

News monitored for: Royal Enfield

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EXCLUSIVE

Royal Enfield showcases high performance EV concept

The Himalayan EV concept which was showcased at EICMA 2023 will serve as a test bed for the company to try out its new electric powertrains and other components. **Ketan Thakkar** and **Dinshaw Magol** report.

Royal Enfield, the world's largest mid-size motorcycle maker is making rapid strides in the electrification space. *Autocar India* had reported that the company is likely to showcase a high performance off road adventure electric motorcycle at the EICMA two-wheeler show in Milan, Italy.

On November 9 at EICMA 2023, Royal Enfield showcased two motorcycles. One was the all-new Himalayan, while the other was the Himalayan EV concept test bed.

The Himalayan EV concept is a pure electric adventure motorcycle prototype. Not much was shared about the Himalayan EV prototype, but it will serve as a test bed for the company to try out its new electric powertrains and other components. The company claims that the Himalayan EV test bed has been through extensive wind-tunnel testing to bring down its drag coefficient as much as possible. The battery pack and motor are off the shelf components and this prototype has been under development for 18 months now.

Sources say, based on its own architectures, there is significant progress being made on two products – LIA and LIK. With the projects reaching a critical milestone, an entire floor has been given to the EV team at the company's corporate office in OMR in Chennai, said people in the know.

One of the several people in the know said, that the LIA is going to be amongst the lightest vehicle architecture developed based on the Flying Flea concept – a petrol motorcycle that the British Army used during World War II.

Considering that the Stark Future's VARG electric dirt bike has serious performance claims, if Royal Enfield decides to adopt their platform (either entirely or use it as a starting point), its product will be quite capable as well.

The Royal Enfield Flying Flea was a lightweight 125cc folding motorcycle developed as a means of transport that could be dropped by parachute on the battlefields of WWII, to quickly carry messages between airborne and assault troops. Post the war, it served as an inexpensive means of transportation. Taking that into account, Royal Enfield could position the



The Himalayan EV concept. The lightweight EV models have been inspired by the Flying Flea, a 125cc lightweight foldable paratrooper motorcycle from WW II.

A studio sketch of the Royal Enfield Electric Himalayan Testbed.



electric Flying Flea as an entry-level model targeted at commuters.

The first tooled-up LIA bike is likely to be ready within a couple of quarters. It may be a single seater, and the company has put in a lot of effort to ensure that it takes away as much of mass and weight as possible to ensure a decent range and performance.

The second project – LIK is likely to have an adventure off-roader form factor. Both these models are likely to deliver a peak power of 16 kW on the fly with 9 kW of static power – this is almost three times the power of Ather 450 X and equivalent to its current 350 cc motorcycles.

While the LIA and LIK are likely to be powered by 60-120-volt battery system, the motorcycle based on Stark's architecture may get a 350-volt battery, which is four to five times higher than the Tata Tiago.

To be sure, there is a 48-60-volt LFP battery also being explored for a more affordable alternative.

For the first two projects – LIA and LIK – Royal Enfield is planning for 60,000 per annum, which is likely to double in 2026 and the predominant share of the models will be for the overseas market.

The company's top management has confirmed that the electric vehicle based on both Royal Enfield's own and Stark Motorcycle's platform is currently under development.

Royal Enfield has committed over Rs 1,500 crore on its EV business and it has already brought on board key top management executives.

CTO for EV, Royal Enfield Umesh Krishnappa has been driving the development project, and Royal Enfield has hired ex-Ducati veteran Mario Alvisi as Chief Growth Officer for the EV business.

Both Umesh and Mario report to the CEO of Royal Enfield, B Govindarajan. A dedicated EV unit has already been formed – which operates like a start up and gets a desired higher share of time and resources from the top management.

While Royal Enfield has already acquired a new land for the EV facility in Cheyyar, the first set of electric vehicles however will be coming out of its Orgadam facility - from a separate manufacturing line. ■