The Moscow Times
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AvtoVAZ Sees New Markets and Owners

By The Moscow Times

March 20, 2012



Car maker AvtoVAZ will expand its line of models and tackle new market segments as it enters additional foreign markets, targeting primarily developing countries in Latin America and Africa, AvtoVAZ president Igor Komarov said Tuesday at a Russian automobile forum in Moscow.

A source in the Industry and Trade Ministry told Vedomosti that the move could include starting manufacturing projects in addition to making a supply of vehicles available.

The key competency of AvtoVAZ is the production of budget automobiles, though the company is gradually raising the quality of its vehicles and will enter higher-end segments with the help of partners from the Renault-Nissan alliance, Komarov said.

The AvtoVAZ head also noted that the company is quite successful in former CIS countries like Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and Belarus.

Komorov also commented on the status of its negotiations with Renault and its Japanese

affiliate Nissan Motor, saying they are likely to complete a deal to acquire control of AvtoVAZ "soon," Bloomberg reported.

The shareholders have already reached an agreement although the deal is "complex and multifaceted," AvtoVAZ's Komarov said at the conference, declining to elaborate or clarify what he meant by "soon."

The Renault-Nissan alliance will acquire the shares that will boost their AvtoVAZ holding to a more than 50 percent controlling stake in "coming years," Komarov said.

TOKYO — Nissan is bringing back the Datsun three decades after shelving the brand, The Associated Press reported. This time, Nissan hopes the name synonymous with affordable and reliable small cars will power its growth in emerging markets.

Nissan Motor chief executive Carlos Ghosn made the announcement Tuesday while in Indonesia, one of three markets besides India and Russia where the Datsun will go on sale from 2014.

Datsun debuted in Japan in 1932, and hit American showrooms more than 50 years ago. It was discontinued globally starting in 1981 to unify the model lineup under the Nissan brand. Nissan also makes Infiniti luxury models.

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