

India can't reach net-zero goal with EVs only: Suzuki

Must consider alternatives like flex fuel and hybrid, says prez of Japanese auto giant

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Electric vehicles (EVs) alone cannot help India achieve its net-zero target by 2070 due to the existing "power supply situation", and it must tap other options too, Toshihiro Suzuki, representative director and president of Suzuki Motor Corporation (SMC), said on Wednesday.

"Although the global focus is on EVs, if we look at the power supply situation in India, the country must have alternative solutions," Suzuki said while interacting with journalists at Auto Expo 2023 in Greater Noida. "In order to meet the challenge of making India carbon-neutral, EVs are one of the solutions. Flex fuel, hybrid, ethanol, and hydrogen-driven cars can also be solutions," he said.

SMC is the majority shareholder in Maruti Suzuki India (MSIL), and 50-60 per cent of its revenues come from the India business.

Net zero means cutting greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible, with any remaining emissions re-absorbed from the atmosphere, by oceans and forests for instance.

Suzuki said India had the potential to become the top automobile manufacturer in the world, and that small cars would have an important role to play in it. In 2022, India beat Japan to become the world's third-largest automobile manufacturer.



Maruti Suzuki unveiled its concept electric SUV eVX on Day One of Auto Expo 2023 on Wednesday. It offers a driving range of up to 550 km. eVX is likely to be launched in India in 2025

Automakers go all out with green offerings

From showcasing electric- to hydrogen-powered vehicles, going green was the buzzword on day one of the Auto Expo 2023 on Wednesday, with auto majors like Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, Tata Motors, Kia, and Ashok Leyland leading from the front. Almost all of these companies either unveiled their new electric vehicle or alternative energy-powered models. Other the major launches included Hyundai's much-anticipated all-electric SUV, Ioniq 5.



Turn to Page 6 ▶

15 ▶

Inside

CUMMINS INDIA TO MAKE FUEL-AGNOSTIC ENGINES THIS YEAR

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Suzuki...

India produced about 4.25 million units last year.

MSIL's share in the Indian car market dropped to 43.38 per cent in 2021-22. "One of the biggest reasons why we could not sustain the 50 per cent market share was the delay in launching SUVs (sport utility vehicles)," he said.

The SUV segment, which has seen the highest growth in the past few years in India, is seeing intense competition among major carmakers. Tata Motors and Mahindra & Mahindra manufactured more utility vehicles than MSIL during the first half of 2022-23.

"If you look at the market share of Maruti in the SUV segment, it is 16-18 per cent. That is one of the biggest reasons behind the decline of Maruti's market share in India...We are in the process of taking action. We are trying to recover our market share," he noted.

Maruti Suzuki unveils eVX

On Day one of Auto Expo 2023, MSIL unveiled the concept electric SUV eVX, powered by a 60kWh battery pack offering up to 550 km of driving range. eVX is likely to be launched in India in 2025.

Suzuki said that while SMC and MSIL were looking to launch electric products in India, they were not depending entirely on EVs for their growth.

Future of small cars

When asked about the future of hatchbacks in India, Suzuki said only 0.3 billion people out of the total population of 1.4 billion were using cars, so there was "a lot of potential".

"Carbon-dioxide emissions from small cars are relatively less. We see potential for long-term growth in India for small cars. SMC and MSIL will have to make efforts to ensure deeper penetration of small cars in India," he said.

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