

Mitsubishi gears up to launch Lancer Evolution X in India

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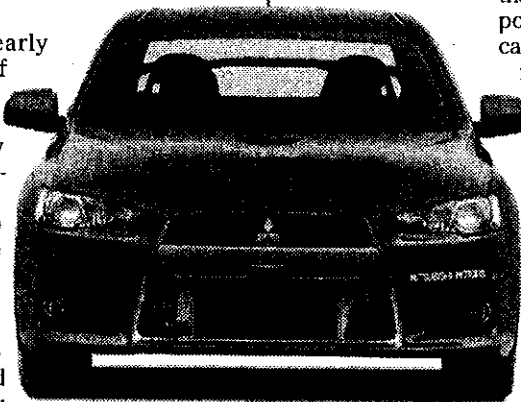
Japanese automobile company Mitsubishi Motors is gearing up to enter the luxury sedan category with Lancer Evolution X (also known as Evo 10).

The car will be launched in early 2009 and this will follow the launch of Outlander sports utility vehicle (SUV) — which will be introduced in the second part of this year as a locally built unit — to be made at its Chennai facility.

"We are planning to bring Evo 10 to India through the completely built route (import). This may push the cars' end cost but the company has no plans to locally build the car yet. The response for the car (from the market) will decide whether it can be manufactured here or not," said a company executive on the condition of anonymity.

Internationally, the car costs \$30,473 (Rs 12 lakh) and \$32,697 (Rs 13 lakh) for different variants, but after adding

the import duties, the cost will be Rs 21.70-Rs 23.5 lakh. This will peg it directly against the brands such as Honda Accord, Toyota Camry, Skoda Superb, Volkswagen Passat, Nissan Teana and Audi A4.



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The company officials added that the selling point of the car may not be its exterior looks but its rugged engine and driving experience. The four-door, five-seater Evo 10 is fired by a 2-litre engine that belts out 295 bhp power, which is more powerful than the 3-litre engines. The car, however, proves to be more powerful than all of its competitors.

Evo 10 is based on a completely new platform such as engine, exterior and interior design and is surprisingly light in weight, thanks to the aluminium engine block under the hood. In addition, to further push the driving experience, the company has given the car a four-wheel drive (4WD) option.

According to the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (Siam), the premium category of cars, having a market size of 6,000-7,000 units has seen a jump of 9 per cent this year. The growth, which would have been in double digits was restricted substantially due to the halt in production of Honda Accord, which is the segment leader.