

HML to launch LPG cars

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Hindustan Motors Limited (HML), the first Indian car company, is planning to launch cars on its ambassador platform with sequential liquefied petroleum gaseous (LPG) injection systems in three months.

The new car will give its owner the choice of using LPG or petrol as fuel. The LPG injection system is widely used and the company would not have to make any significant investments in upgrading its existing platform into a sequential LPG system, said Moley Chowdhury, executive vice president, HML.

The demand for vehicles with alternative fuel technology is on the rise due to economic and environmental reasons, and the production and marketing of this new car would be shaped by the market demands. While admitting that the cars would be more expensive than the existing models, Chowdhury refused to divulge the pricing details.

In another move, HML launched the ambassador air-conditioned (AC) meter taxis in Kolkata in response to user requirements. Some passengers were looking for AC comfort within an affordable range, said Chowdhury. The state transport department has issued permits for 300 such taxis. The city will have a separate counter for AC taxis at the airport and railway stations soon. Around 20,000 non-AC taxis currently

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The first batch of the air-conditioned taxis will be priced at Rs 3.79 lakh ex-showroom as against the non-AC taxi price of Rs 3.6 lakh. The fare will be 25 per cent more than the non-AC taxi fare. The mileage is expected to be in the range of 14-16 kilometers per litre on the city roads, Chowdhury claimed.

HML produces over 1,000 units of ambassador cars at its Uttarpara facility near Kolkata. It runs at one-third its full capacity, primarily because of lack of demand, admitted Chowdhury. The company targets sales of around 12,500 units by the end of this fiscal.

The business verticals at the Uttarpara plant include vehicles manufacturing, automotive forging, stamping and castings production. The vehicles segment contributes nearly 90 per cent of the company's turnover.