

HM bets on variants to rev up sales

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Calcutta, Nov. 19: Hindustan Motors will showcase a new variant of the Ambassador priced between Rs 3.5 lakh and Rs 4 lakh by the end of this year.

The car will not be more than 4 metres in length to be eligible for excise cuts.

Inaugurating the HM pavilion at Auto Show East at the Salt Lake stadium today, managing director Manoj Jha said the company aimed to double sales of the iconic Ambassador to 24,000 units per annum.

"We aim to double sales of the Ambassador in the next 15-18 months from around 10,000 units in 2010," Jha said, adding that the company sold 8,000 units in 2009.

The company plans to introduce six variants in both the passenger and commercial vehicle segments in 12-15 months beginning the first quarter of 2011. He said four of the variants would be the Ambassador.

The Ambassador, manufactured at the company's Uttarpara facility, is among the oldest cars in the country.

The present design, based on a 1940 Morris, will see a major change with the company engaging Pune-based Onio Design Pvt Ltd for the makeover.

HM is also in advanced talks with European component suppliers for the supply of powertrains, a company spokesperson said. "By the first quarter of next year, the variants will be commercially available with a better value proposition," Jha said.

At the auto show, the company launched two variants of light commercial vehicle Winner.