

Govt demand may revive good old Amby

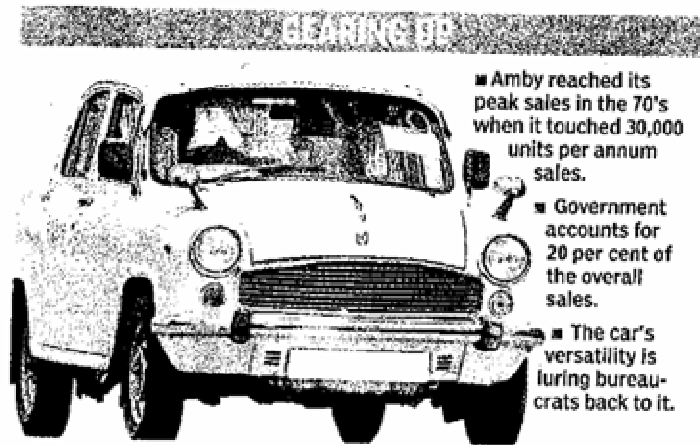
Government has started endorsing Ambassador again in the last 18 months: Hindustan Motors

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THE GOOD old Ambassador, the oldest car to run on Indian roads, may have just got a fresh lease of life. According to the company, the government and allied sectors that had turned away from the Hind Motor product, is returning back to its fold. This has ignited hopes of Ambassador regaining its old glory in future.

"We have been the preferred vehicle of transport for government officials but around four years back, government had decided to try out other vehicles," said Ravi Santhanam, Managing Director Hindustan Motors. "Over the last year we have seen demand returning from that sector and we expect to reach the numbers that we were doing before 2004, very soon."

With an over 50 year life cycle, the Amby reached its peak sales in



the 70's when it touched 30,000 units per annum sales. Thereafter, throughout the 90's and the first half of this decade it sold in the range of 13-15,000 units per annum. But loss of demand from govern-

ment led to a slump in sales after 2004.

"Government accounts for 20 per cent of our overall sales, so it is important. But our presence in the taxi circuit is still robust and we are

doing 600-700 units every month," Santhanam added.

The car's versatility during customisation, bullet proofing, space, robustness and higher stance is what is luring bureaucrats back to it. An unparalleled brand equity acquired since independence of a car made exclusively for those in power, also helps.

Despite emission and safety norms getting stricter, the Amby is also unlikely to ride into the sunset anytime soon. "Due to its bullet proofing capabilities, the car was always the preferred vehicle of choice with the defence forces and state police departments and they are the ones who returned first," said Soni Shrivastav, head corporate communications, Hindustan Motors. "We will keep modifying the car to meet with all compliance norms. The Amby is here to stay."

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