

# Mitsubishi mulls entering small car mkt

**NEW DELHI:** Japan's Mitsubishi Motors Corporation today said it is exploring various options to enter the Indian small car market and may even consider going solo without the current partner Hindustan Motors for it.

"We know that India is a small car market and we would also like to join that segment at some point of time in future," said Masahiko Ueki, executive officer and corporate general manager of Asia and ASEAN, Mitsubishi Motors Corporation, here.

The company may consider its new global hatchback, which is powered by a 1.2-litre petrol engine and will be first launched in Thailand this year, for the Indian market, but it will have to first establish its sales and service network apart from building up volumes, he added.

"For these mass products, we need certain volumes and sales and service network. However, our sales volume and in India is very low at the



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## In India, HM manufactures and markets Mitsubishi products

moment and we would like to increase those first through the existing products," said Ueki.

He was speaking at the launch of Mitsubishi's new sports utility vehicle Pajero Sport priced at ₹23.53 lakh

(ex-showroom Delhi) which will be open for booking from March 13.

Asked about the timeline for entering the Indian small car market, he said, "Not in the near future, at least in the next two to three years as we would need to build up our volumes and network here."

On whether the company will go solo or with the existing partner Hindustan Motors (HM) on the small car front, the top company official said, "Going on our own is also an option. We have

many options and we are exploring all of them at the moment.

"We do not know if our operations with Hindustan Motors is good or not for future. So we are looking at all options."

Ueki, however, hastened to add that 'using HM's Chennai plant for manufacturing the small car is also an option'.

In India, HM manufactures and markets Mitsubishi's products through a licensing agreement signed in 1998. At present, models such as sedans, Lancer, Cedia along with SUVs Montero and Outlander from the stable of Mitsubishi are sold in India.

Commenting on the sales expectations of the new Mitsubishi Pajero Sport, HM director A Sankara Narayanan said, "In the first 12 months, we are looking for up to 5,000 units."

The company will start assembling the Pajero Sport, which is now fully imported, at the Chennai plant by September.

—PTI