

Force Motors invests ₹1,000 cr in new platform for shared mobility

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FORCE MOTORS, THE country's largest van maker, unveiled its first next-generation shared mobility platform that has been simultaneously designed and developed for both internal combustion engines and 100% electric drive.

Force Motors has invested ₹1,000 crore in this the project, code named T1N, Prasan Firodia, MD, Force Motors, said. "This is a completely new platform and we will launch the platform by end of the year and serve the shared mobility market," Firodia said.

These investments were made through internal accruals, Firodia said. "We are a debt free company," he added. This platform has been developed ground-up and there is no carry over parts from the existing Traveller platform, Firodia said.

"Our aspiration is to get into the international markets with the platform," Firodia said. The first phase will see entry into GCC, Africa, South Africa, Saarc, Asean (excluding China and Japan) and Eurasian markets, he said. It will compete with high premium products from Europe, Far East and USA with next gen features and made-in-India price, Firodia said.

We dominate this market with a 68% share so the onus was on them to create a new segment that was aspirational and met international safety standards and raised the bar in passenger comfort, Firodia said. This platform was targeted at premium, tour and travel as people now aspire for this kind of comfort, Firodia said.

This new platform is undergoing final validation and homologation processes. A new facility with body shop with robotic and laser welding facilities is being set up



Force Motors MD Prasan Firodia and chairman Abhay Firodia with the new platform

ASHISH KALE

at the Pithampur works. These vehicles would be showcased at the forthcoming Delhi Auto Expo 2020.

A team of 150 have been working at the Akurdi R&D plant of Force Motors on it for the last four years to develop the platform. T1N is powered by a new BS-VI compliant, common rail diesel engine and also a BS-VI CNG variant. For the first time in this category, the company has come with an 100% electric version.

Force Motors has a 60% share of this segment both in revenue and volumes with its Traveller range of vehicles. The Traveller is 30 years old and is into its sixth generation of engines. The Traveller dominates the schools bus, ambulance, office transport, cargo, aggregators and lately intra city transport. There is growing demand from aggregators, fleet owners and city bus transport segment.