'Algorithm, early intervention key to cutting traffic jams'

This May 11, 2022 photo shows Dvir Kenig, co-founder and chief executive office of Intelligent Traffic Control, speaking next to a monitor showcasing his company's artificial intelligence algorithm traffic solutions during the EcoMotion Week trade show in the Israeli coastal city of Tel Aviv**. AFP PHOTO**

TEL AVIV: Israel's traffic congestion ranks near the worst among developed economies, but an algorithm can help, says one of the country's information technology (IT) firms engaged in the automobile and mobility sector.

ITC, or Intelligent Traffic Control, was one of the artificial intelligence (AI) players at Tel Aviv's recent EcoMotion showcase where high-technology and AI firms hope to make transport more efficient and cleaner.

Its AI software collects real-time data from road cameras and then sends instructions to manipulate traffic lights based on vehicle flows.

"ITC managed to prove mathematically that many traffic jams can be prevented, if you intervene early enough," said Dvir Kenig, its co-founder and

chief technology officer, citing a 30-percent drop in traffic at the two junctions using their system.

The company says road congestion is a global scourge, calculating that the average driver spends three days a year stuck in traffic. It also pumps out greenhouse gas emissions, it adds.

The problem is acute in Israel where, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) says "transportation infrastructure lags significantly behind" most member-countries and "road congestion is one of the worst in the OECD."

EcoMotion founder [Meir Arnon](#) told [Agence France-Presse](#) (AFP) that surging global interest in smart mobility had made Israel an auto industry player, even though it doesn't manufacture any cars.

"Cars changed," the industrialist-turned-investor said. "Cars were metal and wheels and a radio. Today these things don't matter; they're all mass produced by the same companies for everyone."

"What differentiates car manufacturers today is the driving experience... the vehicle's ability to adapt itself to the driver," he added.

Systems developed by Israel's army and private defense industry — notably surveillance, communication and sensory technology — have become central to automakers, according to Arnon.

With more than 600 startups in the field — "second only to Silicon Valley" — Israel has become a "center of mobility," he said, noting that 35 global car companies have operations in the country, including [General Motors](#) (GM).

"The future of vehicles lies outside vehicles — in the cloud, our phones, in the cars to some extent, and all these elements create an open platform," said [Gil Golan](#), head of GM's local technical center. "This open platform is a place for innovation and creativity, which Israelis are good at."

Also at EcoMotion was Rider [Dome](#), whose cameras mounted on the front and back of motorcycles use artificial intelligence to warn riders of nearby dangers.

"A driving assistant that has become a standard in nearly every car does not exist in motorcycles," said Yoav Elgrichi, Rider Rome's chief executive officer. "That's why we decided to found Rider Dome."

But some observers warn that Israel's technology sector, including smart mobility, could run out of steam.

The [Israel Innovation Authority](#) says the tech sector, which accounts for half the country's exports and one in 10 jobs, is "maturing" and the number of new startups is on the decline.

Israel needs more engineers, argues Lisya Bahar Manoah, a partner at [Catalyst Investments](), if it wants to keep pace with the growing mobility sector that is expected to "double in size" globally over the coming years.

"The way that we can overcome the problem is — like in Europe, especially in Germany and Austria — they are creating professional schools," she said.

"Israel needs to stop and think now about a way to create more engineers in order to support the startup system. We need to adjust our education system accordingly," she added.

https://www.manilatimes.net/2022/05/31/news/world/algorithm-early-intervention-key-to-cutting-traffic-jams/1845619