

# New global test norms may raise car prices, lower mileage

**DOUBLE HIT.** Stricter WLTP vehicle testing, alongside CAFE III norms, planned from 2027

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Car buyers may soon face a double blow: Lower certified mileage or electric vehicle-range figures and higher vehicle prices, even when the vehicles remain mechanically unchanged.

From April 1, 2027, India plans to replace the current Modified Indian Driving Cycle (MIDC) with the tougher Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicles Test Procedure (WLTP), while simultaneously tightening fuel-efficiency norms under CAFE III regulations.

Together, the changes could make many petrol, diesel and electric vehicles appear 10-20 per cent less efficient and force automakers to add new technologies to meet stricter emission targets.

A petrol car currently rated at 25 km/l could see its certified mileage fall to around 21-22 km/l under WLTP norms, while an EV claiming a 500-km range may be certified closer to 430-450 km.



**PRICE HIKE AHEAD.** Entry-level small cars may cost ₹30,000-50,000 more, while premium hatchbacks and compact SUVs could go up by ₹40,000-1 lakh

Industry experts say the vehicles themselves will not become less efficient; the new tests would simply better reflect real-world driving conditions.

#### **TWIN CHALLENGE**

"Depending on the vehicle and configuration, the reduction in certified fuel-economy numbers can often be in the range of 10-20 per cent," said Amit Bhatt, India Managing Director at the International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT).

The simultaneous rollout of CAFE III and WLTP creates a two-layer challenge for automakers.

While CAFE III tightens fleet-average carbon dioxide targets, WLTP changes the methodology for calculating emissions by incorporating higher speeds, stronger acceleration and more realistic operating conditions.

Industry executives and analysts estimate compliance costs could rise sharply across segments.

Entry-level small cars may

require upgraded engine-management software, fuel injectors and sensors, adding ₹30,000-50,000 per vehicle.

Premium hatchbacks and compact SUVs may need gasoline particulate filters, catalytic converters, mild-hybrid systems and aerodynamic improvements, pushing up costs by ₹40,000 to ₹1 lakh.

Larger SUVs and MPVs are expected to face the steepest increase, adding ₹1.2 lakh to ₹2 lakh per vehicle.

Randheer Singh, a mobility and energy-transition expert, said WLTP effectively raises the compliance burden under CAFE III because certified fuel-efficiency figures become lower and measured emissions higher.

#### **TRANSITION READY**

Global luxury carmakers such as Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Audi may adapt faster because many of their models are already WLTP-certified overseas.

Domestic manufacturers including Maruti Suzuki, Tata Motors and Mahindra & Mahindra are already recalibrating vehicles and validating compliance strategies.