A brief look at the auto industry in Bangladesh

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The rapid growth of our economy and people's purchasing power has seen a rise in demand for personal transport. People are buying more cars and motorcycles than ever before, being able to pay their way through the duty inflated prices. To support this higher demand, more and more transport manufacturers have set up or setting up plants for local production. We have analysed both industries to see their

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current state and what the future holds for them.

Starting with four wheels, the car market in Bangladesh is small compared to many of our neighboring countries. Bangladesh's automobile density -- the number of vehicles per unit length of the roadway -- is as low as 0.5 percent, compared to the global average of 12 percent. Data from Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) shows that there are a total of 4,471,625 registered vehicles in the

country, of which only 370,519 are registered as 'Private Passenger Car' followed by 105,896 'Microbus' and 66,219 'Jeeps'.

On the other hand, the number of registered motorised vehicles has observed a fourfold increase in just 15 years, as it was only 303,215 units in 2003. People have been buying more cars than ever before, which presents a large opportunity for the local auto industry.

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To circumvent this issue, many companies are setting up or have set up local facilities.

Fair Technology Limited, the sole distributor of Hyundai cars in Bangladesh, is the most recent car company to make moves toward local production. The company signed a contract with Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority (BHTPA) to establish an assembly plant on six acres of land. The company plans to invest \$125 million in the next three to five years to set up a plant capable of churning out 5,000 vehicles a year. The company plans to begin production as soon as 2022



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and claims the locally assembled cars are likely to be 25 percent lower than prevailing market rates.

PHP Motors, a sister concern of the PHP Family based in Chattogram, already manufactures cars made by Malaysia's Proton. Proton Preve, a decently equipped family sedan, has been locally put together for almost half a decade. The company also began assembling the 2021 Proton Saga, according to PHP Automobile chairman Sufi Mohammed Mizanur Rahman.

In terms of full production, the state-run Pragati Industries is working closely with Japanese automotive giant Mitsubishi Corporation to make Bangladesh's own brand of motor vehicles. Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun said in 2020 that Japanese Ambassador Ito Naoki had told him "(They) are interested in increasing investments in Bangladesh". Currently, Pragati assembles cars designed by Mitsubishi Motors.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

