

# Renault looks to drive EV into India next year

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French carmaker Renault has announced an investment of ₹5,300 crore along with its partner Nissan for India.

The duo is considering bringing in a new electric car to the Indian market based on the Spring Electric architecture, which is available in Europe.

Speaking to the media, Venkatram Mamillapalle, country chief executive officer (CEO) and managing director (MD), Renault India, said it plans to launch some new vehicles in 2024. It is considering the electric avatar of the Spring for the Indian market.

Mamillapalle, however, clarified that this car, which is close to the Renault Kwid hatchback, would be made in its Indian plant. The architecture would be based on the Spring. He did not share further details.

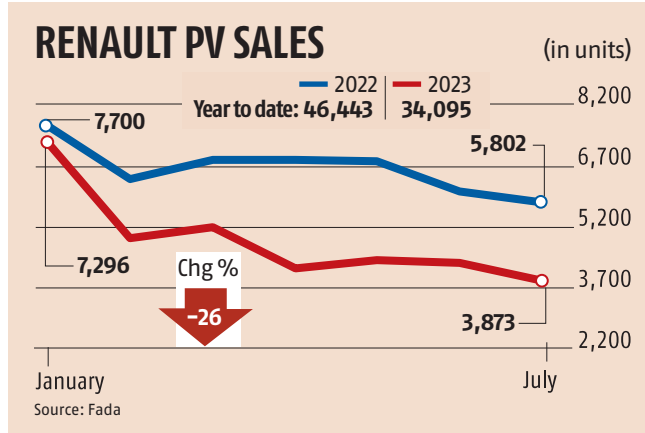
As such, Renault India is working on a slew of new models,

including two ICE (internal combustion engine) products and had earlier indicated that there were plans for an A segment electric car.

Renault and Nissan have a joint venture plant near Chennai with an installed capacity of 480,000 units annually. At the moment, only 48 per cent of the plant is only utilised by both the partners. Renault had produced around 84,000 vehicles in 2022-23, and exported around 28,000 units during the year from the plant. According to data from the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), Renault had sold 78,926 units in the domestic market. Mamillapalle admitted that this year, the numbers are going to slip.

It expects to sell around 60,000-65,000 vehicles in the domestic market, and export around 20,000 vehicles. Its major export market South Africa has witnessed some slowdown.

Renault India now sells only



three models in India – the Kwid (hatchback), Triber (seven-seater multi-utility vehicle), and the Kiger (a five-seater SUV).

Its retail sales have been dwindling, thanks to the lack of options available to the customer.

According to data from the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA), the company retailed only 3,873 units in

July, resulting in a market share of 1.36 per cent in the passenger vehicles' segment. This is down from 5,802 units it sold in July 2022 when it enjoyed a 2.12 per cent share of the market. Monthly sales have almost halved from the January levels (7,296 units).

In an attempt to arrest its dwindling sales, it launched an initiative 'showroom on wheels'

that would serve as a mobile extension of Renault's showrooms. Sales personnel would also be present onboard these mobile showrooms. The company plans to have these showrooms across 625 locations in India.

It, however, does not wish to dilute its brand positioning and bring a CNG variant of its Triber, which can then see demand in the taxi segment.

"We have taken a conscious call around that. It can significantly boost our numbers immediately. But we are looking at a long-term plan, and we want to position our cars on the basis of their performance, and safety features. We don't want to be in the taxi segment," Mamillapalle said.

As such, the company is open to having different powertrains, including plug-in hybrids and even ethanol blends. It has E85 flex fuel option (85 per cent ethanol) ready globally. It can bring it to India, the moment the government wants.