

Hero Moto rides in with 'most affordable' Harley at ₹2.3 lakh

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Harley-Davidson (Harley), in collaboration with Hero MotoCorp (Hero), launched its most affordable motorcycle — the X440 — powered by a 440cc engine on Monday with a clear focus on domestic sales. The X440 motorcycle was launched in the Pink City at a starting price of ₹2.29 lakh (ex-showroom). It will come in three variants — Denim, Vivid, and Pinnacle.

Royal Enfield and Bajaj Auto are the market leaders in the 350-500cc motorcycle segment. In 2022-23, 145,585 units were produced in this segment in India; 62 per cent of them exported to other countries. Meanwhile, the starting price of Royal Enfield's Himalayan 411cc is ₹2.15 lakh.

Pawan Munjal, executive chairman, Hero MotoCorp, told reporters, "Right now, the focus is on Harley's X440 for the Indian consumer and the Indian market. We are going one step at a time."

"This is for the first time that Hero has gone into this particular segment and worked with this engine size... We want to prove ourselves to our



Jochen Zeitz, president & CEO, Harley-Davidson (right) with Pawan Munjal, executive chairman, Hero MotoCorp, at the launch

PHOTO: DEEPAK PATEL

consumers and then talk about other things," he said.

Munjal said that Hero would use

the same 440cc engine to develop its bike at its Neemrana unit, which will be launched in the January-March

period of 2024, with all the bells and whistles of design and features.

Most Harley bikes come with over 1,000cc engines.

Jochen Zeitz, president and chief executive officer, Harley-Davidson, told reporters that the company's brand had been "out of reach" for a lot of customers in India. But that was set to change as the firm for the first time launched a bike that was "achievable" for a broader market segment.

"It is in the premium segment, but it is much more achievable because it is not in the 975cc-plus segment. It is a 440cc bike with a character uniquely Harley," he added.

He clarified that the company was not shifting "downwards" by launching a 440cc bike.

"Not everyone can afford a bike that costs \$20,000-plus, but everyone aspires to own one like how I used to as a kid. If the X440 had been there when I was 18, I would have definitely bought it. I think it is opening up the opportunity to buyers who would not immediately look for a big bike like what Harley traditionally offers," he said.

Quoting from personal experi-

ence, Zeitz said he got into motorcycles when he was 16. Since then, he has graduated to bigger bikes.

"Until you are comfortable on a big bike, you ride the smaller ones. That is what I did. That is what a lot of people do. The X440 is opening the door to more riders than the traditional Harley big engine-run bike riders," he said.

"The strategy we defined in 2020 was to get more riders into the brand. I think this bike achieves that in India," he added.

The X440 will be sold at Harley stores, premium dealerships of Hero, and select general showrooms of Hero across the country.

Harley shut its production plant in India and exited the country in 2020. However, that year, it signed an agreement with Hero to develop and sell a range of premium motorcycles under the Harley-Davidson brand.

"We are combining the strength of a global brand with Harley's engineering and design capabilities and putting that with the knowledge that Hero has about India and in terms of a manufacturing point of view. This is a win-win proposition," observed Zeitz.