

**EV MARKET LEADER TATA MOTORS STILL DOESN'T OFFER SUCH A RANGE**

# Ola's 500-km range claim too good to be true, say analysts

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**OLA ELECTRIC HAS** announced plans to foray into the electric car segment and is targeting its first model by 2024. It also set a target of selling 1 million such cars by 2026-27. Ola founder and CEO Bhavish Aggarwal has claimed the range of its electric car will be more than 500 km, and it will accelerate from 0-100 km/hour in just four seconds.

However, automotive analysts told *FE* that the range of 500 km sounds too good to be true, especially if Aggarwal is talking about the real-world range, which can be starkly different from laboratory testing.

"It has taken years for legacy carmakers to get the electric car technology right," an auto analyst who works with all electric carmakers said. "Launching your first electric car with a 500-km range sounds a bit too overconfident. Unless, of course, if Ola purchases long-range EV technology from abroad. There are many a startup which have the tech but aren't profitable."

India's largest electric car player Tata Motors, for example, entered the space in 2018 and still doesn't have a 500-km range electric car. Its first car, the Tigor EV with a 16.2 kWh battery pack, had a 'claimed' range of 142 km and was priced about ₹10 lakh. In 2019, the extended-range Tigor EV was launched (21.5 kWh battery pack, 213 km range and priced upwards of ₹13 lakh). In

## MILES TO GO

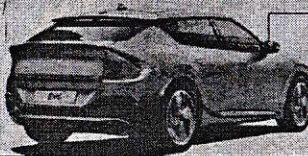


■ Tata Motors' first electric car, Tigor EV with a 16.2 kWh battery pack, had a 'claimed' range of 142 km, priced about ₹10 lakh

■ In 2020, it launched Nexon EV (30.2 kWh battery pack, 312 km range and priced ₹14 lakh



■ The only mass-market electric car to have a range close to 500 km is MG ZS EV (461 km, 50.3 kWh, ₹25 lakh)



■ The longest-range electric cars in India are BMW i4 (590 km, 83.9 kWh, ₹70 lakh), and Kia EV6 (528 km, 77.4 kWh, ₹60 lakh)



■ Others such as Audi e-tron (484 km), Mercedes-Benz EQC (450 km), Porsche Taycan (484 km) and Jaguar I-Pace (470 km) are all priced more than ₹1 crore

2020, the carmaker launched the Nexon EV (30.2 kWh battery pack, 312 km range and priced ₹14 lakh). In 2022, it launched the Nexon EV Max (40.5 kWh battery pack, 437 km range and priced about ₹18 lakh).

"The range in an electric car is a function of battery pack. A bigger battery pack will give you a longer range but it also increases the price of the car," another analyst said. "But it's not so simple above a certain threshold. To reach 500 km and above, a lot of other things need to be mastered, such as battery efficiency, getting the right lightweight material for bodyshell without compromising safety, making the car less resis-

tant to wind, and more," the analyst added.

Possibly, that's the reason even global cars being launched in India don't have a range much above 500 km, even though some have battery packs twice the size of the Nexon EV Max.

Currently, the longest-range electric cars in India are BMW i4 (590 km, 83.9 kWh, ₹70 lakh), followed by Kia EV6 (528 km, 77.4 kWh, ₹60 lakh). Others such as Audi e-tron (484 km), Mercedes-Benz EQC (450 km), Porsche Taycan (484 km) and Jaguar I-Pace (470 km) are all priced more than ₹1 crore.

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"It's very, very tough to offer a 500-km range electric car and price it competitively," auto experts said. "This is despite the fact that global battery prices are coming down."

According to data from Statista.com, the lithium-ion battery pack costs in dollars per kilowatt-hour have halved from 2016 (\$293 per kWh) to 2020 (\$137 per kWh), and are expected to touch \$101 by 2023. At the same time, commodity prices and prices of semiconductors are rising, effectively balancing out any drop in battery prices.

In addition, the driving range claimed by carmakers isn't real-world driving range,

and it is calculated differently.

For instance, When Hyundai India launched the Kona EV in 2019, this 39.2 kWh battery pack car was claimed to have a range of 452 km (certified by the Automotive Research Association of India). The same car, with the same battery pack, had a driving range of 305 km in the European Union (calculated using WLTP, or Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure, a laboratory test claimed to be very close to real-world conditions). No wonder, in real-world conditions, owners reportedly said their Kona EV doesn't travel beyond 300 on a single charge.

But driving range of electric cars is definitely increasing, as carmakers are mastering how to make a car more efficient, using technologies such as brake energy regeneration, better coefficient of drag, lightweighting, etc.

Mahindra's five electric SUVs that will be developed on the purpose-built INGLO platform will definitely have longer range than its existing electric cars such as the eVerito. Cars developed on Tata Motors' born-electric pure EV architecture (such as the AVINYA concept car showcased earlier this year which will be launched in 2025) will have a real-world driving range of more than 500 km on a single charge. "But this 500 km range will have come after about a decade of R&D, not in a couple of years," an automotive industry veteran said.