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Autos & Mobility Industry Briefing -- 24th December to 30th December 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)

- Does not think there will be any supply risks for batteries, even if demand grows, thanks to the long term contracts it has signed with “reliable” suppliers. BMW says that it is working to reduce dependence on hard-to-source raw materials and has already eliminated the use of rare earth metals in the latest generation of electric motor. ([BMW](#))
- Says its battery technology is equal or superior to the competition, when all characteristics are considered, and believes that electric motors are more important to make in-house than batteries. ([BMW](#))
- South Korean regulators fined BMW \$10 million, saying the company had delayed recalls for engine fires and referred the matter to prosecutors. ([Reuters](#))

Hyundai / Kia (history)

- Expects the Russian market to grow by 5% to 6% in 2019. ([Reuters](#))

Nissan (includes Mitsubishi) (history)

- Nissan’s US operation said that it had learned several things about marketing electric vehicles: customers really want a decent range (200 miles+); because there is less of an existing infrastructure for electric cars than gasoline and diesel vehicles the customer needs to be provided with additional services; people want a wide choice of bodystyle; cultural and other factors mean that response is different across markets. ([Green Car Reports](#))
- Will reduce production in China by 30,000 units between December and February because of slow sales. ([Reuters](#))

PSA (includes Opel/Vauxhall) (history)

- CEO Tavares believes that electrification will benefit cars more than SUVs because they have better aerodynamic efficiency and will therefore require smaller batteries to accomplish the same range. He also said PSA’s strategy for re-entering the US market is not based on sharing with other OEMs, but he remains open to the idea. ([Automobile](#))

Renault (history)

- One of the main French unions has called upon the company to be more transparent about the financial dealings of the Dutch registered entity that carries out some of Renault and Nissan’s joint business. ([Reuters](#))

Suzuki

- Maruti Suzuki is looking for a new site to move the Gurgaon factory to because the fields that once surrounded the plant have given way to urban sprawl which has made logistics far more challenging. ([Bloomberg](#))

Tata (includes JLR) (history)

- Tata Motors has reduced its tier 1 supplier list from 1,100 to 800 in the last 12 months. ([Autocar](#))

Tesla (history)

- CEO Musk promised 100% supercharger coverage for European customers. ([Futurism](#))
- According to leaked internal emails, Tesla has stepped up its internal testing program for a new level of self-driving software and plans to retrofit new computers to existing cars but will not need to adjust the sensor set. ([Inverse](#))
- Increased the number of independent board directors to fulfil Tesla's settlement with the SEC. ([Reuters](#))

VW Group (history)

- Reported a set of newly-discovered "abnormalities" with the upgraded emissions control software of 1.2 litre diesel engined cars to the German regulator. VW has stopped updating vehicles and hopes to find a resolution during January. ([Handelsblatt](#))
- Porsche says the Taycan is sold out in the US for a year if all reservations turn into firm orders and that the biggest cohort of buyers are defecting from Tesla. ([CNET](#))
- According to US sales representatives, the all-electric Porsche Taycan (formerly Mission E) will have three models, the base version will retail in "low \$90,000" range, the 4S will have a "high \$90,000" price tag whilst the range-topping Turbo will be "over \$130,000". ([Green Car Reports](#))
- According to Audi's new chief, getting a CEO spot should be on more new year's resolution lists. He claims the new job has helped him shed 10 kilos. ([SZ](#))
- Showed off a prototype charging station that uses the same batteries as MEB platform vehicles (either new, or more likely, used) to provide high capacity and fast charging, regardless of local infrastructure. The 360 kWh unit can provide charging rates of 100 kW. ([VW](#))

Other

- **Great Wall** launched an electric city car under the Ora brand in the Chinese market. The R1 will have ~150 miles of range thanks to a 33 kWh battery but a starting price of \$8,860 (after incentives). ([Electrek](#))
- **GAC** announced the completion of a new 200,000 unit capacity plant for electrified vehicles (to be expanded to 400,000 at a later date) and a 400,000 unit capacity automatic transmission plant (a joint venture with **Aisin**). ([GAC](#))

News about other companies and trends ...

Economic / Political News

- **Germany's** government has reportedly finalised technical specifications for diesel emission upgrade retrofits and will publish them in the new year. ([Manager Magazin](#))

Suppliers

- Following **GM's** announcement that it will (probably) shut the Lordstown, Ohio plant, **Magna** said that it will cease production at its nearby seat factory. ([WTOL](#))
- **ZF** will have a €100 million charge in Q4 2018 due to likely EU-imposed fines against **TRW** for being in a cartel of safety systems suppliers, before it was acquired by ZF. ([ZF](#))
- **Denso** announced a restructuring ([Denso](#)) and that joint ventures announced earlier in the year have been formally agreed for control software ([Denso](#)) and electric drive modules. ([Denso](#))
- **BASF** is building a new plant in China to produce components for exhaust systems. ([Autocar](#))

Ride-Hailing, Car Sharing & Rental (history)

- After raising almost \$3 billion in 2018, **Grab** seems to have upped its target by another \$2 billion. ([TechCrunch](#))
- **Careem** launched a bike messenger service. In addition to providing a simple way to order couriers, customers will be able to order the rider to spend up to \$80 on an item for them and then pay when it arrives. ([Careem](#))

Driverless / Autonomy (history)

- **Nikon** invested \$25 million in **Velodyne** and the two will collaborate on ways to use Nikon's optics know-how in lidar units. ([Velodyne](#))
- Self-driving start-up **Ottopia** raised \$3 million. ([Ottopia](#))

Electrification (history)

- Groups of pick-up truck drivers in the USA have started an odd trend of blocking **Tesla** supercharging stations, leading to speculation about their motives. ([Green Car Reports](#))
- **BMW** does not think there will be any supply risks for batteries, even if demand grows and says its battery technology is equal or superior to the competition, when all characteristics are considered, and believes that electric motors are more important to make in-house than batteries. ([BMW](#))
- **Nissan's** US operation said that it had learned several things about marketing electric vehicles: customers really want a decent range (200 miles+); because there is less of an existing infrastructure for electric cars than gasoline and diesel vehicles the customer needs to be provided with additional services; people want a wide choice of bodystyle; cultural and other factors mean that response is different across markets. ([Green Car Reports](#))

Connectivity

- **NEC** is buying Danish IT firm **KMD** saying the acquisition will help it create better solutions for connected cities to provide services such as public transport. ([Deal Street Asia](#))

Other

- Despite market conditions hobbling rival bicycle rental firms, **Hellobike** has raised more money. ([TechCrunch](#))
- Mobile refuelling start-up **Fild** is struggling to get fire department permits for kerbside refuelling in some cities, undermining its business model. ([Geekwire](#))