

Nissan Re-Launches Datsun In India After 30 Years

The Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Nissan launched a new Datsun in India on Monday, three decades after shelving the brand that helped win Western acceptance of Japanese autos.

The company hopes that bringing back the brand that built its U.S. business will fuel growth in emerging markets with a new generation of car buyers.

The reimagined Datsun — a five-seat hatchback — will go on sale in India next year for under 400,000 rupees (about \$6,670). It will also be sold in Indonesia and Russia, with the company saying its offerings will be tailored to each market in terms of price and size.

In India, the English-language promotional website for the car describes it as the "badge of the risers," an appeal to aspirational first-time auto buyers.

"The drivetrain is designed specifically to suit the local environment, eliminating any stress or complexity for the risers to go forth," the website says.

Nissan Motor Co. is hoping the comeback of one of its defining brands will herald the same rapid expansion that the Datsun provided when it hit American showrooms more than 50 years ago.

The Datsun was discontinued globally starting in 1981 to unify the model lineup under the Nissan brand. Nissan also makes Infiniti luxury models.

Faced with stagnating sales in established markets such as Japan and Europe, most global automakers have their eyes on fast-growing developing countries that also include China, Mexico and Brazil.

Nissan CEO Carlos Ghosn said Monday in New Delhi that first-time car buyers in places like India want the best car they can get at a price within their reach.

"We are responding to that with the return of Datsun," Ghosn said.

India's population of 1.2 billion is a lure for automakers hoping to ring up big sales numbers, albeit with cheaper prices and lower profit margins.

But the Datsun enters the Indian market at a tough time. Sales of passenger cars fell by 10 percent in the April-June quarter from the previous year, according to the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers.

Nissan Re-Launches Datsun In India After 30 Years

Published on Industrial Maintenance & Plant Operation (<http://www.impomag.com>)

Indian consumer spending has been hit by an economic slowdown and high interest rates that make car loans less affordable.

Plus, it's unclear whether the Datsun brand — which still retains wide name recognition in Western markets — will translate to emerging markets' younger consumers. Nissan officials have acknowledged that downside but said the brand still stands for good styling, durability and safety.

Ghosn said in 2012 that the Datsun name is part of Nissan's heritage and retains recognition, even in new markets.

Source URL (retrieved on 09/17/2014 - 2:48am):

<http://www.impomag.com/news/2013/07/nissan-re-launches-datsun-india-after-30-years>