

Chennai design engine powers Ford's global hits

Ford Business Solutions in the city behind popular models, such as F-Series, Explorer, Transit, and Ranger

SHINE JACOB

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It was in August 2022 that Ford Motor Company exited India by winding up its manufacturing units. Even two years after the global automotive giant shut down its unit in Chennai, the same city, through Ford Business Solutions (FBS), is turning out to be the brain behind key design and development aspects of all the globally successful models by the US major in the past two years.

According to FBS, the company's top-selling models globally — including the F-Series, Explorer, Transit, Ranger, and others — are getting a touch of India in

them through the “design and development of specific components”.

FBS oversees the global capabilities of the company through its 12,000 employees at its Global Technology & Business Center in Chennai.

The FBS team is assisting the

global Ford team in computer-aided design, computer-aided engineering, and software development, an executive said in response to questions from Business Standard.

Interestingly, FBS is in the process of hiring around 3,000 more people in Chennai over a period of

three years to increase its employee strength to 15,000.

“We participate in the design/development of components and systems for electric vehicles, internal combustion engines, and hybrid vehicles in FBS,” he said.

Among the above-mentioned models, the F-Series is one of Ford's

biggest moneymakers. During the first half of this year, it was the highest-selling passenger vehicle in the US and also America's best-selling pickup truck for the 48th consecutive year. It reportedly sold over 750,000 trucks in 2023 and has already moved 352,406 in the first six months of this year.

“Ford was again the no. 1 selling pickup manufacturer in the world in the second quarter of this year. The F-Series truck lineup remains America's best-selling truck.

Transit, America's best-selling van, posted a new first-half sales record. Ford set an all-time record for sport utility vehicle (SUV) sales in the US during the first half of 2024, topping the previous record set in 2017,” the executive said.



Ford Explorer Timberline



Ford F-250 LARIAT

Nestle replaces CEO Schneider with firm veteran Freixe

Nestle is replacing Chief Executive Mark Schneider with long-serving executive Laurent Freixe, the company said on Thursday, marking a change of leadership as it faces a challenge to grow sales.

Schneider has decided to step down as CEO and a member of the board of directors after eight years leading the world's biggest packaged food company. The 58-year old German moved the firm away from its decades-old category-led structure in the wake of the pandemic, creating five geographic businesses to steer it through a cost-of-living crisis.

However, after a strong post-pandemic performance, it has struggled recently, last month cutting its full-year sales outlook and saying it had had to slow its price hikes as cash-strapped customers became more price conscious.

Shares at the maker of KitKat chocolate bars and Nescafe instant coffee have fallen 8 per cent in 2024, underperforming rivals like Unilever which have gained 29 per cent.