

Important Vocab For the Editorial

1. **speed up** (phrasal verb) – accelerate, advance, forward.
2. **transition** (noun) – change/move, switch, transformation.
3. **leapfrog** (verb) – surpass, overtake, improve/progress into a leading position.
4. **mobility** (noun) – transportability.
5. **forward-looking** (adjective) – progressive, ambitious, reforming.
6. **inevitable** (adjective) – unavoidable/unpreventable; necessary/compulsory, required.
7. **market-driven** (adjective) – determined by on what and how much people want to buy.
8. **sought** past and past participle of **seek** (verb) – try, attempt, aim.
9. **notably** (adverb) – especially, particularly, primarily.
10. **trail** (verb) – lag behind, be behind, fall behind.
11. **imperative** (noun) – necessary/essential condition, requirement, requisite.
12. **carriage** (noun) – a vehicle for transportation.
13. **outlay** (noun) – expenditure, expenses, spending.
14. **iteration** (noun) – repetition, repetitiveness, reiteration.
15. **fillip** (noun) – stimulus, boost, encouragement.
16. **impact on** (verb) – affect, influence, make an impression.
17. **sustained** (adjective) – continuous, uninterrupted, constant.
18. **rollout** (noun) – official launch/introduction.
19. **come under** (phrasal verb) – be subjected to.
20. **retrofit** (verb) – adding something to the one already done/constructed/manufactured.

Going electric: on plans to switch to electric vehicles

The budgetary measures can speed up India's plans to switch to electric vehicles

The Union Budget has announced a bold move to make a **transition to electric vehicles**, and offered a **tax incentive** for the early adopters. Its stated vision to leapfrog into an era of electric mobility and domestic vehicle manufacturing, led by public transport and commercial vehicles, is forward-looking. It is also inevitable because poor air quality and noise pollution have sharply affected the quality of life, and pose a serious public health challenge. As the NITI Aayog has stated, the goal of shifting to electric vehicles cannot make progress without deadlines, and a market-driven approach sought by some sections of the automotive industry will leave India's capabilities and infrastructure for e-mobility trailing others, notably China. With 2030 as the outer limit, the imperative is to fix a realistic time-frame by which scooters, motorcycles, three-wheel carriages and, later, all new vehicles will be battery powered. An additional income tax deduction of ₹ 1.5 lakh is

now offered on interest paid on loans to purchase electric vehicles, and the GST Council has been moved to cut the tax on e-vehicles to 5% from 12%. Both demands were made by the industry earlier. There is a significant outlay under the second iteration of the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing (of Hybrid and) Electric Vehicles (FAME) plan of ₹ 10,000 crore, to give a fillip to commercial vehicles and to set up charging stations.

The budgetary measures will have an immediate impact on the pricing of electric vehicles and bring in more models, but it will take a sustained effort by the Centre, in partnership with State governments, to enable a fast rollout of charging infrastructure. The Ministry of Power issued guidelines and standards for this in December last year, setting technical parameters for public charging stations that can enable normal and fast charging. With price competition, a speedy spread of electric two-wheelers can be expected, given that over 80% of conventional vehicles sold in India come under that category. Affordable charging will make these vehicles and commercial three-wheelers attractive because operating costs are a fraction of petrol and diesel equivalents. Yet, longer range travel will require more than a charge-at-home facility, and this would have to be in the form of fast charging at parking lots, retrofitted fuel outlets, new public charging stations, hotels, offices and so on. Swapping the battery at convenient locations with one that is pre-charged, especially for commercial vehicles that run longer and need a quick turnaround, is worth considering. A longer-term policy priority has to be the setting up of lithium battery production and solar charging infrastructure of a scale that matches the ambition. The Centre has accepted some of the demands of the auto industry to popularise EVs.