

Can Slavia help the sedan make a comeback?

S MURALIDHAR

In a market that has come to be dominated by sports utility vehicles (SUVs), the sedan body style has seen tremendous pressure over the last decade. Many brands have discontinued production or import of some of the most popular sedans of the recent past. And this culling has been across size and price segments. The latest to go was the Toyota Yaris. The only ones surviving have been from the sub-compact sedan category; and even there the numbers are skewed towards demand from fleet operators.

So, what gives Skoda Auto India the confidence to line-up a sedan as its next offering. The recently christened Slavia will be the next model to roll out of Skoda's facility. The company calls it a notchback, but it certainly fits the classic profile of a midsize C segment sedan. Skoda has been known for its sedans starting from the Octavia with which it debuted its innings in India two decades ago. Later the Superb and the Octavia RS have helped cement the premium, sporty sedan roots of the brand. Now, Skoda feels it may be the right time to bring back the mojo in the sedan segment.

Build

The new Skoda Slavia will be built on the same MQB-AO-IN platform that the Kushaq was also based on. The versatile, fully-scalable, light and rigid platform will enable Skoda to focus on safety, class-leading ride and handling, and in keeping a tight rein on costs, say company officials. The Slavia will be bigger than the first generation Octavia (a D-segment sedan); a stat that really sets the tone for what to expect from the new model. A lot of information about the Slavia is embargoed till November 18 this year when Skoda is set to host a virtual global premiere. Some of the information and opinion that I am sharing here is based on what has been allowed by Skoda at the camouflaged prototype test drive event conducted in Pune recently. The actual di-



Skoda's second from its India 2.0 project is a mid-size sedan. After testing the covered prototype in Pune last week, we can say that it looks and feels capable of reviving this segment

mensions of the Slavia are - wheelbase: 2,651mm, length: 4,541mm, width: 1,752mm and height: 1,487mm. It will compete with the likes of the Honda City, the Hyundai Verna and the Maruti Suzuki Ciaz. The Slavia that I test drove was heavily camouflaged with stickers that bore a design that was one of the award-winning submissions in a contest conducted by Skoda. The orange coloured kaleidoscopic design of the skin you see in these pictures still shows off the final profile of the Slavia. The sedan will borrow design

lines from the Kushaq, including a reinterpreted version of the butterfly grille that is a Skoda signature.

A lot of info about the design, cabin and build is still confidential, but what I can tell you is that the cabin gets a digital cockpit that offers multiple real-time drive related information. And there is a generous amount of space in the cabin and boot.

Focus on safety

According to Skoda officials, the Slavia has not just been tested for generic crash tests like the Indian homologation cycle and GNCAP, but has

also been designed and tested for more stringent crash scenarios that are based on internal Volkswagen standards. About 67 per cent of the Slavia's structure is made from high tensile strength steel and about 14 per cent from hot formed steel. Both the structure integrity and side airbags performance is said to have been designed and tested to meet a side pole crash scenario which is claimed to be higher than GNCAP standards. Slavia's curtain airbag design has also been conceived to offer equal head impact protection to the front and rear occupants. While Skoda's embargo stops me from elaborating on much of the Slavia's design, I can add here that priority has been given for pedestrian safety also. Currently Indian regulatory requirements only mandate protection to lower leg and head impact, but the Slavia is designed to reduce upper leg injuries also. The Slavia has also undergone extensive open air and

extreme weather testing which is said to have been conducted over the last two years in both Arizona in the US and in Aungabad, India. The vehicle has been tested over 100,000 kms for dust, water ingress and NVH (noise, vibration and harshness).

Powertrains

The Skoda Slavia will be offered with the same two TSI petrol engines that the Kushaq is also being offered with. The MQ200 one-litre, turbocharged, 3-cylinder petrol engine and the MQ281 four-cylinder, TSI 1.5-litre petrol engine are offered in the same state of tune as the Kushaq, but will sport a different set of gear ratios, even though they are offered with the same three gearbox options. The 6-speed manual transmission is offered as standard. And while the 1.0-litre can be specified with the AQ250 6-speed automatic gearbox, the 1.5-litre can be had with the 7-speed DSG - dual-

clutch automatic gearbox. The 1.0-litre TSI delivers 115PS of peak power and the 1.5-litre delivers the same 150PS of peak power as in the Kushaq.

The 1.5-litre with the DSG transmission will also get steering mounted paddles for manual gear selection. Both the engines are peppy and refined, and though their output numbers may seem just about enough for a mid-size sedan, they should deliver excellent driveability for the Slavia. I am particularly looking forward to driving the final production version of the manual gearbox variant of the 1.0-litre Slavia. That is one great sounding 3-cylinder even at high revs.

Ride and handling

The highlight of the camouflaged prototype I drove was its ride and handling. The suspension tuning delivers a firm, yet pliant ride like in the Kushaq. Putting it through some really bad patches at speed still doesn't shake things up in the cabin. There is a sense of solidity that the ride quality brings to the driving experience. I test drove the proto in Pune city, some broken tarmac in the outskirts and on the Mumbai-Pune expressway. I was told by Skoda officials that the suspension settings are yet to be fine tuned. Trim and variant strategy details are also awaited.

Bottomline

The Skoda Slavia is an all new sedan that is being launched after a long gap. Skoda officials say that the company is keen on setting new benchmarks in the sedan segment to bring the lure back to this body style. They expect the AO segment to grow by 138 per cent and that Slavia will deliver on all the customer expectations in this segment.

A sedan does luxury and comfort better than a SUV can. And I personally feel that there is a greater sense of ownership in a sedan than a SUV. If the Slavia can deliver the ground clearance and the driveability of a SUV for the average car buyer who is never going to attempt off-roading levels of engagement, then the sedan could easily be the one to choose.

Ultimately, the customer is king and the hope is that the pendulum of preference will swing back in favour of sedans in the years to come. The Slavia sure looks and feels well-equipped to take advantage of the re-emergence of the sedan. Expect prices to range from ₹10-17 lakh.

NEWS

Honda to provide battery sharing service for e-rickshaws

The sharing service will enable rickshaw drivers to swap a mobile power pack with low charge for a fully-charged one



life's potential by further expanding the utilisation of the MPP in broader areas, he said.

Demonstration testing

Honda began demonstration testing in India in February, with 30 units of electric rickshaw taxis driven for a total of more than 200,000 km in operation. Through this testing, it identified the issues to be addressed and verified business viability, the company said.

Honda's battery sharing service will enable rickshaw drivers to stop at the nearest battery swapping stations being set up in the city and swap an MPP - with a low remaining charge - for a fully-charged MPP.

The use of this service will significantly reduce driver concern about running out of batteries as well as the risk of losing business opportunities with customers while waiting for rickshaw

batteries to be charged, Honda said.

To begin this service, Honda will establish a local subsidiary in India to conduct a battery sharing service business. The subsidiary will install a number of Honda Mobile Power Pack Exchangers as battery swapping stations and conduct a battery sharing service in the city.

Honda will also work with electric rickshaw manufacturers and begin the service in selected cities first, it said.

The company said as the economy continues to grow in India, energy demand is increasing. To address these issues, country-wide efforts are being made to expand utilisation of renewable energy and to actively pursue electrification of the transportation sector, which accounts for around 20 per cent of the nation's greenhouse gas emissions.

There are more than eight-million units of auto rickshaws in India, and they have been an essential means of daily transportation. In urban areas, these rickshaws are powered mainly by CNG and have been a key challenge for electrification, it added.

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi, October 29

Japan-based Honda Motor Company on Friday said that it would begin a battery sharing service for electric tricycle taxis (rickshaws) in India in the first half of 2022, using the Honda Mobile Power Pack (MPP), the company's all-new portable and swappable lithium-ion batteries.

"Honda MPP has huge potential to electrify all kinds of devices, including small-sized mobility products. By offering a battery sharing service in India, Honda will contribute to the accelerated electrification of rickshaws and expanded use of renewable energy," Minoru Kato, Chief Officer, Life Creation Operations, Honda Motor, said in a statement.

Moreover, Honda will continue serving people worldwide with the joy of expanding their

Suprajit Engineering to acquire Norwegian Light Duty Cable unit for \$42 million

Transaction also involves the transfer of global sales and engineering expertise

OUR BUREAU

Bengaluru, October 29

Suprajit Engineering, a Bengaluru-headquartered automotive components supplier, has announced that it has signed an agreement to acquire Light Duty Cable (LDC) business unit of Kongsberg Automotive ASA, which is listed on the Oslo Stock Exchange, Norway for an enterprise value of \$42 million (around ₹315 crore).

The LDC business unit of Kongsberg Automotive Group consists of cable business,

supplying to automotive, non-automotive and two-wheeler segments along with Electro-Mechanical Actuators (EMA).

This transaction also involves the transfer of global sales and engineering expertise related to this business to Suprajit, a release from the company added.

The transaction is expected to close by end of January 2022. LDC has three manufacturing plants located in Matamoros, Mexico; Sofok, Hungary; and Shanghai, China; apart from a warehouse in Brownsville - USA.

LDC's global business development and engineering teams are at plants and other key geographies including the US, Germany, France, Norway, Sweden and the UK, and will come under the fold of Supra-

jit. The total employee strength of LDC is approximately 1,300 employees at the end of Q2, Suprajit said in press release. The current year sales of the division is expected to be in the range of \$90 million.

'Perfect fit'

Ajit Rai, Founder and Chairman of Suprajit, commenting on the transaction said, "The LDC business unit of Kongsberg Automotive is a perfect fit for Suprajit. With LDC's manufacturing footprint in 3 continents with sales, business development and engineering support across the world, and, with the annual cable capacity of 400+ million would make Suprajit a truly global major in the cables business"

DALMIA BHARAT SUGAR AND INDUSTRIES LIMITED Regd. Office : Dalmiapuram - 621 651, Distt. Tiruchirapalli (Tamil Nadu) Phone : 011 23465100, Fax (011) 23313303 Email : invhelp@dalmiasugar.com . Website : www.dalmiasugar.com . CIN : L26942TN1951PLC000640 Extract of Unaudited Consolidated Financial Results for the quarter and half year ended 30-09-2021 (₹ in Lakhs)							
S.No.	Particulars	For the quarter ended			For the half year ended		For the year ended
		30-09-2021	30-06-2021	30-09-2020	30-09-2021	30-09-2020	31-03-2021
		Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited
1	Total Income from Operations	74,851	82,345	73,096	1,57,196	1,62,895	2,73,969
2	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items.)	7,900	11,299	7,323	19,196	24,652	36,794
3	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period before Tax (After Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items.)	7,900	11,299	7,323	19,196	24,652	36,794
4	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period after Tax (After Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items.)	5,923	12,434	5,555	18,356	18,141	27,034
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [comprising profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and other comprehensive income (after tax)]	12,112	20,949	9,093	33,059	28,415	62,394
6	Equity Share Capital	1,619	1,619	1,619	1,619	1,619	1,619
7	Earning per Share (of ₹ 2 each)						
a)	Basic	7.32	15.36	6.86	22.68	22.41	33.40
b)	Diluted	7.32	15.36	6.86	22.68	22.41	33.40
Standalone Financial Results							
1	Total Income from Operations	74,714	82,348	73,096	1,57,062	1,62,895	2,73,915
2	Net Profit (Loss) for the period before Tax	7,764	11,302	7,323	19,065	24,652	36,744
3	Net Profit (Loss) for the period after Tax	5,792	12,437	5,555	18,228	18,141	26,950
Notes :- 1 The above financial results are approved by the Board of Directors at their respective meeting held on 29th Oct. 2021, after being reviewed and recommended by the audit committee. The statutory auditors have carried out a limited review of these financial results. 2 The above is the extract of the detailed format of quarterly/half yearly financial results filed with the stock exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the financial results are available on the Stock Exchange websites, www.nseindia.com and www.bseindia.com and on the Company website www.dalmiasugar.com.							
Place: New Delhi Date: Oct 29, 2021						For Dalmia Bharat Sugar and Industries Limited B B Mehta Whole Time Director	

SHILPA MEDICARE LIMITED Registered office # 12-6-214/A-1, Hyderabad Road, Raichur-584135, Website - www.vbshilpa.com, Email - info@vbshilpa.com, Telephone +91-8532-238494, CIN No.- L85110KA1987PLC008739 Extract of the Standalone and Consolidated Unaudited Financial Results for the Quarter and Half Year Ended 30.09.2021 (₹. In Lakhs, except per equity share data)													
Sl. No.	Particulars	STANDALONE					CONSOLIDATED						
		Quarter ended 30.09.2021 (Unaudited)	Quarter ended 30.06.2021 (Unaudited)	Quarter ended 30.09.2020 (Unaudited)	Half Year ended 30.09.2021 (Unaudited)	Half Year ended 30.09.2020 (Unaudited)	Year Ended 31-03-2021 (Audited)	Quarter ended 30.09.2021 (Unaudited)	Quarter ended 30.06.2021 (Unaudited)	Quarter ended 30.09.2020 (Unaudited)	Half Year ended 30.09.2021 (Unaudited)	Half Year ended 30.09.2020 (Unaudited)	Year Ended 31-03-2021 (Audited)
1	Total Income from Operations	29,497.68	25,011.79	27,019.86	54,511.94	48,946.98	86,421.61	29,655.33	23,934.63	26,813.78	53,589.97	51,648.29	93,127.17
2	Net Profit/ (Loss) before tax, non controlling interest & share in profit/ (loss) of joint venture / associates (before exceptional items)	5,206.80	3,145.88	7,572.36	8,352.69	14,249.42	20,259.07	2,368.26	592.18	6,123.49	2,960.45	11,613.45	13,594.77
3	Net Profit/ (Loss) before tax, non controlling interest & share in profit/ (loss) of joint venture/ associates (after exceptional items)	6,097.71	3,145.88	7,572.36	9,243.59	19,544.23	25,553.88	3,144.80	517.20	6,120.46	3,662.01	17,632.22	19,505.19
4	Net Profit/ (Loss) after tax, non controlling interest & share in profit/ (loss) of joint venture / associates (after exceptional items)	4,362.17	2,514.65	5,477.82	6,876.82	14,091.99	18,439.18	1,996.02	158.81	4,537.94	2,154.82	13,168.96	14,778.04
5	Total Income (including other comprehensive income) (loss)	4,366.96	2,672.76	5,492.52	7,039.72	14,087.50	18,440.97	1,998.76	314.88	4,552.64	2,313.64	13,180.94	14,805.11
6	Equity Share Capital	815.27	815.27	815.27	815.27	815.27	815.27	815.27	815.27	815.27	815.27	815.27	815.27
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet, i.e. Other Equity												
8	Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 1/- each) (for continuing operations) - (in Rs)												
1)	Basic:	5.35	3.08	6.72	8.44	17.29	22.62	2.45	0.19	5.57	2.64	16.15	18.13
2)	Diluted:	5.35	3.08	6.72	8.44	17.29	22.62	2.45	0.19	5.57	2.64	16.15	18.13
NOTES: 1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of unaudited financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Un-Audited financial results are available on the Investor section of our website www.vbshilpa.com and under corporate section of BSE Limited and National Stock Exchange of India Limited. 2. The above results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Director at its meeting held on 29 October 2021.													
Place : Raichur Date : 29-10-2021												For and on behalf of the Board of Directors s/- Vishnukant Chaturbhu Bhutada Managing Director	

