



A ride around Victoria Memorial could be cool this summer. The city is likely to have a full-fledged fleet of air-conditioned taxis by then.

Ten such cabs were launched today.

Yellow in colour, the new Ambassadors will have red stripes on the sides and have "AC taxi" written on a glow board on top and on the doors.

There would be separate counters for these taxis at the airport and stations.

At the launch in Salt Lake stadium, transport minister Subhas Chakraborty said booths from where the taxis can be reserved would be set up across the city.

About 300 AC taxis will roll out in the next few months, the minister added.

The government has already issued permits for 200.

A ride on one of the new taxis would cost 25 per cent more than that on a non-AC taxi.

"People can use these taxis with or without the AC. Without the AC, the fare will be the same as other taxis," said Moley Chowdhury, the executive vice-president of Hindustan Motors.

The company is planning to re-launch the green taxis that were withdrawn months after their much-hyped launch in 2004.

Chowdhury said: "Other metros have come up with LPG fuel stations. We expect Calcutta to follow the trend soon. Once that happens, we will re-launch the LPG-run taxis."

Picture by Sanat Kumar Sinha