

All-new F-150 Raptor

FORD'S TOUGHEST, SMARTEST, MOST CAPABLE TRUCK

DUBAI: Ford, America's truck leader, introduced the all-new F-150 Raptor - the ultimate high-performance off-road pickup in the company's lineup.

Ford has reengineered every part of the F-150 Raptor to make it the toughest, smartest, most capable off-roader - and more efficient than ever.

"When we created the first Raptor, we set out to prove vehicle performance isn't just measured on the street or at the track - off-road can be even more fun," said Raj Nair, Ford group vice president, Global Product Development. "The original Raptor, plus enhancements on the all-new F-150 set the bar for us to make the all-new Raptor better in every way."

Toughest

The all-new Raptor starts with a purpose-built frame - the backbone of the truck - that is the strongest in the F-150 lineup, featuring more high-strength steel than the outgoing Raptor.

Forged from high-strength, military-grade, aluminum alloy that helps save more than 227 kilograms of weight, Raptor's exterior design is inspired by Ford's performance heritage in off-road racing that includes Best in the Desert, Lucas Oil Off Road Racing Series and the famous Baja 1000.

Raptor's chiseled looks are reminiscent of those found in Trophy Trucks - the most powerful and fastest off-road pickups.

Raptor is 6 inches wider than the standard F-150 for improved stability off-road.

The all-new Raptor also boasts its first-ever dual exhaust and new 17-inch wheels with next-generation BFGoodrich All-Terrain KO2 tires specifically designed for off-road performance.

Smartest

Raptor is powered by Ford's new, second-generation 3.5-liter EcoBoost engine that produces more power with greater efficiency than the current 6.2-liter V8, which is rated at 411 horsepower and 434 lb.-ft. of torque.

The first-generation 3.5-liter EcoBoost proved its mettle off-road - racing in the original F-150 EcoBoost Torture Test truck in the 2010 Baja 1000, as well as notching repeated wins in off-road race series.

The high-output 3.5-liter EcoBoost is a Raptor exclusive in the F-150 lineup. It will be paired with an all-new 10-speed transmission for improved efficiency.

An all-new four-wheel-drive, torque-on-demand transfer case, with an advanced, easier-to-use version of off-road mode driver-assist technology, further improves Raptor's trail performance.

Raptor's new transfer case, which manages power distribution between the front and rear wheels, combines the best attributes of clutch-driven, on-demand all-wheel drive with durable, mechanical-locking four-wheel drive.

"The new transfer case offers better traction for a greater variety of terrain at low and high speeds - both on-road and off-road," said Jamal Hameedi, chief engineer, Ford Performance.

Raptor's pioneering off-road mode driving technology has evolved into an all-new Terrain Management System(tm) that enables the driver to select modes to optimize driving dynamics to environmental conditions - from snow to mud, sand and more.

The new Raptor features calibration changes to its powertrain, driveline, traction control, ABS and AdvanceTrac stability control for optimal performance. There are six preset modes for the truck depending on terrain and driving



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conditions:

- * Normal mode for everyday driving
- * Street mode for higher-performance, on-road driving
- * Weather mode for rain, snow or ice
- * Mud and sand mode for muddy and sandy trails and terrain
- * Baja mode for high-speed desert running
- * Rock mode for low-speed rock crawling

Most capable

An available Torsen front differential increases off-road capability further. The system increases grip significantly for the front end of the truck and allows it to pull itself over obstacles and up steep grades - even when traction is split between the front tires.

Building a high-performance off-road truck isn't just about engine power - more importantly, it's about the sus-

pension. F-150 Raptor comes standard with new FOX Racing Shox with custom internal bypass technology that works to damp and stiffen suspension travel over rough terrain to help prevent the truck from bottoming out.

Front and rear shock canisters have grown from 2.5 inches to 3 inches in diameter for improved performance. They feature more suspension travel than the current Raptor's 11.2 inches at the front and 12 inches at the rear.

Advanced LED lighting and camera technology contribute to improved visibility on the trail or street - day and night.

Commanding and comfortable

While the exterior design of the F-150 Raptor is about projecting an image, the interior design is about creating a comfortable place for driver and passengers to enjoy their time on- and off-road.

Added content includes interior upgrades, three color material levels, and paddle shifters to manually shift the 10-speed transmission.

Auxiliary switches to control aftermarket equipment such as lights or an air compressor are mounted out of the driver's way in the roof of the cab - similar to a fighter plane.

"This all-new F-150 Raptor takes Raptor performance to the next level," said Dave Pericak, director, Ford Performance.

The all-new Raptor will be built at Dearborn Truck Plant, and goes on sale fall 2016.



SWISS MOVE SPARKS CURRENCY MARKET VOLATILITY

NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

Tuesday morning, the Swiss National Bank vice-chairman clearly said that they he was "convinced that the minimum exchange rate must remain the cornerstone of our monetary policy."

But in an unexpected move on Thursday, the central bank announced that they had removed the minimum exchange rate and dropped interest rates further into negative territory (-0.75 percent), with the floor seeming more of a trap door. Consequently, when the 1.200 floor was removed suddenly, it felt like a tsunami on financial markets.

As the floor was in place since 2011, Thursday move came as a major surprise and moved the currency by 30 percent in a matter of minutes if not seconds. As complex as it was, the decision sends a message to markets that the Swiss national bank policy has just become far more unpredictable in 2015. As they had continuously vowed to keep the floor in place, the move came so sudden and created a chaos that traders will pencil it as an historical day. On the foreign exchange side, the euro became irrevocably the funding currency of choice. As mentioned above, the Swiss National Bank fueled market volatility by removing the Floor of 1.20 on the EUR/CHF pair driving the pair from 1.20 to as low as 0.8517 in a matter of seconds. The pair closed the week at 0.9941 down almost 16 percent in 2 days.

Weakness in the US December retail sales data and the rise in the weekly jobless claims did not help the performance of the USD against the low yielders except the Euro. After opening the week at 1.1841, the currency closed the week at the low of 1.1560. At the contrary, the Sterling Pound opened the week at 1.5160 to close it at 1.5150.

In Asia, the Japanese Yen remain stuck in a range trading as low as 115.86 and a high of 119.32. After the SNB dropped their rates to -0.75, speculation that the Bank of Japan could be studying feasibility of such a move in Japan has been the main center of attention. The Yen closed the week at 117.50

In the commodities markets, Gold continues to march higher all the way to a high of \$1,280. Investors continue to hunt for safe haven investments, as more Central Banks seem to be offering negative interest rates.

Copper and Oil remain a subject of discussion as the consensus view on why oil prices have continued to fall has been largely been about the effects of increased global supply. The problem remains is that the sudden decline in other commodities this week, and in particular copper, brought to the fore the idea that global growth could be at risk and need more stimulus.

USD rally due for a pause?

On the US side, yields have fallen drastically and unexpectedly since the beginning of 2015 as investors search for safe haven investments. With all

global uncertainty in markets, especially after the SNB removed the floor and dropped their rates to -0.75 percent on Thursday, investors are pushing back the anticipated start date of the Fed's tightening cycle into the end 2015. On the data side, retail sales in the US missed expectations coming at -0.9 percent versus expectation of -0.1 percent. In addition, jobless claims came on the weaker side at 316k while economists were expecting 290k.

On a different front, the beige book released this week showed most regions saw "modest" or "moderate" economic growth driven by gains in consumer spending, while Dallas district slowed as oil

along with negative interest rates, the mix could represent a long term losing equation for investors who wish to stay in Euro, hence pushing Reserve managers and long term investors to shun the currency on a long term portfolio allocation basis. As Europe is an aging continent, investors have no choice than to look elsewhere for yield generating assets to fund their retirement. And since European investments grade are returning negative yield, this create the perfect long lasting decline in euro.

SNB shakes markets
The Swiss national Bank stated reason for dropping the CHF cap is that the currency's "overvalua-



prices plunged. "Consumer spending increased in most districts, with generally modest year-over-year gains in retail sales"

QE or no QE

The SNB move on Thursday could be a very good leading indicator of what the ECB intends to do in the coming weeks. We cannot but remember October when the Fed decided to stop its QE program, and two days later Japan announced a large QE. Whether the ECB announces QE or not on January 22, the market price action on Euro is currently consistent with a QE coming in the next meeting or the one in March (Since they cancelled February's). The decision by the European Court of Justice Wednesday is seen as a clear positive for the ECB, with the conditions laid out by not providing critical limits to the design of a public QE program. With up to 1 trillion euro QE priced in the market,

tion has decreased as a whole since the introduction of the minimum exchange rate," due in part to the USD's appreciation versus the CHF.

Markets will question that assessment, and particularly so in light of the renewed gains in the CHF against the USD in the wake of Thursday's announcement.

As the SNB had continuously built FX reserves, mainly Euros by defending the 1.2000 floor, the move has created a huge loss pressure on the bank with the drop of almost 17 percent in the EUR/USD cross since July 2014.

European outflows.

The picture continues to be foggy in the UK. After falling in the beginning of the week due to the weak inflation and Producer Price Index (PPI) figures, the Sterling pound rebounded again after the SNB lowered their interest rates to -0.75 and specu-

lation of the ECB to deliver QE next week fuelled investors sentiment. As we wrote in previous reports, assuming the ECB delivers the long awaited stimulus in the beginning of 2015, the Pound should benefit from portfolio inflows on the back of falling European yields.

Asia & commodities

Australia's labor market data came better than expected, with employment rising 37.4K in December versus a 5K rise expected and following a revised 45K rise in November, while the unemployment rate fell to 6.1 percent from a revised 6.2 percent. The question remains in investors mind whether the Australian economy would fare well in the increase of Central banks adopting negative interest rates or the slump in commodity prices accompanied with a lower Chinese growth would continue to weight on the economy.

China lower growth

The latest data out of China demonstrates that the country is clearly shifting from a debt fuelled construction and foreign demand-led exports economy to one that is more services and consumption oriented. Even government officials seem to have accepted GDP forecasts in the neighborhood of 6 percent or possibly lower. On the back of a slow-down in growth, People Bank of China remains ready to stimulate further the economy as interest rates remains high and the Central Bank has still large room to maneuver.

BoJ's next move

After the Swiss National Bank move, reports from Japan noted that some people in the Bank of Japan are growing anxious about continuing its massive purchases of government bonds, confronted with the program's negative side effects. Pressure from the financial industry is strengthening by the day, according to high-ranking officials at the central bank. The BOJ's buying of huge amounts of Japanese government bonds has pushed long-term interest rates to unprecedented lows. This has made it impossible for insurance companies to generate sufficient returns on JGB investments to pay benefits to policyholders.

In addition, rumors that the BoJ is considering extending two lending programs set to expire in March to assist Governor Haruhiko Kuroda's bid to stoke inflation, resurfaced this week. According to the same sources, the BoJ is likely to push back the deadline to apply for the facilities by a year.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar at 0.29400
The USDKD opened at 0.289400 yesterday morning.