

Volvo to only produce electric cars from 2019

Swedish car maker Volvo has revealed it will adopt an electrification strategy for all new models from 2019. The brand was taken over by the Chinese automotive giant Geely in 2010.



Volvo, which sold more than 534,000 vehicles worldwide in 2016, has stated that it plans to produce one million electrified cars by 2020.

"This announcement marks the end of the solely combustion engine-powered car," said Hkan Samuelsson, president and CE of Volvo Cars.

Speaking at a press conference in Stockholm, Sweden, Samuelsson called on companies around the world to invest more in battery and charging technology.

This will add to concern for SA's crucial R96bn platinum industry, which supplies platinum for the catalytic converters in cars powered by the internal combustion engine.

A switch to electric vehicles would end any requirement for the metal by the automotive industry. Instead, the platinum industry is hoping for a move to fuel-cell vehicles, which require a platinum catalyst, but few car makers have yet adopted the technology.

Volvo made no mention of plans regarding fuel-cell vehicles, instead saying it was chasing electric car sales leader Tesla, which Samuelsson said was "a tough competitor ... but we are becoming the second electrified car maker".

Switch

All existing model ranges will continue with their petrol or diesel-only engines until the end of their life cycles, but the company will begin switching to electrified vehicles from 2019.

These will be at three different levels of electrification.

The first will be mild hybrids. They will have a petrol or diesel internal combustion engine but with a 48-volt motor added that boosts power through brake regeneration.

"The 48-volt will be cost effective, compared to diesel," said Henrik Green, senior vice president of research and development at Volvo.

Diesel target

In the short term, though, the company needs diesel to reach 2020 EU emissions targets.

"Diesel is important for us reaching the 2020 target of 95g [of CO/km]," Samuelsson said. Diesel was set to become more expensive in the longer term.

The second level will be plug-in hybrids, similar to that available in the brand's XC90 T8 SUV. The third level will be a full battery-electric vehicle.

The company will release three new models in 2019, all with electrification options. In the same year it will introduce two full-battery electric models under its performance vehicle division, Polestar.

New electrification models will be produced at all Volvo facilities around the world, but Samuelsson said the first would be built at its plant in China.

Source: Business Day

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