

# Surat → New Delhi

## Vicariously experiencing the spirit that underpins Toyota's founding.

The team was headed for Ahmedabad, the largest city in Gujarat State. Kyosuke Yagura of the Product Audit Department, CV Vehicle Evaluation and Engineering Division, frequently traded opinions about the seat comfort and suspension of the Toyota Glanza. "I'm interested in how cars react to the roads in India. The Glanza has good acceleration and doesn't make you feel scared on highways either. It drives straight and absorbs the body rolls from lane changes. I think it's a good car." Yagura believes that the 5 Continents Drive Project will lead to developing cars that offer reassurance. "It feels like I am getting to experience the spirit that underpins

our founding together with the team. One of the Main Principles of founder Sakichi Toyoda is 'Always be faithful to your duties, thereby contributing to the company and the overall good.' While I don't want to exaggerate and say I'm 'contributing to the overall good,' I think every day about what I can do for the team and other people related to it. And I'm not the only one. I think everyone who's participating thinks about this and makes it their goal."

The team reached Udaipur in India's northwestern Gujarat State. Yasuo Tanaka of the Advanced Vehicle Engineering Development Division, who works on commercial vehicle development, says he was interested in the buses he saw driving in bus-only lanes in cities. "India has an electricity shortage, so getting electric vehicles widely used here may be difficult, but I think Sora

hydrogen fuel cell buses have potential. There is severe air pollution in urban areas. Hydrogen costs a lot, but can be a self-sufficient form of energy and does not emit exhaust gas. Including raising awareness for the environment, fuel cell buses have great significance in the world." India is in a vortex of change. Tanaka discovered the potential for fuel cell buses within this change.





## Even in small Indian villages

The team drove in the mountains on the road from Udaipur to Ajmer. Sometimes the team saw signs for Maruti Suzuki in small villages they passed through. Suzuki enjoys overwhelming public support here. Two people from Suzuki are also participating in the Drive Project, and Toyota and Suzuki cars also make up the cars used in the Drive Project. The Vitara Brezza and the Glanza (OEM to Toyota) from Maruti Suzuki are being driven in India. Tomoo Awata from the Automobile Engine Design Department comments, *“While many of India’s roads are in poor condition, the condition of highways is the same as Japan. In short, India’s road conditions and climate see drastic change, and I feel like people here demand even greater reliability than in Japan.”* It was his sixth visit to India, but the first time Shunsuke Koizumi of the Automobile Product and Cost Planning Department drove here. *“Driving on bad roads, it’s easy to see why compact SUVs sell well in India. If there’s a sedan and an SUV in the same price range, people will*

*pick the latter. But front-wheel drive vehicles offer solid performance and people don’t need to insist on four-wheel drive. I now know that front-wheel drive vehicles perform fine on Indian roads.”* While Awata and Koizumi battled the poor road conditions, they experienced some of India’s immeasurable might and came to admire its market even more.

## People who know the true nature

The new-model Innova minivan produced at TKM’s Bangalore plant is one Toyota model popular with Indians. Tatsuya Ayukawa of the CV Body Design Division, which is working on

development of the next-generation model, says he was startled many times by people and animals suddenly appearing while he was behind the wheel driving on Indian roads. *“You sit high up in the car so you have a good field of vision, but the A pillar is angled and that impedes visibility a little, so I want to improve its field of vision.”* The Innova is categorized as a somewhat large car in India’s market, where compact cars are favored. *“In addition to visibility, it would also be good if we could improve its turning radius,”* he says of his hopes for the Innova in the Indian market. *“This experience of driving together with TKM and TDEM members has really shown me the importance of getting local*



*feedback. They know the true nature of the consumers. We in Japan must listen to their opinions more. We have to create a system that facilitates collecting local feedback and incorporating it into making cars.”*

*It’s the team’s last day in India. After a visit to a Maruti Suzuki plant, the team arrived at Galaxy Toyota Moti Nagar, a dealership in New Delhi. Toshiaki Ito of the Body Design Division had a look of relief on his face. “My teammates and I came from many different workplaces but became one team sharing the experience of the Drive Project.” What impact will the Drive Project have on Ito’s work and life in the future? “I think it will undoubtedly change my work. I’ve never driven this much in the market. It drove home for me again the basic fact that cars are something you get in and drive,” he says quietly. Ito seems to be somewhat shocked after glimpsing the harsh living conditions Indians face. “I had heard that the gap between rich and poor was extreme, but now I have seen this gap for myself. I have to do what I can to the best of my ability. Every*

*morning before the drive, we would tell each other ‘Let’s do our best!’ I want to keep telling myself this after the Drive Project too.” Ito is currently engaged in car body design. “Cars carry your life in their hands. Experiencing the Drive Project in India reaffirmed for me the importance of ensuring safety during a collision. Just because there are laws doesn’t mean that we only have to follow those laws, we must do more. Now that I have witnessed first-hand the value of life, I want to aim for even higher levels of safety.” Starting tomorrow, the team will move to Myanmar to drive the cars.*



**Distance:** 2,889km  
**Duration:** September 23-27, 2019  
**Days:** 5 days  
**Vehicles:** Innova Crysta, Fortuner, Camry HV, Innova Touring Sport, Glanza, Yaris, Land Cruiser 200, Suzuki Vitara Brezza, Corolla Altis

