

Tesla likely to open first showroom in India, begins hiring

Carmaker may enter Mumbai, NCR markets

SOHINI DAS

Mumbai, 18 February

American electric-vehicle (EV) giant Tesla has posted on its website openings for 13 jobs in Mumbai, triggering speculation about the vehicle maker's India entry after it posted a decline in global sales last year after a decade.

Of the 13, four are in vehicle service, six in sales and customer support, and three in operations and business support.

This indicates the company is looking to open an outlet that would serve both as a sales and service point for its cars.

An email sent to Tesla remained unanswered till the time of going to press.

This piece of news comes days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Tesla Chief Executive Officer Elon Musk in the United States. It is, however, not clear whether there was any discussion around Tesla's India entry.

India also reduced basic Customs duty on cars priced above \$40,000 from 110 per cent to 70 per cent earlier this month, which most see as paving the way for Tesla's entry.

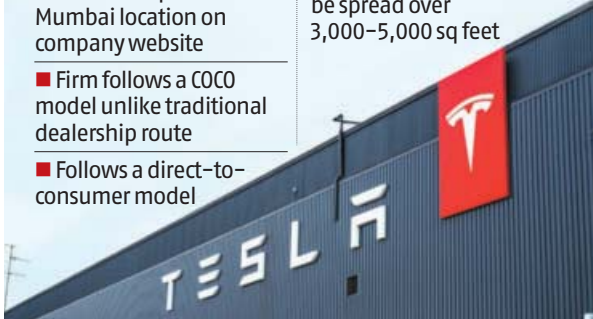
Leading multi-brand dealers in India have said Tesla is not in touch with anyone from the Indian dealers' community yet.

"Tesla typically follows a company-owned-company-operated (COCO) model to sell directly to the customer. It would not adopt a traditional

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- Posts openings in sales, service and ops for Mumbai location on company website
- Firm follows a COCO model unlike traditional dealership route
- Follows a direct-to-consumer model

- Tesla annual sales dipped 1.1% in 2024
- Showrooms likely to be spread over 3,000-5,000 sq feet



franchise-led dealer outlet model in India," said the owner of a multi-brand dealership based in Karnataka.

Unlike other car original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), Tesla sells directly to consumers globally and has created an international network of COCO showrooms and service centres across cities.

Last year Tesla had more than 1,300 such showrooms globally.

Sources in car retail indicated Tesla would look for 3,000-5,000 square feet for its sales and service outlets.

After Mumbai, the National Capital Region is likely to be on the cards for showrooms.

According to a Reuters report, Tesla has selected a space to lease in the Aerocity area near New Delhi's international airport for a showroom, said two people familiar with the discussions, who declined to be named as the matter is private. In Mumbai, the car-

maker has chosen space in Bandra Kurla Complex near the city's airport, the first person said.

India's EV market is relatively nascent, selling around 100,000 units last year.

However, relatively expensive EVs like Mahindra's BE 6 and XEV 9e have generated 30,000 bookings on first-day bookings.

In fact, responding to an X user on how he would handle competition should Tesla come into India, Mahindra and Mahindra Group Chairman Anand Mahindra said on Tuesday this wasn't the first time he faced such a question.

"We have been asked similar questions ever since the opening up of the Indian economy in 1991. How will you compete against Tata? Maruti All MNCs?" he wrote. "But we're still around. And working like maniacs to still be around and relevant even a century from now," he concluded.