

Mercedes to drive in 3-4 EVs in next 12-18 months

SOHINI DAS

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Luxury vehicle maker Mercedes Benz India, which launched a ₹1.39 crore electric sports utility vehicle (SUV) EQE 500 on Friday, is planning to bring in three-four more electric cars into India in the next 12-18 months.

It also said that if it sees high consumer demand, it can realign its portfolio in 6-12 months in favour of petrol powertrains.

This comes after the Centre recently discouraged the use of diesel vehicles.

Speaking to *Business Standard*, Santosh Iyer, managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO), Mercedes-Benz India, said, "We will change the mix if the customer wants — today, we see very high demand for diesel in the SUV portfolio and gasoline for our sedan portfolio. We will need 6-12 months to realign our portfolio if the customer wants to shift from



(left) Santosh Iyer, CEO & MD, and Lance Bennett, VP Sales & Marketing, at EQE launch

INDIA'S MOST EXPENSIVE ELECTRIC CARS

(Ex-showroom price)

₹1.39 cr	₹2.04 cr	₹2.45 cr	₹2.43 cr	₹1.95 cr
Mercedes EQE 500	Audi RS e-Tron GT	Mercedes EQS53 AMG	Porsche Taycan Turbo S	BMW i7

diesel to petrol. We have adjustable powertrains, and production

capability and we have all the powertrains," Iyer said,

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- > Eyes 25% of sales to come from EVs in next 4 years
- > Opening up charging network for other brands to boost adoption of EVs

He added, "We have ethanol friendly gasoline engines, which are E-20 compliant; we have state-of-the-art diesel engines, which are clean and we have electric."

"We are trying to build an ecosystem here," Iyer said. Mercedes is eyeing 25 per cent of its sales in India from electric vehicles in the next four years. This is its mid-term target.

Iyer said that India follows global trends. Availability of cars

and options will drive market demand.

Mass market players, who have an electric portfolio, are able to sell substantial numbers, he said.

He added that it sees demand for electric cars going up substantially.

The EQE will attract a 100 per cent import duty as it would be imported as a completely built unit from its parent company's plant at Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

The EQE is now the third EV in the German luxury carmaker's portfolio in India after the EQS and EQB sedans. It has a range of 550 km on a single charge.

Meanwhile, Mercedes Benz India is opening up its charging network for other brands in order to boost the adoption of electric cars.

Iyer said it has 36 super-charging points (fast charging) in India out of the total 140 charging points.