

# HM launches Pajero Sport

Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI:** Hindustan Motors on Monday introduced Pajero Sport, the new version of the popular sports utility vehicle (SUV) from Mitsubishi Motors Corporation.

Meanwhile, the Japanese automaker said it was planning to entre the fast-growing Indian small car market.

Priced at Rs.23.53 lakh, Pajero Sport offers best-in-class power of 178 PS and better fuel efficiency.

It also gives on-demand super select 4 WD (four-wheel drive) facility, rear stabiliser and a turning radius of 5.6

meters. Hindustan Motors (HM) manufactures Mitsubishi cars in India under a technical agreement, but Pajero Sport will be sold as completely built unit (CBU).

“Pajero Sport introduces a new generation of SUV thinking...it is a perfect amalgamation of power, luxury, style, safety and comfort. In the first 12 months, we hope to sell 5,000 units,” Hindustan Motor's Director A. Sankara Narayanan told journalists here.

Mr. Narayanan said they planned to assemble Pajero Sport at the Chennai plant by September. “For this, we are

investing between Rs.40 crore and Rs.50 crore at the Chennai plant...it will bring down its price in India,” he added.

Notably, while the SUV segment grew by 18 per cent in India last year, Pajero clocked 28 per cent growth.

Meanwhile, Mitsubishi Motors Corporation Japan Executive Officer and Corporate General Manager of Asia and ASEAN Masahiko Ueki said they were keen on entering the small car segment in India.

The company may consider its new global hatchback, powered by a 1.2-litre petrol

engine and to be first launched in Thailand this year, for the Indian market.

“For these mass products, we need certain volumes besides sales and service network. However, our sales volume and in India is low at the moment and we would like to increase those first through the existing products,” Mr. Ueki said.

He, however, pointed out that it might take at least two to three years to entre the Indian small car market.

The Japanese carmaker could use HM's Chennai plant for manufacturing the small car.