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Autos & Mobility Industry Briefing -- 19th November to 25th November 2018

News is arranged by company and topic. Stories that apply to more than one company or topic are duplicated.

News about the major automakers

BMW (history)

- Plans to launch a ride hailing service in the Chinese city of Chengdu. ([Reuters](#))

Daimler (history)

- Invested in on-demand bus service Rally. ([Rally](#))

FCA (history)

- Unions said Maserati's Grugliasco plant has been shut down for 102 of the 214 working days in 2018. ([Torino Oggi](#))

Ford (history)

- A document given to workers at the Bridgend Engine plant suggested Ford will run a voluntary redundancy program in Britain in 2019. ([Wales Online](#))

Geely (includes Volvo) (history)

- Postponed the production of Lynk&Co cars at the Volvo Ghent plant, citing economic volatility. ([Reuters](#))

General Motors (history)

- Announced the "unallocation" - GM-speak for almost certain closure - of three vehicle plants (Oshawa, Detroit-Hamtramck and Lordstown), two transmission plants (Baltimore and Warren) and two additional plants outside of North America. GM expects the redundancies to cost around \$2 billion with an additional \$1.8 billion in write downs. GM will also reduce the salaried workforce by 15% (program already underway) and cut 25% of the executives. ([GM](#))
- Reportedly will have to make more than 3,000 salaried employees forcibly redundant after too few signed up for voluntary severance packages. ([World Socialist](#))
- Increases in production at the Cami Assembly plant in Canada will likely have reduced the workforce on layoff to zero by the end of 2019. ([London Free Press](#))
- Cruise will open a new office in Seattle. ([GeekWire](#))
- The NHTSA is looking into braking problems that could affect 2.7 million vehicles in the US. ([Detroit Free Press](#))
- GM Ventures invested in MapAnything. ([Venture Beat](#))

Honda (history)

- Launched the all-electric Everus in China, built with JV partner GAC. ([Electrek](#))

Hyundai / Kia (history)

- The US Department of Justice has reportedly opened an investigation into engine failures in Hyundai vehicles but declined to comment on the story. ([Reuters](#))

Nissan (includes Mitsubishi) (history)

- Nissan's board voted unanimously to terminate Carlos Ghosn's role as chairman and set up a committee to review governance but held off naming a direct replacement. ([Nissan](#))
- Mitsubishi deeply apologised for Ghosn's alleged offences and said it would remove him as chairman. ([Mitsubishi](#)), then chose the CEO to become CEO and chairman. ([Mitsubishi](#))

PSA (includes Opel/Vauxhall) (history)

- Held a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new PSA-AVTEC joint venture powertrain plant in Tamil Nadu, India. The plant will have initial capacity of 300,000 transmissions and 200,000 engines. ([PSA](#))
- Announced further job cuts at the Ellesmere Port factory, in the past year about half the workforce have been made redundant. Workers walked out in protest. ([BBC](#))
- Reportedly agreed to sell its share in the joint venture Kolin, Czech Republic, factory that makes the 108, C1 and Aygo to Toyota. PSA will then not commission successor vehicles after the current generation ends in 2021. The two companies will also partner on new small light vans. ([Les Echos](#))

Renault (history)

- Appointed Thierry Bolloré as interim "deputy" CEO. ([Renault](#))
- Carlos Ghosn has lost the confidence of the French state, who are trying to defend the status quo of Renault having voting rights in Nissan, but not the other way around. Following Ghosn's sacking from Nissan there has been speculation that the Japanese company could increase its Renault stake to a level that would see Renault lose its Nissan votes. ([Reuters](#))
- Mitsubishi's CEO said it would be hard for anyone other than Ghosn to run Renault, Nissan and Mitsubishi at the same time, calling into question the fate of the three-way alliance. ([Reuters](#))
- Ghosn has denied any impropriety, saying that the problems lie with Nissan's regulatory reporting. ([Reuters](#))

Tata (includes JLR) (history)

- Unveiled the new Range Rover Evoque SUV. Although externally very similar to its predecessor, JLR believe that a series of detailed changes will attract customers to the new model. The car offers 48V augmentation for both gasoline and diesel models and a plug in hybrid will be available in 12 months. ([JLR](#))
- JLR will test driverless cars in London through a partnership with taxi firm Addison Lee as part of a scheme funded by the UK government. ([City AM](#))

Tesla (history)

- CEO Musk set off speculation of a tie-up with Daimler on electric vans by saying on Twitter that he would enquire about sharing the Sprinter electric model. Musk seemingly made no mention of Tesla's [earlier stated](#) plan to build its own vans on the Model S / X platform. ([Reuters](#))
- Rolled back much of a Chinese price increase imposed to recover higher tariffs. Tesla said it wanted to keep the cars affordable, an alternative explanation is that the company exceeded the limits of its pricing power. ([Business Insider](#))

Toyota (history)

- Reportedly agreed to buy out PSA's share in the joint venture Kolin, Czech Republic, factory that makes the 108, C1 and Aygo. PSA will not commission successor vehicles after the current generation ends in 2021. The two companies will also partner on new small light vans. ([Les Echos](#))
- Toyota's MD in Ireland complained about the distortion caused by the weaker UK pound, saying that it encouraged excessive imports of used cars from Britain. He believes Sterling/Euro parity would be "disastrous". ([Independent](#))

VW Group (history)

- Reportedly settled a lawsuit brought by Broadcom alleging VW had infringed its IP. ([Reuters](#))
- CEO Diess does not believe that individual ownership is on its way out, saying “people will continue to be fascinated by driving”. ([VW](#))
- Porsche’s electric offerings will have material cost increases of between €6,000 to €10,000 compared to equivalent combustion engine cars, according to offer the record sources. In response, Porsche intends to enact a profit improvement plan to yield €750 million annually over the next eight years. ([Bloomberg](#))
- Complexity was such that, in 2017, although VW sold 84,000 Golfs in Germany, the largest group of identical vehicles numbered only 400. ([VW](#))
- Acquired a 49% stake in software developer Diconium. ([VW](#))
- Restructured the management of its operations in India to put Škoda executives in charge. ([VW](#))
- Trademarks filed by VW have led to suggestions that the ID range will be branded as ID 1, ID 2 etc rather than being given names as the concept vehicles -- which VW executives still refer to -- have. ([Green Car Reports](#))
- Confirmed the Audi e-tron SUV will be localised in China from 2020 onwards. ([VW](#))
- Recalling around 75,000 cars to fix problems with seatbelts. ([BBC](#))

Other

- **Leap Motor** has so far raised \$290 million of a targeted \$360 million Series A round. ([Deal Street Asia](#))
- **VinFast** unveiled the Fadil, a rebadged version of **Opel’s** Karl Rocks beefed-up small MPV. ([Auto Times](#))
- **BYD** has put plans for a Canadian factory on hold until the “business case makes sense”. ([Reuters](#))
- **McLaren’s** CEO pronounced himself satisfied with the terms of the draft **Brexit** deal. ([Reuters](#)) So did the UK’s car industry trade body. ([SMMT](#))

News about other companies and trends ...

Economic / Political News

- The CEOs of **Daimler**, **VW Group** and **BMW** have probably signed up for impromptu hand shaking lessons after reportedly being invited for a summit at the White House about car imports. ([Detroit News](#))
- An environmental lobby group called for combustion engine cars to be withdrawn from sale in **Europe** by 2035 and for all legacy vehicles to be banned by 2050. ([Business Green](#))

Suppliers

- **Tower** is selling its European operations to French supplier **FSD**. ([Tower](#))
- **ThyssenKrupp** won’t be hiring **Daimler’s** CFO as chairman after all, because the board decided that he wanted to be paid too much. ([Handelsblatt](#))

Ride-Hailing, Car Sharing & Rental (history)

- **Careem** is reportedly trying to raise a further \$200 million from Chinese investors. ([Reuters](#))
- **Zipcar** complained that London local councils and the mayor’s office were not aligned in how badly they wanted electric vehicles on the streets and this was delaying the roll-out of more electric shared cars. ([Inside EVs](#))
- **Didi Chuxing** launched a new development centre in Toronto, Canada. ([FINSMES](#))
- **Daimler** invested in the \$5 million seed round of on-demand bus service **Rally**. ([Rally](#))
- **BMW** plans to launch a ride hailing service in the Chinese city of Chengdu. ([Reuters](#))

Driverless / Autonomy (history)

- **AEye** said it had raised \$40 million in new funding from a group of yet-to-be-announced investors including “multiple global automotive OEMs, Tier 1 and Tier 2s”. AEye says it has developed a lidar that can track large trucks over 1 kilometre away “without difficulty”. Since the test was of a single vehicle on an isolated airstrip, competitors may question how representative this is of the real world. ([AEye](#))

- Commercial **self-driving** bus services will start on the Forth Bridge crossing in Scotland in 2021. ([Independent](#))
- **GM's** Cruise division will open a new office in Seattle. ([GeekWire](#))
- **JLR** will test driverless cars in London through a partnership with taxi firm **Addison Lee** as part of a scheme funded by the UK government. ([City AM](#))

Electrification (history)

- **Porsche's** electric offerings will have material cost increases of between €6,000 to €10,000 compared to equivalent combustion engine cars, according to offer the record sources. ([Bloomberg](#))

Connectivity

- **Mitsubishi Electric** and **NTT DoCoMo** said they had achieved world record vehicle to network data transmission rates of 27 Gbps (at 10m) and 25 Gbps (at 100m). ([ZDNet](#))
- **Nuance** will spin off its automotive voice recognition and personal assistant business into a separate unit called Nuance Auto. ([ZDNet](#))
- Driver monitoring telematics system developer **Lightfoot** raised £3 million. ([TechCrunch](#))

Other

- Swedish scooter rental start-up **VOI** raised \$50 million, whilst German firm **Wind** raised \$22 million. ([TechCrunch](#))
- **Meituan**, owner of bicycle rental service Mobike said it was reducing fleet sizes to avoid oversupply. ([TechCrunch](#))