

 News in Asia

Japanese Automotive Experts Head to Thailand under Roving Dispatch Scheme - Supporting Development of ASEAN Parts Suppliers -

The Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association (JAMA) and the Japan Auto Parts Industries Association (JAPIA) announced on October 17, 2000 the plan to send automotive field management, production technology and improvement guidance experts to Thailand. This program is based on the "Roving Automotive Expert Dispatch Scheme" designed to support the development of ASEAN auto industries, and also targets motorcycles.

In Thailand the first stage of this scheme is set to run for the five months from October 2000 through March 2001, under cooperation from the Thailand Automotive Institute. During this period eight Japanese experts (*) are being dispatched to the Thai Automotive Industry Association.

These experts work to discover and clarify problems at local auto and motorcycle parts suppliers designated by the Thai side, and furnish advice and guidance to improve the operations.

The general approach will have two to three experts visit each supplier for about one month, and then move on to other companies to provide the same type of support. They will return to the companies at which recommendations have been made after set periods of time, to monitor the progress and provide any further advice deemed necessary.

This expert dispatch scheme utilizes the Program for Industrial Restructuring of the Japan Overseas Development Corporation. On December 20 the official "Japanese Expert Dispatch Inauguration Ceremony" was held in Thailand, an event attended by all key cabinet ministers.

The schedule also calls for similar dispatching of experts to Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, with preparations underway to line up local hosting institutions, recruit the experts and complete all other work necessary to send the experts to those countries from April 2001.

*) : This group of experts is being selected from Japanese automobile manufacturers, and does not include motorcycle specialists.



The Director of the Thailand Automotive Institute welcomes the team of Japanese experts to Thailand.

JAMA and China Association of Automobile Manufacturers Hold Inaugural Exchange

The Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association (JAMA) held an exchange meeting with the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers (CAAM) on October 9, 2000. This first-ever encounter was convened at the secretariat level for both national associations, and in attendance were the heads of both secretariats - JAMA Vice Chairman and President Takao Suzuki and CAAM Executive Vice Chairman and Secretary General Senior Engineer Zhang Shulin.



CAAM Secretariat Representative Zhang Shulin (left) and JAMA Secretariat Representative Takao Suzuki (right)

The historic meeting featured explanations of the current status and the market trends in the motor vehicle industries of Japan and China, and exchanges of opinions on the establishment in China of reliable motor vehicle statistics, approaches to achieve harmonization with international standards and other topics.



Opinion exchange between CAAM and JAMA

Likewise, with the move toward globalization in the motor vehicle industry and prospects that China will become a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in the near future, both sides confirmed the importance of promoting active and periodic exchanges between JAMA and CAAM to achieve greater mutual understanding and teamwork between the motor vehicle industries of the two countries.

Specifically, CAAM briefed JAMA on the status of the negotiations for China to join the WTO, the outlook for the country's auto industry policy following the attaining of membership in that body, the current state of its standards and certification for automobiles, and the development of CAAM statistics. JAMA discussed its thinking on the WTO, explained the trends in efforts toward international harmonization of motor vehicle standards and certification, and the nature of its own statistics.

JAMA also clarified the existing situation in Japan surrounding the critical upcoming issues of the environment (emissions, fuel efficiency) and information technology (JNX, ITS), with CAAM agreeing to have these topics placed on the agenda for the next meeting, which will be held in Japan in September 2001.

JAMA Update

JAMA Exchanges Opinions with IMMA Secretary General

International Motorcycle Manufacturers Association (IMMA) Secretary General Nicholas M. Rogers visited JAMA offices on October 19, 2000, where he took part in an exchange of opinions with the JAMA Motorcycle Overseas, Motorcycle Technical and Motorcycle Planning sub-committees. The topics discussed included the current status of the WP1 (Working Party on Road Traffic Safety) newly established in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the European market, FAMI activities and other areas.



IMMA Secretary General Mr. Nicolas M. Rogers

With the official enactment last August of the United Nations "Agreement Concerning the Establishing of Global Technical Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment or Parts Which Can Be Fitted and/or Be Used on Wheeled Vehicles" (the so-called "Global Agreement <1998 Agreement>"), JAMA is determined to work through IMMA to further accelerate the international harmonization of technical regulations by WP29 (Working Party on the Construction of Vehicles).

In the motorcycle field, JAMA is looking forward to the setting of worldwide technology regulations based on the Global Agreement with regard to noise measuring methods, brakes, control displays, headlights and mirrors.

An overview was also presented of the recent efforts by WP1, with a rise in the number of forged international drivers licenses prompting moves to integrate the domestic license formats, and create a role for the international license as well. JAMA noted that because no problems exist in Japan with the systems used to issue either domestic or international licenses, it intends to closely monitor the measures discussed by WP1 to prevent international license forgery in Europe.



Achievements of Progress in Five Year ASV Research

- Quest for Smart Motorcycles with Dramatic Safety Improvements -

Japan's Ministry of Transport (MOT) has compiled the results of Phase 2 of its Advanced Safety Vehicle (ASV) Project, covering the five years from 1996 to 2000. The highlight was the unveiling of the research models built by four Japanese motorcycle manufacturers on November 28 at Tsukuba City outside of Tokyo.

The Advanced Safety Vehicle Project* was launched in 1991 with the key objectives of developing vehicle side technologies capable of accommodating "intelligent transport systems," and enhancing safety. The target envisioned is to commercialize and introduce the technologies developed on the strength of this program early in the 21st century. The four unique new technologies presented in November are as follows.

Helmet-Mounted Display

This sophisticated system incorporates a display controller, projector and combiner into a motorcycle helmet. Donning a helmet equipped with this system, riders are able to view warnings and other critical information transmitted from the displayer controller at the edge of their field of vision. (See Diagram 1: The travel speed of the motorcycle is indicated.)

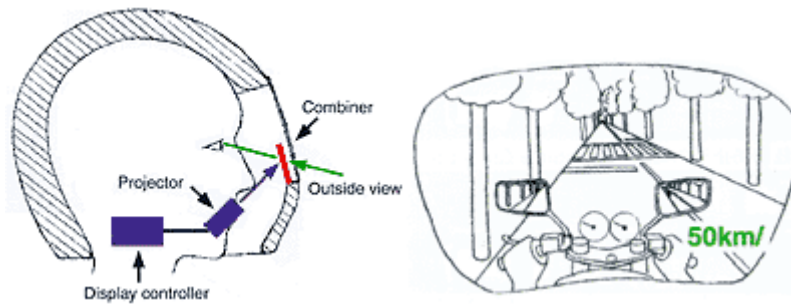


Diagram 1: Helmet-Mounted Display

Adaptive Front-Lighting System

This system secures a reliable field of lighting on the road surface regardless of how the vehicle leans, greatly improving nighttime visibility. (See Diagram 2: While conventional headlights light up part "A" as the motorcycle leans to negotiate curves after dark, this new system illuminates part "B" for a greater field of visibility.)

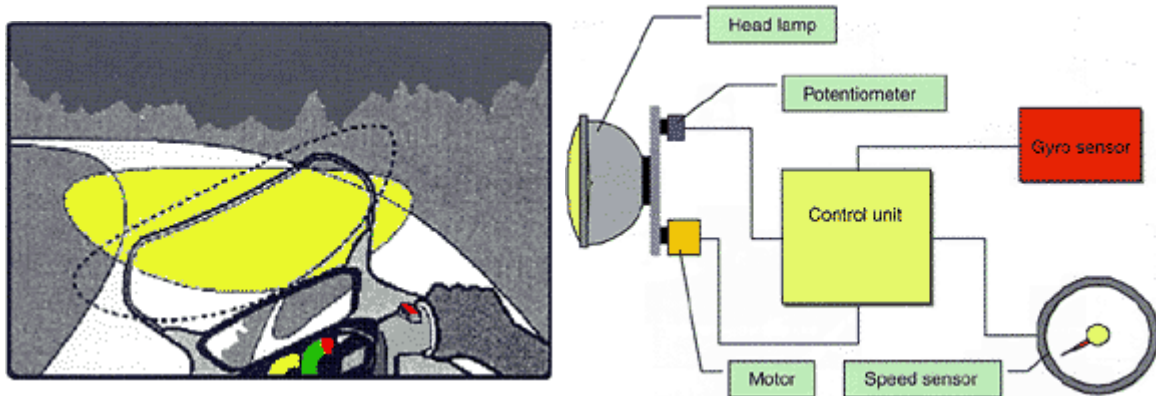


Diagram 2: Adaptive Front-Lighting System

Airbag System for Motorcycles

This airbag system detects and calculates the G-force upon collision, and when judging that airbag deployment is needed ignites the inflator to deploy. The deployed airbag supports the rider, absorbs collision energy, and either prevents the riders from being thrown off the motorcycle or reduces the speed at which they are ejected if the force of the crash inevitably throws them off. (See Diagram 3.)

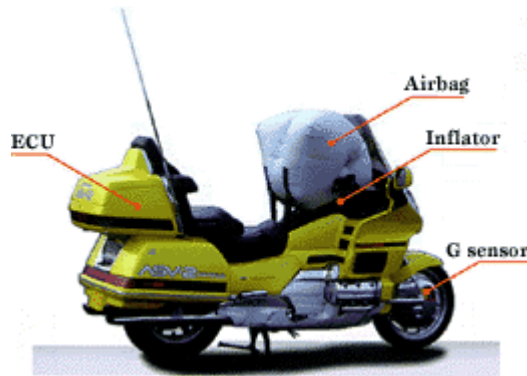
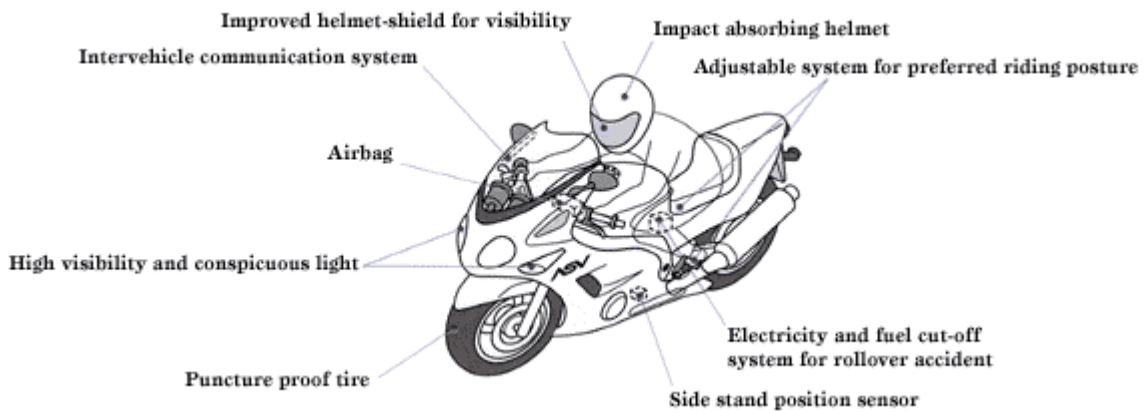


Diagram 3: Airbag System for Motorcycles



Developing Technologies in the ASV Phase 2

Motorcycle Detection System

This system utilizes wireless transmission equipment installed in both motorcycles and automobiles to exchange information on vehicle type, position, speed and direction. When the possibility exists of vehicles crossing paths upon turning right at intersections or in other situations, timely beep sounds, voice messages and visual displays supply information which urge the rider and driver to take evasive action.

While the prospects for commercializing these technologies have yet to be firmed up, the MOT Study Group for Promotion of Advanced Safety Vehicles estimates that if all technologies were actually put into use, fatal accidents involving motorcycles could be reduced by 42%.

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Topics

JAMA Autumn 2000 Traffic Safety Campaign - Understanding Promoted for Daytime Lighting -

JAMA held its autumn traffic safety campaign from September 21 through December 31, 2000, mounting particular appeals for daytime lighting under the theme of "Lights on to be Seen."



"Lights on to be Seen"
Motorcyclers keep their headlights on during the daytime hours
to alert drivers of their presence and ensure safer driving.

During 1999 the number of traffic accident deaths in Japan declined to 9,005 persons, although those injured in such mishaps exceeded one million for the first time at 1,053,397 persons.

An overwhelming majority of those injuries (87 percent, 917,050 persons) occurred due to accidents between separate vehicles (either automobiles or motorcycles - see Chart 1). Of that subtotal, 63 percent (626,035 persons) were injured in rear-end or encountered collisions (see Chart 2).

Chart 1: Traffic Accident Injury Breakdown (1999)

Type of Accident	No. of injured (persons)	Share of total injuries
Vehicle-vehicle	917,050	87.1%
Pedestrian-vehicle	80,654	7.7%
Single-vehicle	52,587	5.0%
Other	3,106	0.3%
Total	1,053,397	100%

Chart 2: Injury Breakdown for Vehicle-Vehicle Accidents (1999)

Type of Accident	No. of injured (persons)	Share of total injuries
Rear-end or encountered collision	626,035	68.3%
Right-turn collision	97,838	10.7%
Left-turn collision	42,182	4.6%
Other	150,995	16.6%
Total	917,050	100%

For 2000 the number of deaths through the end of August was 5,816 persons (an increase of 1.7% percent from the same eight-month period in 1999), while the number of injuries as of the end of July was 635,383 persons (up 8.6 percent). Both categories were thus in an upward trend at those times.

Accidents Now a Familiar Presence

In the autumn safety campaign JAMA stressed the fact that: "With more than 1,050,000 people injured in traffic accidents during 1999, that works out to one in every 120 persons. Let's work together to keep accidents from becoming an even more familiar presence."

Specific appeals were mounted to: 1) Reduce accidents by wearing seatbelts and maintaining proper distances between vehicles; and 2) promote understanding of the importance of daytime lighting for motorcycles.

Concerning greater understanding for daytime lighting, all motorcycles sold in Japan are designed so that the headlights come on automatically when turning the ignition key on. Therefore, the campaign idea was to achieve understanding on the part of all automobile drivers, bicyclers and pedestrians of the fact that motorcyclers practice daytime lighting for safety.

Traffic Safety Quiz with Presents

JAMA used posters, advertisements in newspapers, magazines, the internet and radio, as well as banners at dealer outlets to get its message across. A "traffic safety course" was also placed on the JAMA website, in which five different classes could be taken and responses then made to a quiz. A drawing was held from among the winners to give away special presents.

Animation was utilized in this course, and in the final segment a motorcycle using daytime lighting approaches and passes on the opposite side of the road. The finishing touch is a message which moves across the screen to say: "Motorcyclers keep their headlights on during the daytime hours to alert drivers of their presence and ensure safer driving."