

Hindustan Motors on a rebound drive

■ Nabeel A Khan
Kolkata

Hindustan Motors (HM) is looking at strengthening its product portfolio in the passenger car segment by launching a new compact sedan which will be a modified and shorter version of the legendary ambassador. The car manufacturer is on the verge of finalising an appropriate engine for the vehicle.

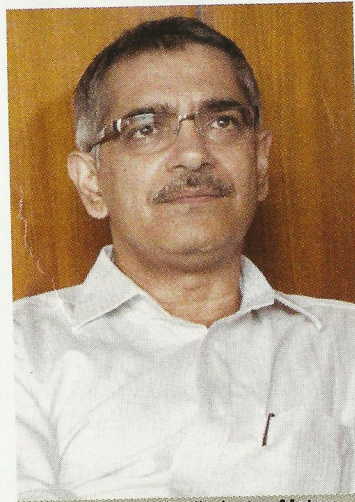
The company hopes to test and finalise the engine by the end of this year. "We are working on that, it will take some time. The engine will be first tested-mounted on the Ambassador. However, it will take sometime to launch the new vehicle as we are still designing the body and other parts of the proposed vehicle. The compact sedan will be in

a simple design with a traditional all terrain capability," Managing Director, Hindustan Motors, Manoj Jha told *Auto Monitor*.

The new car will have a less than 1.5 litre diesel engine but will have above 120 nm of torque to enable it to be all-terrain vehicle.

On asking about the pricing, Jha said he would like to keep the price very attractive but did not divulge details, as the price of the vehicle has become very dynamic and it keeps changing because of the commodity price and other factors.

HM feels that it was important to be prepared to match up and assist its strength and weakness and know where it wants to go further. The vehicle-maker would prefer that it doesn't operate across a wide spectrum, but would rather choose a segment



Manoj Jha, MD, Hindustan Motors

where it has enough strength and penetration in the market or it could create the right penetration in the market. Based on this philosophy, it has decided to

develop the new product, which will have close affinity to its legendary product—Ambassador.

Mitsubishi Partnership

The home-grown vehicle-maker along with its Japanese partner, Mitsubishi is planning to launch a Pajero Sport in the later part of the financial year. The company is relying on the success of the vehicle in the global market and hopes to create a similar acceptance in the Indian market.

Without disclosing the price of the new vehicle, Jha said that it would be priced competitively. The new Pajero will have some minor changes to be suited to Indian environment. The new SUV will have 2.5-litre engine and an upward of 170 PS with a torque of 300 nm. The vehicle will be assembled from its Chennai plant.

The company claimed that in the ASEAN market, which includes countries like Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, the new Pajero Sport is enjoying the number one spot. In Thailand alone, it claims to have been selling 1,500 units a month while 6,000 units in total ASEAN countries. In India, it hopes to sell around 500 units per month.

Widening Reach

HM is also looking at broadening its reach to various sets of customers through increasing the network of dealers and road shows to provide firsthand experience to its customer. It is planning to add at least 10 dealerships, which include both HM and Mitsubishi products, every quarter.


The vehicle-maker recently launched its second round of West Bengal road show to showcase its recently launched small commercial vehicle, Veer along

with the iconic Ambassador and light commercial vehicle Winner XD PLUS.

The 15-day road show shall intensely cover the districts of East Midnapur, West Midnapur, Bardhaman, Nadia and Hooghly (all in West Bengal). The event is a sequel to similar promotional activities conducted across West Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry (Tamil Nadu) with Ambassador and Winner. Veer is a new entrant in the company's field promotions. More road shows will be launched soon again in Orissa and Bihar as also in Gujarat, Maharashtra, central and north India.

Two models of the 800-kg commercial vehicle Veer and Veer LX were launched recently with an introductory price of ₹3.30 lakh (ex-showroom Kolkata). It is showcasing them from the eastern part of the country, starting from West Bengal.

The Veer is built on the tried and tested Ambassador platform, incorporating changes in transmission and suspension systems required for a sturdy load carrier. The vehicle is available in both diesel (BS III) and CNG (BS IV) versions and in two models—Veer and Veer LX. While Veer has a separate load tray, Veer LX's load tray is seamlessly integrated with the front cabin.

This correspondent took a test drive of both the variants of the Veer and found them to be competent enough to move across all kinds of roads. The uniqueness of Veer lies in the fact that it also offers the comfort of a car. In fact, the three-seat bench provided in the front cabin offers better comfort levels compared to other vehicles in this segment. 



The latest edition, Veer