

● END OF THE ROAD FOR THE VARIANT IN SEDANS

Hyundai discontinues diesel engine in Verna

Shift to BS-6 emission norms triggers move

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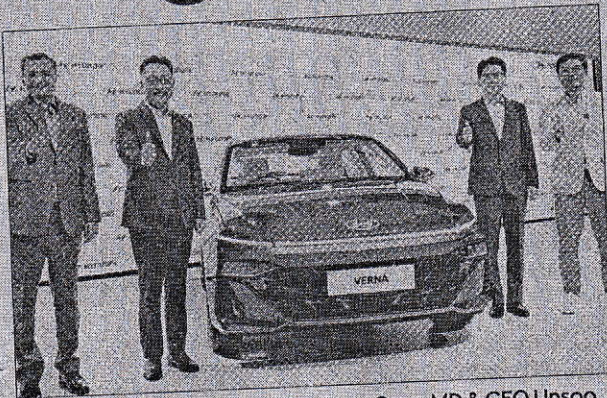
WITH HYUNDAI DISCONTINUING the diesel engine in the new version of the Verna sedan, there is no diesel sedan left in the mass-market segment in India.

Earlier this month, Honda had discontinued the diesel engine in the City sedan, and last year Skoda Slavia and Volkswagen Virtus sedans were launched only with petrol engine options.

Maruti Suzuki had discontinued the Ciaz diesel when the industry shifted to BS6 emission norms on April 1, 2020.

While the above models are midsize sedans — which the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) defines as those having 4,250-4,500 mm length and engine displacement up to 1.6-litre — in a sub-4 metre sedan diesel died a while ago. Diesel engines got discontinued in Maruti Suzuki Dzire and Tata Tigor with the industry shifting to BS6 emission norms.

Hyundai continued diesel in the Aura till 2022, when it replaced it with CNG, and Honda was the last to discontinue the diesel engine in the Amaze earlier this year — due to the RDE (real driving emissions) norms that will come into effect from April 2023, which will require more investment in diesel engines to make



(L-R) Hyundai Motor India COO Tarun Garg, MD & CEO Unsoo Kim, and other executives pose with the new Verna

Hyundai drives in new Verna, garners over 8K bookings

MIDSIZE SEDANS seem to be gaining traction once again with Hyundai launching the all-new Verna on Tuesday, priced ₹10.9 lakh onwards (ex-showroom).

Tarun Garg, chief operating officer, Hyundai Motor India, told FE that the sedan shape will never go out of style. "There weren't many all-new midsize sedan

them meet these norms.

"A decade or so ago, carmakers couldn't make enough small-capacity diesel engines — 1.5-litre and smaller — to power small/midsize sedans and hatchbacks," an automotive analyst told FE. "Today, there are no diesel hatchbacks or sedans left in the mass-market."

In fact, small diesel engines died a slow death. First, the 2015 National Green Tribunal order and the 2018 Supreme

Court ruling (that diesel vehicles more than 10 years old cannot ply in Delhi NCR) impacted sales of diesel cars. Now, the RDE norms — which require cars to achieve emission targets in real-world conditions as opposed to just in a laboratory test — have killed the diesel engine in hatchbacks and sedans.

Investments in diesel engines to meet these norms will substantially increase the

price of the car, and in a price-conscious segment such as small hatchbacks and sedans continuing with a diesel doesn't make business sense.

Over the last few months, the sales share of diesel engine variants in the outgoing Verna had dropped to about 10%, from over 40% before the BS6 emission norms kicked in.

Similarly, in the City, the sales share of diesel engine variants had dropped to just 8% over the last few months, forcing Honda to discontinue the engine.

Diesel engines are still available in sub-4 metre SUVs such as Hyundai Venue and Kia Sonet, as well as in midsize SUVs such as Hyundai Creta and Tata Harrier.

Tarun Garg, chief operating officer, Hyundai Motor India, told FE that diesel engines are now more associated with SUVs. "In sedans, people prefer petrol engines," he said. "In midsize and big SUVs, people want higher torque that diesel engines can provide."

As far as hatchback cars are concerned, Maruti Suzuki Swift and Baleno diesel got discontinued in 2020 (with BS6 emission norms), Maruti Suzuki Ignis diesel was discontinued in 2018 and Maruti Suzuki Celerio diesel was discontinued in 2017 (both due to low sales). Tata Tiago diesel was discontinued in 2020, and Hyundai Grand i10 NIOS was discontinued most recently (in 2022).

In fact, the most affordable diesel engine in a sedan body shape today is only a luxury car — Mercedes-Benz A-Class 200d (priced ₹44 lakh, ex-showroom).