



Ambassador, Literally Speaking

BBC chooses good old Amby for documentary on India

THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION (BBC) is currently producing a documentary, 'India on Wheels', and it has chosen the Ambassador car as their preferred vehicle. For this documentary, BBC anchor Justin Rowlatt and his colleague drove a 1996 Ambassador through a 24-day journey from New Delhi to Chennai recently. As for his choice, Rowlatt said that the Ambassador actually symbolised the story of India, having been the unchallenged king of Indian roads for over five decades. "I wanted to use the car itself as a metaphor while discovering the new India, whose car population has simply exploded." And in the course of a 5,500-km bone-jarring trip across the heart of India – through

Agra, Varanasi, Lucknow, Kolkata, the Sunderbans and the tribal belts of Orissa – the anchor confessed that he actually fell in love with the Ambassador. "It is a solid and safe car for India's chaotic roads, even though its brakes may not be that reliable," he said after completing the final lap on the Marina Beach. The 1996 model car with no a-c or power steering was bought by Rowlatt from "one Mr Singh in Delhi" for a fancy price of Rs 1.25 lakh. "I know I overpaid, but the time I spent in this car makes it worthwhile," said Rowlatt, who has decided to sell his Amby to an Indian friend for Rs 10,000. The documentary, shot as a two-part series lasting an hour each, is expected to be broadcast in September this year.