

Tata Motors drives in India's first CNG truck

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Tata Motors on Monday launched the country's first CNG truck in the medium and heavy commercial (M&HCV) vehicle segment in the 28 and 19 tonne nodes.

Most of the truck makers including Tata Motors, presently offer CNG only in small and light commercial vehicle segments. It also launched a fleet of seven trucks in the intermediary and light commercial vehicle (I&LCV) segment meant for varied applications.

Meanwhile, as part of its net zero emission target, the company is also working on a host of other alternative fuel solutions including liquefied natural gas (LNG) hydrogen, bio-CNG to meet the long term net zero emission goals, said Girish Wagh, executive director, Tata Motors.

"We are doing a continuous TCO (total cost of operation) analysis for various ranges—whether it's 500 km, 1000 km or 2000 km. Depending on a particular application, we should be ready with both LNG and CNG," Wagh told *Business Standard*. LNG as a fuel because of its density makes sense for long haul. The CNG powertrain can be easily adapted to LNG and Tata Motors is already working on it, he said.

To be sure, Tata Motors has introduced CNG powered M&HCV



Tata Motors Executive Director Girish Wagh (third from the right) says the firm is working on other alternatives to meet the long-term net-zero emission goals

PHOTO: KAMLESH PEDNEKAR

trucks at a time when the price differential between the diesel and CNG which used to be as high as 40 per cent till a year ago, has narrowed to 20 per cent now owing to a consistent price hike in the latter. But even at the current price, CNG is more feasible for the operators. The movement towards zero emission in the CVs in the country will happen through natural gases. Therefore, we want to be prepared across the entire range.

With the launch of the new advanced trucks that boast of a host of features including the new-age, Advanced Driver Assistance System

(ADAS) Tata Motors is hoping to create a strong differentiation and recoup some market share it has had in the recent months.

At the end of the June quarter of the current fiscal, Tata Motors share in the commercial vehicle market fell to 42.5 per cent from 45 per cent at the end of fiscal 2021-22. The fall in the M&HCV segment was sharper—54.6 per cent in Q1 of FY23 from 58.2 per cent at the end of FY22.

Commenting on the market share loss Wagh said, "We want to grow profitably." The company is looking to meet the objective through a combination of actions

including introduction of a product range that adds more value to the customer, offer value added services using digital solutions like the "Fleet Edge" which helps track the vehicle, the driver behaviour, and improve fuel efficiency. A combination of all this and a retail focussed approach that includes creating a pull-based approach for products and services instead of the traditional push approach, will help it grow profitably, said Wagh.

The new launches come at a time when India's commercial vehicles market is seeing a sharp recovery after two years of downturn amid improvement in economic activities and pick up in infrastructure and road construction projects.

ICRA Research expects the Indian commercial vehicle (CV) industry to witness a robust volume growth of 12-15 per cent in FY23. This would come on back of a 112 per cent growth in dispatches the industry saw in the Q1 of FY23 albeit on last year's low base.

"This year too, as an industry we are on a growth path," said Wagh. All indicators—be it freight rates, fleet utilisation or economic activities, are encouraging and the industry will see a double digit growth, he added.

With the launches of advanced I&LCV trucks and tippers, Tata Motors (used at construction sites) aims to tap into the multi-application needs of the rapidly

growing logistics and infrastructure sectors. This will particularly address demand in the urban clusters and hilly areas.

The newly launched trucks boast of advanced features including Advanced Driver Assistance System (ADAS).

Speaking at India's largest commercial vehicle launch. The trucks launched address the growing need for safer transportation with an ADAS offering collision mitigation system, lane departure warning, electronic stability control, driver alerts and tyre pressure monitoring.

They also provide cleaner mobility solutions with a richer offering of alternate fuel powertrains.

Available in many fully-built body options of load bodies, tippers, tankers, bulkers and trailers, these M&HCV and I&LCV trucks cater to a wide range of goods movement and applications across diverse sectors – agriculture, cement, iron & steel, container, vehicle carrier, petroleum, chemical, water tankers, LPG, FMCG, white goods, perishables, construction, mining, municipal applications etc, the company said.

The CNG models are powered by the 5.7-litre SGI engine generating peak power of 180hp and torque of 650Nm, come with a modular architecture and offer a range of up to 1,000 km, the company said.