

Ashok Leyland charts a 'product offensive' drive

SUPPLY OUTLOOK. Delivery of electric small trucks to start soon

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Leading truck and bus maker Ashok Leyland is planning a slew of new launches including vehicles powered by alternative fuel over the next couple of years. It is planning to introduce battery-electric trucks not just in the small truck segment, but also in the medium and heavy segment. Its mini-truck launch is also on the anvil.

While the company delivered its 14-tonne Boss electric truck, powered by a 200-kWh battery pack last week, it is also preparing to launch a 55-tonne electric tractor-trailer for long-haul transport. "This will be launched in the next few months," said Shenu Agarwal, Managing Director, Ashok Leyland.

The company is about to complete the trials of the 55-tonne electric tractor-trailer. Its electric medium and heavy commercial vehicles will target niche applications. It is also planning to introduce a new range of electric buses

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DHEERAJ HINDUJA,
Executive Chairman,
Ashok Leyland



under its EV arm Switch Mobility.

Switch Mobility is preparing to commence delivery of its electric small trucks to customers in the next couple of months. The company has already signed up with various companies for the supply of about 13,000 units.

START OF DELIVERY

"All these electric pick-ups will be supplied to the B2B segment of customers including e-commerce players. Charging infrastructure for these vehicles is created within their premises. Supply of these trucks to retail cus-

tomers will take some time as the public charging infrastructure is evolving in the country. In the near term, we see good demand from large e-commerce and logistics companies," Dheeraj Hinduja, Executive Chairman of Ashok Leyland, told *businessline*.

Discussing the e-bus segment and tenders, he said Switch Mobility didn't want to be competitive as the rates offered by some of the new entrants in the earlier CESL e-bus tenders were not viable." As these contracts run over a period of 10-12 years, the payment security mech-

anism is very important and critical for us."

"Yes, one can say Switch is not as aggressive as some of our competitors. But in recent months rates offered by our competitors have increased and it is likely to become viable. Meanwhile, we are getting a lot of demand for our double-decker buses from different cities across the country. We are seeing demand for e-buses coming from other segments such as staff transportation etc," Hinduja added.

Currently, the company has global orders to deliver about 1,100 units of electric buses, including an order to supply 950 units to the Delhi government.

Ashok Leyland had announced that it would enter a sub-1 tonne payload mini-truck segment. "We are working on this product and it will be launched sometime in FY25," said Aggarwal. As the company's sales continue to grow in northern and western regions, Ashok Leyland will continue to expand its network.