

Italy's Benelli joins hands with DSK Motowheels for India foray

To launch five superbikes in the 300-1130 cc range

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Italian superbike brand Benelli, now owned by Chinese motor group Qianjiang, has entered into a technical partnership with Pune-based DSK Motowheels for India foray.

The partnership will launch five superbikes in the 300-1130 cc range. DSK already has partnership with South Korea's Hyosung to manufacture and market its superbikes in India.

The 103-year-old Italian company is also planning to launch a motorcycle for the mass segment in India to tap high demand in the world's largest

two-wheeler market. The superbikes will be imported as completely knocked down units from Benelli's plants in Italy and China, and be assembled at DSK Motowheels' plant in Wai, Maharashtra. The company is planning to launch the bikes in two months.

Frank Zuang, Board Director, Benelli QJ SRL, said the company wants to be a long-term player in the Indian two-wheeler market. "We will gradually introduce a wide range of products, and continue to expand from single cylinder to four cylinder products; from 125, 600, 1130 to 1600 cc to the complete Benelli product range."

The company will review and evaluate the market, add local content to the products in time, bring in products tailored for Indian road conditions and

consumer needs, Zuang said, adding that even investment could be considered in the future. Elaborating on the new alliance, Shirish Kulkarni, Chairman DSK Motowheels, said the Benelli range will be operationally independent from Hyosung and the products will be sold through a completely separate network of dealerships. "We will set up eight Benelli dealerships by January 2015 and add 12 more till the end of next year."

DSK has invested around ₹100 crore at Wai where the current installed capacity is 6,000 units a year on a two-shift basis.

With sales of Hyosung expected to touch 2,400 units in FY-15 (1,800 units last fiscal), Kulkarni said a new plant would be required to be set up in around two years' time.