



Opel's China shift rattles hometown

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- The move comes as Stellantis, Opel's parent company, plans to cut 650 engineering jobs

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CEO of German carmaker Opel, Florian Huettl

ry, Opel has been at the heart of life in Rüsselsheim. But as the German carmaker turns increasingly to Chinese technology and cuts engineering jobs, the city is wondering what its

future looks like without the company at its centre. Opel is expanding its partnership with Chinese electric-vehicle maker Leapmotor to develop a new SUV, combining German automotive expertise with Chinese know-how in software and low-cost EV production.

The move comes as Stellantis, Opel's parent company, plans to cut 650 engineering jobs at Opel's Rüsselsheim development centre, reducing a workforce of 1,650.

The cuts have raised fears that the site could gradually lose its role as a centre for vehicle development and become little more than

an adaptation hub for cars designed elsewhere.

Opel chief executive Florian Huettl says the changes reflect a new reality. Chinese carmakers accounted for 9 per cent of the European Union car market in the first five months of 2026, rising to 10.5 per cent in June, he said.

"The arrival of Chinese manufacturers in Europe is a reality," Huettl said, arguing that the partnership could combine the strengths of both sides.

But for Rüsselsheim, the changes are difficult to ignore.

Opel's workforce in the city has fallen dramatically from about 42,000 employees in the 1970s to around 6,800 at the end of 2025. The company's decline has mirrored the struggles of Germany's wider automotive

industry, with Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Porsche all pursuing cost-cutting programmes.

There is some relief. Stellantis has allocated production of the next-generation Opel Astra and DS4 to Rüsselsheim, helping secure the plant beyond 2029 as part of a 1 billion investment programme in Germany.

Yet the city is preparing for a future beyond Opel.

The company plans to release 140,000 square metres of industrial land, which officials hope to transform into a green-hydrogen technology hub.

For Mayor Patrick Burghardt, the challenge is balancing the pain of job losses with the opportunity to reinvent the city.

"We have two hearts beating in our chests," he said – one

worried about Opel's decline, the other looking towards a new economic future.



Opel was founded in 1862, but it didn't build its first car until 1899 – meaning the German brand spent nearly four decades making products such as sewing machines and bicycles before entering the automobile business.

New Hyundai Tucson gets bigger, bolder makeover

TDT | agencies

Hyundai has unveiled the next-generation Tucson, giving its popular SUV a larger footprint and a bold new design.

The new model is based on Hyundai's "Art of Steel" design philosophy and is 60mm longer, 40mm wider and 20mm taller than its predecessor. Its wheelbase has also grown by 30mm. The Tucson adopts a more upright,

boxy profile, with squared-off wheel arches giving it a tougher stance. At the front, a full-width LED light bar is flanked by vertical LED strips, while the rear features vertical LED taillights linked by another full-width light bar. Chunky bumpers complete the rugged look.

Inside, Hyundai has taken an equally unconventional approach. The cabin features a two-spoke steering wheel and a digital instrument cluster positioned

high on the dashboard. A large floating touchscreen takes centre stage on the dashboard.

Hyundai has yet to reveal technical specifications for the new Tucson. Details of its

powertrain options are expected to be announced closer to its launch.



WHAT IS A DUAL CLUTCH SYSTEM?

A dual clutch system (DCT) is an advanced automatic transmission that uses two clutches for faster, smoother gear changes.

HOW IT WORKS

Unlike a traditional manual or automatic transmission that uses a single clutch, DCT has two separate clutches:

- CLUTCH 1** Handles odd-numbered gears (1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th...)
- CLUTCH 2** Handles even-numbered gears (2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th...)

HOW GEAR CHANGES HAPPEN

While one clutch is engaged and delivering power, the other pre-selects the next gear.

POWER FLOW (ENGAGED) → PRE-SELECT NEXT GEAR

ENGINE → CLUTCH 1 (ODD GEARS) → CLUTCH 2 (EVEN GEARS) → GEARBOX

This allows near-instant gear changes with no interruption in power.

USED IN

Widely used in performance cars, premium vehicles, and increasingly in everyday cars for a perfect balance of performance and efficiency.

ADVANTAGES

- FASTER GEAR CHANGES** Ultra-fast shifts. Improving acceleration.
- SMOOTHER DRIVING** Minimal power interruption for a seamless drive.
- BETTER FUEL EFFICIENCY** Optimizes performance and reduces fuel use.
- IMPROVED PERFORMANCE** Quicker throttle response and better overall performance.
- DURABLE & EFFICIENT** Built for high performance and durability.

DISADVANTAGES

- HIGHER COST** DCTs are more complex and expensive to make.
- MORE COMPLEXITY** The advanced mechanism makes the system more complex.
- HEAT & WEAR** Can generate more heat in stop-and-go traffic.
- NOT IDEAL FOR ALL DRIVERS** May feel jerky at low speeds or in heavy traffic, especially in older designs.

Mercedes-Benz unveils updated C-Class

TDT | Manama

Mercedes-Benz has unveiled the facelifted C-Class with refreshed styling, updated technology and revised powertrains.

The sedan gets a larger illuminated grille, redesigned LED headlamps with star-shaped daytime running lights and updated wraparound taillights featuring star-shaped LEDs. Dual exhausts complete the revised exterior.

Inside, the existing dashboard layout is retained, with a portrait-oriented 12.3-inch touchscreen now running Mercedes-Benz's latest MB.OS software.

The

system includes a virtual assistant using ChatGPT, Google Gemini and Microsoft Bing AI, along with wireless Android Auto and Apple CarPlay, a head-up display and Level 2 ADAS.

Powertrain options include 2.0-litre petrol and diesel engines with a second-generation 48V mild-hybrid system. A plug-in hybrid variant combines a 100kW electric motor with a 19.5kWh battery.

The C-Class also gets a retuned suspension, while all-wheel drive and rear-axle steering are available as options.



Swedish union ends Tesla strike after almost three years

Stockholm, Sweden

Sweden's metalworkers' union IF Metall said Thursday they were ending their strike against Tesla, originally launched in October 2023, saying the US carmaker had bought out all of the union's striking members.

The strike was launched on October 27, 2023, when mechanics at 10 Tesla repair shops in seven cities walked off the job over Tesla's refusal to sign a collective agreement with the metalworkers' union IF Metall.

IF Metall said it was officially ending all labour action against Tesla as of August 19.

Luxury buyers are ditching the badge for better value

TDT | agencies

Luxury car buyers in the US are increasingly switching to mainstream brands, finding that they can get much of the

technology, comfort and features they want without paying a premium for the badge.

A new J.D. Power study points to a growing challenge for brands such as Mercedes-

Benz, BMW and Audi, which are already facing competition from Tesla and Chinese automakers.

The shift comes as affordability becomes a bigger factor

in car-buying decisions. Buyers can now find mainstream models offering features once associated mainly with luxury vehicles, making it harder for premium brands to justify their higher prices.

Premium brands are now averaging discounts of about 7.3% of a vehicle's sticker price, compared with around 6% for mainstream brands.

For luxury carmakers, the message is clear: buyers may

still want luxury – but they are becoming less willing to pay simply for the badge, especially when mainstream brands now offer similar levels of technology, comfort and features at a much lower price.