

# Mercedes-Benz to drive 10 new models into India in '23

Most entrants will be in the top-end category, says the country head

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**M**ercedes-Benz India will launch 10 car models in 2023 and a majority of them would be in the top-end category, said Santosh Iyer, managing director and chief executive officer, on Friday.

The German carmaker recorded its highest sales in India in 2022 at 15,822 units, clocking 41 per cent growth over 2021. "When one goes a bit deeper into 2022 volumes, the fastest growth has come from top-end vehicles (which are priced more than ₹1 crore) and they have shown growth of 69 per cent," Iyer told *Business Standard* in an interview.

The company on Friday launched this year's first top-end vehicle: Convertible AMG E 53 4MATIC+ Cabriolet, which is priced at ₹1.30 crore (ex-showroom) and can accelerate to 100 km/hour in 4.5 seconds.

Iyer said 22 per cent of the firm's sales come from these top-end vehicles. Before the Covid pandemic, in 2018, the share of such cars in Mercedes-Benz India's sales was 12 per cent. "So, that's again a very good mix, which shows that a real luxury customer prefers Mercedes-Benz over any other brands' assets," he mentioned.

"We will be launching 10 new products in 2023. The majority of them will be in the top-end vehicle segment," he mentioned. Iyer did not clarify how many of these models would be electric vehicles (EVs). He said the firm aims to have about 33 per cent of its total unit sales from these top-end cars in the next 2-3 years.

Mercedes-Benz has achieved its best-ever sales in India in the last 28 years of its presence here, he mentioned. Despite the headwinds the carmaker had in terms of supply shortages, the company not only sold many cars but it also has a huge order book of about 6,000 units leading to a waiting period of up to nine months, Iyer said. With this size of the order book, he noted, the company is looking at double-digit growth in 2023.

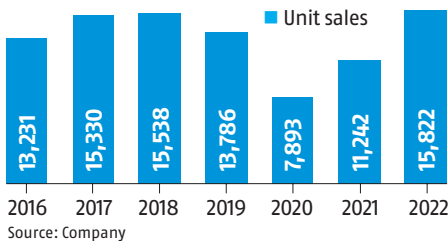
Iyer said that the company received about 2,000 online orders for its cars in 2022. Before Covid-19, the company was selling about 1,000 cars per year through its online store. Mercedes-Benz will enhance the customer journey in the online space, Iyer said. So far, the customers



Mercedes-Benz India MD & CEO Santosh Iyer with the AMG E 53 4MATIC+ Cabriolet

## ON A SALES HIGH

Mercedes-Benz India's volume performance



were able to see cars that will be produced in the next three-month period.

"Since we have a long waiting period, they (customers) will be able to see cars for the next one year which are going to be produced and block (book) them. So, if there is a wedding or a birthday in October, they can already check its availability in that month and block it," Iyer explained. Via its online store, the company is also trying to boost its used car business.

Mercedes-Benz India sells 3,000-4,000 used cars per year. "We saw 20 per cent growth in the used car business last year," Iyer mentioned.

"Therefore, we are trying to make the journey simple. So, a customer can log on and give details of his current used car online and he will get an indicative price of the car immediately. Then, they can select a franchise partner and they can then decide whether to trade in with the partner or not," Iyer said.

Mercedes-Benz India is also coming with an artificial intelligence-powered evaluation app for this purpose, he added. There are more than 170,000 Mercedes-Benz cars parked in India so moving forward, the company expects double-digit growth in its business, Iyer noted. Iyer said the company launched EQC, its first EV, in India about two years back but the pandemic broke out. "So, when (electric) cars were there, we had Covid-19. Then, we sold the cars and then there was a huge waiting period and we couldn't supply the (electric) car," he said.

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