

Rare earth-free EVs 3 years away: Montra MD

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The rare earth magnet shortage is a concern for everyone in the automobile industry and the issue should get resolved soon, said Jalaj Gupta, managing director of TI Clean Mobility, which goes by the brand name Montra Electric and is part of the ₹80,000 crore Murugappa group.

“Can you do an electric vehicle’s motor without these rare earth magnets? The answer is yes. How long will it take (to develop such a motor)? It will take a minimum 2–3 years,” Gupta told Business Standard on the sidelines of the launch of the firm’s three-wheeler, Super Cargo, in Delhi.

“That (alternative chemical-run electric motor) sol-

ution will take time... Today, you need these magnets. About 90 per cent of the rare earth magnets are controlled by China. Until then, we have to resolve the issue,” Gupta said.

“And I’m sure this issue will be resolved because the entire electric ecosystem.

Everyone is dependent on electric motors. An electric motor has these rare earth magnets as one of the key components,” he added.

Montra Electric’s EV business

spans four verticals: heavy commercial vehicles, small commercial vehicles, three-wheelers, and tractors.

When asked if the shortage is affecting the company, Gupta replied, “For some businesses, it is not. For some, it is. So, it is not a concern in two

businesses — big trucks (heavy commercial vehicles) and small commercial vehicles — where the motor assembly is happening outside the country, and

the entire motor is imported.”

“It is a concern for the other two businesses — three-wheelers and tractors — whereby our vendor base is in India, from whom we are taking the motor. However, we are hopeful that the issue will get resolved,” he added.

He added that the current production cycle won’t be affected by the shortage.

When asked if vendors have given any timeline for magnet availability, Gupta replied, “It varies from company to company and business to business.

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Jalaj Gupta
MD, TI Clean Mobility

We also have an indication from our vendor, and we are working with them to see how we can resolve the issue. There could be multiple ways of resolving the issue.”

He also mentioned that the company aims to reach a turnover of \$1 billion in the next 4–5 years. “Last year, our turnover stood at ₹650 crore (\$75 million),” he stated. “About 50 per cent of the \$1 billion top line could come from big trucks, 20 per cent from the three-wheeler, 20 per cent from small commercial vehicles, and 10 per cent from electric tractors,” he added. The Super Cargo three-wheeler, launched on Friday, has a certified range of over 200 km and a real-world range of 170 km. The vehicle is equipped with a 13.8 kWh battery and offers a 15-minute fast-charging option.

