

THE NEED TO OVERHAUL A SEMICONDUCTOR SCHEME

An overhauled Semiconductor Design-Linked Incentive scheme would fortify India's comparative advantage and augment its forays into other stages of the semiconductor global value chain

India's \$10 billion Semicon India Program has had mixed results, at best. Photo: chips-dli.gov.in

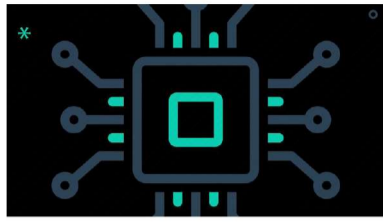
The mid-term appraisal of the semiconductor Design-Linked Incentive (DLI) scheme is due soon. Since its announcement, the DLI scheme has approved only seven start-ups, markedly short of its target of supporting 100 over five years. This impact assessment, therefore, presents an opportunity for policymakers to appraise and revamp the scheme.

India's \$10 billion Semicon India Program has had mixed results, at best. There are three goals of India's semiconductor strategy. The first is to reduce dependence on semiconductor imports, particularly from China, and especially in strategic and emerging sectors, ranging from defence applications to Artificial Intelligence development. The second is to build supply chain resilience by integrating into the semiconductor global value chain (GVC). The third is to double down on India's comparative advantage: India already plays host to the design houses of every major global semiconductor

industry player and Indian chip design engineers are an indispensable part of the semiconductor GVC.

These goals will help cement India's status as a semiconductor powerhouse. However, resources are limited. Therefore, priorities for industrial policy should ensure that we reap disproportionate benefits from our investments. Stimulating the design ecosystem is less capital-intensive than the foundry and assembly stages of the semiconductor GVC. Bolstering this stage can help establish strong forward linkages to an up-and-coming fabrication and assembly industry in India. Therefore, it is odd to note a concerted lack of policy scrutiny of the DLI scheme's lack of results, while Production-Linked Incentive schemes for foundries and assembly stages received quick revisions post notification.

Prima facie, the DLI scheme fares well with its focus on providing access to design infrastructure, such as electronic design automation (EDA) tools, alongside financial subsidies for different steps of the chip design process. But there has been lacklustre uptake of the scheme. First, the scheme mandates that beneficiary start-ups maintain their domestic status for at least three years after receiving incentives, and for this they cannot raise more than 50% of their



requisite capital via foreign direct investment. This is a significant barrier.

Costs for semiconductor design startups are also significant. Semiconductor R&D usually only pays off in the longer term, and the funding landscape for chip start-ups in India continues to be challenging despite promising IP and business potential. Such capital requirements, combined with the lack of success stories caused by the absence of a mature start-up funding ecosystem for hardware products in India, reduce the risk appetite of domestic investors. Consequently, any shortfall in investment for DLI beneficiary start-ups could be bridged by equity financing bringing in foreign funds, if not for the scheme's riders on ownership.

The relatively modest incentives under the DLI scheme (capped at ₹15 Crore for Product DLI and ₹30 Crore for Deployment Linked Incentive, per application) would not make for a worthwhile trade-off for start-ups standing to lose out on access to crucial long-term funding. It

is therefore crucial to delink ownership from the development of semiconductor design and adopt more start-up-friendly investment guidelines. This would also boost their financial stability and provide them global exposure.

The primary aim of the DLI scheme should be to cultivate semiconductor design capabilities in India, with the understanding that home-grown IP will organically evolve as local talent fosters the creation of indigenous companies over time. The scheme needs to be revised to focus on the broader objective of facilitating design capabilities for a wide array of chips within the country, so long as the entity engaging in the design development process is registered in India. The Union government's recent statement, that "(the product) should be an India-designed chip", implies a move in this direction. The financial outlay of the scheme must be enhanced substantially to support this policy shift.

The Centre for Development of Advanced Computing's role as the nodal agency appraising proposals by applicants under the DLI scheme merits a re-look too. As it is also a market player in the Indian chip design sector, clear concerns of a conflict of interest arise, as well as its capacity and suitability to be the implementing and regulating agen-

cy. The Karnataka government's Semiconductor Fabless Accelerator Lab (SFAL), with its specific partnerships with the Indian Electronics and Semiconductor Association, EDA vendors, IP, and testing companies, could be an appropriate blueprint for an implementing agency for DLI.

A similar agency under the auspices of the India Semiconductor Mission could aim to emulate SFAL's approach and provide affiliated start-ups access to a network of mentors, industry,

and financial institutions, in addition to the disbursement of financial incentives under the scheme. It could inspire an expanded focus for a revamped DLI scheme attracting a broader range of semiconductor design start-ups (not just ones ready for volume production) and help them overcome initial hurdles in developing design ideas. A recalibrated policy focused on chip design steered by a capable institution can tolerate a certain failure rate and treat beneficiary start-ups as exploratory risk-taking vehicles to establish India's foothold in this high-tech sector.

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MOST UPDATED COMPACT SUV: KIA, WITH ADAS THE NEW SONET IS LAUNCHED AT A SPECIAL PRICE STARTING AT RS 7.99 LAKH



Pondicherry: Kia, India's leading premium carmaker, has introduced its most premium Compact SUV - the New Sonet, at a special introductory price starting from INR 7.99 Lakhs (Ex-showroom) nationwide. Unveiled in December 2023, this latest iteration of Kia's second best-selling innovation boasts 25 safety features, including an outstanding ADAS with 10 autonomous features and a robust 15 Hi-Safety features.

The vehicle hosts over 70 Connected car features including 'Find My Car with SVM', which gives a surround view of car's vicinity and Hinglish commands to make Sonet the most comfortable drive. The New Sonet offers a diverse range of driving experiences with its availability in 19 different variants, including the 5 Diesel Manual variants starting from INR 9.79 lakhs. Segment-best ADAS Level 1, featuring 10 autonomous functions, is accessible in the top-of-the-line variants for both diesel and petrol engines.

The GT Line and X-Line variants in Petrol costs INR 14.50 and 14.69 Lakhs and the Diesel costs 15.50 and 15.69 Lakhs, respectively. The new muscular and sportier Sonet retains its distinctive road presence with an upright body style. Packed with 10 autonomous features,

like Front Collision-Avoidance Assist (FCA), Leading Vehicle Departure Alert (LVDA), and Lane Following Assist (LFA), among others, the latest iteration of the popular compact SUV deeply resonates with the personality of modern Indian customers. Enabling a safer driving experience, it also boasts Robust 15 Hi-Safety features standard across the variants, consisting of 6 Airbags, Electronic Stability Control (ESC), and Ve-

hicle Stability Management (VSM), to name a few. With this introduction in Sonet, Kia has made 6 Airbags standard across its product portfolio.

Furthermore, the Sonet hosts 10 best-in-segment features, including Dual Screen Connected Panel Design, Rear Door Sunshade Curtain, and All Door Power Window one-touch Auto up/down with Safety, to name a few. Compared to the nearest rivals, the new Sonet has at least 11 advantages over them and is the most technologically advanced and feature-rich Compact SUV.

The new Sonet now includes an uplifted front facade with a new grille and new bumper design,

Crown Jewel LED Headlamps, R16 Crystal Cut Alloy Wheels, and Star Map LED Connected Tail Lamps. Announcing the launch/price of the new Sonet, Kia India Chief Sales and Business Strategy Officer Myung-sik Sohn said, "We are once again premiumizing the Compact SUV segment by introducing the new Sonet.

The old Sonet disrupted the segment with its exceptional design and technological prowess, and with the new Sonet, we are taking that winning proposition much higher. We are adding a substantial value-for-money proposition at the back of low maintenance and a top-tier safety proposition with the most advanced ADAS technology.

Additionally, it also proudly stands as the most connected car in its segment, featuring enjoyable Hinglish commands and futuristic features like the Surround View Monitor, all designed to provide the best Compact SUV driving experience for both shorter and longer commutes."

EICHER LAUNCHES NON-STOP SERIES OF HEAVY-DUTY TRUCKS IN CHENNAI

Chennai: Eicher Trucks & Buses, a business unit of VE Commercial Vehicles Limited, launches the Eicher Non-Stop Series, a new range of heavy duty trucks meticulously designed for the fast evolving long haul transportation in Chennai. The Non-Stop series encompassing four new Heavy-Duty trucks are equipped with powerful and fuel-efficient engines and supported by a connected service ecosystem to deliver enhanced performance and superior Uptime to fleet owners. The Eicher Pro 6019XPT Tipper; Eicher Pro 6048XP, haulage truck; Eicher Pro 6055XP and the Eicher Pro 6055XP 4x2, tractor-trucks complement Eicher's extensive line-up of



Heavy, Medium and Light Duty trucks and buses. Commenting on the launch, Mr. Vinod Aggarwal, MD & CEO, VECV, said, "We take great pride in introducing the Non-Stop range of HD Trucks that will set new industry standards, representing our dedication not only to

our customers' success but also towards improving efficiency and cost of logistics in our country. Backed by our industry-leading Uptime Center and MyEicher App, this new range will deliver more productivity and profitability for Eicher customers."

VENGAIVAYAL CASE | DNA OF 31 PERSONS DO NOT MATCH FAECAL SAMPLES

A water tank that quenched the thirst of Dalits has turned into a blot at Vengaiyaval village in Tamil Nadu's Pudukottai district.

More than a year after human faeces were found floating in an overhead tank that supplied drinking water to Adi Dravidar families in Vengaiyaval, investigators have suffered a setback as the DNA samples of 31 persons did not match with the faecal samples collected from the tank. The incident came to light in December 2022.

The Crime Branch-CID (CB-CID), which is investigating the case, had collected blood samples of 31 persons at different points of time as part of their probe and sent them for a DNA test in Chennai. This was done upon obtaining a direction from the Special Court for Exclusive Trial of Cases Registered under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act in Pudukottai.

The DNA test was performed to carry out the probe in a scientific manner and collect scientific evidence since there were no eye witnesses, said sources in the CB-CID.

However, the DNA samples of the 31 persons did not match with the faecal samples collected from the water tank, the sources said. Now, the CB-CID will collect samples from the other suspects and send them for DNA tests after obtaining a court direction. Meanwhile, the CB-CID is concentrating on conducting polygraph tests as part of its investigation and has filed a petition in this regard in the special court to run the test on 10 persons initially. Recently, nine out of the 10 persons filed a petition objecting to the polygraph test. The next hearing of the case is slated for January 29. After the incident came to light in December 2022, the case was initially probed by special teams of the Pudukottai police and was subsequently transferred to the CB-CID in January 2023.

NAME CHANGE

I, VIMALRAJ, S/o. Sebastian residing at No.9/2, Gnanaprakasam Street, Vadalur, Cuddalore - 607303, Tamil Nadu do hereby Solemnly affirm and State as follows: That my name has been written as VIMALRAJ SEBASTIAN in my Aadhar Card, Pan Card and also in all others of my document mentioned in my name as Correct name is VIMALRAJ SEBASTIAN. I swear that in my passport my father name is wrongly spelling mistake as VIMALRAJ SEBASTIAN. (pass port No : F65206 47). The above mentioned names VIMALRAJ SEBASTIAN and VIMALRASEBASTION is Same one and The same, Both the name are mentioned are belongs to my name only, one and identify myself only.

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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given in terms of paragraph 93 of the Master Direction- Non-Banking Financial Company - Housing Finance Company (Reserve Bank) Directions, 2021, that the branch office of the Company located at No.385, 2nd floor, MRG Tower, Sathy main road, Ganapathy, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu - 641006 will be closed with effect from close of business hours of 28th April, 2024 as operations are being shifted to a nearby branch office located at 3rd Floor, No - 63, Karpagam Towers, Sathy Road, Ganapathy, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu - 641006. In case any assistance is required, you may contact the nearest branch office as mentioned above or send an email to connect@indostarhfc.com.

This notice may be accessed on the Company's website (www.indostarhfc.com).

For IndoStar Home Finance Private Limited

Sd/-
 Nidhi Sadani
 Company Secretary

Date : 24-01-2024