

DID YOU KNOW?

The path trodden thus far by the pioneers of India's motor-car industry

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1. Hindustan Motors Limited (HML), India's first car-makers, came into existence prior to the country's Independence (August 1947). B. M. Birla founded HML in 1942 and it went on to become the flagship company of the C. K. Birla Group. HML started their operations at a small assembly plant at Port Okha, Gujarat to assemble the Hindustan 10. The manufacturing facility was shifted to Uttarpara in West Bengal a year after Independence (1948).

2. The Ambassador was the face of the Indian car in the post-Independence era and the model dominated the market for almost four decades. The iconic car was preferred by politicians and bureaucrats alike and enjoyed the privilege of being the official conveyance of the country's successive prime ministers. The Ambassador was based on the Morris Oxford (series II and III), made by the UK-based Morris Motor Company. The Amby had a fully enclosed monocoque chassis that ensured a spacious interior. The car did not undergo many changes until 1992 when a new version, the 1800 ISZ, was launched with a 75bhp Isuzu engine equipped with a five-speed gearbox.

Now HML want to resurrect the Amby, designed anew by a European design house. The new version will have a combination of retro design and cutting-edge technology. According to HML, the car will be ready by February 2011 for test runs and is likely to be rolled out by August 2011 bearing a price tag ranging



spacious cabin and comfortable ride, the model basked in the glory of being a luxury car in the domestic market. The Contessa was available in options comprising a fuel-injected engine, a two-litre diesel and a two-litre turbo diesel engine. HML suspended its production in 2002.

4. A joint venture with Isuzu to manufacture engines and transmission proved beneficial for HML. This enabled them to bring in relatively powerful engines in the 1980s for the Ambassador and for the Contessa. HML's manufacturing facility has catered to Mahindra and GM Opel as well. In 1999, General Motors bought HM's Halol plant in Gujarat.



5. HML also have a successful joint venture with Mitsubishi since 1998. Both the partners started off with the philosophy of 'one country, one price' to sell their vehicles. The cars on offer in India under this JV are the Lancer, Cedia, Pajero, Montero and Outlander. HML have a plant in Thiruvallur, Tamil Nadu, where the Lancer and Cedia are manufactured.



from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 7 lakh.

3. The Contessa, the next offering from HML that appeared on Indian roads in 1983, was based on the British Vauxhall Victor FE. Although GM had stopped producing the Victor in 1979, HML introduced the Contessa in India with a 1.5-litre engine. It was soon replaced with a 1.8-litre Isuzu engine. Thanks to its

