

# Future workhorses take centre stage

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13 Nov 2015

The Tokyo Motor Show is mostly about cars, but in the corner of one of the halls, the Japanese truck industry had a number of models to make a song and dance about.



Mitsubishi Fuso Super Great V

Fuso was at the show under the banner of "Running ahead - for the drivers of our tomorrow". One of the most striking examples of what it plans to bring tomorrow was the new Fuso Super Great V, which is currently under consideration for the South African market. There were two examples, one of which was the Spider multi-task truck, which contained a number of crane attachments that lead to it getting its name.

It was impressive and, while it is only a concept, could easily be yearned for by construction or timber companies. It was created mainly with construction operations in mind to be what the company calls a "working vehicle". And work it certainly can, with grabbers and bins attached to four knuckle move cranes as well as a drilling rig. The various items allow it to grab, scoop, dig and crush, all at the same time. It would be great in Sandton at the moment with all the construction work going on.

The other version of the heavy-duty Super Great V was a bit more Tokyo Drift, with bright blue lighting and decals to give it a real standout look. It also features a number of technological items such as an automatic cruise economy control function and a power cut-off automatic control system.

Isuzu Trucks had a number of new models, including its new Erga city bus which uses a straight four-cylinder engine to maximise on urban fuel economy. But it was the reveal of the new Giga which grabbed attention. The Giga is already being tested in SA for the international market, and is under consideration for the local environment.

"At this stage we have been requested by Isuzu to do testing of the Giga in SA," says Jayesh Daya, GM of sales and product at Isuzu Truck SA. "This will happen towards the end of the first quarter 2016. Once we have completed the testing phase for the world market, we will make a call to bring it to SA or not. For now the new Giga is only for local Japanese consumption."

Chatting to company representatives at the show, it is likely that the Giga will be marketed worldwide as the C-Series, taking the brand into the long-distance haulage market. It also offers a number of technological features, including the Mimamori system which provides information on the vehicle's condition, as well as economical driving monitoring. The Giga also features the company's new D-Core engines, its next generation of efficient diesel powerplants, as well as a new heavy duty automated manual transmission or a nine-speed manual box.

It was also the home show for Hino, which themed its stand "Transport Heroes". One major hero was its incredible Dakar rally truck which was on display. However, it was more about the future on the company's stand with the new Profia hybrid truck on show. The concept truck takes the many years of experience of Toyota in hybrid technology to another level. The concept featured design items to reduce air resistance and 90kW electric motor that supplements a 9l diesel engine.

The other model which attracted us, as the Joburg EcoMobility Festival came to a close, was a concept fuel cell bus. Using hydrogen as fuel, it is geared towards environmental performance and zero CO2 emissions while in operation. Like other fuel cell vehicles it can be used as an external power supply.

At the show it had its own stand space, complete with ticketing machines and access barriers, allowing the company to showcase how it could fit into a next generation Bus Rapid Transit (brT) system. To further emphasise its potential role in an ecomobility environment, it was fitted with a specially designed bicycle trailer, making it easy to cycle to the bus stop, put your bike on the back, travel in the city and hop back on two wheels. We have a long way to go.

The truck manufacturers had some great products for today and tomorrow. Hopefully those under consideration for SA will find their way here, and one day perhaps we will see some of the more advanced concepts on our streets, too.

*Source: Business Day*

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