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Autos & Mobility Industry Briefing -- 12th July to 18th July 2021

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)

- Invested in synthetic leather company Natural Fiber Welding. ([BMW](#))

Daimler (history)

- Said that Q2 2021 financial results have been better than expected with group EBIT of €5.2 billion and free cash flow of €2.6 billion. Daimler will report full results later on. ([Daimler](#))

Ford (history)

- Recalled almost 850,000 vehicles for problems with suspension that might break, drivelines that might break and electric wiring that could rub against other parts and catch fire. ([Ford](#))
- Reckons that because small accidents or near misses are under-reported, city planners don't know about accident hotspots and aren't able to properly create heat maps (or Heinrich's triangles). Ford says that feeding in near miss information from connected cars should make cities far safer. ([Ford](#))
- Released a petrol-scented perfume, seemingly aimed at electric vehicle drivers who miss the smell of fuel station forecourts (Ford says they account for 20 percent of owners). ([Ford](#))
- Exploring the option of shipping incomplete vehicles to US dealers to partially offset the impact of the semiconductor shortage, under the proposed terms Ford would continue to own the cars. ([Detroit News](#))

Geely (includes Volvo) (history)

- Volvo upped its stake in Polestar to 49.5% (it had been diluted from 50% in a private share offering). Volvo acquired the shares from Geely's boss. ([Volvo](#))
- Volvo sold 15% of its autonomous driving division Zenseact to Chinese supplier ECARX. ([Volvo](#))

General Motors (history)

- Confirmed that BrightDrop vans would be built by robot supplier Kulka whilst GM waits for its Canadian factory to be ready. ([Reuters](#))

Honda (history)

- Honda's CEO said the firm is ready to convert to only electric vehicle sales in Europe as soon as politicians demand and thinks regulations are becoming "stricter by the day". Although the fuel cell powered Clarity is being retired, Honda will launch more cars with the power source. ([Nikkei](#))
- Released its latest sustainability report. ([Honda](#))

Hyundai / Kia (history)^{war}

- Launched an autonomous on-demand bus service in Sejong, South Korea. The minibus in use will have “minimal intervention” from an ever-present safety driver. ([Hyundai](#))

Renault (history)

- Delivered 757,525 vehicles in Q2 2021, up 40% on a year earlier. ([Renault](#))

Stellantis (formed via the merger of PSA and FCA)

- Opel’s boss is leaving for unspecified pastures new, to be replaced by an executive from Renault. ([Stellantis](#))
- Alfa Romeo has extended its sponsorship of the Sauber Formula 1 team. ([Alfa Romeo](#))

Tata (includes JLR) (history)

- Recruited a new chief commercial officer from Dyson. ([Economic Times of India](#))

Tesla (history)

- Started offering monthly subscriptions to the latest driver assistance features for \$199 per month. Unfortunately for owners of pre-2020 cars, Tesla is asking them to stump up \$1,500 to upgrade their hardware before they can access the subscription offer. Instead of the monthly fee, owners can pay a single \$10,000 lifetime payment. ([Electrek](#))

Toyota (history)

- Toyota’s Woven Capital subsidiary acquired Carmera, a mapping company. ([Toyota](#))

VW Group (history)

- Held an investor strategy presentation day. VW says that increasing regulation will erode margins on internal combustion engines so much that margin parity with battery electric vehicles will be reached within two to three years. VW thinks that autonomous driving technologies will be maturing by 2030 sufficient for large-scale deployment. CEO Diess said the company is “well on track” to be the world’s biggest EV seller. ([VW](#))
- Says that “software enabled sales” could be worth €1.2 billion by 2030, with the head of the company’s software division quoted as seeing automated driving software as a “major source of income”. ([VW](#))
- Will use the scalable systems platform (SPP) as a single architecture for all battery electric products from 2026 (dumping the MEB and PPE platforms that VW promised would bring unparalleled scale for ever and ever). VW says that 40 million vehicles will be made on the platform. Since VW has also talked about different battery technologies, ranging from lithium ion to solid state, the question is whether VW has found a way to integrate the technologies or is stretching definitions to breaking point. By 2025, VW says it will have a single operating software to be used across brands. ([VW](#))
- Lamborghini sold 4,852 cars in H1 2021, up 37% year-over-year with increases across the range. The brand says it has a ten month order book. ([Lamborghini](#))
- Porsche sold 81,670 cars in Q2 2021, up 28% versus prior year. ([Porsche](#))
- Installing a network of 3,000 chargers in Italy in collaboration with Enel X. ([VW](#))
- Audi’s designers discussed how electric and driverless vehicles will change styling priorities. ([Audi](#))
- Building a battery factory in partnership with Chinese firm Gotion High-Tech. ([VW](#))
- German VW employees fired over the diesel scandal are fighting back through the courts -- and winning. VW says it will continue to contest the wrongful dismissal suits. ([Handelsblatt](#))
- Bentley’s technical boss says that the user interface will be one of the most important elements in the brand’s future cars. He sees a role for e-fuels but none for hydrogen. ([Autocar](#))

Other

- **McLaren** raised £550 million from investors, with £150 million from existing shareholders. McLaren will use the money to repay debt and finance future growth plans. ([McLaren – not accessible for US readers](#))
- **VinFast** has opened offices in North America and Europe ahead of a market push. ([Reuters](#))

- **AYLI** expects brand recognition to “explode” once details of its strategy come to light. ([AYLI](#))
- **Aston Martin** unveiled the Valhall supercar. [Many elements of the design have changed since the concept was originally revealed as the RB-003](#) (including the engine). ([Auto Express](#))
- **SAIC** revealed a new logo which the firm calls “youthful”. The hope is that it will persuade consumers that the company is now a high-tech firm. ([SAIC](#))
- **Pininfarina** showed off the Teorema concept car. It isn't clear if the vehicle is intended to herald one of the brand's planned five cars, or is just to generate interest. ([Autocar](#))

[News about other companies and trends ...](#)

[Economic / Political News](#)

- The **EU** is contemplating a ban on all sales of non-battery electric vehicles by 2035. ([Nikkei](#))

[Suppliers](#)

- **Autoliv** reported Q2 2021 revenue of \$2 billion and operating income of \$166 million. ([Autoliv](#))
- **REE Automotive** is partnering with bodybuilder **EAVX** to develop vehicles. The first product will be a light van due for released in 2024 ([Electric Drive](#))
- **Haldex** reported Q2 2021 sales of 1.1 billion SEK (about \$131 million) and operating income of 79 million SEK (about \$9 million). ([Haldex](#))
- **Grammer** reported Q2 2021 revenue of €469 million and EBIT of €5 million. ([Grammer](#))

[Dealers](#)

- **Carsome** is acquiring **iCar Asia**. ([Deal Street Asia](#))

[Ride-Hailing, Car Sharing & Rental](#) (history)

- **Uber's** CEO expects prices to return to historic norms by around September. ([Business Insider](#))

[Driverless / Autonomy](#) (history)

- Self-driving firm **Aurora** plans to list in an \$11 billion merger with a special purpose entity. ([FT](#))
- **AEye** says its lidar unit can see over 1,000m through the rain, a performance it claims is “twice the range as the nearest LiDAR competitor”. ([AEye](#)) At an investor day, AEye said that **Continental** would use its lidar units and it would partner with Sanmina to contain production costs. ([AEye](#))
- Warehouse vehicle maker **Ati Motors** raised \$3.5 million. ([Deal Street Asia](#))
- Driver assistance developer **Netradyne** raised \$150 million. ([Netradyne](#))

[Electrification](#) (history)

- Battery developer **SES Holdings** (investors include **GM**, **Hyundai** and **Geely**) will list via a merger with a special purpose vehicle. ([Deal Street Asia](#))

[Connectivity](#)

- Connected car services supplier **Banma Technologies** raised \$434 million. ([Deal Street Asia](#))

[Other](#)

- **Cummins** and **Chevron** will collaborate on developing hydrogen infrastructure. ([Cummins](#))
- Scooter rental company **Veo** raised \$16 million. ([TechCrunch](#))