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Bajaj Auto's 'V' motorcycle to have an engine of 'close to 155cc'

28 Jan 2016, Amit Panday

Bajaj Auto has readied an all-new motorcycle with which it plans to give birth to an altogether new motorcycle brand named 'V'.

The company plans to position the new upcoming motorcycle model in the growing premium commuter segment and compete with the likes of Suzuki's Gixxer and Honda's CB Unicorn models, said at least four industry sources aware of the development.

Autocar Professional has learnt that Bajaj Auto has built an all-new motorcycle that will be powered by an engine displacement of slightly more than the existing 150cc – close to 155cc – and with a slightly different design philosophy than its existing line-up of models.

“The all-new premium commuter motorcycle (codenamed: C101) will be powered by a new four-stroke, single-cylinder, powertrain that will have a displacement of close to 155cc. The new brand is an attempt to reduce its dependability on Pulsar as a standalone brand that has fetched the company remarkable sales for years,” said a source who wished not to be named.

It is known that the Bajaj Pulsar 150, the Pulsar brand's first ever model, has been selling for more than a decade now. The model continued to dominate the 150cc premium commuter motorcycle domain, along with Yamaha's FZ series.

However, with Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India (HMSI) and Suzuki Motorcycle India (SMIL) finding traction in the said segment, the industry has seen a considerable shift towards repackaged motorcycles delivering slightly higher power and torque while addressing the buyer's expectations on the design front as well.

It is known that Suzuki's Gixxer (launched in September 2014), followed by HMSI's CB Unicorn 160 (launched in December 2014), Suzuki's faired Gixxer SF (April 2015) and HMSI's CB Hornet 160R (December 2015) – all have been successful models giving the two companies a strong foothold in the market.

Interestingly, both the companies – Honda and Suzuki – have struggled in making their niche space earlier, thanks to the fierce competition from the Bajaj Pulsar 150.

“It is time that the company had to reinvent its products and branding to stay in line with the ever increasing consumer aspirations. For now, it looks like that the Bajaj Pulsar brand may be identified with premium motorcycles with bigger engines. This is already happening,” added another source on the condition of anonymity.

Automotive expert VG Ramakrishnan, managing director, Avanteum Advisors LLP, who believes that success will define the category for Bajaj Auto, said: “The company will have to keep up with

the consumer aspirations, the per capita income has gone up translating into an increase in the disposal incomes. The buyers now look at more style and performance from the motorcycles. It looks like the company will consolidate its position in the premium commuter segment, which is understood to fall in the price range of Rs 60,000-Rs 85,000, with a different design philosophy.”

Talking about the margin point of view, Abdul Majeed, partner, Price Waterhouse, said: “It is important to define a specific domain where you want to be. Bajaj Auto has been looking for a good market share in the premium motorcycles, and they have been making headway in new segments. The pricing strategy and the product performance will define success for Bajaj ‘V’. This is the right move from a product strategy point of view.”

The company, which declined to comment on the same, issued an official release on January 27, 2016 revealing that the [Bajaj ‘V’ is developed using the scrap metal of India’s first and most celebrated aircraft carrier *INS Vikrant*](#). It is understood that the brand name ‘V’ has been derived from ‘Vikrant’.

Eric Vas, president, motorcycle business, Bajaj Auto, commented in the official release “For decades, the *INS Vikrant* has been celebrated as the pride of our country and is synonymous with Indian military capabilities and power projection. We are proud that Bajaj Auto is playing a role in keeping the legacy of India’s first aircraft carrier alive.”

He added that, “For the warship, the name Vikrant was taken from the Sanskrit word Vikrānta meaning ‘stepping beyond’, i.e. ‘courageous’ or ‘bold’. These qualities also form the essence of our new brand. We are confident that the bike will carry the spirit and legacy of *INS Vikrant* forward and become one of the most path-breaking motorcycles that customers will witness this year.”

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