

# SUV sales in the fast lane for Maruti as small cars sputter

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**MARUTI SUZUKI ISN'T** a small car company anymore. Its domestic sales in February grew 8.7% to 160,271 units, but this growth came on the back of utility vehicles (UVs) and not passenger cars.

In February 2024, sales of the company's UVs (Brezza, Ertiga, Fronx, Grand Vitara, Invicto, Jimny and XL6) almost doubled — to 61,234 units from 33,550 in February last year — even as sales of its mini and compact cars (Alto, S-Presso, Baleno, Celerio, Dzire, Ignis, Swift, Tour S and Wagon R) dropped 15.1%, from 101,773 units in February last year to 86,409 units this year.

The same trend is reflected in the April-February sales numbers. Sales of the company's UVs grew 77.4% in April-February FY24 — from 329,075 units to 583,860 units — even as sales of its mini and compact cars shrunk from 1,012,526 units to 888,436 units (12.3% decrease).

From a small-car company, Maruti Suzuki is evolving into a UV company. Industry analysts shared with FE a couple of reasons why

## REVVING UP

■ In February 2024, sales of Suzuki's UVs nearly doubled to

**61,234**  
as compared to the same period last year



■ Sales of its mini and compact cars dropped 15% to 86,409 units

Maruti Suzuki's UV sales are growing at the cost of hatchback sales.

"The Fronx — which is the Baleno-based SUV — hit the market on April 24, 2023, and crossed the 100,000-sales mark in just nine months, averaging 364 cars per day," an analyst told FE.

"In the process, it took away sales from the Baleno hatchback and the Dzire sedan — as sales of the Baleno grew just 4.48% in CY23 (half the industry growth of 8.33%), while those of the Dzire

dropped 1.5%."

Shashank Srivastava, senior executive officer, marketing & sales, Maruti Suzuki India, told FE that the reason for the success of the Fronx is its unconventional and yet likeable design.

"The Fronx was totally new and came with a unique body shape. People hadn't seen such a vehicle from Maruti Suzuki and yet they placed their trust in this crossover SUV," he said.

"Its popularity has soared particularly amongst young customers, who like its tech-loaded cabin and multiple powertrain options. In fact, the Fronx has been instrumental in more than doubling our SUV segment share to 19.7% in CY23 from 10.4% in CY22."

The Fronx has also attracted a lot of first-time car buyers, as well as those who want automatic gearbox and powerful cars. Srivastava said the automatic variants of the Fronx have contributed to 24% of sales, signalling growing inclination towards clutch-less transmission options. "There is also considerable demand for the 1.0-litre turbocharged Boosterjet engine, as well as for the recently-introduced S-CNG option," he said.