

More hybrid models, new electric car from Toyota

TOKYO - Automobile giant Toyota has unveiled plans to unveil 21 new hybrid models and launch its latest all-electric vehicle this year in a bid to ramp up sales of environmentally friendly cars.



The firm said it would release the new models by the end of 2015 and "expects global sales of its hybrid vehicles to be at least one million units a year from 2013 to 2015".

Vice chairman Takeshi Uchiyamada said Toyota would continue focusing on hybrid technology.

"If we carry out hybrid technology (development), we can use it as elements of technologies for next-generation vehicles," Uchiyamada told a news conference in Tokyo on Monday.

"Above all, hybrid is very practical," he said. "So, we will continue to develop the hybrid as the core technology."

Toyota has been a pioneer of hybrid vehicles, which run on petrol and electricity, launching the original Prius model in 1997. Toyota's rivals are now moving to embrace the nascent electric vehicle market.

The company said 14 models would be completely new, with the remainder being updates of already existing vehicles.

Separately, Toyota announced a plan to sell its new limited edition electric vehicle, "the eQ", for ¥3.6m (\$46,000) in the Japanese and US markets, starting in December.

It plans to sell about 100 units of the compact electric vehicle featuring a lithium-ion battery with the world's best electric power consumption rate at 104 watt per kilometres, Toyota said.

Toyota will also launch another electric vehicle, RAV4 EV, in the United States starting in September.

Source: *AFP* via I-NET Bridge

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