

'Comparing BEVs, hybrid vehicles would be wrong'

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New Delhi

Battery electric vehicles (BEVs) and hybrid vehicles are fundamentally different and thus cannot be incentivised at the same level, a senior official at Niti Aayog stated on Thursday.

To position India as a global EV manufacturing hub and achieve net-zero emissions by 2070, both vehicle types require clear definitions, he added. Sudhendu Jyoti Sinha, Advisor at Niti Aayog, told *businessline*, "They (EVs) have zero operational emissions; absolutely nothing. Hybrids, on the other hand, do have emissions, albeit lower ones. So, comparing hybrids and battery EVs would be wrong."

He explained that while hybrid vehicles utilise fuel-efficient technology, this will neither significantly reduce nor eliminate the country's reliance on fuel imports. "That is not going to completely clean up the environment or atmosphere from pollution, air quality. That is not what is going to make India the EV manufacturing hub, and that will not be able

to get us to net zero. So, if at all those are the priorities, then we have to pursue electric mobility," Sinha said.

HYBRIDS WELCOME

Despite this, Sinha acknowledged that hybrid vehicles are welcome, which is why they do not incur Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) penalties. However, he stressed that government support should primarily be directed towards BEVs. Beyond BEVs, Sinha suggested that hydrogen vehicles or Fuel Cell Electric Vehicles (FCEVs) are another technology India should adopt quickly, as they can be compared with battery-electric technology.

When questioned about the end-of-lifecycle management for BEVs, given the hazardous nature of lithium-ion batteries if not disposed of responsibly, Sinha confirmed that Niti Aayog and the Ministry of Environment have collaborated to create 'battery waste management rules'. "There is a very well-set protocol on how the battery is to be disposed of, and there is a concept of extended producer responsibility," he added.