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India not really prepared for electric vehicles at the moment: Volkswagen

India's new import duties, said VW India president Andreas Lauermann, are another factor deterring the company from accelerating the launch of its electric vehicles in India.

BUSINESS Updated: Mar 16, 2018 12:58 IST

Press Trust of India, Geneva

Volkswagen has announced plans to expand production of EVs worldwide on a massive scale with 16 locations to produce battery-powered vehicles by the end of 2022.(REUTERS FIile)

German automaker Volkswagen says India is not “really prepared” for a full leap towards electric vehicles (EVs), although the government’s move to put it on the agenda is a good step.

The company, which has announced plans to expand production of EVs worldwide on a massive scale with 16 locations to produce battery-powered vehicles by the end of 2022, also said india should be clear about what kind of technology it wants.

“I believe it was a good step from the government to put it (EVs) on the agenda. It is absolutely necessary for India,” Volkswagen India president and managing director Andreas Lauermann told PTI when asked about the company’s plans for EVs in India.

However, he added, “...but we all know that India is a not really prepared for a such a step at the moment. Also in terms of technology, India should be clear what kind of technology it wants.”

On the compatibility of the company’s existing EVs with the Indian market, he said, “When we look at our EVs at the moment with the technology, it is little bit too early there (in India).”

Recently, the Indian government think tank NITI Aayog had said there was no need for an electric vehicle policy, and technology should not be trapped by rules and regulations.

Another factor, which is also deterring VW from accelerating launch of its EVs in India, according to Lauermaann, is the “new import duties (as) they are absolutely not fitting in our strategy”.

“There is no plan visible for the future development in term of technologies,” Lauermaann said.

On hike in import duties on automobiles imposed by India, he said, “It was clearly against European auto firms and this is not acceptable.”

He, however, said VW hasn’t taken a final decision on increasing product prices in India.

In the Budget for 2018-19, Indian government increased custom duty on CKD (completely knocked down) imports of motor vehicles, motor cars, motor cycles from 10% to 15%.

Further, duty on CBU (completely built units) imports of motor vehicles (trucks and buses) had been hiked from 20% to 25%.

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