

Basic motoring? Get Alif!

NEW cars at rock-bottom prices, anyone? This runaround is claimed by its maker to be the world's cheapest – it has just been launched at a bargain basement £1,650.

Amazingly, it might not be the record holder for long. A rival firm is working on a motor it says will trump

that, at only £1,300. This Alif four-seater is made by Pakistani brand Transmission, and while it is not exactly the height of luxury, it does have some excellent features.

Seatbelts are standard, there's a canvas roof and the spare wheel is mounted on the tailgate. It's just under

three metres long and available in five colours. A single-cylinder 200cc four-stroke engine offers close to 80mpg.

The Alif is being promoted as an alternative to Pakistan's traditional three-wheel rickshaws, which are being phased out because they have inefficient two-stroke powerplants.

Challenger for its world's cheapest crown comes from Indian company Tata, which supplied the CityRover to MG Rover. Its car, codenamed Project X3, is due for launch in 2008 and is expected to be powered by a 700cc 45bhp petrol engine. However, industry experts aren't convinced that such a no-frills vehicle can appeal to status-sensitive Indian buyers.

There's also scepticism about how models such as the Alif and X3 can be made so cheaply. While they may meet the latest anti-pollution laws, safety experts believe there's too little in the way of crash protection.



Stripped-down Alif gets 200cc single-cylinder motor that returns 80mpg