

Govt asks ISRO to share technology for manufacturing Lithium-ion batteries for vehicles

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NEW DELHI: The government has asked Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to allow interested players including from private sector to obtain the technology for mass production of Lithium-Ion batteries for electric vehicles. ISRO will now come up with a framework to make this process smooth.

Over half a dozen major automobile companies, battery manufacturers and public sector undertakings have already approached ISRO. These are Mahindra Renault, Hyundai, Nissan, Tata Motors, High Energy Batteries, BHEL and Indian Oil are keen to produce the indigenous Lithium-ion batteries.

The Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre under ISRO has developed indigenous technology to manufacture such high-power batteries for automobiles and their feasibility tests in vehicles have been successful.

Union road transport minister Nitin Gadkari had sought ISRO's help to develop indigenous technology for Lithium-ion batteries so that their prices are within the reach of Indian customers. ISRO had earlier developed similar batteries for satellite and the launch vehicle applications.

The government has set an ambitious target for pushing more use of electric vehicles to reduce air pollution, which has become one of the biggest health concerns.

Batteries are the key components of any electric vehicle. At present, all Lithium-ion batteries are imported and it's very expensive. Such batteries have high-power, but these weigh less and their volume is much less as well in comparison to conventional batteries.

Sources said ISRO and BHEL are likely to finalise an MoU soon for manufacturing such batteries. "The cabinet secretary has asked ISRO to create a framework for enabling even interested private players to obtain the technology for mass production. Only one agency producing them will not be enough. The cost will come down only when we will have huge production to meet the demand," an official said, who was present in the meeting. Union road transport minister Nitin Gadkari chaired this meeting.

Government documents show that the cost of Lithium-ion batteries is very high because of small volume of procurement. Bulk procurement and mass production can reduce the cost by almost 80%, which is key to push demand.