

1 September 2008 | 10 pages

India Auto Sector

August Sales: Mixed Trends: 2 Wheelers Shine, Cars Disappoint

- Aug Sales dealer dispatches were mixed this month with strong dispatches in two wheelers (especially Hero Honda), and relatively weaker trends visible in the passenger car segment. Two wheeler dispatches appear strong (aided by low base effect and build up of stock levels in anticipation of robust demand in the festive season); in contrast, retail demand for cars appears to be tapering – resulting in OEMs curtailing dispatches.
- Headline Pricing Stable HROH hiked prices by Rs850 (average) on its product portfolio. Pricing remains stable in CVs too TAMO has increased prices by ~7% in the past four months. Passenger cars remain an area of concern OEMs have increased prices by ~2-3% (insufficient to pass through cost pressures) and attendant discounts have been escalating. Most players believe that cost pressures have stabilised especially for steel. Rubber and tire prices remain an area of concern for most players.
- Two wheeler sales +16% YoY Impressive growth was driven by HROH's dealer dispatches (+27% Y/Y). Bajaj's domestic sales declined 7% Y/Y, whilst TVS' domestic sales rose a modest 6% Y/Y. Hero Honda continues to build inventory levels ahead of the festive season. Sequentially, both motorcycle and 2 wheeler sales were up ~6% and 5% respectively.
- Maruti Sales Declined 9% YoY Domestic sales fell by 10% Y/Y due to a sharp decline in A2 (compact segment) sales. Retail offtake continues to be weak, given the adverse macro environment higher interest rates and an erosion of wealth (in both property and financial markets) has resulted in consumers deferring purchases. Growth is restricted to the relatively newer products Swift and Swift Dezire. YTD growth of ~5% is below our expectations we see downside risks to our c8% volume growth forecast for FY09.
- M&M Sales +8% YoY August sales rose 8% YoY; driven by strong tractor sales (+16% YoY). UV sales were muted (+2% Y/Y) as strong growth in non Scorpio sales (+12% Y/Y) was offset by weak Scorpio sales (-21% YoY). Domestic tractor sales rose 16% Y/Y aided by last year's low base and a continued strong pick up in rural demand. Management maintained its guidance of 10-12% growth in UVs and increased guidance on tractor growth to 6-8% vs. flat / nominally negative expectations earlier.

See Appendix A-1 for Analyst Certification and important disclosures.

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Two Wheeler Sales: Up 17% YoY

Figure 1. Two Wheeler July 2008 Sales: Summary

	Aug Sales	YoY Chg	MoM chg	YTD Sales	YoY chg
	(Nos)	(%)	(%)	(Nos)	(%)
Hero Honda	305,516	26.8	8.6	1,481,077	19.0
Bajaj Auto					
Motorcycles	175,274	4.7	3.8	902,743	9.9
2 wheelers	176,631	3.8	3.9	908,579	9.0
3 wheelers	24,324	-4.6	2.5	106,175	(11.5)
Total	200,955	2.7	3.7	1,014,754	6.5
TVS Motors					
Motorcycles	52,304	13.1	-3.2	270,674	10.9
2 wheelers	114,321	11.3	-3.6	564,655	6.5
Motorcycles	533,094	17.3	5.7	2,654,494	14.9
2 wheelers	596,468	16.1	4.7	2,954,311	13.3
Source: Citi Investment Rese	arch				

Figure 2. Two Wheeler Market shares (%)

	FY08	FY09 YTD^	FY09 YTD	Aug
	%	%	Relative* %	Relative* %
Motorcycles				
Hero Honda	54.0	48.9	55.8	57.3
Bajaj Auto	35.7	30.7	34.0	32.9
TVS Motors	10.3	9.8	10.2	9.8
2 wheelers				
Hero Honda	49.2	40.6	50.1	51.2
Bajaj Auto	31.8	24.5	30.8	29.6
TVS Motors	19.0	16.9	19.1	19.2
Samaa Camaaan SIAM				

Source: Company, SIAM

Note: *Relative market shares based on 3 majors volumes , ^Market share uptil July 2008 based on consolidated industry data

Two wheeler sales grew by +16% YoY for the three majors in August led by Hero Honda. Motorcycle sales were also healthy (+17% YoY, YTD +15%). Bajaj Auto volumes were fairly muted (+3% Y/Y) driven by 5% Y/Y growth in motorcycle sales despite a fairly low base last year. Three wheeler sales declined by 5% Y/Y. Domestic sales were disappointing (-7% Y/Y) and growth was aided by 26% Y/Y growth in exports (YTD +30% Y/Y). Bajaj growth has lagged that of industry leader Hero Honda. Bajaj indicated that it would launch 4 new >125cc motorcycles between Jan-Mar 2009. We reckon Bajaj is not building inventory as compared to its competitors yet due to launch of its new bikes after the festive season.

	Aug Sales	YoY Chg	MoM chg	YTD Sales	YoY chg
	(Nos)	(%)	(%)	(Nos)	(%)
Total Sales	200,955	2.7	3.7	1,014,754	6.5
Motorcycles	175,274	4.7	3.8	902,743	9.9
Other Two Wheelers	1,357	(50.1)	19.6	5,836	(50.8)
Total 2 wheelers	176,631	3.8	3.9	908,579	9.0
3 wheelers	24,324	(4.6)	2.5	106,175	(11.5)

Hero Honda posted strong c27% YoY growth in sales in August – despite a stiffer base than competitor Bajaj. Hero Honda is building inventory ahead of the festive season. We believe the competitive environment will become challenging as Bajaj plans to launch four new >125cc models between Jan – Mar 2009 and we could see discounts returning in the festive season if retail demand continues to be weak. Hero Honda was cautious in its outlook for industry growth in FY09 and guided to a 5% YoY growth in FY09 for the industry – achievable, given the strong YTD performance. Key risks to this view are interest rates – which continue to trend up.

Pricing remains firm – HROH raised prices by an average of around Rs850 per bike last month – indicating the company's ability to pass through cost pressures (albeit partially).

Figure 4. Hero Honda Aug 2008 Sales – Up 27% YoY

Figure 3. Bajaj Auto Aug 2008 Sales – Up 3% YoY

	Aug Sales (Nos)	YoY Chg (%)	MoM chg (%)	YTD Sales (Nos)	YoY chg (%)
Two Wheelers	305,516	26.8	8.6	1,481,077	19.0
Source: Company					

TVS reported 13% YoY growth in motorcycle sales – driven by a benign base effect, strong performance of the Apache, and robust growth in exports (+51% Y/Y). Domestic sales rose +6% Y/Y. The new product – the 125cc Flame – is priced significantly higher than competing products. Dealer feedback indicates that demand for this product is relatively muted thus far. Scooter/Moped sales rose by 10% Y/Y in August. Scooter sales were relatively subdued (+3% Y/Y), while moped sales were fairly robust (+15% Y/Y), indicating that rural and semi urban demand remains robust.

Figure 5. TVS Motors Aug 2008 Sales – Up 11% YoY

	Aug Sales	YoY Chg	MoM chg	YTD Sales	YoY chg
	(Nos)	(%)	(%)	(Nos)	(%)
Total Sales	114,321	11.3	(3.6)	564,655	6.5
Scooters/Mopeds	62,017	9.8	(3.9)	293,981	2.8
Motorcycles	52,304	13.1	(3.2)	270,674	10.9



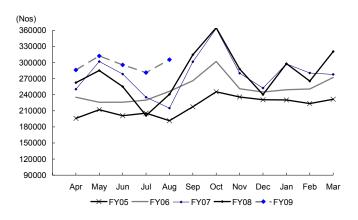
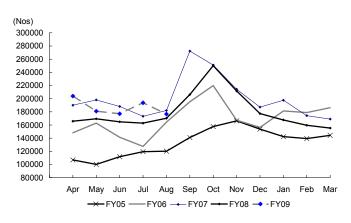
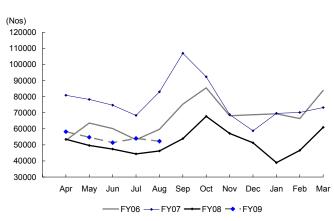




Figure 8. Bajaj Auto: 2 Wheelers Sales Trends

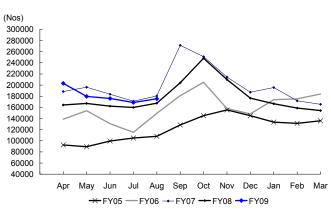


Source: Company Reports, SIAM



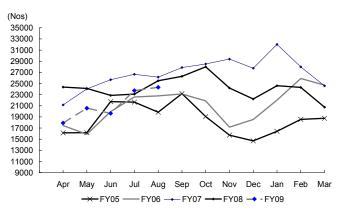




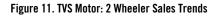


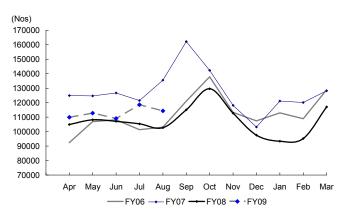
Source: Company Reports, SIAM

Figure 9. Bajaj Auto: 3 Wheelers Sales Trends



Source: Company Reports, SIAM





Source: Company Reports, SIAM

Source: Company Reports, SIAM

Maruti Suzuki: Only Fresh Product Sells

Maruti's domestic sales declined 10% Y/Y in August (YTD +5%), given the c10% Y/Y decline in compact segment sales. We reckon this is due to the stiff base effect of last year and the loss of market share to Hyundai's i10 and GM's Spark. The base effect will remain challenging over the next 3-4 months before moderating from Dec08 onward. We factor overall domestic volume growth of 8% in FY09 – these forecasts won't be achieved if the current trend continues – expected volume growth in 4Q (on account of the A-Star) wont be sufficient to offset weaker than forecast sales trend from Aug-Nov.

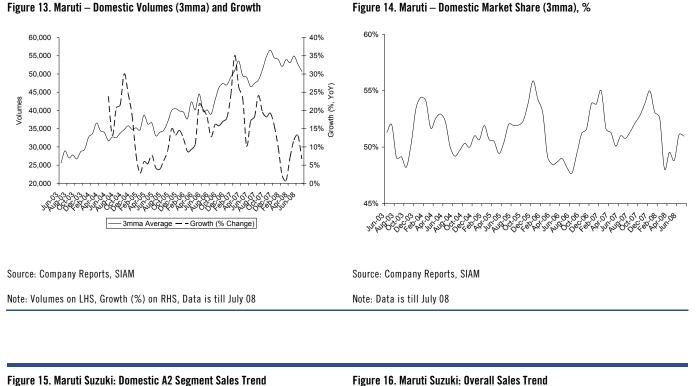
Maruti 800 volumes fell (-32% Y/Y) due to weak retail offtake. A2 volumes declined by 10% Y/Y (YTD +6% Y/Y) mainly due to stiff base effect and lacklustre demand. The silver lining? Swift volumes remain robust ~9,000 units (+19% Y/Y). *However excluding Swift, we reckon A2 segment declined by 16% Y/Y, and note that Maruti may have lost market share to Hyundai's i10 and GM's Spark in this segment.* Exports growth was also disappointing (flat Y/Y) after a robust 28% Y/Y growth between Apr-July 08 – but export sales trend on a MoM basis is difficult to discern, given the nature of end markets.

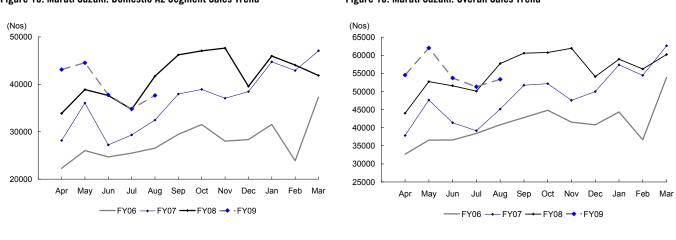
A3 segment volumes were also subdued (+12% Y/Y), driven by Dezire volumes (we estimate volumes were ~4,000 units this month). Sans the Dezire, A3 segment volumes declined sharply by 71% Y/Y. Channel checks indicate that Dezire has a waiting period of 5-6 months.

Competitive intensity remains intense in the passenger car market. Tata Motor's recently launched Indica Vista and Hyundai's i10 will be key competitors for Maruti. The impending launch of Hyundai's i-20 and Suzuki's A-Star should improve customer off-take, but we believe sales will be replacement – rather than fresh demand.

Figure 12. Maruti Suzuki – August 2008 Sales

	Aug-08	% chg YoY	% chg	FY09 YTD	% chg YoY
	Nos		over July	(Nos)	
A1 (M800)	3,717	(32.2)	(25.0)	25,319	-14.0
C (Omni, Versa)	6,540	(17.1)	4.6	33,554	-6.1
A2 (Alto, Wagon-R, Zen, Swift)	37,667	(9.7)	8.3	197,889	5.9
A3 (Baleno, Esteem)	5,427	12.2	(9.7)	27,376	34.9
MUV (Gypsy, Vitara)	762	167.4	(15.4)	2,979	125.9
Total Domestic	54,113	-10.2	2.3	287,117	4.9
Exports	5,795	1.0	2.9	23,918	20.3
Overall	59,908	-9.2	2.3	311,035	6.0
Source: Citi Investment Research	1				





Source: Company Reports, SIAM

Source: Company Reports, SIAM

Mahindra and Mahindra: Tractor Sales Spring Positive Surprise

August sales were up 8% YoY driven by 16% Y/Y growth in tractor sales. UV sales were muted (+2% Y/Y, 11% YTD) as strong growth in non-Scorpio sales (+12% Y/Y) were offset by weak Scorpio sales (-21% YoY). It remains on course to meet management's guidance of 10-12% growth in UVs over FY09e.

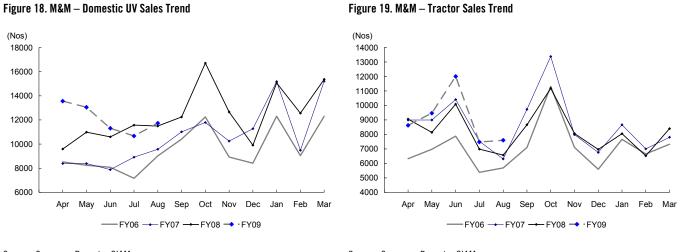
Logan volumes continue to disappoint, due to strong competition in the A3 segment. 3 wheeler sales grew 51% YoY, reflecting strong growth by the *Alfa*.

Domestic tractor sales surprised (+16% Y/Y, 10% YTD) aided by a low base last year, strong rural demand and strong push by Mahindra Finance. Management has maintained its guidance on tractor sales to 6-8% for FY09.

Management's cautious stance continued, given that key concerns - higher interest rates and restricted financing from banks - continue. Pricing remains strong in the tractor segment too - the company affected a price hike of c.3% in April, to pass on cost pressures. Management has also indicated that cost pressures (but not margins) can be passed on over the near term.

Figure 17. M&M – August 2008 Sales

	Aug-08	% change	% change	FY09 YTD	% chg
	Nos	yoy	over July	Nos	yoy
UVs	11,731	2.1	9.9	60,322	11.2
LCVs	811	(2.5)	(29.1)	4,912	8.1
3-wheelers	4,315	50.9	5.8	19,791	49.4
Exports (Auto sector)	890	7.1	(19.5)	5,182	33.1
Logan	1,464	(35.0)	4.1	7,465	(27.6)
Auto division	19,211	5.2	4.4	97,672	13.3
Tractors (Dom + Exp)	7,597	15.6	1.6	45,178	10.6
Total	26,808	7.9	3.6	142,850	12.4
Source: Citi Investment Res	earch				



Source: Company Reports, SIAM

Source: Company Reports, SIAM

Appendix A-1

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