

Mercedes Benz rolls out 20,000th car from Pune factory

It was a moment of pride as the iridium silver E-Class Mercedes Benz worth 4.5 Million rolled out late Wednesday afternoon from Mercedes Benz India's Plant here in Chikali. It was the 20,000th vehicle rolling out from the plant set up in 1995.

Dr. Wilfried Aulbur, managing director and CEO of Mercedes-Benz India, said: 'The car also has another unique distinction - it is the 10,000th E-Class to be sold in India.'

'We were the pioneers to open a shop here in 1995 and in such a less time we have achieved 20,000 vehicles. It sure is a great moment for us,' Suhas Kadlaskar, director of corporate affairs, Mercedes Benz India, told IANS.

On the occasion, Kadlaskar also announced sale of 1,094 cars during the first quarter of 2008. 'The market for Mercedes in India is getting very strong. It is an unprecedented increase. Last year, during the same period, we sold 690 cars.'

Of the 1,094 cars sold, 208 were S-class, 288 belonged to the E-class and 574 were C-Class models.

Kadlaskar said sales in the tier-2 and tier-3 cities in India were growing consistently besides the metros. 'Demand for Mercedes in cities like Pune, Mysore, Kanpur, Lucknow and Kolhapur is also picking up.'

At the Chikali factory, 4,000 cars of classes S, E and C are manufactured annually.

Other products are offered through the imported cars route as Completely Built Units. These include the Mercedes-Benz S-Class, M-Class, CL-Class and the specially popular models like the SLK-Class and the CLS-Class.

Mercedes-Benz has also forayed into the Commercial Vehicles segment in India with the 'Actros' truck. Targeted at mining applications in India, the Actros has been assembled at the Mercedes-Benz plant in Pune since November 2007.

Mercedes-Benz has also announced its interest in the luxury bus segment and has partnered Sutel Motors for the creation of the bus body. The launch of the luxury buses is scheduled during 2008.

In view of future requirements, Mercedes-Benz is creating a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility at Chakan in Pune. This facility spreads across 100 acres and will produce both passenger cars as well as the commercial vehicles range of Mercedes-Benz in India.

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