



An old school rear-wheel drive, body on frame compact SUV from India that is only offered with a five-speed manual transmission. Making it quite a unique specimen in its segment.

How does it look?

To put it in a sentence, an engineer's dream, a designer's nightmare. Every design element on the TUV300 is there to serve a function, and has been put together with minimal regard to the overall aesthetics. There's a tall roof for good headroom, gouged out front bumper fog lamps because the car needs them, and diminutive 15-inch alloy wheels to help with fuel efficiency. The result is a highly practical car with unusual proportions and slightly off-putting lines, which take a while to grow on some people. However, what Mahindra disregarded in style has more than made up on toughness. Everything that is not mandated by the government to be plastic is made out of steel, giving the TUV a curb weight of almost two and a half-tons. Every door



on this car is heavy, and are expected to be slammed shut during operation. The same is true for the locks, which opens and closes with a loud thunk. In a world where every budget car is trying to imitate a racehorse, the TUV 300 is a pack mule and it's not ashamed about it.

What about the interior?

Rough, tough, and spartan, like the rest of the car. All the interior bits are made out of hard plastic built to outlast



your grandson. The seats are covered in leatherette, making them practically immune to stains, mud, and the occasional spillage. There is no central storage box, instead, the center console is riddled with multiple cubby holes and no less than three cupholders. Two jump seats make up the third row, a layout that while awkward, somewhat solves the legroom issue. The dose has a trick up its sleeves



in the features department, as automatic running door locks come standard with all cars. There is a 12-volt socket for your charging needs, placed at the base of the center console. Rear parking sensor comes standard from the factory and good folks from Mahindra Bangladesh has added an aftermarket rear camera free of charge.

How's the drive?

Bouncy, as expected from soft suspension.

The five-speed manual transmission makes the driving experience surprisingly fun, especially at the low end. The body roll increases significantly at higher speeds, so hitting triple-digit is not recommended. Shifting from second to third can be a bit tricky as the gate between third and fifth is vague at best, but the digital gear indicator on the gauge cluster lets you quickly lets you know if you have shifted into the wrong gear. Mahinda stuff claims mileage is around 10 KMPL city and 16 KMPL highway, based on user feedback.

Should I get one?

If you are looking for a no-nonsense, rugged SUV that is built like a tank, this will do. Just understand that a tank isn't built for luxury, its built to outlast anything it is thrown against.

Specs

Engine: 1.5-liter mHAWK100 Diesel Engine with 2-Stage Turbocharger (100 HP, 240 Nm)

Transmission: Five-Speed-Manual, RWD

Safety: ABS, EBD, Dual SRS Airbags, rear parking camera and sensor.

Features: Automatic door locks, CD/USB/AM/FM/Bluetooth, front 12-v Charging port, fog lamps, climate control. Price: 22 Lakh

For details, contact Rangs Ltd.

COVER STORY

TOGGLE 5

ARE RIDE-SHARING SERVICES ON THE RIGHT PATH TO RECOVERY?

VERONICA GOMES



been strictly making sure safety practices are met by training their drivers to follow proper World Health Organization safety guidelines using masks, hair covers, gloves, disinfectants and hand sanitizers. Passengers aren't allowed to sit in the front seat and drivers are encouraged to keep windows down unless the passenger requests air conditioning. Drivers are handpicked and before each ride are asked to sanitize their respective cars to ensure safety.

Recognizing ride-sharing services as a growing necessity to Bangladeshi commuters in terms of reaching the destination at low cost and shorter time, Shohoz has collaborated with the E-commerce Association of Bangladesh (eCAB) to develop and implement safety protocols based on technical guidance issued by the Directorate General of Health (DGHS) to ensure the safest mode of transportation for users and riders alike. Furthermore, Uber Bangladesh has formulated a Transport Safety Alliance (TSA) with DBL Pharma, Zantrik, Dettol (Reckitt Benckiser) and Fresh Tissue which looks to make users more aware of safety protocols while equipping its drivers with necessary supplies from Zantrik-provided distribution points.

In the long run, COVID-19 is expected to affect businesses of all forms for another year, to say the least. Working and studying virtually will become the norm for a certain portion of the population. As a result, a limited number of people will have pressing reasons to go out and hence less number of people will

trigger the need for ride-sharing services. Keeping this shift in mind, companies like Pathao and Shohoz are diversifying their portfolio, having launched groceries and telehealth services during the pandemic to make sure its riders are given alternative modes of earning money for example- through parcel delivery, while demand for ride-sharing services recovers.

In conversation with Adnan Khan, Head of Truck Operations, Ticket & Ride at Shohoz, the following insights came to light, "We had to take a deep look into our roadmap and realign items to meet the challenges. Thanks to our nimble and highly qualified Tech and Product teams, we could make quick adjustments and expand our portfolio accordingly." While the demand for ride-sharing services was temporarily on a downfall, Shohoz's Health and Corona Tracer BD app helped them regain users' trust by their showing of dedication and sincerity towards combatting Covid-19 and thereby providing safety and good health for its users. Through the implementation of such measures, Shohoz, which resumed its ride-sharing services from September 3rd to a limited scale in Dhaka, are seeing an encouraging surge in its business with numbers going back to almost 75% of what they used to be before the pandemic.

On a global context, the prior estimated growth of 55% from 2020-21 for this industry is expected to be down by 2% post-COVID-19. However several adjustments including partitioned front

and back seats, temperature checks and use of sanitizers upon entry have been taken up by all ride-sharing services to regain user trust and hence hike up demand. While a lot of these services are making a comeback, their success strategies during the pandemic highly rely on service diversification and strengthening their stance in newly emerging markets.

In addition to the steps taken by Bangladesh's leading ride-sharing services, a few other necessary adjustments need to be made which global frontrunners like Uber, Lyft and Didi have already implemented abroad. Firstly, ride-sharing services in Bangladesh which are yet to implement online payment as an option should do so as cashless transactions are projected to become a necessity in the post-pandemic world. Secondly, as people's increasing tendency to stay home reduced air pollution significantly during Covid-19, increasing environmentally conscious users will prefer ride-sharing companies which are making use of eco-friendly alternatives to keep emissions at a minimum in the future as well.

All in all, Bangladeshi ride-sharing services are slowly on the trend of recovering most of their loyal users and regaining the trust of people throughout the country with its proactive safety protocols and adjustments. As the world experiences dynamic shifts, it is truly exciting to witness what innovative measures these businesses have in store for its users in the long run.

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