

Toyota Ses'fikile

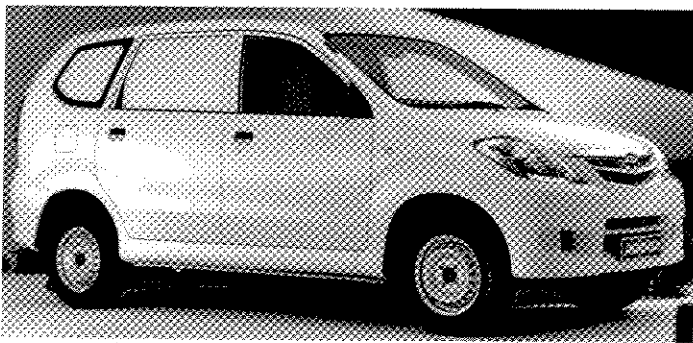
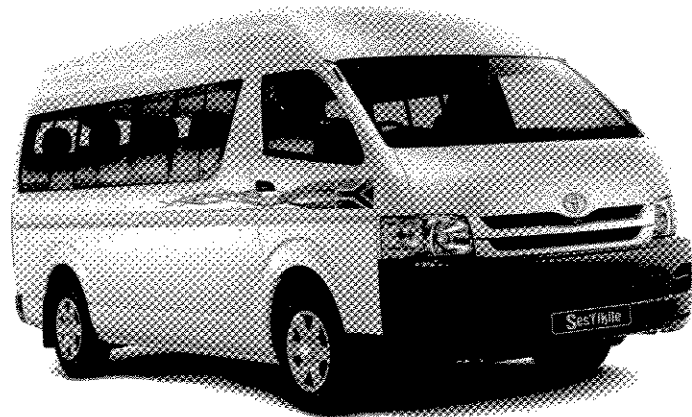
Toyota has replaced the venerable Hi Ace Siyaya with a new 14-seater taxi that is based on the Quantum commuter bus and which fully complies with the requirements of the Taxi Recapitalisation Programme.

Ses'fikile offers seating for 14 occupants with the driver included, in a 2:2:3:3:4 configuration with three point seatbelts for the front two seats and two-point lap belts for all other seats. Another safety feature in Ses'fikile is ABS with Brake Assist.

Ses'fikile is powered by a 2,7-litre four-cylinder, 16-valve, double overhead

camshaft engine has VVT-i (Variable Valve Timing - intelligent) on the intake camshaft and a resin intake manifold that reduces induction air resistance for improved induction characteristics. S-TDI (Single Toyota Direct Ignition) and a knock control system (KCS) assist in achieving a high degree of ignition timing control.

Maximum power is 111 kW at 4 800 r/min. Peak torque is 241 Nm at 3800 r/min and almost 80% of this torque is available from just 1 400 r/min through to 5 000 r/min. Price: R208 300



Toyota Avanza Panel Van

Toyota has adapted the 1,3-litre Avanza MPV into a workhorse panel van offering 955 litres of load space and aimed at inner-city delivery requirements from companies needing more security for loads that can be obtained with a bakkie.

In its panel van form the load area features a flat floor with tie-down hooks.

A cargo barrier separates the front cab area from the load compartment. Side windows are blanked out with white vinyl material and access to the load area is provided by the two rear side doors and rear tailgate.

The body structure of the Avanza is based on a highly rigid monocoque structure that provides a strong driver and passenger safety cell and stable handling characteristics. The vehicle is designed around the principle of excellent durability and reliability.

Impact absorbing structures and side reinforcement beams provide for added occupant protection. These attributes are shared by the new Avanza Panel Van.

The Avanza Panel Van is powered by Toyota's 1,3-litre K3-VE engine, a modern four-cylinder engine with a twin-overhead camshaft, 16-valve cylinder head. VVT-i (Variable Valve Timing- intelligent) and electronic fuel injection assist in optimising performance and fuel economy. Maximum power is 67 kW at 6 000 r/min. Torque is 120 Nm @ 4 400 r/min.

Service intervals are 15 000 kilometres.

A 4-year/60 000 kilometre service plan is included in the price. Warranty cover is for three years/100 000 kilometres with AA Roadside Assistance for the duration of the warranty and the price is R112 900.

Tata Xenon

Based on the Telcoline and augmenting that range is the new Tata Xenon aimed at users who share both work and pleasure with their vehicle - the Xenon boasting a comprehensive list of luxury features.

It combines sleek outer contours with a fun, rugged adventurous look while the plush and comfortable interior gives the drive-ability that will appeal to both male and female drivers as a reliable work and family transporter.

Under the bonnet is a 3,0-litre common rail direct injection diesel engine that produces 85 kW of power at 3 000 r/min and 300 Nm of torque at 1 600 r/min.

A Geometric Intercooler turbo-charger extends the torque lower down in the rev range for greater driver response. The Xenon offers ease of driving with power steering and an adjustable tilt steering column as well as all the standard comfort features such as air-conditioning, radio/CD/MP3 sound system, front and rear power windows and loads of storage space in the centre console as

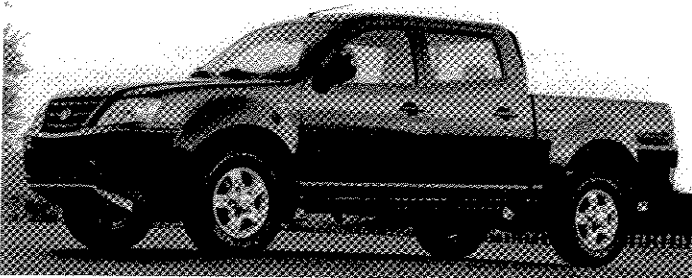
well as rear folding seats for additional cab loading.

Standard safety features include a brake load sensing proportioning valve and central locking. A full 'safety cell' made up of front crumple zones, a collapsible steering column, a re-enforced roll-over bar, inertia reel locking on all the seatbelts and side intrusion beams protects all passengers in the event of a collision.

The Xenon 4-wheel drive option offers 'shift on the fly', which allows the driver to change into either a 4x2 or 4x4 High Range without having to come to a complete stop. Low Range is also standard with a final drive ratio of 34:2.

The rear differential incorporates a limited slip-diff that facilitates ease of road driving, especially during wet conditions.

The Xenon enters the market at R169 995 for the 4x2 double-cab and R194 995 for the 4x4 double-cab. Included in the price is a 3 year/100 000km manufacturer's warranty, a 3 year / 60 000km service plan and roadside assistance.



Don't believe the hype

Martin Bensley

Going green has so far done little to boost the sales of carmakers in Europe who are trying to win back the lead from their Asian rivals by stressing a commitment to environmental friendliness.

Eco-friendly vehicles were thronged at the Frankfurt car show late last year but there are no queues at local showrooms to buy them. It seems green cars are either too expensive or simply not available.

Much-vaunted new models, such as the petrol-electric hybrid version of the Porsche Cayenne or eco-offerings from volume makers like Ford and Opel, are not even on sale yet. Others such as the hybrid X6 off-roader shown by BMW may never reach series production.

Meanwhile, surveys show that while frugal diesels, gas-powered cars and the hybrids, which feature either petrol or a diesel engine mated to an auxiliary electric motor, are generating a lot of interest, German customers in particular are not prepared to pay a premium for cars which are easier on the environment.

It is a different story in Sweden, where officials have reported Europe's fastest increase in the number of new green cars registered in 2007.

Sales in Sweden of low-emission vehicles such as hybrids and ethanol-powered cars went up by 25 per cent in the first six months of the year.

"Sweden is taking the lead in Europe's environmentally-friendly car league," Environment Minister Andreas Carlgren told a press conference when the figures from Swedish car industry organization Bil Sweden were presented.

Experts in Stockholm say green tax breaks for the owners of eco-friendly cars contributed significantly to the sales boost, measures which are still being discussed by the German government.

"Environmental-friendliness is something car customers expect as a matter of course, they don't want to spend more money in order to get it," says Dr August Joas, head of automotive practice at the Oliver Wyman management consultancy.

"Motorists do rate the environmental impact of a car more highly than they did only a few years ago, but many are confused by the plethora of low-emission ideas on offer, Joas adds. Consumers are just crying out for information which will help them make a decision."



BMW X6

He believes an independent quality stamp detailing a car's level of eco-friendliness could help jump start sluggish sales.

A survey by the Gfk market research team showed that only 11% of new car buyers in Germany would even consider buying a hybrid. Most were put off by the higher price, with three quarters saying they would be prepared to buy a greener machine provided it cost no more to purchase than a standard model.

"People have less money in their pockets these days and cars are getting more expensive, especially hybrid models," said Thomas Froeba who works for Autohaus Motor Bauer in the Bavarian town of Kronbach. His views are echoed by many dealers in the business.

In Germany, a hybrid model from Japanese carmakers Toyota or Honda costs an additional 2 000 to 3 000 euros (2 970 and 4 450 US dollars) over a conventional model with a petrol engine only. However, supporters point to reduced fuel costs, lower tax in some countries and the higher resale values for petrol-electrics.

According to the report Hybrid Cars Market Outlook from the Indian-based market research company RNCOS, hybrid sales in Europe reached around 39 000 units in 2006 of which Toyota - whose Prius is in its 10th production year - had

a 90% share. RNCOS expected European hybrid sales to top 49 500 by 2012.

Toyota said recently demand for its Lexus brand in Europe is strong, with most of a projected boost in sales set to come from hybrid models. The firm said it was especially targeting buyers in Eastern Europe where Lexus competes head-on with premium cars from Mercedes, BMW and Audi.

Michael Ramstetter, who edits the magazine of the ADAC motoring club, recently accused German carmakers of offering motorists the "mirage" of a green motoring future without providing the products to go with it.

"There's still not a single German-made hybrid on sale in this country," he wrote. "Compare that to what is on offer from Japanese makers like Honda or Toyota."

The frugal image of hybrids has meanwhile received a dent from recent tests in various German car magazines which revealed that models such as the Honda Civic and Lexus R400 can sometimes burn much more fuel than the manufacturers claim.

In an article entitled "dispelling the hybrid myth," Stern magazine concluded that while a petrol-hybrid could cut its owner's fuel bills in city traffic, plain diesels were much better for long-distance driving. www.featurenet.co.za