

Leapmotor set to enter India mkt in Q3 of FY25

To launch first car in India in collaboration with Stellantis

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Chinese electric-vehicle (EV) maker Leapmotor, in collaboration with Stellantis, will enter the Indian market by launching its first car in the country in the third quarter of the 2024-25, the latter's chief executive officer Carlos Tavares said on Tuesday.

The Amsterdam-based company is open to using its manufacturing facility in India to produce and sell Leapmotor's EVs to overcome the hurdle of high import duties, he told reporters during a press conference in Hangzhou, China.

India charges import duties ranging from 70 to 100 per cent on completely built units (CBUs) of EVs. Stellantis and Leapmotor said on Tuesday they had received approvals to form Leapmotor International BV, a 51:49 joint venture led by Stellantis. The joint venture will first launch Leapmotor's EVs in nine European countries in September this year. In the second stage, it will focus on the South American markets of Brazil and Chile, West Asia, Africa, India, and the Asia-Pacific region, by launching Leapmotor EVs there in the third quarter of 2024-25, according to Tavares.

When asked which models the JV was planning to introduce in India, Tavares said: "As a second step, we will address the India opportunity. So, I think it is too soon to answer your question. I apologise for that. It is a precise question. I think we need to start from Australia and New Zealand as the first step and from there, we



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need to see what opportunities there are in India."

"We have to think the same way as we do everywhere in the world, which is we bring the existing dealers and offer them the possibility to be multi-branded. This is one option. Do we create new dealerships? That is another option. That discussion has not taken place so far. It will take place inside Leapmotor International BV," he added.

Sales of electric cars in India rose to 90,996 units in 2023-24 as against 47,551 units in 2022-23, registering an increase of 91 per cent. In India, Stellantis operates two manufacturing facilities: One in Chennai, which produces Citroen vehicles, and another in Pune, which manufactures Jeep vehicles.

On the India market, Tavares stated: "Each time we face severe customs duties or tariffs, it is a good opportunity to use the manufacturing footprint of Stellantis inside the bubble. We are very keen on creating that opportunity for Leapmotor International if that makes economic sense. So, there is no limitation for Leapmotor to use our manufacturing footprint in India if that was to be the best business case."

He said the mission of the joint venture was to sell Leapmotor models only in India, and cross-badging vehicles under Stellantis's Citroen brand has not been discussed yet.

The joint venture intends to debut the TO3, a compact five-door urban commuter car, and the C10, a high-end electric vehicle.