

# HM banks on new launches in commercial vehicle segment to revive fortune

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RIDING on a host of new launches, with a focus on the commercial vehicle segment, ailing auto maker Hindustan Motors (HM) is expecting a revival of fortune in another three years' time, a top company official said today.

"We have plans to introduce a host of new vehicles by the end of current fiscal, mostly in the commercial vehicle segment. We hope that in three years' time we will turn around the company," Manoj Jha, MD of Hindustan Motors said on the occasion of the launch of its 0.8 tonne the small commercial vehicle (SCV) called Veer. The vehicle priced at 3.3 lakh (ex showroom Kolkata) is built on the Ambassador platform of the company's Uttarpara facility in West Bengal. "We have honoured our commitment by launching Veer. Four new vehicles will also be launched this year. These will come both from our Uttarpara and Chennai plants," he said.

The CK Birla group company is planning to bring out two more vehicles from the Uttarpara plant by October this year. "There will be one commercial passenger carrier on the

Ambassador platform with seven to nine seater variants. Another is a 10 toll seater commercial vehicle on the Winner platform. This will be more like a small bus." Jha said.

Two vehicles will come out from HM's Chennai facility also, where the Mitsubishi range of vehicles are made. "By the third quarter we will introduce, a seven seater Outlander from the Chennai plant. We are working on another brand new sports utility vehicle (SUV) from the facility. This may come sometime in January next year," he said.

HM has sold about a total of 10,000 units in the last fiscal. According to Jha, by the end of 2013-14 the company is aiming to sell about 50,000 units, which is the combined annual capacity of all three plants -- at Uttarpara in West Bengal, Tiruvallur near Chennai and Pithampur in Madhya Pradesh.

"We are expecting a rapid increase in sales with all these new launches. By 2013-14 we will hopefully sell about 50,000," he said, adding, "Our focus is more on the commercial vehicle segment now. The sales ratio of passenger vehicles and commercial vehicles is about 80:20. We hope this will be around 50:50 in a couple of year's time."