



## Exide & Leclanche JV for Lithium-Ion Battery



Exide Industries is planning to start production of lithium-ion batteries from its joint venture plant in Gujarat by end of this calendar year.

Aiming at entering India's electric vehicle market and grid-based applications, Exide had formed a 75:25 joint venture with Switzerland-based Leclanche SA, one of the world's leading energy storage solution companies, in June last year. The JV company's production plant in Gujarat is the first such indigenous facility in the country for manufacturing lithium-ion batteries and provide energy storage systems for the EV market, with the government's push towards promoting electric mobility. The JV company, which is planning three different assembly lines for three different types of products, will specifically target e-transport and fleet vehicles, including e-buses, e-wheelers and e-rickshaws.

Exide Industries MD & CEO Gautam Chatterjee told that "It is inevitable that electric vehicles will come into India. Whether it will be three years or five years or ten years down the line, that can be debated. But we, as a company, want to be fully prepared to address this opportunity." He added that "The Gujarat plant is going on full stream. It will start operation by end of this calendar year. Around INR 100 crore has already been invested. Another INR 100 crore will be pumped in within March next year."

## Battery materials Cobalt, Nickel may face supply crunch

Wood Mackenzie estimate electric vehicle sales including hybrid electric vehicles were up more than 24% last year. It expects global electric vehicle sales with a plug to account for 7% of all passenger car sales by 2025, 14% by 2030 and 38% by 2040. It said that battery materials, cobalt, lithium and nickel, could face a supply crunch by mid 2020s. Cobalt market will see an oversupply of intermediate products such as hydroxide until at least 2024. Battery sector will make up more than 80% of total lithium demand by 2030. Investment in new nickel projects is hindered by low prices, but needs to start now as mines can take up to 10 years to develop.

## Auto sector sees 2 lakh job cuts

Around two lakh jobs have been cut across automobile dealerships in India in the last three months as vehicle retailers take the last resort of cutting manpower to tide over the impact of the unprecedented sales slump, according to industry body FADA.



According to a media report, with no immediate signs of recovery, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) feared that the job cuts may continue with more showrooms being shut in the near future and sought immediate government intervention such as reduction of GST to provide relief to the auto industry.

"The majority of job cuts have happened in the last three months. It started around May and continued through June and July," FADA President Ashish Harsharaj Kale told PTI.

He further said, "Right now most of the cuts which have happened are in front-end sales jobs but if this (slowdown) continues, then even the technical jobs will be affected because if we are selling less then we will also service less, so it is a cycle."

When asked how many jobs have been cut across the dealerships in India, he said, "Close to about two lakh."

"It is a guesstimate that our members have already cut 7-8 per cent of the jobs in most of the dealerships as the degrowth has been very high," he added.

Around 2.5 million people were employed directly through around 26,000 automobile showrooms operated by 15,000 dealers. Another 2.5 million are indirectly employed in the dealership ecosystem, he added.

As per Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) figures, vehicle wholesale across all categories declined by 12.35 per cent to 60,85,406 units in April-June against 69,42,742 units in same period of last year.

On the other hand, as per data based on registrations collated by FADA, automobile retail sales in the April-June period declined by 6 per cent to 51,16,718 units in the first quarter of this fiscal as against 54,42,317 units in the year-ago period.

This section is a compilation from various company press releases, business dailies, trade publications and Industry Websites.