

## Automakers spotlight electric vehicles

Miles to go: Lack of clear policy, high prices are challenges that EVs like Renault's TREZOR concept car face. PTI

Electric vehicles stole the limelight at the Auto Expo this year, with almost all automakers unveiling a slew of vehicles that are likely to hit the Indian roads over the next two to three years.

However, the industry still sees the government's proposal to move to 100% electric vehicles (EVs) by 2030 as a "big challenge" amid lack of charging infrastructure and clear policy norms, besides the high prices of EVs.

More than half of the 65 vehicles unveiled at the exposition this year were EVs and hybrid concepts put up by car manufacturers.

Maruti Suzuki, which aims to roll out an EV in 2020, showcased e-Survivor.

"We are requesting that there should be a roadmap for battery charging stations," said Yoichiro Ueno, president and CEO, Honda Cars India. Policymakers need to decide "what EV society is India trying to achieve... otherwise it is too difficult to decide what products to bring to India," he said, adding the firm was developing a variety of EVs. Honda earlier unveiled its Sports EV concept and NeuV EV concept.

### 'Price-sensitive market'

Considering India's expanse, it would take time to establish charging a network, Mr. Ueno said. India, he said, was a price-sensitive market and EVs currently cost at least twice as much as a comparable internal combustion engine (ICE) model.

"What needs to be done is to bring it down to the same level as the ICE," said Rakesh Srivastava, director sales, Hyundai, which unveiled its Ioniq EV. "This government has to facilitate by way of subsidies." He added the government needed to frame an EV policy, on which work was underway, quickly.

"There also needs to be a testing facility to test the road-worthiness... a mechanism needs to be worked out to safely dispose or recycle the battery after its life is over," he added.

Hyundai plans to get ahead of Maruti by introducing its EV in 2019.

EV growth in the country was inevitable in future but what was needed at present was greater clarity from the government in terms of policies and infrastructure, said Sumit Sawhney, country CEO and MD, Renault India Operations. Renault showcased several cars, including TREZOR, an all-electric Grand Tourer concept car.

Globally many countries have fixed targets for completely doing away with fossil fuel vehicles. The U.K. has announced a ban on sales of new gasoline and diesel cars starting 2040. By 2050, all cars on the country's road will have zero emissions. Paris has also planned to do away with petrol and diesel-fuelled cars, while China plans to cap its automobile carbon emissions by 2030.

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