ 5 is also engaging to drive. And given that electric powertrains are unaffected by high altitudes, the outputs of 217PS and 350Nm were making it an excellent set of wheels in the mountain twisties.

Khardung La is just 40km from Leh but you climb nearly 6,000 feet over the short distance, which gets dizzying. Khardung La also used to be the world's highest motorable road before Umling La came up and is still the second highest in the world! As we summited the pass, I was glad about having reached a critical milestone. Getting to Khardung La was also a huge achievement because every single internal combustion engine-powered vehicle is left gasping



DRIVING TO THE SIACHEN BASE CAMP WAS FAR MORE CHALLENGING THAN DRIVING THE IONIQ 5 TO THE HOTTEST BORDER IN PEAK SUMMERS





for air at the altitudes that I was driving at, but not the IONIQ 5. It was also one of the first few EVs to make it up there and certainly the first IONIQ 5! I'd lost 22 percent charge in 40km and had a range of 383km left. The good news though was that the other side of Khardung La is a steep downhill drive, helping me recover lost charge double quick. Within the next 5 kilometres, I had recovered over 20km worth of range. Effectively I had over 400km of driving range left, while the distance to Siachen Base Camp, sans any uphill sections, was just about 150km!

Another concern with EVs is the ground clearance but even fully loaded the IONIQ 5 sits 163mm above the ground and was clearing broken sections without any scraping. It also runs on 20-inch wheels shod with 255-section tyres that have an aspect ratio of 45, but the ride quality is excellent thanks to the well-tuned suspension, even on broken roads. I was also enjoying the sights of Nubra Valley, one of the most picturesque parts of Ladakh and definitely one of the most beautiful places on the planet. It is virtually untouched and pristine and is home to just a few villages and this is Ladakh at its prettiest! The land throughout Nubra Valley is also flat, meaning the IONIQ 5 was not spending more energy than

needed. As I passed the first arch welcoming us to Siachen Base Camp, I realised I was minutes away from creating history, as the IONIQ 5 was about to become the first electric vehicle to have conquered India's hottest and coldest borders both.

This was a huge testament to the Hyundai's engineering, as the IONIQ 5 had braved some of the toughest driving conditions in the world and not just in India! I was soon at the last civilian point at Siachen Base Camp and admittedly, I've been on countless roadtrips over the years but this was special. Driving to the Siachen Base Camp was a roadtrip unlike any other and was far more challenging than driving the IONIQ 5 to the hottest border in peak summers. I had to make some wild calculations given the cold weather, steep inclines and lack of oxygen at those altitudes but the IONIQ 5 shined bright with its performance, comfort and energy-efficient powertrain. I still had over 60 percent charge left despite driving for 200km and had 'only' 200km to drive back to Leh, which I did, without a hitch. In fact, on my way back I was at Khardung La top with a range of 83km but by the time I reached Leh city, I had a range of 130km thanks to the steep downhill climb! This one is certainly for the record books! **tc**

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T A K E T W O

A L L A B O U T T W O - W H E E L S

It's an exciting month for performance motorcycle enthusiasts! The Aprilia RS 457 is here and so are updated Ducati Scramblers! BMW Motorrad has refreshed its middleweight ADVs. We've also got you covered with the latest reviews - we have ridden the all-new TVS Apache RTR 310 and new generation KTM 390 Duke, besides the River Indie electric scooter, besides attending the world's highest motorcycling-music festival, the 2023 Outback





WORDS SAYANTAN DE

LEGAL LIMIT

The Aprilia RS 457 promises middleweight thrills in an exotic package

There were hints, spy shots and other information on the upcoming A2-licence compatible sub-500cc Aprilia super sports, rumoured to be called the RS 440, and it is now here in the flesh. Aprilia has elected to christen it the RS 457, which means it packs 17 more cc's than expected and it is gorgeous!

There's no information on the price at the time of going to press, but we expect all of that Italian style may not exactly be what you'd call pocket-friendly. While the main development work was carried out in Italy, Aprilia's Indian team provided lots of input during the development process. It will be manufactured at Aprilia's Indian plant, located in Baramati, Maharashtra, which should make it a bit more affordable.

It looks like a scaled-down version of the beastly Aprilia RSV4 - arguably one of the best-looking litre-class superbikes of all time. The RS 457

follows the same design language, with the wide all-LED headlamps and the fairing hinting at the barely-contained power within. Speaking of the power, it stands at 47.6PS, the legal maximum for an A2-licence-compatible motorcycle. However, Aprilia has not revealed the torque figure of this engine. It is a 457cc liquid-cooled 270-degree parallel-twin DOHC four-valve engine, an all-new unit from Aprilia.

Aprilia has managed to fit a 2-into-1 exhaust setup in an underbelly configuration to their compact supersports, and we can only wonder what kind of nightmare the engineers had about the packaging. We suppose the exhaust releases a lot of heat onto the swingarm, which is probably why Aprilia has chosen to use steel instead of aluminium for it.

The chassis is an aluminium twin-spar with the engine as a stressed member - Aprilia says this is

a trick they borrowed from the RS 660. The cycle parts are top-notch - there are preload-adjustable 41mm USD forks at the front and a ByBre radial front brake calliper biting down on a 320mm disc paired with a 220mm rear disc. The tyres are standard sizes for this segment, with 110/70 R17 at the front and 150/60 R17 at the rear.

Of course, today's customers need all the features and technology they can get their hands on, so Aprilia loaded up the RS 457 with a 5-inch TFT console, a ride-by-wire throttle, three different ride modes and a traction control system with three levels of intervention. Aprilia is offering a quickshifter as an option as well.

Globally, the sub-500cc segment is the hottest one right now, and Aprilia's contender ticks all of the right boxes. With such juicy specs, we hope Aprilia debuts the Tuono 457 soon! **tc**

TOP RIGHT: The RS 457 comes equipped with adjustable front forks. **RIGHT:** All-new 5-inch TFT console looks like it's lifted off a larger motorcycle





WORDS SAYANTAN DE

SCRAMBLIN' ON

Ducati brings its latest range of Scramblers to India

In the final episode of the Ducati World Premiere 2022, Ducati revealed a long list of updates for the Scrambler range, and it finally debuts in India! The updated Scrambler range starts at ₹ 10.39 lakh, ex-showroom. Ducati has not touched the 803cc Desmodue L-twin engine that is at the heart of the Scrambler and it still churns out the same 73PS and 65Nm as the previous generation while being Euro-5 emission compliant.

The whole range gets updated instrumentation, as there is a 4.3-inch TFT display, and the Scrambler also gets two ride modes - Road and Wet, cornering ABS, and switchable traction control. The rear swingarm has been redesigned and is now made out of aluminium, and it sports a wider steering geometry for friendlier handling. Brembo radial callipers and Pirelli MT60RS tyres are standard fitments. The

three variants on offer are the Full Throttle, which makes a comeback after being discontinued in 2018, the Nightshift which sports a dark aesthetic and obviously, the Icon, which has become one in its own right, as the flag-bearer of the most affordable Ducati model range in years.

The Full Throttle gets a sump guard, no rear mudguard and the side panels emblazoned with the number 62, which is a callback to the original Ducati Scrambler from the year 1962. It also has a lower handlebar, up and down quickshifter (optional on Icon and Nightshift) and comes with a Termignoni exhaust.

The Nightshift receives spoke wheels, Ducati performance indicators and a ribbed tan seat. It gets bar-end mirrors and even a rear mudguard delete like the Full Throttle. **tc**

INSIDE JOB

We recently had a chance to get behind the scenes at Tork Motors' factory in Pune



Tork Motors is one of the pioneers of the electric motorcycle segment in India, and we recently had a chance to see how its Kratos R comes to life. Tork does almost everything in-house, including the assembly of the battery and the motor, and the Kratos R is one of the few motorcycles in the world to be powered by an axial-flux electric motor. Tork is an engineering firm first and foremost, so they followed a form follows function philosophy in their design approach. The motorcycle was designed to fit around the aluminium enclosure of the battery, which is filled with a phase-changing coolant that's solid at room temperature. Tork went with an axial-flux motor instead of a radial-flux one, as the former produces more torque than the latter. Each motorcycle is hot-tested after assembly on a rolling road dynamometer as well. Overall, seeing the attention to detail, innovative approach towards manufacturing and strict quality control in a startup was quite refreshing.

BANSHEE!

Kawasaki brings the 400cc Ninja ZX-4R screamer to India

At ₹ 8.5 lakh, the Kawasaki Ninja ZX-4R is the most expensive sub-500cc bike in India. It is also one of the most expensive bikes in that engine capacity range in the world. But we feel the ZX-4R is essentially priceless, which makes it a bit of a bargain. Allow us to explain. Back in the late 90s the market was full of 250cc and 400cc inline four-cylinder bikes. These all disappeared with changing times, and the Ninja ZX-4R (along with the ZX-25R) are the only new ones developed in the last two decades. You will not find any other road-legal engine that revs to a F1 car-rivalling 15,000rpm. The power is 77PS at 14,500rpm (80PS with ram-air) and peak torque is 39Nm, at an equally stratospheric 13,000rpm. Given Kawasaki's decision to bring it here, there surely is a market here for such a niche motorcycle.





WORDS SAYANTAN DE

REFRESHED WORKHORSES

BMW has refreshed its middleweight adventure motorcycle family

BMW Motorrad's F 750 GS and F 850 GS / GS Adventure models had been successful for the Bavarian marque, but those were getting long in the tooth, having been launched back in 2018. So for 2023, which is the centenary year for BMW's two-wheeler division, it has updated the entire mid-capacity ADV range with three new models - the F 800 GS, F 900 GS and the F 900 GS Adventure.

The F-Series parallel-twin engine gets its capacity bumped up from 853cc to 895cc, which helps increase the power output to 87PS and 105PS from 77PS and 95PS of the older models, respectively. But power is not the only update, as the F 800 GS gets a new 6.5-inch TFT console along with an uprated LED headlamp, heated grips, hand protectors and a top-case carrier. The F 900 GS also gets a new LED headlamp, new styling and heated grips, but there's more, as its weight was reduced by 14kg, a sizable reduction courtesy of a plastic fuel tank and lighter swingarm. There's a standard Akrapovič exhaust and a new fully adjustable Showa USD front forks. BMW

is even offering the knuckle guards as standard.

The F 900 GS Adventure is distinguished from the rest of the range by more rugged styling and a larger fuel tank (23 litres compared to 14.5 litres). It comes equipped with fully adjustable longer travel Showa USD forks, extra protection bars, new LED lights and an aluminium engine guard. We expect BMW India to bring in the updated models early next year. **tc**



**HONDA CB200X**

₹ 1.47 lakh

The 2023 version comes with a slip-and-assist clutch like the 2023 Hornet 2.0, but we feel longer travel suspension and dual-purpose tyres should have been offered considering it's being pitched as an ADV. It ditches the grey shade though for a rather fetching dark blue colourway.

**HONDA CB300F**

₹ 1.70 lakh

Thanks to stiff competition, it is now ₹ 59,000 more affordable, which makes it a better value proposition than the older model. The Deluxe variant has been axed and it now only comes in the Deluxe Pro variant, with a Bluetooth-connected console. The colours are the same red, blue and black.

**JAWA 42 BOBBER
BLACK MIRROR**

₹ 2.25 lakh

This special edition comes in a gorgeous combination of mirror chrome and matte black, which is where it gets its name. Interestingly, the Black Mirror has mechanical tweaks, with a larger 38mm throttle body, lowered idling RPM and an updated fuel map.

**2023 KTM
250 DUKE**

₹ 2.39 lakh

It now gets the new chassis from its bigger sibling and an all-new engine, which provides more power and torque. It has better ground clearance and a lower seat; it is significantly lighter as well. At this point the 390 Duke's value-for-money quotient is nigh unbeatable.



[REVIEW]

WORDS **RITESH PATIL**
PHOTOGRAPHY **SIDDHANT GADEKAR**

KTM 390 DUKE

Everything is new, yet familiar





2024 KTM 390 DUKE

- **Engine:** 399cc liquid-cooled single cylinder
- **Power:** 46PS @ 8,500rpm
- **Torque:** 39Nm @ 6,500rpm
- **Weight:** 168kg
- **Gearbox:** 6-speed manual
- **Price:** ₹ 3.11 lakh ex-showroom

was far from being old enough to ride a motorcycle when the first generation of the KTM 390 Duke first appeared in 2013. But I had heard stories about how the motorcycle offered a brilliant price-to-performance ratio with handling that was unforeseen at the price. It was also known for its raw performance that suffered no fools. In 2017 the 390 Duke saw its first generational update which, besides ironing out a few niggles, made it more refined while losing some of the raw aggression in the process; an aggression which made the first generation a cult motorcycle. Now the 390 Duke gets its second generational update which brings in a larger engine, a new chassis, new tech and a lot more. But does it bring back the rawness from the first-generation

motorcycle which we so missed? To find out, we rode the new 390 Duke on both the road and track.

KTM has always been thorough with its generational updates especially when it comes to design. The new 390 Duke carries a lot less over from its predecessor and you could easily mistake the new Duke for another model from the Orange marque. The 2024 Duke looks bigger, almost like a middleweight streetfighter. The sharper headlamp is flanked by LED DRLs, which now sit as separate units. At the sides, the larger 15-litre fuel tank looks muscular and now gets larger tank extensions that further enhance the streetfighter's aggressive stance.

You now get an offset monoshock, and with the underbelly exhaust making a comeback with the third-generation model, the 390 Duke now features

an asymmetrical yet clean look. At the rear, you get an all-new tail section with a sleek tail lamp, and an extended rear fender. The quality levels all-around have gone up too, with the switchgear having a nice tactile feel to it. Overall, the 390 Duke has grown in size and we feel it is one of if not the best looking sub-500cc motorcycle out there!

In terms of features, you now get an all-new five-inch TFT instrument console with Bluetooth connectivity and turn-by-turn navigation. It now packs in a host of electronics as well, starting with three ride modes - Rain, Street and a new Track mode which gets launch control! The power and torque is tuned down in the first mode with the ABS being in its most intrusive setting, while you get access to the full grunt in the latter two modes with lesser intrusion. In addition to dual-channel ABS with a Supermoto mode, you now get cornering ABS as well. And you even have switchable traction control. All this electronic

wizardry should provide an extra safety net.

The 2024 390 Duke is powered by a larger 399cc liquid-cooled single cylinder engine that puts out 46PS and 39Nm, a bump of 2.5PS and 2Nm compared to its predecessor. It gets a larger airbox and longer stroke which has improved the tractability. The streetfighter is quick to pick up speeds from as low 30kmph in third gear, making it a lot more usable in the city compared to the model it replaces.

There's a noticeable surge in power post 4,000rpm, and before you know it you are already doing illegal speeds, with the shift light flashing on the TFT, asking you to upshift. Coupled with the slick-shifting 6-speed gearbox, which gets a Quickshifter+ function, the 390 Duke continues to be a fun motorcycle to push around with a hint of raw performance like the first gen model. We managed to hit a speedo-indicated 160kmph on Bajaj's test track. The vibrations are noticeable at higher revs but we didn't mind it

**THE 390 DUKE CONTINUES TO BE A FUN
MOTORCYCLE TO PUSH HARD WITH A HINT OF
RAW PERFORMANCE LIKE THE FIRST-GEN MODEL**





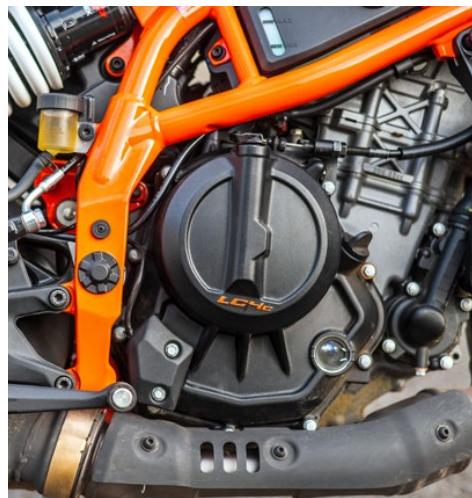
CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: The new five-inch TFT instrument console gets a dedicated Track screen. The LED DRLs add to the overall muscular look of the streetfighter. The tail lamp is sleeker compared to its predecessor. The switchgear is new and impresses with its quality and tactility



much, as it makes the streetfighter's motor feel more characterful.

Just like its design, the chassis has been thoroughly updated too. It now sits on a steel trellis frame with an aluminium subframe and gets a new curved swingarm. The offset monoshock has allowed KTM to tightly package the motorcycle. As a result, the wheelbase is now shorter by 3mm while the ground clearance has gone up by 33mm, compared to its predecessor. The India-spec model will get a shorter 800mm seat height, while the 820mm seat might be available as an option in the future. The seat itself is firm but doesn't feel uncomfortable at any point. You get a wide handlebar and the rear-set footpegs mean you sit in a forward-biased position. While the overall ergonomics are sorted, taller riders might feel slightly cramped in the saddle.

What stays the same though is the brilliant agility the 390 Duke is known for. Making quick direction changes is as easy as cutting through butter with a



ABOVE: The biggest highlight of the new engine is the improved tractability which makes the 390 Duke a lot more usable in the city

MAKING QUICK DIRECTION CHANGES IS AS EASY AS CUTTING THROUGH BUTTER WITH A HOT KNIFE, AND IT GETS ADDICTIVE





ABOVE: The new 390 Duke impresses with its stability in corners. **BELLOW:** The fully adjustable suspension plays a major role in the dynamics of the new Duke as you can now set them to your preference. **BOTTOM:** The disc brake is now directly mounted on the wheel spokes and helps reduce the overall unsprung mass

hot knife, and it gets addictive after a point. Also helping matters is the reduced unsprung mass, thanks to the redesigned alloys which get hollow hubs and lesser spoke count to save weight. The upside-down forks are 5-step adjustable for compression and rebound damping, while you get 10-step preload adjustability for the monoshock along with 5-step rebound damping. In its stock settings, the suspensions do a good job of soaking up bumps with a slight underlying firmness. The braking is impressive too, with a 320mm front and a 240mm rear disc offering ample feel, bite and stopping power for the lightweight motorcycle.

With prices starting at ₹ 3.11 lakh, ex-showroom, the new model is around ₹ 12,000 dearer compared to its predecessor, which makes it a steal in our books, considering how much has changed on the third-generation model. To conclude, the all-new 390 Duke takes forward all the positive traits of its predecessors while bringing back the aggressive nature of the first generation model. This besides offering a premium ride experience you see on larger capacity motorcycles. Despite facing a lot more competition now, the 390 Duke continues to be one of the most value for money performance streetfighters on sale in India. **tc**



[REVIEW]

WORDS HALLEY PRABHAKAR

PHOTOGRAPHY TVS MOTOR

TVS APACHE RTR 310

Is the TVS Apache RTR 310 brilliant enough to take the RTR legacy forward?



Since its launch in 2005, TVS' Apache has become one of the most well-liked motorcycles in its category, enjoying a sizable fan base. The model has sold more than five million units over the years, making it a genuine success. The motorcycle has since increased in size and capability, and the brand-new Apache RTR 310 has been introduced just in time for its 18th birthday. We flew to Bangkok to test out the most recent streetfighter on both the road and the track.

Despite sharing the same platform as the RR 310, launched six years ago, the RTR 310 took longer to come to reality. As a result, the motorcycle now has a lot more contemporary features and styling. For instance, the aesthetic is current and draws inspiration from the most recognisable streetfighters from around the world. It's an in-house design, and it looks good. Wide dual LED headlamps and edgy surrounds with a cyborg theme are mounted on the front. These headlamps are adaptive based on speed and ambient

lighting conditions. This gives the bike a larger-than-life appearance, especially when seen from the front. The face has a lot of personality thanks to the perfectly integrated DRLs. In fact, the face is so cool that it's even used as an abstract print on TVS' official tees.

View it from the side, and the outside tank panels fit together perfectly and are a suitable size. While the subframe is substantial and adds mass to the rear section, the trellis chassis is exposed well and painted in white to stand out even more. The wheels are likewise finished in two different hues, and the rear receives a red or yellow paint treatment depending on the shade selected. The dual-tone colours also add to the style. The wheel has an entirely new 8-spoke design and is more aggressively styled than the RR. In contrast to the RR 310, split seats are standard, and the pillion seat sits lower and flatter, making it much more useable. The fact that it is a naked motorbike does not mean that there is no mass underneath the tank; rather, TVS' designers included a sleek engine cowl and distinctive radiator surrounds. Equally intriguing

TVS APACHE RTR 310

- **Engine:** 312.12cc liquid-cooled single-cylinder
- **Power:** 35.6PS @ 9,700rpm
- **Torque:** 28.7Nm @ 7,500rpm
- **Weight:** 169kg
- **Gearbox:** 6-speed manual
- **Price:** ₹ 2.44 lakh ex-showroom



is the back, where the twin-LED tail lamp has been updated from the Apache's iconic appearance. During hard braking the lamps flash to alert other road users behind you. The wheel hugger, which includes the rear number plate holder and blinkers, is another nice feature. Remove the hugger and the RTR 310 is stunt ready and one won't need to install a tail tidy kit.

The 312cc motor from the RR 310, which has an established track record, powers the RTR 310. However, the engineers were able to get greater performance out of this engine and added a lighter forged aluminium piston. As a result, the motorcycle's maximum power has increased from 34PS to 35.6PS at 9,700 rpm, while peak torque has increased by almost 1.5Nm to 28.7Nm and is now available further down the rpm range. To provide improved acceleration, the rear sprocket size has increased by four teeth, and the throttle body has been modified. Similar to the RR 310, there are four riding modes to choose from: Urban, Rain, Sport, and Track. The RTR is true to its moniker, and the motor

seems far more responsive than the RR right away. However, it will take some time to get used to its power delivery. The motor only wants to rev up even while utilising the more tranquil Urban mode. It is, however, stunter friendly.

It accelerates quickly, reaching 60kmph in a claimed 2.81 seconds, quicker than the RR and comparable to the best in the market. However, the claimed dash to the tonne is a tad slower than its faired sibling at 7.19s. On the RTR, the engine has a radically different personality and fits the restless motif. Give it some gas, and it will reward the rider with excellent performance; it is also an exceptional tourer thanks to its ability to cruise at triple digit speeds with ease. Despite the RTR 310's claimed top speed of 150kmph, I eventually pushed it to 160kmph on the clock. The motor appears less smooth than the RR, despite its remarkable performance, and it would have been good if the harshness and vibrations were more muffled.

The RTR has excellent dynamics, and both on





ABOVE: The Apaches are known for their sharp handling, and this characteristic is amplified on the new RTR 310.

BELLOW: The headlamp and tail lamp are all-LED affairs and look like no other motorcycle currently on sale in India which will set it apart on the road, especially in the bright yellow shade of our test bike!

the racetrack and in town, its sporty frame contributes to exceptional flickability. The shortened wheelbase, altered rake angle, and excellent line-holding of the bike all contribute to a quicker turn-in, as does the riding position. Kudos to TVS for continuing to offer the Michelin Road 5 tyres as standard equipment that significantly improves the handling. Although, we did not test the base model with non-adjustable suspension (the RTR we rode had fully adjustable KYB suspension). The setup handled undulations and some melted pavement rumblers admirably on both an uneven roadway and a bumpy track. However, we will have to ride it back home over potholes and broken surfaces before commenting on the overall ride. Straight line stability is good too and the RTR felt solid even at speeds above 140kmph.

Long lists of features are now a trademark of TVS, and the RTR 310 is no exception. All of the features found on the RR 310 and even more are available in the instrument cluster. It has a 5-inch TFT screen, but in a landscape orientation, unlike the RR. There is a lot of information shown, such as performance metrics, tyre



pressure, and Bluetooth caller information. Another choice is to link to and control a compatible GoPro. While Bluetooth and the SmartXonnect software may be used to connect the cluster to a phone or a helmet communication device, it would have been wonderful to see the navigation capability include a map function.

The Dynamic Pro kit provides first-in-segment cornering ABS, cornering cruise control, and cornering traction control, among other safety features. It is the first motorcycle manufactured in India to be equipped with Motorcycle Stability Control (MSC), or as TVS calls it, Race Tuned Dynamic Stability Control (RT DSC), which has been developed in partnership with Bosch. While touring on the smooth Thai highways, the cruise control option was quite useful and effective. It can be quickly initiated by pushing a designated button, and the function can also be toggled to set a speed or resume. The other feature that is probably seen for the first time in the world on a motorcycle from the factory is the climate control seat. Peltier technology

is used in the rider seat to cool or heat the seat by up to 15 degrees. Even with riding pants on, you can still feel the cooling, which is impressive given that we tested it in Bangkok's hot weather. The heater also functions well, however, it would be advisable to try it in a place with lower temperatures. Since the rest of the seat is amply padded, the stiffness of the thermoelectric plate area didn't seem to have an impact on overall comfort.

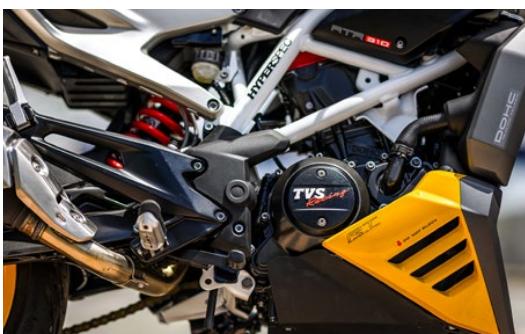
The TVS Apache RTR 310 finally gives Apache loyalists looking for a more powerful motorcycle in the 300cc class an option that will primarily be used for street riding and touring. The RTR is priced well too and undercuts the RR by almost thirty thousand but can go up if specced to offer all the features using the BTO platform. It looks international, is built well and offers a wealth of features too. The starting price of ₹ 2.43 lakh, ex-showroom also makes it one of the most affordable offerings in the segment. This 'freestyler', as TVS likes to call it, is definitely a tempting proposition that promises to take the RTR legacy forward. **tc**

THE DYNAMIC PRO KIT PROVIDES FIRST-IN-SEGMENT CORNERING ABS, CORNERING CRUISE CONTROL AND CORNERING TRACTION CONTROL





ABOVE: The TVS Apache RTR 310 has all of the features found on bikes a segment or two above at a price that makes it exceptional value. BELOW LEFT: TVS has managed to find more performance from the same engine that debuted on the RR 310. BELOW RIGHT: Rolling on interesting 8-spoke alloys, the RTR 310 is the herald of a brave new world for TVS



WORDS **RITESH PATIL**

PHOTOGRAPHY **SIDDHANT GADEKAR**

RIVER INDIE

*The newest player in the premium e-scooter segment has
a few unique tricks up its sleeve!*



RIVER INDIE

- **Engine:** PMSM
- **Battery Pack:** 4kWh
- **Power:** 9.1PS
- **Torque:** 26Nm
- **Range:** 161km (ARAI)
- **Weight:** 140kg
- **Top Speed:** 90kmph
- **Price:** ₹ 1.45 lakh ex-showroom (estimated)



With EVs, manufacturers have a chance to try and create something different from the conventional vehicles we are used to seeing on the road. And as is evident, homegrown startups have managed to do that pretty well. Joining the bandwagon is River, a Bengaluru-based startup, with its first electric scooter, the Indie. It calls it the SUV of scooters, but to be called that, the Indie needs to fulfil a few parameters, like having butch looks, decent practicality, a reasonably powerful powertrain and good ride quality. Does the River Indie manage to do that? Let's find out.

In terms of looks, it is quite distinct compared to other electric scooters in our market, the primary reason being its boxy proportions and wide 14-inch wheels which lends the electric scooter a butch stance. It starts at the front which gets twin LED headlamps and metal fall protectors on each side. Move on to the sides and you'll see the pannier mounts, which apart from holding a 20-litre pannier box each, add more ruggedness to the design. The rear looks simple with a large LED tail lamp taking the centre stage. So, as far as looks go, it certainly is one of the highlights of the River Indie.

Speaking of the features, you get a six-inch colour LCD that looks crisp but is not a touchscreen unit. There is no connected tech either, however, there's an optional phone mount accessory on offer that allows you to mount your phone on the handle bar. Speaking of accessories, the River Indie offers a huge amount of customisation options.

As it is, there is plenty of storage space, like the 12-litre lockable box in the front apron which gets a USB charging port, a spacious floorboard and segment-leading 43 litres of underseat storage. This can be expanded by another 40 litres with the pannier boxes and not just that, you also get an option of a 25-litre top box that can be mounted on the rear grab handle. To further aid practicality, there are smart accessory options such as a detachable floor cage, for example, that helps you keep your stuff in place and there's even front footpegs for you to rest your foot on when there's no space on the floorboard. You also get park assist that further adds to the convenience. Since we were riding the initial batch of scooters, there were a few niggles in terms of the finish which should be ironed out in the production version. The overall quality was quite satisfactory though, especially considering this is the first product from the two year-old startup.

The River Indie gets a 9.1PS mid-drive motor and



TOP: The six-inch negative LCD looks crisp but could do with more brightness. ABOVE: 0-80 percent charge takes five hours with the supplied 800 watt portable charger

a 4kWh battery pack with a claimed true range of 120km on a single charge. There are three ride modes on offer - Eco, Ride and Rush. The claimed top speed is 90kmph in Rush mode. In reality though, we could only hit a speedo-indicated top speed of 84kmph. While the initial acceleration is quick, it tends to taper off post 60kmph, so quick overtakes at high speeds require planning. We liked how the Eco mode doesn't feel as laid back as its rivals though, and is totally usable in the city. The Ride mode feels like the default mode to use as it finds the right balance between Eco and Rush. The regen levels are non adjustable but feel natural and are easy to get familiar with. So, as long as you are not looking for outright performance, the River Indie is a good choice as a city hauler.

Speaking of range, we started the day with around 90 percent charge with the LCD showing a range of 108kms. After riding it for a couple of hours in and around Nandi hills, we had 40 percent charge left with around 45km of range available in Eco mode. River says you can charge the Indie from 0-80 percent in five hours with the supplied 800 watt charger and the scooter also supports fast charging. The seating comfort is another highlight on the River Indie. The seat is one of the largest we have seen on any scooter and thanks to the wide floorboard, it is easy to find a comfortable riding posture.

The River Indie is an eager handler, courtesy of the low centre of gravity as a result of the battery pack being





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The River Indie impresses on the handling front. It gets segment-leading 43 litres of underseat storage, and if that was not enough, you also get an additional 12 litres of storage area in the front apron

placed in the floorboard. In fact, it might be a little too eager for a normal user, as the scooter tends to change directions with the slightest inputs to the handlebar. The front telescopic forks and twin shock absorbers at the rear do an impressive job of absorbing bumps and the Indie remains stable at high speeds, which makes you wish there was more performance on offer, as the chassis certainly feels capable. At 140kg, the River Indie has some heft to it which can be felt during low speed manoeuvring. As expected, there is ample grip on offer from the 14-inch tyres and you'll have fun pushing the Indie in corners. We did take the scooter for some mild off-roading, after all it is called the SUV of scooters! The 165mm ground clearance proved more than enough in those conditions and the suspension too didn't bottom out. It impresses on

the braking front as well, equipped with disc brakes at both ends and a combi braking system. The brakes are sharp with a strong bite and gets the scooter to a halt in no time.

While the Indie was initially launched at ₹ 1.25 lakh, the prices will be updated due to the revisions in the FAME-II subsidies. We expect it to be priced around ₹ 1.45 lakh, ex-showroom. The SUV angle aside, the River Indie is a valiant effort towards making an electric scooter that stands apart from the rest. It looks distinct, has enough features and offers unique customisation options. The powertrain is sufficiently powerful and it impresses on the dynamic front too. It has the capability to be a rugged workhorse and look good while doing it. That makes the River Indie a special scooter in our books. **tc**

[FEATURE]

WORDS **ARJUN PARMAR**
PHOTOGRAPHY **ABHISHEK YADAV**

ROOF-TOP FESTIVITIES

The world's highest festival is back and better than before!





The Outback Festival was back for round two. A great success in its first iteration, the world's highest adventure music festival was all set to come around again in Stok, just outside of Leh in the middle of September, and Harley-Davidson joined forces with us at Xplorearth to take a group of Pan Americas up to the venue for the occasion.

Himachal had been devastated by the monsoon over the past few months. Entire mountainsides had been washed away, and the loss of life and property had been both swift and cruel – as things like this tend to go. The development in the region, particularly the new highway to Manali, had been absolutely obliterated in places, and the tourists earlier flocking to the region were advised to stay home for the foreseeable future. All those going to Leh were advised to fly in or take the long route through Srinagar, avoiding the destruction along the main highway from Manali. All this was openly available information, spread far and wide by the mainstream media.

What was not being shouted from the rooftops however was of far more interest to us at Xplorearth. The roads to Manali and beyond were as close to empty as they've been in the past 20 years, with the fear mongering at an all time high. A largely tourism-driven economy was suffering like it hadn't in decades, peak season having been reduced to absolute nothingness. If one bothered to do their homework, it was clear that the main road was completely operational, albeit a little worse for wear at points – a far more gorgeous approach to Leh than through the sweltering plains of Punjab and Jammu.

So keeping all of that in mind, the group of Pan Ams congregated in Manali two days prior to the festival, with a number of goals in mind. First of all, we wanted to take an adventure bike and do adventure bike things, taking on the damaged roads, high altitude and everything else that came along with it, on our way to an adventure festival. Secondly, we wanted to help out our friends en route – the local hotels, dhabas and the like – partners in all of our adventures and often saviours to boot, the least we



TOP: The festival enthralled enthusiasts of all ages. BELOW: It isn't called the world's highest motorcycling-music festival without reason! BELOW RIGHT: Harley's badges of honour can only be earned!



could do was provide these people business in their time of need.

Keeping that in mind, a band of merry men set off down the road towards Leh. A night in Jispa came first, with the aim to help everyone acclimatise. The following morning we set off early and made short work of the largely tarmac roads and surmounted the iconic passes en route to our destination. Routine stops were made at Sarchu and Sonam's dhaba at Pang. The altitude is always a tricky customer to deal with, and the road work roughly between Lachalung La and Pang provided a stern off-road test. We even got some changeable weather en route, including sleet and snow, climbing up to Tanglang La, but the Pan Am soldiered on and we rolled into Stok in the dying light of the day.

The following morning marked the start of this year's Outback Festival, which would carry on for the following two days. Hundreds of adventure motorcycle enthusiasts rolled into the venue, seemingly out of thin air (we hadn't seen a soul on our run from Manali to Stok!). The motorcycling and BMX stunt boys had the milling crowd enthralled, and we were treated to talks by the likes of Vijay Thomas and Amit Sadh on all things motorcycles! Music lovers got their fill with BFR Sound System, Taba Chake and many more. Most importantly, this year's edition saw clear skies – a marked improvement from last time out when the cold September rain had decided to play spoilsport. The festival saw a solid mix of local and out-station participation, both in terms of





**HUNDREDS OF ADVENTURE MOTORCYCLE
ENTHUSIASTS ROLLED INTO THE VENUE,
SEEMINGLY OUT OF THIN AIR**





THE BIKING COMMUNITY IS FULL OF PEOPLE
WHO HAVE MADE THEIR NAME IN THE
AMPHITHEATRE OF THE MIGHTY HIMALAYAS

**A GREAT CONCEPT
FOR THOSE
BOUND BY THE
LOVE FOR ALL
THINGS OUTDOORS
ADVENTURE**



TOP RIGHT: A highlight of the festival was the stunt performance with the Hero Xpulse 200 4V. **BELOW:** Every H.O.G. group has unique jackets with interesting badges stitched on



the attending public, the stalls on display and even the performing acts – a great concept for those bound by the love for all things outdoors adventure to come together and have a good time! Despite the revelry on the evening of day one, the Pan Am cohort was up and about early the next morning, riding off to Wari La and beyond for lunch before returning in time to enjoy the second day of the festivities. The group set out early the day after the festival was over, and made for Manali. A stellar group of riders who had their priorities right, on a trusty motorcycle that is yet to surrender in the face of everything we throw at it! We got rain, hail, sleet and snow all the way back but the Pan America chugged along without missing a beat and the adverse conditions only made the hot showers on arrival all the sweeter. Another successful run on Harley's big ADV for the books.

The biking community is full of people who have made their name in the amphitheatre of the mighty Himalayas. They revel in the adulation they receive for traversing these timeless mountains. To those willing and able, I implore – get out on your bikes, ride through the mountains and show all your friends and followers that the same areas that were devastated not so long ago are now healing, even if that kind of news doesn't get the same kind of clicks. Don't haggle with hoteliers, using their weakness in terms of tourist influx as a bargaining chip to save a quick buck. Help the locals back to their feet the same way they've helped travellers during long, difficult journeys for decades and decades now, and remember – every small bit goes a long way! **tc**

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MOTOR SPORT

PASSION ON WHEELS

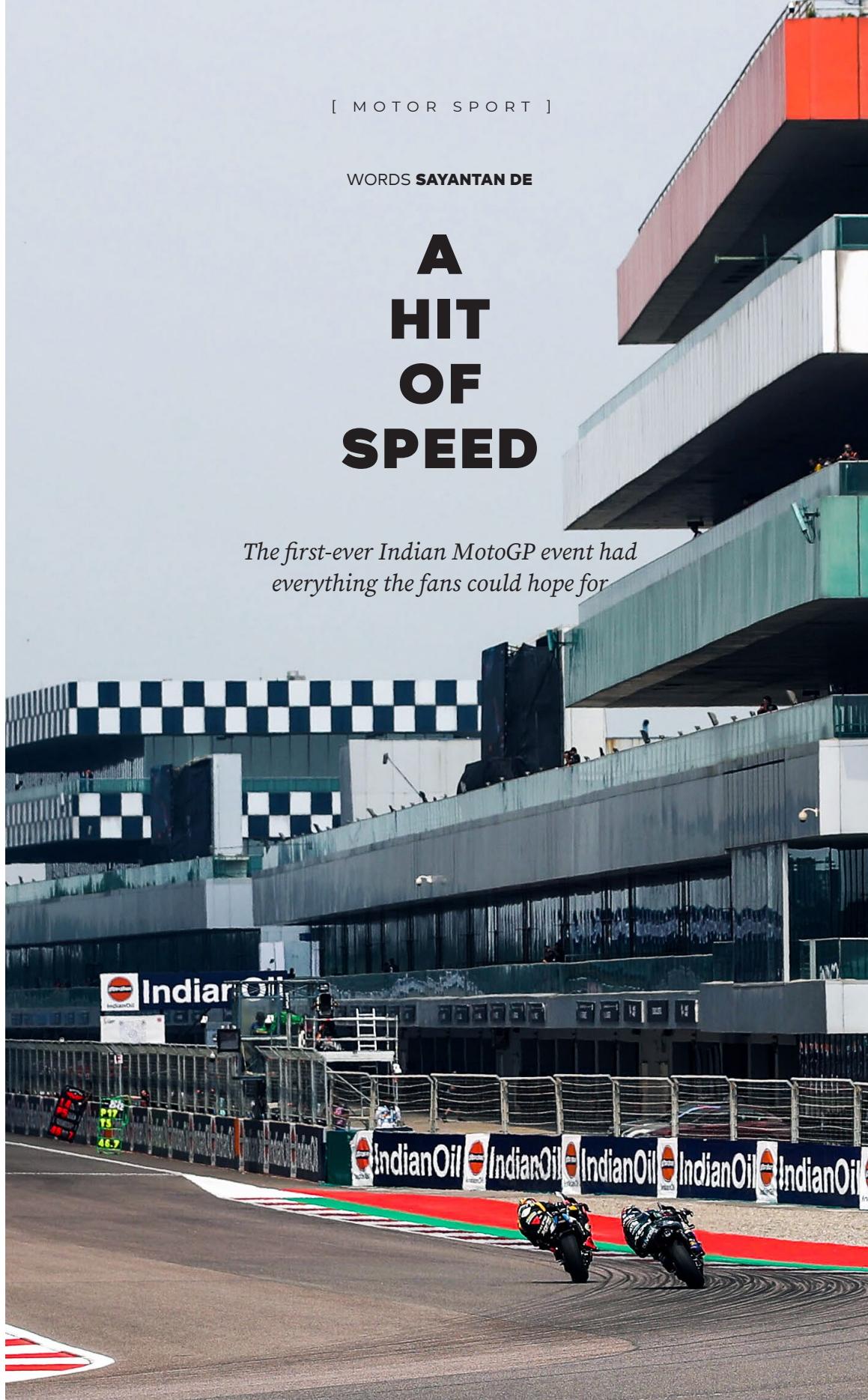
What a time to be an Indian motorsport fan this month! It starts with India's first-ever MotoGP Grand Prix, Jehan Daruvala joins Formula E while TVS Racing debuts its Electric One Make Championship. Also, the wraps are off the new F4 Indian Championship racecar.



WORDS SAYANTAN DE

A HIT OF SPEED

The first-ever Indian MotoGP event had everything the fans could hope for





Back in 2013, Indian motorsport fans were happy, safe in the knowledge that after running successfully for three years, the Indian Grand Prix was set to return in 2015, but as we now know with the advantage of hindsight, the 2013 edition of the Formula 1 race was the last top-tier motorsport event in India for a decade. But the times, they are a-changin' once again for the fans. It started with the Hyderabad E-Prix in February, the first FIA sanctioned Championship event since that 2013 Formula 1 race and now, we've witnessed the first-ever MotoGP race in India, the Grand Prix of India! Kudos to the organisers, Fairstreet Sports, who pulled off the biggest motorsport event in our country this year.

And what a race it was, the maiden MotoGP Grand Prix of India — Marco Bezzecchi came out on top, putting the VR46 team owned by the Doctor himself, Valentino Rossi on the top step of the podium after becoming the first-ever pole-sitter for

the Grand Prix of India. It is only fitting considering the number of Rossi fans we have in India, if the number of '46' stickers on two-wheelers is anything to go by! The real drama was reserved for the battle for second place though, as it came down to the wire between Jorge Martin and Fabio Quartararo, with the Spaniard barely managing to hold on to the second place before suffering the effects of heat exhaustion and had to be attended to by the MotoGP medical team. The drama didn't end there as championship leader Francesco Bagnaia crashed out of the race in spectacular fashion, throwing the race for the championship wide open.

The heat was well and truly on, as apart from an average of 35 degree Celsius ambient temperatures, the Moto2 race got red-flagged as well due to a massive pileup triggered by Jeremy Alcoba. Pedro Acosta came out on top after the restart. Further down the tier, Honda managed to score a 1-2 podium with Jaume Masia taking the chequered flag in the Moto3 race.



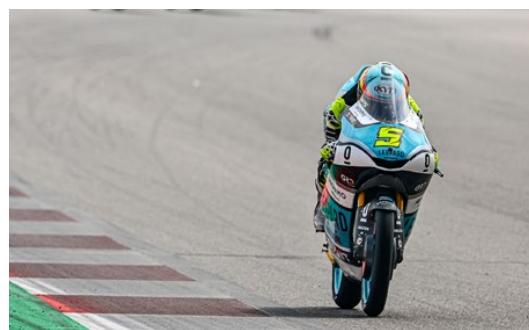
A special mention has to go to KY Ahmed, who was the only Indian rider on the circuit and entered as a wildcard entry for the Petronas MIE Racing Honda team. He rode during the Friday and Saturday practice sessions, but was unable to come within 107 percent of the fastest time and thus was unable to qualify. Before this, he never had a chance to ride the Honda NSF250R used in the Moto3 class before. Nevertheless, it was a historical moment for the Indian presence in the hotly contested international motorsports arena.

As this is the absolute pinnacle of motorcycle racing in the world, Indian celebrities who are associated with motorcycling made an appearance including Ranveer Singh, official brand ambassador for Ducati India as well as John Abraham, official brand ambassador of MotoGP in India. The latter

TOP: Marco Bezzecchi on his way to winning the first-ever MotoGP Grand Prix of India. ABOVE LEFT: Jorge Martin nearly passed out from heat exhaustion after finishing second. LEFT: Fabio Quartararo gave Yamaha fans something to cheer about with a 3rd place finish



ABOVE: KY Ahmed was the only Indian at the circuit, putting in a valiant effort despite this being his first outing in the Honda NSF250R. BELOW: The first-corner pileup forced the Moto2 race to be red-flagged. BOTTOM LEFT: Pedro Acosta rode to victory after the Moto2 race was restarted. BOTTOM RIGHT: Jaume Masia took top honours in the Moto3 class





even managed to get a few laps in, astride a BMW M 1000 RR safety bike. He flagged off the MotoGP race as well. Leaving Bollywood for the cricketers, we had Yuvraj Singh flagging off the Moto2 race, Shikhar Dhawan was there as well, but we would have loved to be in Suresh Raina's shoes, who rode shotgun and also had a chat with none other than Marc Marquez while taking a lap of the circuit onboard a sidecar-equipped Royal Enfield. The riders themselves had their fair share of fun, trying out cricket and basketball. Finally, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath waved the chequered flag as the race came to a close, and presented the winner's trophy to Bezzecchi.

If you missed out on this year's MotoGP Grand Prix of India, fret not as the 2024 calendar has been announced and we are on for the next edition, set to happen between September 20-22, 2024. So, what are you waiting for? Book your plane/train tickets or plan a roadtrip, book your stays, or find friends in Delhi and Noida to crash with, because missing it once is understandable, but missing it twice with a year's notice in advance, well that's on you then, isn't it? See you there next year! **tc**

TOP: Most of the riders loved the technical nature of the BIC.
 LEFT: KTM and Honda fans did not get to see a podium finish from their favourite brands, with KTM's 4th and Honda's 5th place finish at this year's race



TOP LEFT: Suresh Raina riding shotgun with Marc Marquez. TOP RIGHT: John Abraham got a few laps in astride the BMW M 1000 RR. ABOVE: The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath was present at the race. BELOW LEFT: Ranveer Singh posing with the Ducati Desmosedici. BELOW RIGHT: Francesco Bagnaia trying his hand at cricket!



FRESH START

Mahindra Racing has an all-new driver lineup for Formula E Season 10

The positive thing about a new season is that it is essentially a reset to zero for most competitors and Mahindra Racing has taken that quite literally as the team has announced an all-new driver lineup of Nyck de Vries and Edoardo Mortara for Season 10 of the ABB FIA Formula E World Championship. Nyck de Vries needs no introduction as he's the Season 7 world champion and returns to Formula E, having recently done a stint in Formula One with Scuderia AlphaTauri. As for Edoardo Mortara, he's been racing in Formula E since Season 4 and has six wins and 13 podiums in the championship. In fact, he and de Vries have history as title protagonists in Season 7 with the former finishing just seven points behind the latter. While predicting the outcome of Formula E Season 10 is a near impossible, Mahindra Racing hopes to improve upon what was a difficult first season in the new Gen3 era back in Season 9.



ABOVE: Nyck de Vries and Edoardo Mortara share an interesting history in Formula E as title protagonists in Season 7 with the former clinching the title by just seven points

STEPPING UP

Jehan Daruvala heads into the electric racing space with Maserati MSG Racing



The big news for the Indian presence in Formula E continues to flow in as Jehan Daruvala will step up from F2 to race for Maserati MSG Racing in Season 10 of the ABB FIA Formula E World Championship. Daruvala will be the second Indian to race in Formula E after Karun Chandhok and the third Indian to race in an FIA World Car Racing Championship. Daruvala brings with him plenty of junior racing experience with four wins and 18 podiums in Formula 2. For Season 10, he will be partnered with Maximilian Günther, who's already had five seasons in Formula E, amassing four wins in the process. The pair will kick off Season 10 for Formula E with pre-season testing at Valencia from October 23-27, 2023, before they go racing in Mexico for the season opener, scheduled for January 13, 2024.



WORDS **GAURAV DAVARE**

FIRST BLOOD

TVS Racing spearheads India's first-ever electric two-wheeler racing championship

They say the early bird gets the worm, and TVS Racing is doing exactly with the electric two-wheeler racing space. The racing team has revealed its maiden TVS Racing Electric One Make Championship (e-OMC), marking a historic moment as being the first-ever electric two-wheeler racing championship in India. What's more, the 8-rider grid hand-picked by TVS Racing debuted these electric racing machines at the Madras International Circuit in the fourth round of the Indian National Motorcycle Racing Championship.

The machinery used is the TVS Apache RTE (Racing Throttle Electric) race motorcycle that will be powered by a liquid-cooled electric motor. Other highlights include a carbon-fibre battery case that also acts as a stressed member of the chassis, Öhlins front and rear suspension, a Brembo braking system that comprises a 320mm front disc, radial calipers and Pirelli SuperCorsa tyres. Even the chassis and wheels are made from carbon-fibre.

The inaugural invitation had Chiranth Vishwanath take top honours ahead of Sarthak Chavan in second place, with Jagan Kumar finishing third. **tc**



WORDS **GAURAV DAVARE**

F4 UNWRAPPED

Your first look at the F4 Indian Championship racing machine

As we get closer to the inaugural season of the F4 Indian Championship, the single-seater race car has officially broken cover. The car has been shod in the Indian tricolour livery with a blue stripe running along the sides.

Diving deeper into the racing machinery the racers will use, these are FIA-spec, halo-equipped second-generation Mygale F4 cars that have been used in the French F4 championship since 2022. They run four-cylinder engines pushing up to 180PS, paired with a SADEV gearbox. MP Motorsport will be the exclusive technical partner for this championship as part of a multi-year deal with Racing Promotions Private Limited (RPPL).

As for the championship, it is set to comprise a 12-car grid with 15 races being spread across a 5-round season. The big pull for the F4 Indian Championship however is that it will award FIA Super License points. The top seven overall finishers will get these points

in the format starting from 12 points to one. The overall winner will also be offered a full scholarship to participate in the 2024 Indian Formula Regional championship.

The calendar is tentatively slated to flag off at the Hyderabad Street Circuit on November 05 and conclude at the Chennai Formula Racing Circuit on December 10. **tc**



TAIL ENDERS

TALES IN THE END

Ritesh and Saneet get acquainted with the newest members of the fleet, the Hyundai Exter and Renault Triber. "Thou shalt be missed, dear Hyundai i20 N Line", says Ed, while Ben is loving the attention the Maruti Suzuki Jimny garners. We take a look at the latest Apple products to hit the market.



WORDS **RITESH PATIL**

HYUNDAI EXTER

Big surprises crammed into a small package

Our in-house video editor, Rohan, broke his leg while playing football and the next thing I know I have been handed over the keys of the Hyundai Exter! Actually, I asked for it, citing the reason that I could pick up and drop him off to and from office (wink wink!). The real reason though, was to check out why everyone in the office, including Ed, were so impressed with the Exter. Also, getting to drive the newest entrant in the fleet is an opportunity I didn't want to miss!

Unlike most recent Hyundai cars, the Exter's design

doesn't take much time to grow on you. It gets an upright front and rear-end, flat bonnet, roof rails and black cladding all around to give it an SUV character. Being a fairly new offering in the market there are not many of these on the road yet, so it does garner quite a bit of attention.

Every time I had a new passenger in the car, be it my parents or friends, they were surprised by the list of features packed in this small car. No points for guessing what the fan favourite feature was - the sunroof! The Exter has the ability to make you feel like you are sitting in a more expensive car, a trait I feel, would be

GARAGE UPDATE

- **Total:** 2,965km ► **This Month:** 651km ► **Fuel:** 44.58 litres ► **Mileage:** 14.6kmpl
- **Pros:** Loaded with features, surprisingly spacious ► **Cons:** Front row seats miss out on adjustable headrests

highly appreciated by first-time buyers. Special mention to the air-conditioning system on the Exter which cools the cabin in no time. I appreciate the large window area which, apart from making the cabin feel airy, provides brilliant all-round visibility.

Looking at its size, one would assume the Exter to feel cramped on the inside. But here again it surprised me! In a couple of days, Siddhant had joined the carpool with Saneet being an occasional guest. The four of us were more than comfortable in the car and there was no rubbing of shoulders. The suspension gobbles up most of the road imperfections with ease but tends to bog down a bit at the rear when the car is fully packed.

The 1.2-litre Kappa engine in our long term Exter is paired to a five-speed manual gearbox. Despite heavy traffic on my everyday route to the office, I didn't mind shifting gears thanks to the light clutch and short throws of the gearbox. The engine is refined and has enough low end grunt to close gaps in bumper-to-bumper traffic. I personally would've liked more performance, though. And Hyundai can easily fix that by plonking in the 1.0-litre T-GDi under the hood. An N Line version would be the cherry on top!

My first impressions are that the Exter is an impressive city car. While I have been mainly using it to pick-up and drop Rohan off, I do plan to take it on an outstation trip (probably to Mumbai) soon, to test its highway capabilities. Maybe Rohan needs to seek a second opinion about his fractured leg in Mumbai, would be a good reason to seek permission, no? **tc**



TOP: Driving the five-speed manual wasn't an issue in the traffic, thanks to the short throws and light clutch. **ABOVE:** The sunroof is one of the many features on the Exter previously unseen on a car of its size!



WORDS **SANEET DSILVA**

RENAULT TRIBER

When versatility meets utility

Amidst the world of MPVs, where versatility meets practicality, the Renault Triber emerges as a shining star in our long-term fleet. During our short time with this MPV, it has become an instant favourite as the support car for our shoots. The reasons behind this preference can be attributed to its exceptional spaciousness.

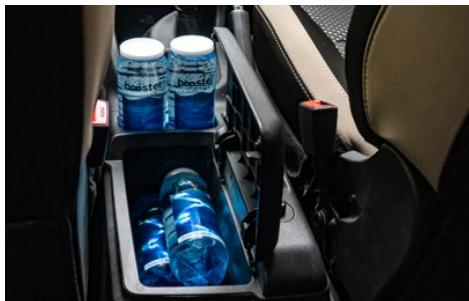
At first glance, the Triber presents itself as a seven-seater, but it doesn't stop there. Most cars in its category would simply offer the option to fold down the rear seats to make room for equipment or

luggage. However, the Triber takes it a step further by introducing removable modular third-row seats. This feature transforms it into a cargo-hauling powerhouse, effortlessly accommodating all our camera equipment with room to stash in our photographers as well! Fold down the last row of seats, and the Triber transforms into a cavernous cargo carrier that seems almost unreal for a sub-4-metre car. However, once the last row is removed in just two easy steps, the cargo space becomes a cavernous 625 litres.

Our shoots often kick off in the early morning, providing the ideal opportunity to put the Triber

GARAGE UPDATE

- **Total:** 1,963km ► **This Month:** 323km ► **Fuel:** 24.65 litres ► **Mileage:** 13.1kmpl
- **Pros:** Very spacious and ergonomic ► **Cons:** Instrument console layout feels dated



TOP: The eight-inch infotainment touchscreen supports Android Auto and Apple CarPlay.

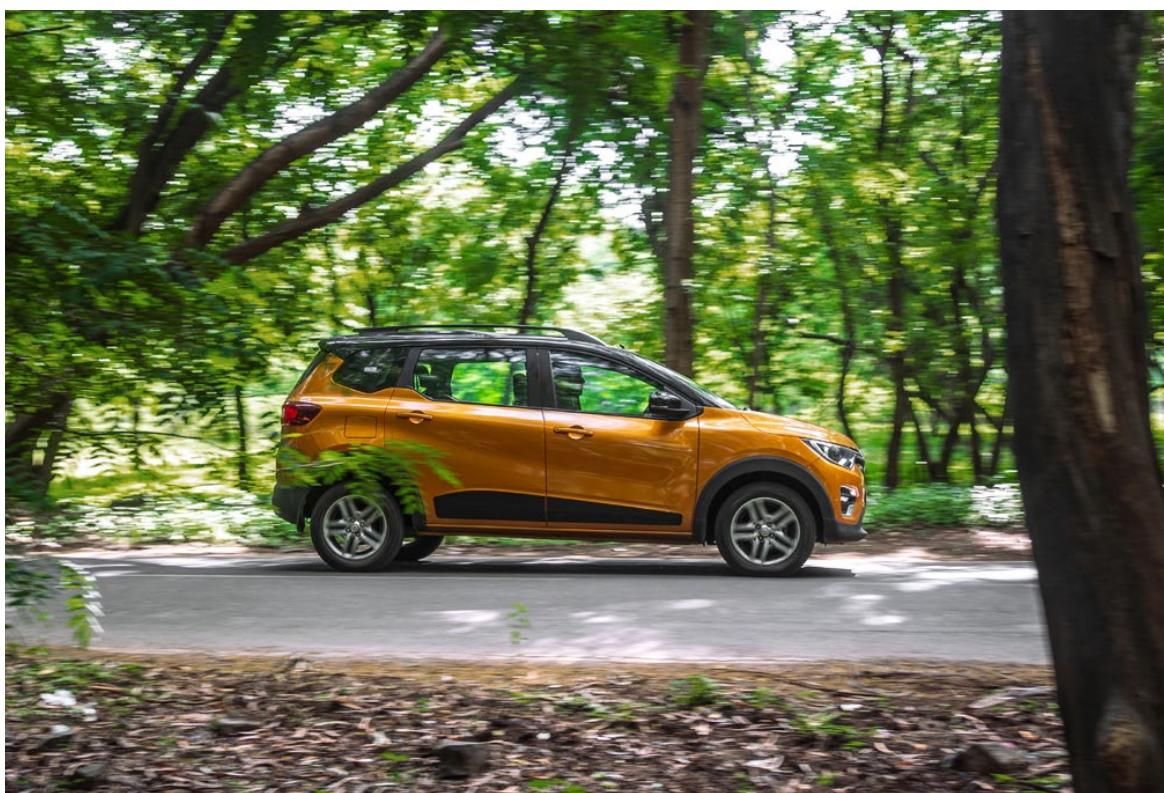
ABOVE: It even gets a cooled storage box!

BELOW: The Triber impresses with its cleverly packaged three-row seating layout

through its paces. It is equipped with a 1.0-litre engine that delivers 72PS of power and 96Nm of torque, mated to an AMT gearbox. Despite a slight lag during gear shifts typical of AMT systems, the Triber remains undaunted in fulfilling its tracking duties. The simple way to mitigate the lag is to shift into Manual mode and take control of the gearshifts. And the Triber obliges! While it's rare for the Triber to upshift autonomously, it seamlessly downshifts as you decelerate. However, the real highlight, which is "underrated" according to our camera crew, is the suspension tuning. The French automaker has set up the Triber's suspension to conquer the challenging terrain that Indian roads have to offer. It exhibits stability at higher speeds while easily absorbing bumps and undulations, facilitating smooth shoot sessions. Though the steering lacks enthusiasm, it efficiently fulfills its role.

The Triber interior impresses with its ergonomic layout and abundant space. Features such as the cooled storage compartment in the centre console and separate fan control significantly enhance the crew's comfort during long shoot days. The inclusion of Android Auto and Apple CarPlay is a welcome addition to this segment, catering to the modern needs of today's users. The Triber's ergonomic prowess and practicality truly make it the quintessential do-it-all car priced under ₹ 10 lakh.

In conclusion, the Renault Triber stands out as an exceptional choice for those seeking an all-encompassing vehicle. Its seamless transition between passenger and workhorse roles, efficient performance, and thoughtful interior features solidify its status as the ideal support car for our photo shoots. **tc**





WORDS ABHAY VERMA

HYUNDAI I20 N LINE

Bidding adieu to what was unanimously voted our favourite long termer!

The i20 N Line will go down in history as one of the most special test cars to have been part of the TURBOCHARGED garage! Obviously, a big reason behind the same is the erm...the turbocharged petrol engine under its hood. But jokes apart, the 1.0-litre, three-cylinder turbocharged petrol engine is what made it everyone's favourite in the office over the past year. With 120PS on tap and its kind of linear power delivery, the i20 N Line was the car almost all team members (me included!) preferred driving around town over the bigger and

more powerful cars we've had in our long term fleet! Okay, it may not be a hot hatch going by the textbook definition of the word, but the N Line version of the i20 has been one of the most exciting hatchbacks to get launched in the country in a while.

Besides the stonker of an engine it is powered by, the well-tuned suspension and the weighted and more responsive steering are what made it a favourite in the office. There were numerous instances when I've left the office late at night and preferred driving the i20 N Line back home over sedans and SUVs to make the most of the empty streets! It's a hoot to drive and

GARAGE UPDATE

- **Total:** 14,457km ► **Previous:** 13,894km ► **This Month:** 563km ► **Fuel:** 38.56 litres ► **Mileage:** 14.6kmpl
- **Pros:** Sporty dynamics, punchy motor ► **Cons:** Takes time to get used to the iMT gearbox

handles the way a performance hatchback should, and also sounds sporty enough to make you roll the windows down and break into a smile on a late night sortie. Admittedly though, despite the convenience it offers in traffic, I wasn't a fan of the iMT or clutchless manual transmission. My biggest grouse was the effort required to change gears when driving spiritedly. This also meant that gearshifts take a fraction of a second more than conventional, three-pedal manual transmissions.

Good news though is that you can now have the i20 N Line with a three-pedal manual as Hyundai has finally launched that version! Besides the gearbox the i20 N Line hasn't really given me or anyone else a chance to complain though. It's got a great mix of space, features and of course, it also looks brilliant. In fact, I've always been conflicted whether I like the i20 N Line more in the blue with red accents or our test car, this white with red accents! The sharp design looks fresh even two years after the car was launched and the N Line is still one of the best looking hatchbacks in the country in my opinion. And despite its sporty intent, the car has also returned favourable fuel efficiency numbers. This, of course, when not giving it the stick, something we were always tempted to do! Thou shalt be missed, dear i20 N Line! **tc**



TOP: We just had to slap some TURBOCHARGED stickers onto the i20 N Line! **ABOVE:** The N Line-specific grille accentuates the car's visual appeal in heaps. **BELOW:** The i20 N Line's side profile looks sporty, especially thanks to the wheels and red accents exclusive to the N Line - even two years after its launch it screams sportiness!





WORDS BENJAMIN GRACIAS

MARUTI SUZUKI JIMNY

It can be the spice to your mundane daily commutes

“It’s the new Gypsy” yelled the young man behind me, astride a motorcycle with his wife riding pillion and a kid on the fuel tank. While I could refute his observation, there was no getting away from his infectious enthusiasm so much so that I slowed down and allowed him to pass, in order for him to take in the vibrant Yellow-hued Jimny. And he did! Craning his neck and a wide grin plastered across his happy mug.

It isn’t a one-off encounter either. The Jimny encourages such behaviour. I once had a youngster driving ahead slow down and give me a thumbs up. As I passed him, I saw a familiar grin as I waved back. I reckon the Kinetic Yellow shade is a major contributor to the Jimny’s street presence. Then there is the iconic slab-sided bodywork and compact

dimensions which seem to surprise all. It reminds me of the *Hot Wheels* toys I grew up playing with and I like to think that’s the reason the Jimny is adored by many. It invokes nostalgia!

It is hardly surprising that kids love it too. A preschooler in my neighborhood squeals with delight whenever he sees the Jimny during his daily walks. He was overjoyed when I plopped him in the driver’s seat and he refused to leave much to the chagrin of his mother. Driving the Jimny too is a far cry away from your mundane commuters. You sit higher than others, with a bird’s eye view of all around you. I feel we need more cars and bikes like the Jimny. One that evokes joy, bliss, contentment and other optimistic feelings. Like the geriatric gent taking time from his daily mundane routine to admire the Jimny. Vehicles like the Jimny adds flavour to your life! **tc**

GARAGE UPDATE

- **Total:** 2,201km ► **Previous:** 1,350km ► **This Month:** 851km ► **Fuel:** 85.1 litres ► **Mileage:** 10kmpl
- **Pros:** Eye-catching looks, easy to park! ► **Cons:** It is strictly a four-seater

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APPLE WATCH ULTRA 2

The Ultra 2 gets a faster S9 chip and also features gesture control. Its titanium body now houses a brighter screen, now at 3,000 nits, making it the brightest-ever Apple Watch. It gets a new Action button on the left of the body as well.

₹ 89,900
apple.com



APPLE IPHONE 15 SERIES

The iPhone 15 series brings in the USB port to iPhones for the first time and the 15 gets the A16 Bionic chip from the 14 Pro whereas the 15 Pro / Pro Max gets the latest A17 Bionic chip and a 5x optical zoom camera. It introduces the Dynamic Island even in the affordable 15 and 15 Plus.

₹ 79,900 onwards (15), ₹ 89,900 onwards (15 Plus)
₹ 1.35 lakh onwards (15 Pro), ₹ 1.60 lakh onwards (15 Pro Max)
apple.com



APPLE WATCH SERIES 9

The Apple Watch Series 9 brings in Double Tap i.e gesture control. It does this by detecting the movements and changes in blood flow. It is also the first carbon-neutral product from Apple.

₹ 41,900 onwards
apple.com



SAMSUNG TV S90C 4K 77-INCH OLED

This is the world's first OLED TV to be validated by PANTONE for delivering a wide range of colours. Samsung is even manufacturing this in India for the entire world. It also packs in a gamer-friendly 144Hz refresh rate!

₹ 4.50 lakh
samsung.com



SAMSUNG ODYSSEY NEO G9 57-INCH

This is the world's first Dual Ultra-High-Definition (DUHD) screen and it packs a blistering 240Hz refresh rate. As good as two 32-inch monitors side-by-side, it has a 32:9 aspect ratio and sports a 1,000R curvature.

₹ 2.25 lakh
samsung.com



MSI STEALTH 16 MERCEDES-AMG MOTORSPORT

Apart from the top-of-the-line hardware such as an Nvidia RTX 40-series mobile GPU and a 14-core i9 processor from Intel, it comes with a designed colour box, a mouse, a mouse pad, a USB drive, a pouch, a collection of postcards and a cable tie.

₹ 2.90 lakh
msi.com



SONY PLAYSTATION PULSE EXPLORE

The Pulse Explore has planar magnetic drivers for an audiophile-level sound quality and packs dual microphones with AI-enhanced noise cancellation. It gets lossless audio as well making it a fantastic buy for audiophiles.

₹ 12,399
sony.com





TIIVRA WINGMAN TACTICAL BAG

Wearing a backpack for carrying a few daily essentials like a wallet, phone and cards on your ride can feel like a drag and thigh bags like the Tiivra Wingman aim to solve this problem. Measuring 30x30.5cm, the thigh bag is made up of 600D Oxford fabric and weighs 290 grams. It has three storage compartments – a main zipper, a smaller outside zip pocket and a mini detachable zipper pocket. The thigh bag offers enough storage to carry all the essentials you'd need on a leisurely Sunday trip. There are two adjustable belts on offer along with a quick-release buckle. Tiivra continues to offer bright colours for its products - the Wingman is available in Black and Yellow.

₹ 1,490

tiivra.com

GEAR AID HEROCLIPS

What you see here is a versatile product called Heroclip by the American company Gear Aid. Heroclip come in handy when you need to hook, hang or carry stuff on your adventure trips like overlanding, camping or even trekking. It is available in four sizes - Mini, Small, Medium and Large, with an approximate load carrying capacity of 18kg, 23kg, 27kg and 45kg, respectively. The hook is capable of 360-degree rotation to aid convenience and gets a rubber foot to make it capable of hanging off any surface. Depending on the size, the Heroclip are capable of hanging everything from your keys, Bluetooth speakers, wetsuits, backpacks to even heavier stuff like kayaks, thanks to the aluminium construction.

₹ 2,920 onwards
bigbadbikes.com





SW-MOTECH 3-5L QUICK LOCK PRO MICRO TANK BAG

The SW-Motech Quick Lock system clicks onto the fuel filler cap bolts, and once it is installed, it takes just a second to attach or detach the tank bag. As the name suggests, this one is compatible with the Quick Lock Pro tank ring, which is sold separately; it is available for bikes ranging from the Bajaj Dominar to Ducati Panigale. The bags are made from durable and UV-resistant 1680D ballistic nylon with a water resistant interior coating apart from a rain cover that comes with it. The bag itself also has a carrying handle, reflective details and even a cable feed-through in case you want to charge something kept inside the bag from a USB port on the motorcycle.

₹ 11,800 (Tank Bag), ₹ 5,600 (PRO Tank Ring)
bigbadbikes.com

VIATERRA RADIATOR GUARD (KTM 250/390 ADVENTURE)

If you own a liquid-cooled adventure motorcycle, getting extra protection for your radiator is of paramount importance. One rock hitting the radiator, flung up by the front tyre, can end your sojourn pretty quickly. Viaterra now have radiator guards for the KTM Adventure duo. It fits both the 250 Adventure and the 390 Adventure. It is made out of mild steel and gets a thick, matte black powder-coating to ensure durability. Viaterra utilises precision laser cutting and CNC bending to get the best finish possible. Moreover, it is plug and play and doesn't require any permanent modification to the motorcycle.

₹ 2,399
viaterragear.com





DSG ADV JACKET AND PANTS

WORDS BENJAMIN GRACIAS

Modular riding gear is one of the coolest inventions in motorcycling. You can pick and choose and customise your riding gear according to your needs and comfort. The DSG ADV riding set is one such innovative example. The jacket and pants set consists of an outer jacket and pant shell and a soft-shell bionic jacket and bionic knee guards underneath.

The outer shells are made of 900D polyester fabric with large 3D mesh panels. Both are designed to allow for unrestricted movement. The jacket has detachable sleeves, large front and back pockets and even a sleeve for a 2-litre hydration bladder, just like an ADV jacket.

Included with the ADV jacket is the bionic jacket which features DSG's FLEXION CE Level 2 armour. It fits well and is quite comfortable. The sleeves are detachable as well.

The pants too are engineered for adventure riding and get leather knee patches for you to grip the fuel tank better. The pant set includes a set of CE Level 2 bionic knee protectors that impress with their ergonomic fit. Overall, it is a fantastic set for adventure riders on a budget.

₹ 9,499 (jacket set), ₹ 7,999 (pant set)

planetdsg.com





ROYAL ENFIELD STREETWIND ECO JACKET

WORDS RITESH PATIL

At first glance, it might look like any other cool-looking riding jacket, but it is a lot more than that! Each Royal Enfield Streetwind Eco jacket is made of 75 recycled PET bottles. Royal Enfield claims it will provide the same level of protection as a normal polyester jacket as it uses 610D polyester Cordura fabric at abrasion zones and there is the usual CE Level 2 protection for the elbow, shoulder and back.

Having used this for a while, I can confirm that it is quite a comfortable jacket! It feels lightweight on the body and I didn't face ventilation issues even on hot and humid days. The 'L' size offers a more relaxed fit on my slim six-foot frame and needed slight adjustment to the cuff and waist area. With the Streetwind Eco jacket, you can ride guilt-free, since it offsets a bit of your carbon footprint!

₹ 5,950

store.royalenfield.com



ROYAL ENFIELD CRAGSMAN GLOVES

WORDS BENJAMIN GRACIAS

When it comes to protecting our fingers, some of us prefer the mental peace offered by leather gloves. The Cragsman gloves are one of the most affordable leather gloves on sale but do not compromise on safety. The goat leather construction accentuated with PU and Microsuede reinforcements in key areas offers good abrasion resistance. It gets thermoplastic knuckle protectors as well. Most riders shy away from getting leather gloves for daily riding owing to the lack of ventilation but the Cragsman had that issue solved to an extent. It features mesh panels on the finger areas which work well in keeping your hand cool even in humid climates. Overall, the Cragsman comes across as a good option for comfortable leather gloves for your daily rides.

₹ 5,750

store.royalenfield.com





TISSOT

T-Touch Connect Solar

Tissot created one of the first watches with touch-sensitive technology back in 1999, when it unveiled the T-Touch to the world. As consumer preferences have shifted, Tissot continuously updated the T-Touch, and we have here the T-Touch Connect Solar. Encased in titanium and measuring 47.5mm in diameter, it sports a smooth black PVD finish. There's a ceramic bezel with compass indicators engraved on it. A rubber strap accentuates the sportiness of the watch. The sapphire crystal is antimagnetic as well as naturally scratch-resistant and acts as the touch interface. It is even water resistant to 100m and has a power reserve of 180 days.

₹ 91,000*

tissotwatches.com

MONDAINE

Helvetica 1 Smart

This watch is named after the famous Swiss typeface - Helvetica. The watch comes in a 44mm stainless steel case with a brushed finish, paired with a black leather strap and sports a sapphire crystal. The Arabic numerals are of course in Helvetica and there's a round sub-dial at the six o'clock position, which is the display for the smart functions. On the sub-dial, the larger hand shows the day of the month, while the smaller hand shows your step goal percentage. In sleep mode, the date hand moves to the sleep position and the second hand displays the percentage of sleep.

₹ 79,000*

mondaine-helvetica.com



FREDERIQUE CONSTANT

Horological Smartwatch

The Frederique Constant Horological Smartwatch also has its sub-dial at the six o'clock position and is housed in a 42mm stainless steel case with leather straps. Just like the Helvetica, one of the two hands of the sub-dial tracks the day of the month and the other, the user's activity completion percentage on the chapter ring. In contrast to the Helvetica which offers 30m of water resistance, this watch is water-resistant to 50m. Another thing to note - this watch boasts a two-year battery life, far surpassing conventional smartwatches.

₹ 80,800

frederiqueconstant.com



WORDS SAYANTAN DE

ORIGIN OF SPECIES

Hybrids are now everywhere, but it began with the first-gen Toyota Prius

What started out as a way to make more efficient vehicles in the late 90s with the Toyota Prius has now become the most important piece of automotive technology of the last three decades. I am, of course, talking about hybrid propulsion systems. Since 2012, no non-hybrid cars have won the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Today, in India, you can buy a Maruti Suzuki Grand Vitara or the Mercedes-AMG GT 63 S E Performance on two ends of the hybrid spectrum. This month we will talk about the basics of the system, before getting into more details in the subsequent episodes.

The basics of the original Toyota system found on the 1997 Prius was made up of a 1.5-litre four-cylinder petrol engine and an electric motor. The Prius derived its power from the electric motor at slow speeds, from the petrol engine at medium speeds, and both at high speeds. This is what is called a parallel hybrid, and in order to receive inputs from two standalone propulsion systems, Toyota utilised a planetary gearset which is something it had in common with the Ford Model T

(and to think of the impact these two cars had in the history of the automobile).

Toyota used a 1.78kWh NiMH battery in the original Prius, and it still uses this battery chemistry to this day. Toyota studied Bullet train semiconductors to achieve maximum efficiency for the energy flow between the battery and the motor. The original Prius was also one of the pioneers of the idle stop-start technology, which we now take for granted in our scooters as well, and Toyota achieved this by utilising a starter-generator unit, which has now become commonplace.

In order to maximise fuel efficiency, the original Toyota Prius' engine ran on the highly thermally efficient Atkinson Cycle, which leaves the intake valve open slightly longer on the compression stroke, which reduces in-cylinder pressure, sacrificing power for efficiency. The loss of power was covered up by the electric motor, so it was easy to drive in urban traffic conditions. From being the anti-enthusiast car to one of the best-looking cars ever made by Toyota, the Prius has come a long way, but it also paved the way for hybrids to become de rigueur and created the silent revolution it set out for. **tc**



We think Ben could look into contesting in
'Khatron Ke Khiladi'



We are not high enough, We need to get
up there!



We are lost, aren't we?



The festivities began early with these two



Akshay getting all inquisitive on seeing a diesel
Bullet in Ladakh



Is that the promised land?



Sometimes you need to find your own cocoon to
contemplate



No matter if you are on top of the world, work
never ends for Ed



"Sometimes if something is stuck, you have to
jimmy it apart". "That's lame Saneet"



The A-team is all smiles after conquering Siachen
in an EV



The best part about the rainy season? Getting to
clean bikes by the side of the road!



As you can see, fixing a problem is a team effort
here at TURBOCHARGED



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