



2020 Mitsubishi Xpander

RAHBAR AL HAQ

What is it

The Mitsubishi Xpander is a seven-seater multi-purpose vehicle built to carry around large families. Designed in Japan and produced in Indonesia, the car is best known for its polarizing front end.

Why does it look like that?

It's unique, that's for sure. In a world where every car looks like a badge-engineered version of another car, Mitsubishi managed to give the Xpander an unmistakable face. For one reason or another, the Three-Diamond Mark decided to swap the placement of the DRL and headlamps, giving the car an alien look. The 2020 facelift made some additional changes, adding a bigger badge and a slightly reworked front grille. Beauty is to the eyes of the beholder and the author is quite fond of the design, a view not shared by the rest of the Shift team.

What's it like on the inside?

Storage space. There's so much of it. It seems Mitsubishi has turned every flat surface on the car into a storage cubby of some kind. The dashboard alone contains eight different places for you to store your stuff, and that's excluding the large glove compartment. Every door card has a storage tray with an integrated water bottle holder, while the cavernous center console is topped up with a pencil tray. The theme continues elsewhere, with the passenger



seat featuring a shoe tray under the seat and three separate pouches in the back. Speaking of seats, they're made of cloth but branded seat covers are available as an option. The middle seats are adjustable, meaning adults seating in the cramped third row can have some actual legroom if the people at the front are willing to sacrifice some of their own. To alleviate some of the discomforts, there is a dedicated ac unit for the rear passengers and three 12-volt sockets are spread across the car for everyone's



charging needs. For hauling non-human goods, both second and third-row seats can be folded down, giving you a massive 1,608 liter of cargo space. Additional cargo room can also be found under the rear trunk liner, while the tools are hidden under a difficult-to-operate panel on the left D pillar. The rear storage comes at the cost of the spare tire, which has been relocated under the car. You need to undo two bolts in the trunk to access it.



How does it drive?

About what you'd expect, with a few surprises. Mitsubishi has taken great pride in designing the car's lightweight structure, the effect of which can be felt during driving. The car almost behaves like a subcompact sedan when driven reasonably, however, a spirited drive around a corner will quickly remind you of what it actually is. Visibility is great thanks to the extended A pillar, giving the

interior a very open and spacious feel. The 205 mm ground clearance gives the driver a commanding view of the road, as well as allowing the car to navigate most of Dhaka's road with ease. The sound deadening works rather well, with the engine only becoming audible when you floor it. One annoying issue about the driving position is the lack of a center armrest, leaving you no place to rest your left arm.

Verdict

If you are looking for a family wagon that stands out on the road but is conventional otherwise, this is for you. The Xpander blends the minivan practicality and bog-standard Japanese reliability with a front fascia that will make most people stop and think "what is that?" for a few seconds.

Specs

Engine: 1.5 litre 16-valve DOHC MIVEC 4 cylinder (103 HP, 104 lb-ft)
Transmission: CVT, FWD.
Safety: ABS, EBD, Active Stability Control, Dual SRS Airbags, rear parking camera
Features: LED Daytime Running Light, touchscreen infotainment, multi-function steering wheel, CD/USB/AM/FM/Bluetooth, keyless entry.

Photos: Akif Hamid

For details, contact Rangs Ltd.

Developers mad at giving up 30% of the Apple pie

SAIM AHMED SHIFAT

Over the last year, companies have been getting more vocal about their disagreement with the sales cuts Apple takes from its app store. App developers like Epic Games and the digital music service Spotify have recently challenged Apple, the most valuable company in the world, for the company's policy of taking a large cut of its app store sales.

The App Store is one of the most prominent centers for commerce. Last year, the platform led to half a trillion dollars in sales. And Apple still takes 30% of the sales on its platform from third-party developers. This cut has made way for tremendous growth for Apple in recent years. However, it has also caused some problems in the guise of antitrust scrutiny, dissatisfaction from app developers, and several lawsuits from consumers and business partners. These problems were further intensified when Epic Games recently sued both Apple and Google, accusing them of breaking antitrust laws and forcing app developers to pay 30% of the revenues generated.

Epic Games are the maker of Fortnite, arguably the most popular game in the world right now. The game has recently been removed from both the Apple and Google Store in response to the developers' encouraging direct payment through the app instead of the payment services of Apple and Google. This removed the payment processing fees that the app store owners could avail. After Apple had pulled Fortnite out of the App Store, Epic launched an in-game event inside Fortnite creating awareness among gamers and released an epic parody video titled "Nineteen Eighty-Fortnite" with the hashtag "#FreeFortnite" mocking Apple's "1984" commercial for the Mac.

Do the Companies Really Need a Third of App Store Sales?

Apple and Google together are worth more than \$3 trillion and they provide software to support a majority of the world's smartphones. This dominance has ensured higher bargaining power enabling high commissions consistently for the giants. A 30% cut seems illogical to the developers for payment processing and better security as credit card companies charge around 3% for similar services. This is a rising sentiment among the developers and regulators. Moreover, the tech giants do not have to resort to app store charges as their manufactured smartphones have become the only way for businesses to reach people. Unlike Apple, Google has much lower stakes in its Play Store as the store is a much smaller portion of its overall business. They have not impacted Epic Games the way Apple has. Android users can download apps from outside of the android app store. This leaves Epic with



numerous ways to reach consumers with android devices.

How are the Consumers Impacted?

One side-effect of this 30% sales cut is the increasing cost for consumers. The developers have to pass the added cost to consumers in order to survive and support the app store policy. Spotify, for instance, increased its monthly subscription back in 2014 from \$10 to \$13 to accommodate Apple's fee. Apple then took advantage of the situation by introducing its own music streaming service at \$10. Now, Spotify subscription in a website is a must however, they can not mention that in the Spotify iPhone app. Besides developers, consumers also spoke up against Apple in 2019 and filed a huge class-action lawsuit that accused Apple of breaking antitrust

laws while enforcing the commission and inflated app prices for iPhone users.

On August 7, Facebook joined the talks and complained against Apple's collecting of 30% of sales in live events where people and small businesses share seminars, talk about fitness and take cooking classes through the Facebook app. Facebook wanted to process the payments by themselves so that all of the generated revenues could go directly to the small businesses that generated the contents. However, Apple declined to do so. When asked about the problems and disagreements, Apple's CEO Tim Cook defended the company in front of Congress mentioning a better situation prevailing for developers than the past, when 50-70% of the retail price used to go to the middlemen.

The Way Forward

Apple generates more sales through its App Store although Android is much more widely used as an operating system. Epic, for example, generated around \$43 million through Apple's App Store whereas it earned only a little more than \$3 million in sales from Google Play. (CNBC, Sensor Tower) So, Apple remains the most crucial option for developers as far as making money is concerned. However, the rules and policies have to change to establish a much better ecosystem for the developers and final consumers. With recent disagreements piling up and spilling out into the public forums, Apple might have to concede to ease the tensions and shift the momentum in their favor.

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