

# Amazon to make **Fire TV stick**, other devices in India

Foxconn arm to start production in Chennai later this year

NEW DELHI

E-COMMERCE and technology major Amazon will soon start manufacturing of its electronics products including the 'Fire TV' stick in India. After a virtual conversation with Amit Agarwal, Global Senior Vice President of Amazon and Country Head for India and Chetan Krishnaswamy, Vice President, Public Policy of Amazon India on Wednesday, the Union Minister for Electronics and IT, Ravi Shankar Prasad took to Twitter and the home-grown social media platform Koo, to make the announcement.

"Held a very good conversation with @AmitAgarwal and @Chetankrishna of @amazonIN today. Delighted to share that soon Amazon will commence manufacturing of electronics products like FireTV stick in India," Prasad said.

Further, Amazon also has announced its plans to begin manufacturing Amazon Devices in India. In a blog-post, the company said that it will commence its manufacturing efforts with contract manufacturer Cloud Network Technology, a subsidiary of Foxconn in Chennai and start production later this year.

As per the blog, the device manufacturing programme will be able to produce hundreds of thousands of Fire TV Stick devices every year. Amazon will continuously evaluate scaling capacity to additional marketplaces or cities depending on the domestic demand, it



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added. The minister during his conversation with the Amazon India executives also asked them to help in taking products made by India's artisans and Ayurvedic products to global markets through e-commerce. "Amazon is a global company, but Amazon India

must evolve as a truly Indian company deeply connected with Indian business community and culture," Prasad tweeted.

Another tweet by the minister also said that the Ministry of IT is setting up several digital villages and Amazon India can pick up a few villages in India and develop them as fully digital villages. Amazon should also work with small local shops and make them a stakeholder in the larger efforts of Amazon to grow its business, he added.

Agarwal said that Amazon is committed to partner with the Indian government to advance the vision of an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'. "Amazon is committed to partner with the Indian government to advance the vision of an Atmanirbhar Bharat. We have pledged to invest US \$1 billion to digitize 10 million small and medium businesses, help Indian businesses sell worldwide thereby enabling US \$10B in cumulative exports, and create an additional 1MM jobs by 2025," he said.

## Rejig inevitable for Renault Samsung for survival: CEO

Company's sales fell to lowest level in 16 years since 2004

SEOUL

THE Chief of Renault Samsung Motors said on Tuesday that restructuring will be inevitable for the survival amid the prolonged coronavirus pandemic and lower demand for its models. In a message to employees, Renault Samsung Chief Executive Dominique Signora made the comments as the company struggles with lower vehicle sales and high labor and manufacturing costs.

"There is an urgent need to cut costs (through restructuring) to ride out this crisis as the company's overall vehicle sales fell to the lowest level in 16 years since 2004. In particular, exports plunged by nearly 80 percent last year compared to the previous year due to the halted production of the Nissan Rogue SUV in March," Signora said.

Car assembly plants under Renault Group are required to cut manufacturing costs further to secure a new vehicle for production and additional volume for sales for survival amid the Covid-19 pandemic and a paradigm shift in the automobile industry, he said.

For the whole of 2020, Renault Samsung, which is 81 per cent owned by French carmaker Renault SA, sold 116,166 vehicles, down 34.5 per cent from 177,450 units a year earlier, reports Yonhap news agency. Domestic sales rose 11 percent to 95,939 units last year from 86,859 the previous year, but exports plummeted 78 percent to 20,227 autos from 90,591 over the cited period.

As a result, the Korean unit re-



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ported an operating loss worth 70 billion won last year for the first time in eight years. In January, Renault Samsung entered emergency management amid the extended Covid-19 pandemic and announced its plans to cut the number of executives by 40 percent and their pay by 20 percent. It also offered a voluntary retirement program to all employees.

Last year, Renault Samsung promised to improve productivity at the Busan plant to win export volume of the XM3 SUV for European markets. So Renault Group decided to allow the plant to manufacture most of the XM3 for global sales in September, Mozos said. "But Renault Samsung didn't keep its word as of the end of 2020 and the XM3's manufacturing costs per unit at the Busan plant are two times higher than the Captur SUV's cost-per-unit at (Renault's) Spain plant," he said.

## Apple iPhone 13 may come with always-on display feature

SAN FRANCISCO

APPLE is reportedly planning to launch iPhone 13 lineup next year and now a new report has claimed that the upcoming series may have an always-on display feature to show notifications without illuminating the entire screen. Upon receiving the notification will pop up normally except that the screen will not entirely light up. According to Max Weinbach via EverythingApplePro, with an always-on display, the lock screen will still show some important elements. The clock and battery icons will apparently always be visible on the screen, even if the screen is locked.

The upcoming series may come with an optical in-display fingerprint sensor as the secondary biometric option alongside Face ID. Previously, Apple analyst Ming-Chi Kuo had also revealed that Apple is working on the optical in-display fingerprint and might introduce it with the iPhone 13 series. The iPhone 13 lineup may mirror the iPhone 12 family of phones, with a 5.4-inch iPhone 13 Mini, 6.1-inch iPhone 13, 6.1-inch iPhone 13 Pro and 6.7-inch iPhone 13 Pro Max. In addition, the Ultra-Wide cameras on the two high-end models will be significantly upgraded to f/1.8, 6P (six-element lens) with autofocus. All the current iPhone 12 models are equipped with f/2.4, 5P (five-element lens) Ultra-Wide cameras with fixed focus. According to Barclays analysts, the iPhone 13/Pro models may feature Wi-Fi 6E. The Wi-Fi 6E provides Wi-Fi 6 features and capabilities, including higher performance, lower latency, and faster data rates.



## Saudi Arabia to stop contracting with firms without local HQ

Rule applies to foreign companies that deal with government agencies, institutions and funds

DUBAI

SAUDI Arabia announced on Monday that it plans to stop signing contracts with foreign companies that don't have their Mideast headquarters in the kingdom, state-run media reported, a bold move that could escalate business competition in the region.

The decision, to take effect on Jan 1, 2024, aims to solicit foreign investment, increase efficiency of state spending and boost local employment, according to an anonymous official quoted by the state-run Saudi Press Agency. The rule applies to foreign companies that deal with government agencies, institutions and funds. The step could put Saudi Arabia at odds with Dubai, considered the region's commercial and tourism hub. The freewheeling city in the United Arab Emirates long has served as the headquarters for most big companies operating in the oil-rich Persian Gulf.



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Saudi economy and liberalize its society in preparation for a future less dependent on oil. During the government's high-profile investment conference, the Future Investment Initiative, held last month, 24 foreign companies announced their intent to move their regional headquarters to the Saudi capital of Riyadh, the SPA report said, without offering specifics. The decision "will not affect any investor's ability to enter the Saudi market," the report added, noting that further measures will emerge throughout the year.

The wealthy kingdom has historically relied on vast oil reserves and state spending to power the country and subsidize the lives of most Saudi citizens on the government payroll. But in recent years, Prince Mohammed has sought to revamp the economy by building up tourism, entertainment and even a futuristic city in the desert called "Neom" under a grand plan called Vision 2030.