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EVENT AUTO EXPO 2018

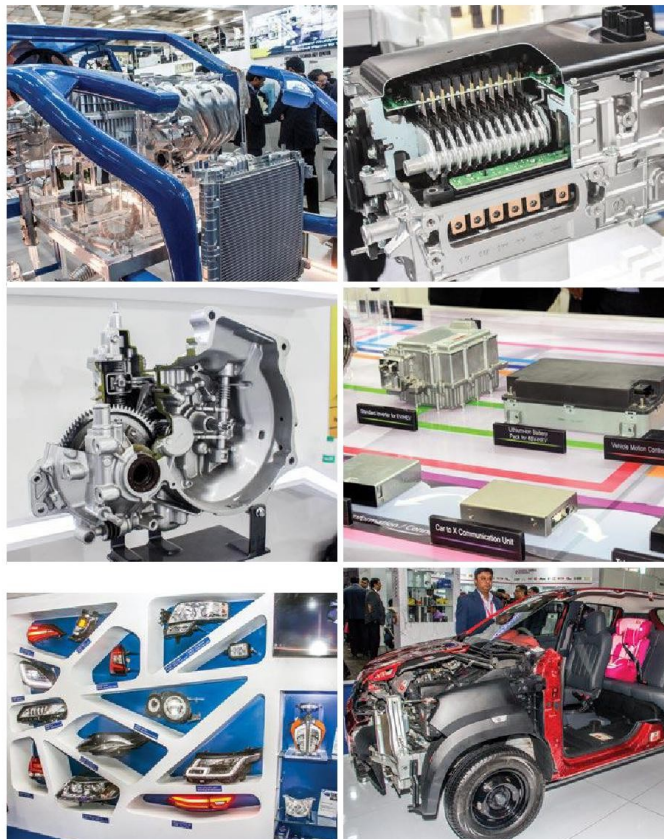
COMPONENTS SHOW PRESENTS INDUSTRY'S INNOVATION MIGHT

The Auto Expo 2018 – Components, held in New Delhi from February 8-11, 2018, was the event's 14th edition. Scale-wise, the components show may not have matched the participation level of the 2016 edition but it nevertheless witnessed a good turnout, attracting over 1,200 component suppliers and over a lakh trade delegates from across the globe.

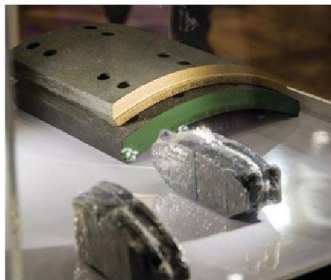
The biennial trade show for the auto component sector, the Auto Expo – Components, has over the years turned out to be one of the most visited automotive trade shows in this part of the world. This year – in its 14th edition – the expo attracted suppliers from as many as 20 countries, with over 1,200 suppliers showcasing their products, technologies, engineering and innovations around the theme 'Automotive Technologies that Drive the World', to an estimated 1.15 lakh trade delegates. The exposition this year featured seven country pavilions – Canada, China, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and the UK.

FOCUS AREAS

Spread over an area of 60,000 sq m, the overwhelming focus of the 2018 Auto Expo – Components was on hybrid and electric vehicles as well as futuristic technologies that were widely reflected in the displays and product showcases of the participants at Pragati Maidan. From the Indian perspective, the event not only showcased the capabilities of the Indian component makers for the world market, but also brought to the fore their future readiness. The diverse showcases of Indian component makers only accentuate one thing – the 'Make in India' drive is very much in overdrive mode.



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INNOVATIONS & TECHNOLOGIES

Upcoming regulations on emissions, efficiency and safety drove bulk of the product and technology showcases at the components expo, while many suppliers also highlighted their capabilities in the areas of hybrids and electric mobility. Over the next two years, India will upgrade to BS VI emission norms, while the Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) regulations and crash test norms will also become effective in the three to four year horizon. In addition, component manufacturers at the expo showcased a gamut of electronics-based technologies and products at the expo.

The expo also witnessed a number of concepts that are expected to arrive in the market soon. One such showcase was that of an internal dash cam inside a cab vehicle that will not only track driver as well as passenger behaviour. This solution will for the first time ever will detect any unbecoming behaviour of passengers along with driver behaviour. Another eye-catching showcase was of an electric vehicle battery charger that also features an infotainment display board that can serve as an additional revenue stream via posting of commercial advertisements.

While the automotive industry has been showcasing various technologies related to electrification of mobility, the components show witnessed Indian com-

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panies delivering products for such requirements. A number of Indian component suppliers showcased electric motors and actuators that were completely developed in-house, with high-levels of localised content. It is also pertinent to mention that some of these electrification solutions were showcased jointly with OEMs that have integrated them into their vehicles. These developments would certainly help the Indian automotive industry achieve the fully-electrified mobility goal by 2030.

Additionally, a similar scenario played out with regards to the soon-approaching BS VI emission norms, scheduled to be rolled out starting April 1, 2020. Component suppliers, even MNCs, at the components expo displayed products that boost the efficiency of engines (petrol and diesel) as well as reduce overall emissions. The components and technologies show-

cased by these suppliers were also developed exclusively for a market like India. The country is grappling with its own set of challenges of achieving more stringent emission levels, which include low fuel quality, varied usage patterns, etc., and component manufacturers were seen offering solutions that adequately address these issues.

On the efficiency front, suppliers not only focused on powertrain solutions, but also covered areas such as electrical and electronics. More efficient forms of lighting, which predominantly included the LED technology was the focus area for many companies, with additional customisation benefits being added to the offerings. Electronics is becoming more important, since the upcoming standards have a growing prerequisite for the fusion of electronics in various areas of the vehicle. These standards relate to both emissions

as well as safety regulations. Thus, software and related engineering service providers also had an important role in showcasing their offerings in the integration of technologies into hardware (components) offered by suppliers.

The components expo not only witnessed innovations in terms of e-mobility concepts, but also material development and electronic integration. Many Indian component makers displayed their advanced polymer compounds for lightweighting and improved aerodynamics that were in line with the upcoming BS VI norms, which aim at improving fuel efficiency. These products showcased how engineering plastics were positively impacting weight reduction and despite the fact that carbon fibre is yet to make its way to India, advanced compounding techniques have resulted in enhancing vehicle dynamics and lower coefficient of drag.

The move towards BS VI was also highlighted by air filter manufacturers, who demonstrated advancements in filtration technologies to meet new cleaner emission norms. Air filter manufacturers displayed compact filter designs, with innovative material combinations and wider applications. They showcased their coil blockage removal techniques and with multi-functional air filters gaining popularity across the country, Indian players are also evincing interest in this technology. With market vendors gradually shifting focus from manufacturing conventional car air purifiers to purifiers incorporated with the latest technologies, domestic manufacturers wanted to evaluate the cost dynamics involved before pumping in additional investments.

PAVILIONS AT THE SHOW

The expo this year featured three focused pavilions, with ACMA's 'Safer Drive' pavilion attracting a fair share of public attention as it witnessed enthusiastic participation from exhibitors and visitors alike. The Virtual Reality Game as well as the Mind Wave Sensor Game that focused on educating the common people on road safety evoked interest among visitors. Ramashankar Pandey, Chairman, ACMA Aftermarket Committee said it is very critical to ensure safer driving in India, as

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accidents happen every minute and one person dies every four minutes in the country. "Millions drive on the Indian roads and 400 don't return home every day," he noted.

The organisers undertook a special initiative and also set up a dedicated bearings pavilion at the expo, in line with India's reputation as one of the world's fastest growing bearings market. The bearings pavilion saw the participation of the country's leading bearing manufacturers such as National Engineering Industries Ltd better known as NBC, Texpin, NRB Bearings, Garlock, Orbit Bearings India, igus and SKP. A clutch release bearing that can be pneumatically actuated was prototyped at the event.

A focused garage equipment pavilion was also set-up, which showcased diverse equipment to meet the growing customer requirements. The showcased equipment included washing hoist, wheel aligners, wheel balancers, tyre changers, tyre inflators, paint booth, spot & mig welders, wet & dry vacuum cleaners, and floor cleaners, among others.

ACMA STUDY ON XEVs

At the expo, ACMA, in association with Roland Berger, released a 'Study on xEV market and opportunities for xEV component suppliers' to bring clarity and solidify its perspectives on the disruptive changes happening within the \$ 43 bn component industry; 50 % of the turnover

comes from Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) aggregates.

Commenting on the findings of the survey, Vinnie Mehta, Director General, ACMA, said, "Apart from the domestic demands, exports from our industry constitutes for over \$ 11 bn, of which 30 % revenue is sourced from powertrain-related components. Thus, our preparedness for the upcoming challenges is the key to sustainability."

Dr Wilfried G Aulbur, Managing Partner, Head Automotive Asia, Roland Berger, presented a detailed study, analysing the market size and growth prospects of electric and hybrid vehicles in India in coming years, status-quo of the components industry and its adaptation to the new market demands, role of government in facilitating the transition, and OEM-supplier strategies in embracing a new technology ecosystem.

Sharing his views on the discussions, Nirmal Minda, President, ACMA, said that any large-scale disruption is likely to take some time and may not happen all of a sudden. "Lack of volumes is a persistent challenge in our industry even in the ICE age. As far as EVs are concerned, unless volumes go up, localisation may not happen. But with increased demand, Indian players can supply new products at competitive prices, although battery cell manufacturing may still lag behind," he observed. He also assured that ACMA will play a supportive role in aiding its members in this transition.

Overall, the survey mentioned that

while e-mobility is fast gaining prominence in global markets and in India, there will still be a large room for conventional vehicles and ICE-related products. The speakers stressed on the importance of a basket of technologies in pursuit of emission-free mobility, as the industry should cater to what the end user wants.

CONCLUSION

The decision to organise the component show and the motor show in separate locations have often attracted mixed reactions. The 2018 edition was no different. While many suppliers we spoke to expressed their displeasure at not being able to meet their core customers – the OEMs – many were happy as the component show attracted serious business visitors only.

Overall, the event only enhanced the reputation of the Indian component makers to manufacture world-class products coupled with its increasing stature as one of the fastest growing automotive market in the world. The substantial increase in investments of components as well as heightened R&D focus was evident from the products and technologies that were showcased at the event. The enhanced R&D focus of component suppliers will go a long way in improving the quality and technology of their products.

The biennial event was organised jointly by the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA), Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM). The expo is accredited by the International Organisation of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers (OICA). The 15th edition of the Auto Expo – Components would be held on February 6-9, 2020, announced the organisers.



TEXT: Suhrid Barua
PHOTO: Bharat Bhushan Upadhyay / Vasu Anantha

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