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Tata Motors appoints Guenter Butschek as CEO & MD

Guenter Butschek will be responsible for only the Indian operations, with the company's London-based Jaguar Land Rover unit continuing to be managed by CEO Ralf Speth.

ET Bureau | 18 January 2016, 5:22 PM IST



MUMBAI: Tata Motors has hired former Airbus Chief Operating Officer Guenter Butschek as its managing director and chief executive of local operations, filling up the positions left vacant after the death of Karl Slym in January 2014.

The 55-year-old German will take charge at Tata Motors on February 15, the nation's top automobile manufacturer by revenue for five years said in a filing with stock exchanges.

He will be responsible to lead all operations of Tata Motors in India and in international markets including South Korea, Thailand, Indonesia and South

Africa, with the company's London-based Jaguar Land Rover unit continuing to

be managed by CEO Ralf Speth.

Cyrus P. Mistry, Chairman, Tata Motors, said, "Tata Motors is going through an exciting yet challenging phase and Mr Butschek's appointment comes at an opportune moment. He brings with him rich global experience of growing organizations and developing new markets. I am confident that Mr Butschek's ability to lead high performing teams will enable our company to achieve sustainable, profitable growth."

Butschek, who resigned from European aircraft maker Airbus in December 2014, has had a series of negotiations with Tata Motors over the past year or so, people in the know said.

He spent almost four years at Airbus out of which about two and half years as the aircraft maker's chief operating officer.

He has more than 25 years of experience in the automotive industry, all at Stuttgart based luxury car maker Mercedes-Benz.

The appointment of Butschek happens at a time when the domestic operations of Tata Motors are gradually turning a corner. While it is losing market share on the commercial vehicle front, the company has grown its medium and heavy truck volumes by 22%.

In the passenger vehicle space, Tata Motors has posted cumulative growth of 5% lower than the industry growth of 9% April-December 2015, which though is a much better performance when compared with the past few years.

V. G. Ramakrishnan, MD of Avanteum Advisors LLP says Butschek could potential be the Alan Mulally of Tata Motors. Mulally fashioned a major turn around at Ford in the middle of crisis.

"Butschek will have to draw upon his experience in China and South Africa to tackle what would probably his toughest challenge to day. Critical challenge for the new CEO would be understand mass market consumer behaviour, managing an organisation with its own culture and in a country that is culturally diverse. Appreciation of heterogeneity of the India market will be crucial to success," said Ramakrishnan.

Ramakrishnan says, late Karl Slym had put in place basic fundamentals in place, which are coming together nicely, all Tata Motors needed was a leader on top to drive the show.

With more than Rs 3,500 crore to Rs 4,000 crore of investment planned per annum, the product pipeline is well in place for the company to attempt a turnaround in operations.

Butschek, graduated in Business Administration and Economics with a diploma from the University of Cooperative Education Stuttgart, Germany. He brings broad functional and general management skills, and wide international experience to his new role at Tata Motors, said the company in a statement.

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Volkswagen has no alternative for Matthias Mueller, says member of executive committee

"The impression he gives is that he is working in a very serious and results-oriented way on the problems. People like to speculate but there is neither cause nor reason to express doubt on this issue."

Reuters | 20 January 2016, 6:00 PM IST

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The decision was taken in the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

PTI | 20 January 2016, 5:00 PM IST

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PTI | 20 January 2016, 4:36 PM IST

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