

Ford announces R5.2bn local investment for hybrid bakkie production

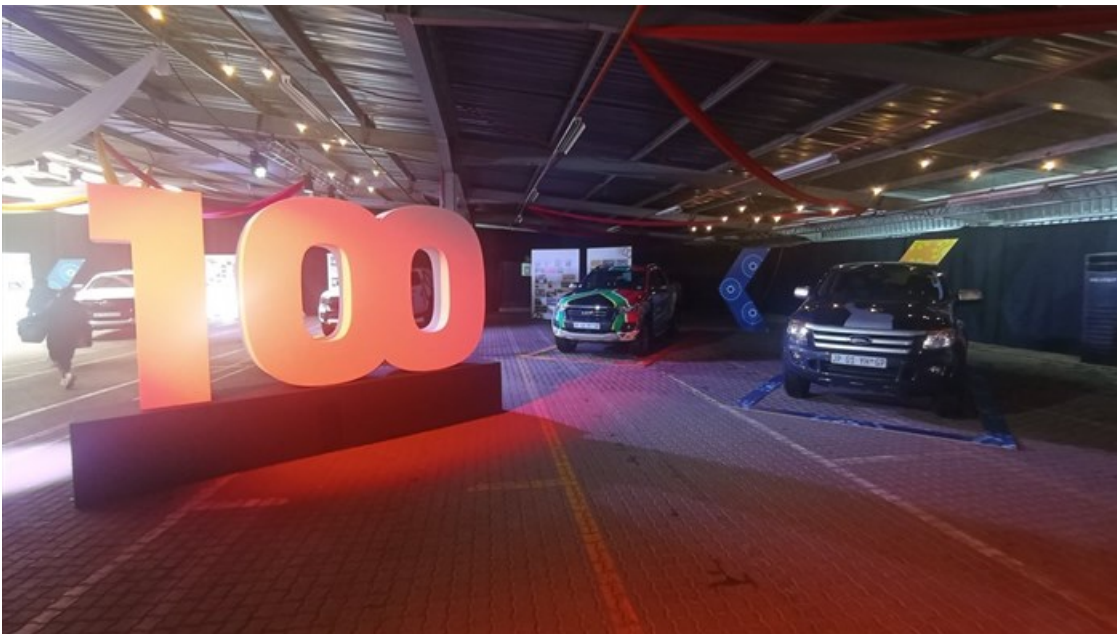
By Imran Salie

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Ford Motor Company has celebrated its 100-year anniversary of operations in South Africa with big announcements.



Source: Supplied



Taken at the Ford SA 100-year anniversary celebration on 8 November 2023 | Image credit: Imran Salie

The automotive giant said it will be making a R5.2bn investment in its Silverton Assembly Plant in Pretoria for the production of the first-ever Ranger Plug-in Hybrid bakkie.

“The additional investment in the Silverton Assembly Plant for the Ranger Plug-in Hybrid takes our total manufacturing investment in South Africa over the past 14 years to around \$1.72bn, or nearly R33bn,” said Andrea Cavallaro, operations director for Ford International Markets Group.

The manufacturing will start in late 2024 and the bakkies will be exported to Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. Cavallaro said it's the first time in nearly two decades that the Silverton plant will be supplying the Australia and New Zealand markets with vehicles.

Ford said the investment will be used to build a new battery pack assembly plant, revamp the paint shop, and add other upgrades to the Silverton factory.

The Ranger Plug-in Hybrid will have more torque than its Ranger siblings and will come with a 2.3l EcoBoost turbo petrol engine paired with an electric motor and rechargeable battery system.



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Ford said it can be driven in pure electric mode for more than 45kms and will have a new feature that enables the charging of tools and appliances.

New community projects

Mary Culler, president of the Ford Fund, announced that Ford South Africa in partnership with the Nelson Mandela Foundation will build 100 early childhood development centres in disadvantaged areas.

"I am proud to launch three far-reaching education projects as part of the centenary celebrations that will create a lasting legacy for thousands of young people in this wonderful country.

"In keeping with the 100th-anniversary celebration theme, Ford and its project partners are creating 100 maths and science laboratories for primary schools around the country, building 100 early childhood development (ECD) centres, and funding 100 youth scholarships to promote learning in the fields of science, technology, engineering and maths," Culler said.

Local product portfolio gets major expansion

Other announcements include a wide array of new vehicles to bolster the Blue Ovals' local product portfolio. These vehicles are set to launch in South Africa in 2024 and 2025.

The Ranger lineup will be expanded next year with the Ranger Tremor and Ranger Platinum. As with the other Rangers, these two new models will be built locally. The Tremor is based on the XLT series, while the Platinum derivative is said to have a more premium appeal.

Ford will be introducing updated Tourneo and Transit Custom vans next year as well. The seventh-gen Mustang and the Mustang Dark Horse (the most powerful naturally aspirated 5l V8 Mustang ever, according to Ford) will also land on local shores in the coming year. A new Ford SUV will also be making its way to South Africa in 2024, this is the Ford Territory SUV, which will come with a turbocharged 1.8l four-cylinder engine.



A blurred shot taken of the Mach-E showcased at the celebratory event | Image credit: Imran Salie

Arguably the most exciting Ford model announced to be launching locally in 2025 is the all-electric Mach-E, which Ford said can do the 0-100km sprint in 3.7 seconds.

ABOUT IMRAN SALIE

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