

HM veers into CV segment

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Kolkata

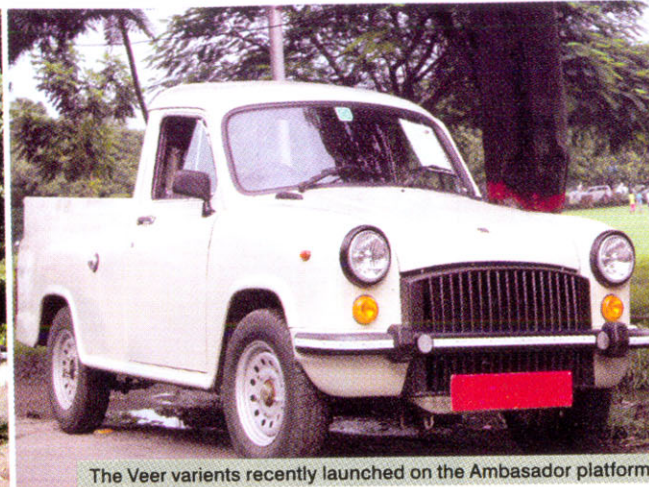
Hindustan Motors (HM), the flagship venture of CK Birla Group is all set to launch commercial vehicles (passenger carrier) by November this year. The new vehicles will bear the Euro IV compliant diesel engines and the two vehicles are in the advance stage of testing at company's Uttarpara facility.

The Euro IV diesel engines are being mounted and tested at Uttarpara, which will go in the Ambassador as well as in the entire range of commercial vehicles including the Winner, Veer and the two new upcoming products.

"We are looking at two more products—one on Ambassador Platform that will be a commercial vehicle for passenger carrier



Photographs: Nilayan Dutta



The Veer variants recently launched on the Ambassador platform

eastern and north-eastern India. Rather than going only via dealerships, it is taking the Veer directly to the customers through road shows in the respective markets, where it wants to launch the product for the customers can get a touch-and-feel of the

product directly. However, the products will also be available at its dealerships.

The company cited a few reasons for the volume constraints. One issue is that the products did not have a Euro IV compliant diesel engine while all the major

Ambassador markets have turned Euro IV in diesel, thus there has been slump in the demand.

Although the company has a Euro IV compliant engine in petrol and CNG, they cater to shrinking markets, as diesel engines are reigning across

segments. From that point of view, the vehicle manufacturer is not able to cater to the large part of the changing profile of the Indian market. The second constraint is that it has cut down on the volume of production as developing new products requires change

in the manufacturing processes. However, it is gearing up to retain those markets and spike up the production and sales also, with the introduction of the new products including the Euro IV-compliant diesel engine. **AM**



Manoj Jha, MD, Hindustan Motors

and another one on the Winner platform, which is again a passenger carrier. We see both as important products as last mile connectivity for passengers, both in rural and urban areas. We are working on achieving both the products by around November this year," Managing Director, Hindustan Motors, Manoj Jha told *Auto Monitor* in an exclusive interview.

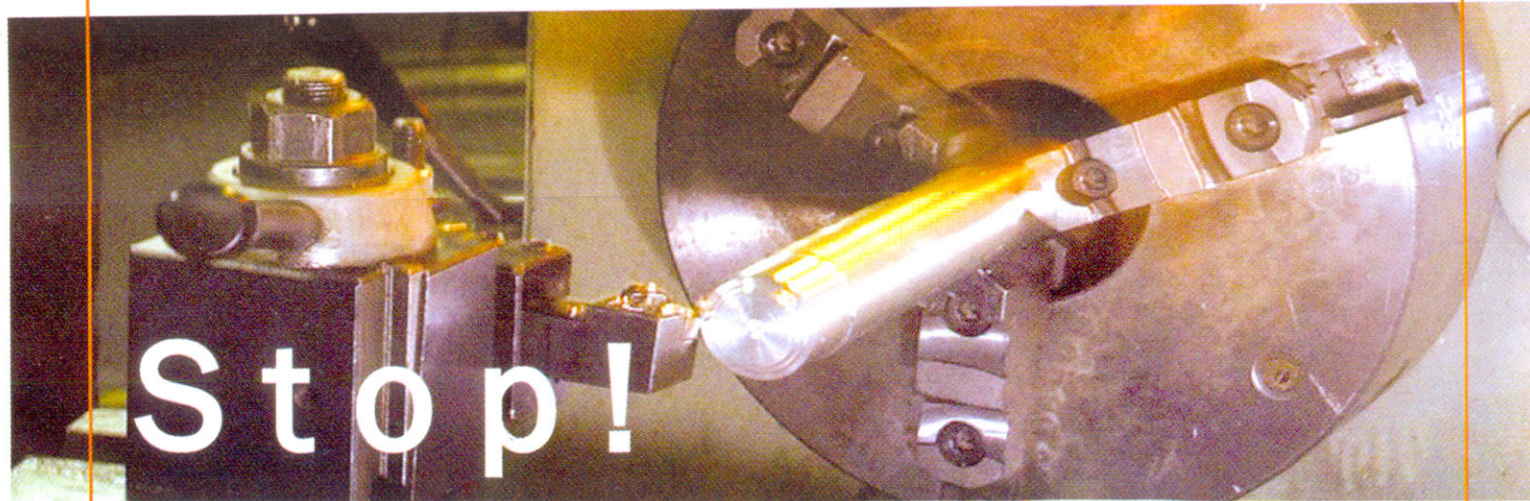
A pickup as a concept is yet to mature in India when compared with South-East Asia. Even in a highly developed country like Japan, Korea pickups are available in very large numbers in both, passenger and cargo transportation. The vehicle manufacturer is very optimistic about the segment that will create huge opportunities here in India. A change in this direction has already been witnessed in India and HM is confident of having more movement in this segment of vehicle.

Jha added, "Look at the one tonne small truck and how it has transformed over five years! If someone was to talk about the one tonne vehicle five years ago, no one would have predicted the same. Thus we see a huge potential in the pickup segment and we are sure of achieving success." While the company sees competition in this segment, it feels that it is still manageable compared to the passenger car segment.

HM has recently launched a 0.8 tonne commercial vehicle (goods carrier), Veer, in the eastern part of the country and plans to take it pan India in a few months. The vehicle maker chose eastern India first because it has traditionally been a strong market for the Ambassador.

The company is taking a different route for marketing the vehicles. In July, it had initiated a road show for Veer and Winner and received good response from

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