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NEWS

International

Renault appoints new Head of Eurasia Region

Denis Le Vot (50), Senior Vice President, Sales & Marketing for Europe G9, at **Renault S.A.** has been appointed Senior Vice President, Chairman of Eurasia Region., effective as of the 1st of April. He replaces **Jean-Christophe Kugler** (54), who has been appointed as Executive Vice President, Chairman of Europe Region and a member of Renault Executive Committee. Denis Le Vot already has working experience in Russia and Turkey which are amongst the key countries of the Eurasia Region. Le Vot, who holds an engineering degree from the **École des Mines de Paris**, joined Renault in 1990 in Sales & Marketing within the International Operations Department. In 1994, he joined the After-Sales Division and becomes Senior Manager After-Sales Product Development. Appointed successively Senior Manager After-Sales of **ОАО Автотрамс** (today **ОАО Renault**

Russia) in Russia, Sales Director in Belgium, Global After-Sales Marketing & Strategy and then Marketing Director of **Renault MAIS** in Turkey, he became Vice President, Marketing & Sales of Eurasia Region in 2007. In that time, the region Eurasia has not included Russia and CIS, but it included Africa. In 2011, Le Vot was appointed Deputy Managing Director of Renault Russia and in September 2013, he became Vice President, Sales & Marketing G9. In January 2015, Le Vot became a member of the Renault Management Committee.

Belarus/Russia

Datsun brand may be launched in Belarus

Nissan Motor Co. Ltd. is considering the launch of the **Datsun** brand in Belarus. "Currently, we are seriously considering to enter the market of Belarus as well as some other countries," **Dmitri Busurkin**, director of the Datsun brand in Russia, told Avtostat. Datsun was launched in Kazakhstan and Moldova recently.

Czech Republic

Seat unveils Czech-made Ateca SUV

Seat S.A. presented its first SUV model, the **Seat Ateca**, at a media event in Barcelona. When the Ateca commences advance sales this spring, it will come in a wide range of variants. The choice of turbocharged TSI petrol and TDI diesel engines spans from 115 hp to 190 hp, with either front-wheel or all-wheel drive. The array of diesel engines starts with the 1.6 TDI and 115 hp. The 2.0 TDI is available with 150 hp and 190 hp. The entry level petrol engine is the 1.0 TSI with 115 hp. The 1.4 TSI comes with cylinder deactivation under partial load and produces 150 hp. In keeping with Seat's tradition, the Ateca derives its name from Spanish geography. The Ateca village lies in the west of Saragossa in the heart of the Iberian Peninsula. At an exterior length of 4.36 metres, the Ateca offers a luggage compartment that holds 510 litres in its standard configuration or 485 litres in the versions with all-wheel drive. The new SUV is manufactured at the **Škoda Auto a.s.** plant in Kvasiny.



Škoda's VisionS concept is a plug-in hybrid

Škoda VisionS, the concept to be unveiled at the Geneva auto show in March, has a plug-in hybrid drive: with 225 hp, the show car accelerates from 0 to 100 km/h in 7.4 seconds with a top speed of almost 200 km/h. The car needs 1.9 litres of petrol to travel 100 km (45 grams CO₂ per kilometre). It can go up to 50 km on electric alone, and will travel up to 1,000 km with both systems combined. With a 2.79-meter wheelbase, 4.70 meters long, 1.91 meters wide and 1.68 meters tall, the VisionS is based on the **Volkswagen Group's** Modular Transverse Matrix (MQB). It is Škoda's first vehicle to feature six seats across three rows.



Government approves incentives for INA Lanškroun

The Czech government has approved investment incentives for **INA Lanškroun** worth almost CZK 255 million. The incentives, which account for about 10 percent of the total investment amount, will be paid in two tranches. The investment is to be finalised in August 2019. As a part of the project, **Schaeffler AG** will install new production equipment at the INA Lanškroun plant in Lanškroun and construct a new plant in Svitavy. The foundation stone for the new factory was laid in November and Schaeffler expects the plant to be operating at full capacity by 2019. According to Czech Prime Minister **Bohuslav Sobotka** the company will create 900 new jobs by 2019, Schaeffler said at the cornerstone laying ceremony that it plans to create 960 new jobs.

Iqap enlarges logistics facilities

Iqap Czech s.r.o. has enlarged logistics facilities at its plant in Planá nad Lužnicí near Tábor. The company's warehouse currently includes about 1,000 square metres of covered space.

Czech Republic/Poland

KES may expand to Poland

KES – kabelové a elektrické systémy s.r.o., the Czech subsidiary of Austrian supplier **ZKW Group**, is considering the expansion to another site in either the Czech Republic or Poland, the company's CEO **Martin Svozil** has told idnes.cz. The company, which is located in Vratimov near Ostrava in Northern Moravia, manufactures wiring harnesses for headlights destined for its own mother company as well as other clients. Currently, KES employs about 900 people in manufacturing, including 100 workers coming from Poland. 90 percent of all employees are women. It plans to create 200 new jobs this year. According to Svozil, the company still has space for one more hall at the site in Vratimov. However, he lamented the lack of manpower in the region. While it is already complicated to recruit people now, the situation will become even worse in the case of a possible expansion. KES is therefore considering the possibility to construct a new plant in the Bruntál district in the Czech Republic or in Poland near the Czech border. "For (Poland) speaks the fact that the distance to Bruntál is 100 kilometres and to Poland only 30," Svozil told idnes.cz. He also underlined that the wage level in Poland is lower than in the Ostrava region.

Estonia/Lithuania/Russia

PKC to phase out production in Estonia

Finnish company **PKC Group Plc** has announced it will close its **PKC Eeesti AS** plant for production of wiring harnesses in Keila, Estonia, in March 2017. 613 people are expected to lose their jobs. Currently, the company employs 707 people. Production is to be moved to PKC's plant in Lithuania and Russia. Competence units will remain at Keila to serve the company's European and South American business.

Hungary

Daimler celebrates important milestone in Kecskemét

In the presence of **Viktor Orbán**, Prime Minister of Hungary and **Christian Wolff**, CEO and Site Manager, **Mercedes-Benz Manufacturing Hungary Kft** has produced its 500,000 car in Kecskemét. The anniversary model was a cosmos black **Mercedes-Benz CLA**. Today the plant employs over 4,000 people and produces the B-Class, the CLA and CLA Shooting Brake models. Latest development project was launched in early 2016: the logistics hall is being considerably expanded with an investment of €15 million.

Daimler details plans for logistics investment in Kecskemét

Mercedes-Benz Manufacturing Hungary Kft provided more details about the current investment of €15 million in a logistics project at its site in Kecskemét. The plant's logistics hall is being expanded considerably to supply parts directly to the production line. This expansion is influenced by the digital transformation: the new shopping cart-based logistics system has brought about visible changes in the plant's assembly section as there are now no shelves filled with boxes and parts to be seen anywhere on the production line. The associated logistical supply processes have likewise changed: the previous transport routes became free, and driverless transport systems take the shopping carts from the picking zone in the logistics centre

to the assembly line automatically. Here the employees remove the parts from the shopping cart at the relevant workstations and install them in the vehicles. Consequently, the load carriers previously required in the production area are no longer necessary. Breaktime areas are being set up for the employees in the now free zones. Construction work commenced in early 2016 with completion scheduled for summer 2016.

Schäfer-Oesterle expands in Bonyhád

Schäfer-Oesterle Kft has announced that it will invest HUF 900 million in its site in Bonyhád. The current 4,000 square metre hall will be joined by a new, 5,000 square metre hall enabling the company to meet the demand from **Volkswagen Group** for leather-covered steering wheels, gearknobs, door panels and pillars. The project is supported with a HUF 443 million EU grant.

Kazakhstan

AllurGroup concentrates vehicle assembly in SaryarkaAvtoProm

AllurGroup has decided to concentrate its vehicle assembly activities in the company **TОО SaryarkaAvtoProm**. Currently, vehicles are assembled by both SaryarkaAvtoProm and **АО AgromashHolding**. Both companies operate at the AgromashHolding site in Kostanay. AgromashHolding will focus on the production of agricultural machines in the future. A total of 5,757 vehicles were assembled in Kostanay in 2015. AllurGroup sold 6,550 locally assembled as well as imported vehicles last year. Currently, the company assembles **Geely, Hyundai, Iveco, JAC, Peugeot, SsangYong** and **Toyota** vehicles from SKD or CKD kits. It is preparing CKD assembly of JAC S3 and Peugeot 301 models.

Astana Motors celebrated five years of commercial vehicle assembly plant

KMK Astana Motors has celebrated five years since the opening of its commercial vehicle assembly plant **TОО Hyundai Trans Auto**. The factory assembles **Hyundai** trucks with 2 to 20 tons payload and Hyundai County buses. It launches assembly of **FAW** heavy trucks in 2015.

Kazakhstan/Russia

Ford Sollers launches Fiesta exports to Kazakhstan

ООО Ford Sollers Holding has launched export shipments of the **Ford** Fiesta sedan and hatchback for the Kazakh market. In addition to the Fiesta, Russian-made Focus, Mondeo, EcoSport, Kuga, Explorer and Transit models are exported to Kazakhstan. The first Ford cars were shipped from Russia to Kazakhstan in November 2014.

Poland

Federal Mogul to expand plant in Gorzyce

Federal-Mogul Gorzyce Sp. z o.o. plans to expand its plant in Gorzyce. Plant manager **Dariusz Kowalski** confirmed expansion plans to local media. The administration of Gorzyce plans to add another 20 hectares

land to the **Tarnobrzaska Specjalna Strefa Ekonomiczna (Tarnobrzeg Special Economic Zone)** in order to make the expansion possible. Federal-Mogul, the largest employer in Gorzyce, currently employs about 1,500 staff workers plus some agency workers.

FCA manufactures six millionth 1.3 MultiJet engine

FCA Powertrain Sp. z o.o. has celebrated the production of its six millionth 1.3 MultiJet engine at its site in Bielsko-Biala. The diesel engine, which is manufactured at the plant since 2003, is currently offered in Euro 4, Euro 5 and Euro 6 versions.

Romania

Ziarul Financiar: Ford may add EcoSport and Ka output in Craiova

Ford Motor Co. is considering building the **Ford Ecosport** and the new **Ford Ka** for European markets at its **Ford Romania S.A.** plant in Craiova, the **Ziarul Financiar** business daily reported, quoting sources at the factory. Ford declined to comment on the reports. "There is nothing new to be announced," **Ford of Europe** President **Jim Farley** told Automotive News Europe in conjunction with the report. "Craiova remains a very critical part of our operation. Expect the Ford team to be laser-focused on continuing to get most of the plant." Ford currently manufactures the **B-Max** as well as engines in Craiova. Car production in Craiova is operating far below its capacity of 300,000 vehicles per year.

Optibelt finalises new buildings in Tauthi Magheraus

Optibelt Power Transmission SRL, the Romanian subsidiary of German supplier **Optibelt GmbH**, has completed additional buildings at its site in Tauthi Magheraus. They consist of a two-storey administrative building with a floor area of around 1,200 square metres, a production warehouse of 5,400 square metres, and a pre-production plant of 3,500 square metres equipped with new facilities and machinery. At the same time, a new mixing plant was successfully started up just before Christmas 2015. The ongoing trial runs of the new manufacturing processes will be completed by early March, so that the new buildings will be ready for the final acceptance by the local authorities. "With the new production capacities including preproduction we intend to start a three-shift operation by the end of the second quarter. With our new production program in Tauthi Magheraus we seek to increase manufacturing by minimum 2.5 million pieces in 2016 and by about 4 million pieces in 2017. In the long run, the belt production in Romania is supposed to double its output," said **Konrad Ummen**, member of the management board of **Arntz Optibelt Group**. "The expansion in Romania is primarily a response to the continued growth of Arntz Optibelt Group in its core business, that is the production of drive belts." Aside from setting up the in-house mixing and the production of semi-finished parts, one of the main purposes of the site expansion is to increase capacity in the production of the company's two main segments – industry and automotive. The investments will substantially expand the product portfolio in Romania. One of the new product groups manufactured at the site will be automotive toothed belts. The company plans to increase its workforce from the current 300 employees to about 375 people by the end of the year.

Infinion extends lease contract with Novo Park

Infinion Technologies Romania SCS has signed for seven more years for its Research and Development Centre with **Novo Park**, the office park owned by **Genesis Development**. The extension of the lease contract was signed two years before the previous one expired and is valid until 2024. The company is currently leasing some 7,500 square metres. It occupies an entire building. Infineon Technologies Romania has invested over €100 million at the site since 2005. It currently employs more than 300 engineers.

Russia

AvtoVAZ seeks support after record loss

OAo AvtoVAZ warned it may not survive without help from shareholders after reporting a record loss. The company's net loss widened to RUB 74 billion (\$930 million) last year from RUB 25 billion in 2014. This is the company's largest loss since it started reporting under international standards. Revenue declined 8 percent to RUB 176 billion, falling below costs. Auditor **EY** said AvtoVAZ had liabilities that exceeded assets by RUB 67.78 billion (\$857 million). "Without changing the opinion about trustworthiness of the consolidated financial report, we warn that AvtoVAZ and its subsidiaries sustained losses amounting to RUB 73.851 billion in 2015 and their short-term debt exceeded working assets by RUB 67.78 billion as of the 31st of December 2015," the auditor said. „These conditions, along with other matters ... indicate the existence of a material uncertainty which may cast significant doubt on OAo AvtoVAZ and its subsidiaries' ability to continue as a going concern," EY said. AvtoVAZ, majority-owned by **Renault S.A.** and **Nissan Motor Co. Ltd.**, said management was confident it could secure help from shareholders „at a level required to finance its operations in the foreseeable future." Renault said talks with other AvtoVAZ shareholders were ongoing (see separate news). **Alliance Rostec Auto B.V.**, the joint venture that holds 74.5 percent in AvtoVAZ, is owned 50 percent by Renault, 17.13 percent by Nissan and 32.87 percent by Russia's state owned company **GK Rostec**. Rostec said it was considering converting part of the debt it is owed by AvtoVAZ into shares to increase the carmaker's capital. "We are closely tracking the situation and we will take measures to improve financial health of AvtoVAZ together with other shareholders. We consider a capital injection through contribution of money into the share capital and conversion of a part of its debt as a possible support scenario. At the same time, Rostec plans to keep its stake in the capital (of AvtoVAZ) at 25 percent," the company said.

Renault on loss connected to AvtoVAZ

Regarding **OAo AvtoVAZ's** contribution to **Renault S.A.'s** financial results for 2015, „the exceptionally weak economic situation in Russia, worse than our initial expectations, led Renault to book a €620 million loss", the French company said. The loss is explained by Renault's share in the net loss booked by AvtoVAZ for €395 million (of which €136 million from negative operating margin) as well as an impairment loss on the value of the equity investment for €225 million, to adjust it to the stock-market value of AvtoVAZ shares. On the 31st of December 2015, Renault's share in AvtoVAZ was valued at €91 million. The Renault group has entered into discussions with the other shareholders of the AvtoVAZ's controlling holding company, **Alliance Rostec Auto B.V.**, with an intention to recapitalize the company. This could lead to consolidation in Renault's accounts. As a result, the loan and receivables on AvtoVAZ would be capitalized and constitute part of the net equity investment on the 31st of December 2015.

AvtoVAZ names lessees for new AvtoVAZ-Technopark project

OAo AvtoVAZ has commenced implementation of its new **AvtoVAZ-Technopark** project which is based on the territory of AvtoVAZ's former subsidiary **OOO VMZ** as well as the former **Prototypes & Try-outs Plant (OPP)**. AvtoVAZ has signed a memorandum of intent with first potential lessee **OAo Metallist-Samara**, which will use VMZ's area and equipment for the production of tooling and equipment destined for the production of parts for rockets at its plant in Samara. Other companies expected to establish activities in the AvtoVAZ-Technopark include **OOO Motor-Super** (a supplier located in Togliatti), **OOO Yazaki Volga** (a supplier based in Gorodets in the Nizhni Novgorod region) and **OOO IzhSpetsMash** (a manufacturer of moulds, dies and non-standard equipment headquartered in Izhevsk).

AvtoVAZ starts sales of Lada Xray

OAo AvtoVAZ has launched sales of the **Lada Xray** crossover at 124 dealerships in 57 Russian cities. "About 16,000 to 20,000 cars are to be sold according to a pessimistic scenario and 25,000 under an optimistic scenario," the company's PR department told TASS.

Lada Xray to be launched in Germany in early 2017

Lada Automobile GmbH, the Germany-based **Lada** importer responsible for the German and Austrian markets, said it plans to launch sales of the Lada Xray crossover in Germany in early 2017.

Hyundai to launch Creta volume production in third quarter

OOO Hyundai Motor Manufacturing Rus said it plans to launch volume production of the **Hyundai Creta** crossover in the third quarter of 2016. The first pilot vehicles were already built earlier. The Creta will share the assembly line at the plant in St. Petersburg with Hyundai Solaris and **Kia Rio**. More than 100 employees of the Russian plant were already trained in South Korea in conjunction with the new model.

Ford Sollers to significantly increase exports

OOO Ford Sollers Holding plans a significant export increase this year. "Ford Sollers is constantly exploring new export opportunities for further business development. In 2016, the company plans to increase the total volume of exports five times," the company said without providing more details.

AvtoVAZ to offer Lada 4x4 long version as Urban

In addition to the 3-door **Lada 4x4 Urban**, **OAo AvtoVAZ** plans to offer an Urban version of the Lada 4x4 5-door as well, Kolyosa.ru writes. According to the report, the vehicle is expected to start at RUB 552,100 and to be launched on the market in spring.

Ford Sollers launches production of Transit with ERA-GLONASS system

OOO Ford Sollers Holding has finalised the certification and launched production of the **Ford Transit** equipped with the **ERA-GLONASS** system. Ford Transit versions Bus (category M2) and Van (category N2) manufactured at the plant in Elabuga have received the ERA-GLONASS system. The telecommunications device module is sourced from **Clarion Co. Ltd.**

Ruskiye Mashiny to make equipment for Gazprom's CNG filling stations

Korporatsiya Ruskiye Mashiny, or **Russian Machines** in English, has signed a cooperation agreement with **Gazprom GMT** with regard to equipment for compressed natural gas (CNG) filling stations. Pursuant to the agreement **RM CNG**, which is part of Russian Machines, will produce CNG dispensers and sets of CNG filling equipment which will be supplied to Gazprom GMT. The parties will enter into a supply contract within 30 days after signing the cooperation agreement. The project is in line with Gazprom GMT's plans to develop a CNG market in Russia and will provide further momentum to the localization of CNG filling equipment for the benefit of the country's strategic security and its industrial potential.

Slovenia

Daimler: More details on shipping vehicles through Koper

As already reported, **Daimler AG** has selected the Slovenian port Koper as the new hub for shipping of cars to Asia. Daimler has now provided more details about the new hub. "The opening of our hub in the port of Koper is the latest milestone in the ongoing development of our global logistics network," said **Alexander Koesling**, Head of Supply Chain Management Mercedes-Benz Cars. "This new Mediterranean hub gives us a southern route with major advantages in terms of flexibility and costs for shipping connections between Europe and Asia." After Bremerhaven (Germany) and Zeebrugge (Belgium), the Slovenian port is the third most important European hub for Mercedes-Benz for exporting vehicles to overseas markets. Vehicles from various European plants will be shipped to China, Singapore and Brunei via Koper. Most of the vehicles shipped via Koper come from the Mercedes-Benz plants in Sindelfingen and Rastatt (both Germany) and Kecskemét (Hungary), as well as the smart plant in Hambach (France), the **Revoz d.d.** plant in Novo Mesto (Slovenia) and the **Magna Steyr Fahrzeugtechnik AG & Co KG** factory in Graz (Austria). Koper complements the existing shipping ports Bremerhaven, which still handles the largest volume of vehicles, as well as Zeebrugge, which still serves destinations such as Australia, South Africa and Mexico via a western route. Koper, which lies south of Trieste on the Adriatic Sea, significantly reduces transportation distances on land and above all at sea. Depending on the destination, transferring freight via Koper can significantly reduce transit times by up to one week. The new concept also offers substantial benefits from an environmental perspective. Depending on the destination country, the transfers per ship circuit are up to 8,800 kilometres shorter than the previous transfer from Bremerhaven, saving around 60,000 tons of CO₂ emissions per year. The Mercedes-Benz hub now adds overseas vehicle exports to Koper's destination list. The contracting partners are the port **Luka Koper**, the Slovenian logistics service provider **Intereuropa**, the RoRo Carrier **MOL (Mitsui O.S.K. Lines)**, the rail service providers **Schenker** and **Altmann**, as well as numerous forwarding agents.

Slovenia/Bosnia and Herzegovina

Slovenian supplier Cimos merges Bosnian subsidiaries

NT Forging d.o.o., a subsidiary of Slovenian supplier **Cimos d.o.o.** located in Novi Travnik, Bosnia and Herzegovina, has been merged to **Cimos TMD Ai d.o.o.**, another Cimos subsidiary headquartered in Gradačac, and no longer exists as a legal entity. Its legal successor is Cimos TMD Ai. A branch office of Cimos TMD Ai has

been established on the former headquarters of the NT Forging in Novi Travnik. The factory and its employees remain subject to previously acquired rights and obligations. With this step, Cimos is pursuing the implementation of the measures defined in the financial restructuring plan.

Turkey

Toyota to launch production of new crossover later this year

Toyota Motor Europe S.A./N.V. has published more details about its future crossover based on C-HR concept which will be built at the **Toyota Motor Manufacturing Turkey (TMMT)** plant in Arifiye in the Sakarya province alongside the Corolla and Verso models. It marks the first time a hybrid-powered vehicle will be produced in Turkey. Total production capacity for TMMT will increase from 150,000 to 280,000 vehicles per year. Employment at TMMT is expected to increase from 3,000 to 4,000 in the months leading to the start of production, which is planned towards the end of 2016. The additional investment at TMMT is around €350 million for the project. The hybrid engine for the crossover is to be produced at **Toyota Motor Manufacturing UK's** engine plant in Deeside, Wales. The production vehicle based on the C-HR concept will be revealed at the Geneva Motor Show on the 1st of March. The new model's name will be announced at the Geneva show as well. The car will be based on Toyota's new global architecture (TNGA). The destination for the vehicles will be greater Europe and regions outside Europe. According to TME's CEO **Johan van Zyl**, the new model will be exported to 53 countries. **Hiroshi Kato**, chief executive of TMMT, said the company exports 80 percent of its production and this level would rise to around 90 percent once it is in full-year production in 2017.

Ford Otosan reports higher profit and revenues

Ford Otomotiv Sanayi A.Ş. (Ford Otosan) posted a 42 percent rise in net profit to TLL 841.9 million in 2015, the company said in a statement to the Istanbul stock exchange. Revenue grew 40 percent to TLL 16.75 billion.

Uzbekistan

General Motors launches production of Lacetti CNG

GM Uzbekistan YoAJ has started volume production of **Chevrolet Lacetti** cars with gas-cylinder equipment working on compressed gas. **GM Korea** and the Italian company **Landi-Renzo** participated in the realisation of the project to perform calibration of the automobile and gas cylinder equipment, as well as necessary tests of parts and components of the gas-cylinder equipment. GM Korea carried out tests to ensure optimum performance of the engine which was adapted to two-fuel system. Italian company **Faber** (cylinders) and the Uzbek-Italian joint venture **Uzavto-Landi Renzo** (engine compartment equipment) are suppliers of the gas cylinder equipment. **GM Powertrain Uzbekistan YoAJ** supplies the engine working on gas. "The engine has a reinforced cylinder-piston group and valve mechanism. In addition, the car has reinforced chassis parts - shock absorber struts, springs, stabiliser bars and others" GM Uzbekistan said. The gas cylinder equipment has a warranty for a year or 20,000 km mileage. The Lacetti CNG can run up to 1,130 km, including 850 km on petrol and 280 km on gas. The mileage on a full gas cylinder at a speed of 90 km/h is 280 km and in the urban cycle 230 km.

NEWS FROM MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA

Middle East and Africa

Ashok Leyland to expand UAE plant, plans new assembly plants in Africa

Indian commercial vehicle manufacturer **Ashok Leyland Ltd.** plans to double capacity at its Ras al-Khaimah factory in the UAE and to set up two assembly plants in Africa. "We are looking at a couple of smaller assembly plants in Africa. We haven't identified the location yet. Besides, we are also looking to double the capacity of our Ras al-Khaimah facility," Ashok Leyland's Managing **Director Vinod Kumar Dasari** told media on the sidelines of the Auto Expo in Delhi. "We were doing four units a day, which has been increased to 12. By the end of 2016, we will double it to 24 units a day," Dasari said when speaking about the UAE plant. Regarding the African plants, Dasari explained as these are small facilities the company could invest around Rs 400-500 million on each.

Algeria

SAFAV-MB ships new batch of vehicles to Algerian army

The Algerian assembly plant **SPA SAFAV-MB**, which is located in Aïn Bouchekif in the region Tiaret, has delivered a new batch of 245 **Mercedes-Benz** G-Class and Sprinter vehicles to the Algerian army.

Egypt

General Motors resumes operations

General Motors Egypt S.A.E. has resumed operations at its plant in the 6th October City after temporarily halting activities due to its inability to source dollars. "The problem has been solved," a company representative told Reuters.

Iran

Iran Khodro: Waiting for final agreement between Saipa and Renault

Whilst the **Iran Khodro Industrial Group (IKCO)** has already signed a cooperation agreement on car production with **PSA Peugeot Citroen**, there is no official contract with **Renault S.A.** As Renault is cooperating with both IKCO and the **Saipa Auto Group**, its new agreements are to be coordinated with both companies. "We are waiting for the finalising of the agreement between Saipa and Renault and then we would start cooperation with Renault for new projects," IKCO's President and CEO **Hashem Yekehzare** explained at a press conference.

Iran Khodro aims for higher market share

Iran Khodro Industrial Group (IKCO) is aiming for a higher market share by 1404 (March 2025 to March 2026). "In the year 1392 the market share of Iran Khodro was 36 percent, now it is 54 to 56 percent. We are trying to increase our market share in Iran to 60 percent by the year 1404" IKCO's President and CEO **Hashem Yekehzare** said at a press conference. "In the year 1404 about 1,800,000 units of vehicles would be produced at Iran Khodro, about 60 percent of which would be produced in cooperation with foreign companies."

Hyundai Motor Group to more than double exports to Iran

Hyundai Motor Co. and **Kia Motors Corp.** aim to export about 60,000 cars to Iran this year, compared to 25,000 units shipped to the Middle East country in 2015. "The group has increased its sales target by 140 percent from 25,000 cars sold in Iran last year" Hyundai Motor CEO **Jeong Jin-hang** said in a meeting with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy on targeting the Iranian market. In addition, the Korean automotive group will expand its CKD products for Iran. Currently, the **Kia Cerato**, which is assembled by **Saipa Auto Group**, is the only Hyundai/Kia model built in Iran.

Daimler prepares restart of cooperation with former car importer Setareh

Daimler AG plans to resume cooperation with its former Iranian passenger car importer **Setareh** as part of the resumption of activities in Iran. "We are preparing for the re-entry into the Iranian market and are in discussions with our previous partner Setareh" a Daimler spokeswoman said.

Charkheshgar launches production of new gearbox

Charkheshgar Co. has commenced production of transmissions for the **Zamyad Padra** pickup truck with a capacity of 45,000 units a year. The Tabriz-based company is partly owned by **Iran Khodro Diesel** and supplies gearboxes to the **Renault Tondar 90** already.

Saudi Arabia

Lanxess and Saudi Aramco rubber joint venture to be launched in April

Speciality chemicals company **Lanxess AG** and **Saudi Aramco** have announced **Arlanxco**, the name of their new 50:50 joint venture for production of synthetic rubber used in the global tire industry, auto-parts manufacturing and a wide range of other applications. The new name and logo combines elements from the names and logos of both partners. The logo is complemented by the descriptor "Performance Elastomers" to highlight the new company's product range. All relevant antitrust authorities have cleared the transaction. Hence, the joint venture will be launched as Arlanxco on the 1st of April. "We will establish Arlanxco as a new and independent player in the global market for synthetic rubber" said **Matthias Zachert**, Chairman of the Board of Management of Lanxess and future Chairman of the Shareholders' Committee of Arlanxco. The new joint venture will be headquartered in the Netherlands. The partners will soon appoint the management team that will run Arlanxco. Each partner will have equal representation on the boards overseeing the company. The CEO will be appointed by Lanxess and the CFO by Saudi Aramco.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- » **February, 22-24:** ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA: AUTOINVEST, 2016
<http://autoinvest-russia.ru>
- » **March, 15-17:** MOSCOW, RUSSIA: RUSSIAN AUTOMOTIVE FORUM
<http://www.russianautomotive.com/>
- » **March, 15-17:** ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA: AUTOPROMO RUSSIA
<http://autopromrussia.ru>
- » **March, 31-3 April:** POZNAN, POLAND: POZNAN MOTOR SHOW
<http://www.motorshow.pl>
- » **April, 5-10:** ZAGREB, CROATIA: ZAGREB AUTO SHOW, 2016
<http://www.zv.hr/default.aspx?id=523>
- » **April, 19-24:** BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA: 26TH INTERNATIONAL MOTOR SHOW
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