

## Hindustan Motors to launch premium sedan Lancer Evolution X

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India's oldest car maker Hindustan Motors is planning to launch premium sedan- Lancer Evolution X from the stables of Japanese Mitsubishi Motors this fiscal.

The two companies have a technical collaboration that dates back to late 1990s.

"The homologation activities for Lancer Evolution X are over and it will be launched before the end of the third quarter of this fiscal. The model will be priced around Rs.50 lakh," Executive Vice President and Business Head Y.V.S. Vijay Kumar told reporters here Thursday.

Asked about Mitsubishi Motors' India strategy, he said: "The plan is to consolidate our presence in the premium sports utility vehicle (SUV) segment."

With the demand for premium sports utility vehicles (SUV) picking up, Hindustan Motors is hoping to increase the capacity utilisation of its Chennai car plant to around 25 percent this year.

The 24,000 units per annum plant at Thiruvallur near here rolls Lancer, Cedia, Pajero, Outlander models of Mitsubishi Motors.

"We hope to achieve a sales volume of 6,000 units this year comprising of Outlander 2,500 units, Pajero 1,800 units, Lancer/Cedia 1,400 units."

According to him, the completely built unit (CBU) SUV Montero is expected to clock around 300 units this year.

Kumar said the demand for premium SUV (Rs.15 lakh to Rs.25 lakh range) is expected to touch around 20,000 units this fiscal up from 12,500 units logged last fiscal.

According to him the company will also be launching Pajero Sport and evaluating the prospects for Outlander Sports model.

Asked about the impact of a firming up Yen on the company's finances as its localization percentage is very low across all the models, he said: "Once volumes go up we will increase the local content. We have also raised the prices of our models and the Japanese collaborator is helping us in this regard."

He said the local content in Lancer is 35 percent and in others it is 10 percent.

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