



## THE AMBASSADOR OF GOODWILL

"We plan to launch a new model on the Ambassador platform," says Uttam Bose, MD & CEO, Hindustan Motors

MOST OF US REMEMBER THE Ambassador as the trusted family car from yesteryears and during its existence for over close to half-a-century it received several timely upgrades. Based on the Morris Oxford III, the four-door saloon is manufactured at the company's Uttarpara plant on the outskirts of Kolkata. However, over the years other more modern cars outperformed the old-timer and with the implementation of the stringent BSIV norms in 2011, the car received yet another setback. It seems now that Hindustan Motors are gearing up to revive the Ambassador brand as they plan to launch a BSIV-ready diesel model and even a snazzy new compact car.

Excerpts from an interview with Uttam Bose, MD & CEO, Hindustan Motors.

**Car India:** Is there a sub-four-metre Ambassador on the cards? Is it being developed in-house?

**Uttam Bose:** Hindustan Motors Ltd (HM)

intend to introduce a sub four-metre diesel variant of the iconic Ambassador in the second quarter of the financial year 2013-14. The proposed vehicle is being developed by HM's own R&D team, which has done the prototyping in-house. However, the actual changes are being supported by external vendors like MAGNA Styer.

**CI:** Could you shed some light on the BS-IV diesel model? Who will you source the engine from?

**UB:** HM will introduce a BS IV-compliant diesel model of the Ambassador by June 2013. We are upgrading our existing 1.5-litre diesel engine to BS IV level. For this, we are getting technical support from MAGNA Styer, which has all the verticals for automotive systems supply. Particularly for the upgrading programme, HM are closely working with MAGNA's powertrain engineering centre in Styer, Austria.

**CI:** Are there plans to launch a hatchback any time soon?

**UB:** HM plan to launch a new model on the Ambassador platform towards the end of the next financial year (2013-14) or the earlier part of the financial year 2014-15. However, whether it will be a hatchback is too early to say. The Ambassador commands tremendous brand loyalty, which we would certainly like to leverage in the case of the new model. The branding too will retain the name Ambassador with the possible inclusion of some prefix or suffix.

However, the new model will offer a peppy and youthful look and feel, equipped with several new features sought by young and modern customers. It will be competitively priced and offer ideal value for money. Cost-efficient maintenance and easy availability of affordable spares will be the hallmark of the new model like all HM products.

-- Sarmad Kadiri