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Bajaj Focuses On KTM



Bajaj Auto, which was negotiating with top European motorcycle brand Triumph for an alliance/acquisition, has now decided to put those plans on hold and instead focus attention on KTM. Bajaj will increase its holding in KTM, Europe's second largest sport motorcycle maker, from the current 25% to around 30% by early next year.

Accordingly, it plans to increase its representation on the KTM board as well. Although no confirmations were available, market sources say the 5% increase in stake would cost around Rs 60-80 crore. Bajaj Auto started talking to Ducati and Triumph mid 2007. By the end of the year, company chairman Rahul Bajaj was quoted saying that BAL has walked away from Ducati because it was too expensive.

"We are focussing our top-end efforts on the KTM brand. By next year some of those products will be out in the market and we will work towards riding that brand in the lifestyle segment. We are not pursuing any further negotiations with overseas brands right now," Bajaj Auto MD Rajiv Bajaj said.

In the last 10 months, a lot of the product development and R&D work for KTM has shifted to India and Bajaj will roll out its KTM range through its Probiking retail network shortly. Bajaj Auto-the market leader in the performance segment in India, thanks to the Pulsar twins and Avenger-had been looking for an alliance or acquisition to possess enough engineering and product development expertise to crank out cruisers and higher displacement bikes in the 200 cc plus range.

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