

Eicher contemplating big capacity expansion

VE Commercial Vehicles Ltd. (VECV), with its most popular vehicle brands, Volvo and Eicher, is planning a major expansion to meet the growing demand for its products all over India.

In an informal chat with media persons, Mr. Siddhartha Lal, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the company, said that he is very happy both over rising vehicle sales and the improved finances. Today his company has a cash surplus of Rs. 800 crores, and even during the current general slowdown, it has been able to increase its market share, thanks to the ready market acceptance of its products and the technology used.

He said the company will soon be going in for capacity expansion in the existing plants. The monthly installed capacity of the Eicher Commercial Vehicle plant at Pithampur is 4,000 units, of which the current production is only 2,500 units. For capacity hike including expansion of its Enfield motorcycle plant at Thiruvotriyur, the company will be



Mr. Siddhartha Lal,
Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer

spending around Rs. 125 crores.

The Eicher Group began its business operations in India nearly 40 years ago with the roll-out of its first tractor. Today, its businesses are spread across commercial vehicles, components, motorcycles, engineering design services, city maps and travel guides. While the Eicher Group owns Royal

Enfield, the oldest motorcycle manufacturing company in the world, its flagship, listed company is EML.

In operation since July 2008, the VECV product range covers Eicher trucks and buses, Eicher's components and engineering design services businesses as well as the sales and distribution business of Volvo Trucks India. VECV aims to become a full-range commercial vehicle company whose products will drive modernization in commercial transportation in India and other emerging world markets.

Prior to joining Eicher Motors and VE Commercial, Mr. Lal, a BA (Hons) in Economics, held different responsible positions. After shopfloor training at MAN Nutzfahrzeuge, Germany, and Management Trainee at Royal Enfield in 1995-96, he joined Eicher Tractors Marketing in 1999. He was Chief Executive Officer of Royal Enfield Motorcycles during 2001-03 and was COO of the Eicher Group during 2004-06.



Skyline range of Eicher buses goes 'Executive'

Amid euphoric banter of select Eicher customers gathered at an exclusive meet in Hyderabad, Eicher Buses showcased and introduced the 'Executive range' of its Skyline buses. The Skyline Executive range will serve the needs of the institutional segment as the seating capacity, contemporary styling and becalming aesthetics make for a comfortable ride to office and back.

All Skyline buses are offered as fully built 32-40 seaters and are BS II / BS III compliant. These buses conform to the bus-body design norms and the 'roll-over test' as prescribed in the Bus Code laid down by the Automotive Industry Standards Committee. Eicher's Skyline buses are already available for the school segment as the much recognized yellow-toned 'Skyline School' brand.

The Skyline Executive has a body width of 4 feet and the largest span suspension design amongst its category of buses. The bus body is completely textured in fiber-reinforced plastic and is polish-painted with a high-durability gloss to give a classic, premium look. Driving comfort is ensured by the power steering, air brakes, high head-rest seats, an aqua-finish dashboard with additional boot space on the side panel, a short-handle gear-shift lever and a wide panoramic windscreen.

Mr. Somnath Bhattacharjee, Executive Vice President, Sales, Marketing and Aftermarket, VE Commercial Vehicles, said: "The ride to the office and back should be the most comfortable, safe and soothing experience. Whilst the journey to office is always about the newness of another day,

the journey back home should allow for relaxation. The Skyline Executive is primed for passenger comfort even if the bus is on-road for longer than anticipated spells of time due to clogged traffic. Secure bus-body fittings, engine covers to reduce noise levels and elegant interiors with spacious hat racks make for a cosy bus ride. All Skyline buses score on safety, style and comfort. The Skyline Executive notches these attributes to a level above and also offer around 10% superior fuel efficiency when compared to other contemporary buses plying in the 'office travel' segment. Moreover, the Skyline Executive outscores on performance parameters, thereby making it a very reliable product for the transport operators to better their business".

The Skyline Executive is being introduced across the country in a phased manner. It has already been introduced in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat,

Goa and Rajasthan. Exports of this bus in the right-hand drive markets commenced in June this year, and the left-hand drive version is likely to be introduced in the Middle East and some African markets by early 2010, he added. ♦



VECV introduces 'Skyline Executive'

Eicher buses division of VE Commercial Vehicles has introduced its 'Executive Range' of Skyline buses. The Executive range targets office transport segment, with its contemporary styling and aesthetics. The Skyline brand has already gained recognition by their yellow-tinted 'Skyline School' label.

Offered as fully built units with BS II / BS III engine options, the buses can seat from 32 passengers upto 40. Featuring a body width of 4 feet, the Skyline Executive also boasts of the largest span suspension design in this segment. While an array of features such as power steering, short-handle gear-shift lever, air brakes and high head rest seats provide comfort to the driver, finishing touches comes from an aqua-finish dashboard, an additional side-panel bootspace and a wide panoramic wind-

screen. Passenger comfort is enhanced by elegantly done interiors with cosy seats and spacious hat-racks.

The noise levels are significantly lower, thanks to secure bus-body fitments and engine covers. Crafted with Fiber-Reinforced Plastics (FRP), the exteriors are polish-painted with a high-durability gloss that improves aesthetics considerably.

Eicher claims that the Skyline Executive is superior in fuel efficiency too, to the tune of 10 percent when compared to the other 'office travel' buses. The vehicles conform to the bus-body design norms as well as 'roll-over tests' as laid down by the Au-

tomotive Industry Standards Committee.

The buses would be introduced in a phased manner across India. They have already been introduced in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa and Rajasthan. Exports to the right-hand driven markets started in June 2009. Left-hand versions for the Middle East and African markets would kick off by early 2010. ■

