

Beijing battery performance

China is at the global forefront of the electric vehicle (EV) and EV battery industries. Its firms produce nearly two-thirds of the world's EVs and more than three-quarters of EV batteries. They also have produced notable innovations in EV products, processes, and customer experiences.

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The Seagull by Chinese carmaker BYD is one of the first mass-produced electric cars to use a sodium-ion battery (Image: Peerapon Boonyakiat / Alamy)

At the Beijing Auto Show in April, CATL, the world's largest electric vehicle (EV) battery maker, stunned many with a new product.

The Shenxing Plus battery can power an EV for more than 1,000 kilometres on a single charge, according to CATL. That's enough to get from Guangzhou to Wuhan, or London to Berlin.

"[The battery] can reach a range of 600 kilometres with a 10-minute charge, equalling one kilometre every second," Gao Huan, chief technology officer of CATL's electric car business, proudly announced at the launch ceremony.

Chinese firms have been unveiling new lithium-ion cells with longer ranges, shorter charging times and more charging cycles in their lifespans, at a frequency unseen anywhere else in the world.

But with the global demand for EV batteries projected to jump up to tenfold by 2030, companies worldwide have been racing to develop next-generation technologies to seize future market shares.

The innovation rush is driven by various motivations, mainly to cut cost and avoid supply chain bottlenecks. But it could also benefit the environment and climate by reducing carbon emissions during the mining and production of certain minerals, according to a report by consulting firm McKinsey.

"Whoever wins the battery war will win it all," Chinese economist Ren Zeping said in 2022. Ren noted that the technologies and performance of batteries is the "core" of taking the EV sector forward.



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