

Luxury Carmakers Lead the Green Rush

Porsche, Mercedes & others plan high-performance electric & hybrid cars in 2020 on the back of govt allowing easier import norms

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Mumbai: The luxury carmakers are driving the change when it comes to bringing in cleaner and greener vehicles in India to address the rising pollution challenge in the country.

Come 2020, there will be at least half a dozen zero emission pure electric cars and SUVs like Porsche Taycan, Mercedes Benz EQC, BMW 'I' brand, Audi E-Tron, Jaguar IPace, amongst others, which may hit the market along with another dozen hybrid vehicles which are low on carbon footprint by over 25-50%, thanks to government's recent import regulations which allows for 2,500 vehicles per annum per carmaker without homologating those vehicles locally which is an expensive affair.

Also, it opens up the opportunity to bring high performance cars like the AMG from Mercedes Benz,

RS from Audi and M cars from BMW in the country. Martin Schwenk, MD of Mercedes Benz India, told ET the regulation opens up the possibility of multiple models the company can explore bringing in which were earlier not part of the plan.

Customers in India to get the taste of best of technology and vehicles launched world over in the shortest possible time

For instance, Mercedes Benz brought in its new MPV 'V Class' within 3 months of global launch. In September 2018, the Government of India allowed automakers to import up to 2500 units per annum without any local homologation paving way for vehicle makers to import high-end cars in India. The government had stated that certification done at the country of origin will be acceptable post payment requisite duties.

Ready, Set, Go

Launches lined up in 2019-20

6 high performance EVs | 12 hybrid electric vehicles

High-profile EVs to hit the road...
Porsche Taycan, Mercedes Benz EQC, Audi E-tron, Jaguar I Pace, Nissan Leaf

There is a range of plug-in hybrid vehicles expected from BMW, Volvo, Land Rover

What is aiding EV and hybrid story?
Govt's import regulations allowing for 2500 vehicles a year per carmaker without local homologation

Vehicle makers save crores on...
Local official approval | Product introduction time by over 3-6 months

Earlier norms allowed PVs to be imported without homologation or meeting norms valued upwards of \$40,000 & engine above 3 litre diesel and 2.5 litre petrol

The previous norms set by the director general of foreign trade (DGFT) allowed passenger vehicles to be imported without homologation or meeting local norms valued upwards of \$40,000 and engine above 3 litre diesel and 2.5 litre petrol. Customer gets the taste of best of technology and vehicles

launched world over in the shortest possible time, but it also saves on cost for the vehicle maker who invariably spend between ₹2 crore to ₹4 crore to bring in one model in the market. Given the couple of dozens of models being explored across car makers, it could potentially help vehicle makers save upto

₹100 crore in homologation itself.

Charles Frump, managing director of Volvo Car India said, it allows luxury carmakers to bring latest offerings as well as niche segment cars to India. The move not only cuts down the homologation cost as well as waiting period for car launch in India post the global roll out.

Volvo plans to launch four plug in hybrid vehicles in India in the coming year and Frump said, the regulation will help the company to expand the plug-in hybrid portfolio, which he thinks is ideal path for India to achieve full electrification.

Rahil Ansari, Head, Audi India said how Audi is planning to bring in – models like the Audi Q8 and the Audi e-tron in the coming years.

“Audi India is ready to launch its all electric model, the Audi e-tron which will be perfect for the Indian market requirements once the infrastructure is conducive. This shall hopefully happen by 2020 latest, if not earlier,” added Ansari.

The move to electrify vehicles has already gathered momentum world over. Mercedes Benz will be introducing over 10 battery operated electric vehicles in the next three to four years, whereas its rival Audi has committed to bring in a dozen EVs by 2025.