

'IOCL to set up EV charging stations at 4,000 locations'

Our Bureau
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Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) intends to set up electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure at 4,000 locations across India by 2024, said Manjeet Walia, the company's Chief Divisional Retail Sales Head.

He was speaking at the *businessline* Campus Connect lecture series at Panjab University, Chandigarh. Some 2,500-odd charging stations have already come up, he mentioned, while delivering his lecture on 'Opportunities and Challenges with EVs'.

Walia said that IOCL's R&D team is also working on aluminium air batteries.

This would look at replacing lithium — which is currently being imported — with aluminium that is currently available in abundance here.

IOCL is also looking to set up battery swapping stations, which would effectively save time associated with charging EV batteries. He also touched upon the company's work in the development of hydrogen cells for a "carbon neutral future of mobility".

UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

According to Akshay Sangwan, Director-Development and Commercial, Sonalika / IITL, and Executive Director, Sonalika Industries / ICML, who was also present at the lecture series, said there is

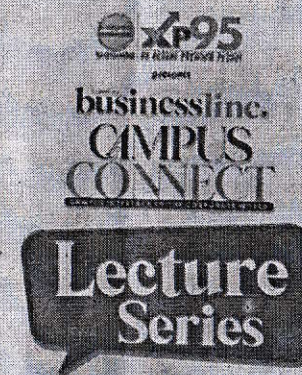


(from left) Veer Karan Goyal, Manjeet Walia and Akshay Sangwan speak at the BL IOCL lecture series at Panjab University

scope for start-ups to tap into the EV space. Pointing to opportunities, Sangwan said OEMs are currently relying on outsourcing knowledge — a segment that the various start-ups can now

tap into.

Sonalika was willing to support such start-ups and also invest in them if the opportunity arises, he said. In fact, while taking up the issues associated with battery



EVs and plug-in EVs, including economic benefits, and environmental and safety concerns, Sangwan pointed to the retro-fitment feasibility of current vehicles that are in use.

Low-power passenger and commercial vehicles are most likely to be the first adopters of EVs, he said.

Students were also asked to tap into R&D on the EV segment with Veer Karan Goyal, research scholar at IIT-Bombay and Power Electronics Design Engineer (R&D) at ElectroWaves Electronics, inviting them to join him at his in-house production facility in Himachal Pradesh.

Most technology required in the EV sector was being outsourced, and there was a need to make them within the country. Self-dependence in the vehicle charging and charger departments was important, and this formed the backbone of Goyal's interactive session.