

# Slowdown doesn't bite these SUVs

Pankaj.Doval@timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** Amid a slowdown in the auto industry, a new set of products has been able to buck the trend, witnessing strong booking and sales numbers. And, in line with preference of Indian buyers for off-roaders, these products happen to be SUVs — ranging from the sub-Rs 10-lakh mini Hyundai Venue to the Rs 40-lakh-plus Volvo XC40.

Take for example the Hector premium SUV (priced upwards of Rs 12 lakh) from British brand Morris Garages (MG) Motor. Hector, which touts itself as 'India's first internet car', has managed to get bookings of over 21,000 units since its launch on June 27. Overwhelmed by the number, which far exceeds internal estimates, the company has stopped taking bookings. "This is a happy, but completely unexpected response. We are sold out for this year, and that too so soon," Rajeev Cha-

## BUCKING THE TREND

**MG Hector:** Launched on June 27, it has received **over 21,000 bookings**. Stops taking fresh bookings

**Kia Seltos:** Got over **6,000 bookings** on the first day. Deliveries begin from next month

**Mahindra XUV300:** Over **25,000 cars sold**

since launch in January. Company to increase monthly production by **50%**

**Hyundai Venue:** Bookings of nearly 45,000 since launch on May 21. Over **20,000 delivered**

**Volvo XC40:** Sold over **1,000 units** of luxury car despite market slump



**SUV category still remains under stress despite new launches — perhaps, as new cars are eating into the market of older models**



ba, MD of MG Motor India, told TOI.

Korea's Kia Motors is also witnessing strong numbers. The company got over 6,000 bookings on the first day for SUV Seltos. Kia is working overti-

me to ensure that the waiting list will be minimum when deliveries begin, said Manohar Bhat, head of sales and marketing. "We are elated with an overwhelming response... and are fully prepared to make

on-time deliveries."

For Mahindra & Mahindra, new mini SUV XUV300 has been a success story. "We have managed to sell over 25,000 units since the launch in January. We are still having a waiting list, at a time when we are also opening export bookings," Pawan Goenka, MD, said. To meet demand, the company has decided to increase production of the model from 5,000 units to 7,500."

Hyundai's Venue has witnessed 45,000 bookings since its launch on May 21. "We are taking steps to boost deliveries to cut the backlog. So far, 20,000 have been delivered," Vikas Jain, head of sales, said.

Volvo sold 2,700 cars (across models) last year and has managed to sell 1,000 units of XC40 that is imported at present. "There has been a constant demand for this car and, going forward, we will ensure that more units of the model are allocated for India," Volvo Car India MD Charles Frump said.