

When we come back after Eid, look out for our issue on one of the biggest recent trends in Dhaka: Bicycles! Till then, happy holidays and Eid Mubarak!



# SHIFT

# Car Clubs

It's a Friday. The afternoon sun brightens the day as people return home from their Jumma prayers. The roads are relatively empty. Some view the empty roads as a blessing after the jam packed chaos of the weekdays. Some, however, view the roads as ripe with potential.

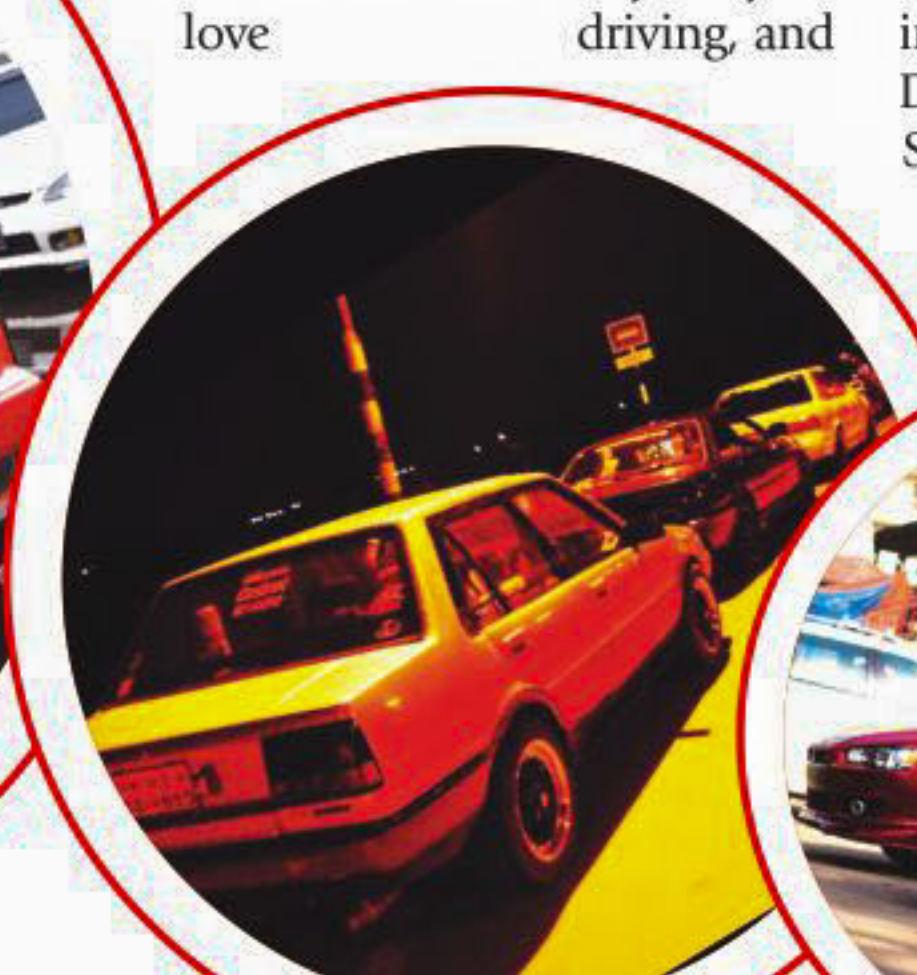
An earth shattering mechanical howl breaks the calm. A golden blur passes by, the shriek of the VTEC kicking in reverberating across the buildings. Jaws

recognized of the car clubs to being a mere shadow of its former self. Club GT was always steady and is now on a steady climb in popularity. R3V are newcomers but if the popularity of their site and Facebook page, not to mention their frequent meets are any indication, R3V is going to be very big indeed. In between the larger clubs lurk small but richly populated clubs like Drivetime BD and Asphalt Grinder.

Which brings us to the question, why join a car club? Most of the people we asked said people with an interest in cars naturally flock together to discuss about their motoring passions. Saurin A Rahman had this to say: "if you love driving, and

simplest thing done, networking is as valuable as wheel nuts on your wheel. Need a part that you can't find? Ask a few car guys and one of them is bound to know someone who knows someone who can get you what you want. Need to know what mods work on your car and how you can pull it off? Fellow car geeks may provide valuable second opinions. Knowing certain people is bound to get you some discounts at places like Bangla Motor and Scout Market.

Some of these people even bring in parts and other car related goodies. Danny Siraji and his Streetdreamz project is helping quite



drop, old people complain loudly, and the women try to contain their excitations.

In the distance, more can be found: a huge procession of spoilers, rims, and loud exhausts and vibrating engines. Toyotas, Hondas, Nissans and Mitsubishis. Here and there, one or two examples of German engineering from the likes of BMW and Benz. A banner flaps at the front of the long line of cars, proclaiming the cars to be of some car club or the other. The blinkers are everywhere, shooting out warnings: hold the line.

Eventually the long line of cars comes to a stop. Their owners get out and walk about, admiring each other's cars, suggesting, learning and expanding their knowledge on all things automotive. It's a brotherhood, and their t-shirts proudly announce their solidarity as part of a car club.

In recent years car clubs have started to sprout up everywhere. WheelsBD fizzled out and went from being the biggest and most

love cars, you'd definitely be interested in hanging out with people who at least have the same enthusiasm towards cars as you do; a good car club should have such mature people, a club isn't about spirited driving and doing stunts every weekend."

When news of an Allion driven into a tree by a teenager comes up, one of the many car clubs in Dhaka get blamed for it. Talking to the club members however, think that this kind of moronic driving is unsafe and paints everyone else in a bad image, even though they have no part to play. Everyone knows about Gulshan FFC and the Dead End Tree's grief, famous even among non-car geek circles.

So is it just about sharing an interest? As it happens, car clubs seem to be more of a social thing than simply a car thing. It's networking. How does networking help out? In a country like Bangladesh, where you have to know people to get even the

like "wikipe dia, ebay, googlemaps, howtogeek and facebook put together", only for cars.

Most of these car clubs have websites and Facebook pages which are more or less update regularly, with info on upcoming meets, more threads and forums that help out other people and documentation of their meets. These sites and pages are also the first sources of info about the shiny new "exotica" entering the country, plus car spotting's that will blow the minds of even non-car geeks. For example, the rumors of a Ferrari F430 entering the country first originated at the FB page of R3V.

There are some rivalries. "Our club is better" and all that. Within the clubs themselves, the solidarity is there. Car clubs are groups of people who get together to have some good, clean fun. Not by doing handbrake turns and frightening little kids

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and crashing into trees, but by simply being there with each other and their cars. Some car clubs do great, some fail miserably, some do fine with whatever little recognition they get. But as long as they exist and we have a lively car scene in Bangladesh, everyone's happy. Except for cops, the government, wives, dads, bank managers, Pakistani embassy diplomats, Gulshan FFC security guards, and a lonely tree at a dead end (although it might want to reject whatever company it usually gets).

SHAHER REAZ  
Photos: R3V; ClubGT

## REMEMBERING NFS II

Need For Speed is terrible. It really is. It's been terrible for a while now (not including the slight respite from the depths of mediocrity that Hot Pursuit provided). Fans of the series will probably say Shift was good. But then again, they are fans of NFS and that means their opinions count for nothing.

With the likes of Forza and Gran Turismo, Need for Speed feels outdone by its competition. There used to be a time when NFS was really awesome. That was until about 2005. Most Wanted was the last really good game in the series. Its successor, Carbon, started its downhill plummet into a mile deep pit of garbage.

Now, many would consider Most Wanted to be the best of the series (which now spans a whopping 21 games including online and first-party games), but if you had to pick, it's only real contender has to be the second in the series, NFS II.

NFS II was released way back in 1997. If you show it to a spoilt noob kid now, he'll most likely have a fit at the graphics, sound, gameplay mechanics and most of all, the physics. But in 1997, times were simpler. Nobody much cared for "realism" in games. It was just about having fun. And NFS II was about as fun as it got.

Every single computer in Bangladesh used to have NFS II. Along with House of the Dead, Virtua Cop 2 and FIFA 98, it was a staple for every kid: so many magical memories of split screen races. In fact, we had found NFS

II in the school computer lab a few years ago. Needless to say, every computing class after that consisted of me and my friends racing away on NFS II. Teachers yelling didn't really matter. There were McLaren F1s to race.

For it's time, NFS II had really crisp graphics. It deviated from the simulation type game that was the original Need for Speed to a more arcade style one. It had a brilliant range of exotic cars including the Lotus Esprit V8, Jaguar XJ220, Ford GT90, Ferrari F50 and of course, everyone's favourite, the massively overpowered (is that the right word in a racing game?) McLaren F1. It also had that freaky futuristic bonus car that went so fast you had no choice but to crash it into everything. FZR 2000 anybody?

It also had those absolutely insane tracks. The mere outlandish nature of these tracks just added to the arcade fun. NFS had racing up the side of the Himalayas, through a jungle in Peru, across the Australian outback or the creepy mad-genius-hideout reminiscent movie studios. Remember that cheat code which made the car in front of you flip over if you pressed the horn?

NFS II was a brilliant arcade game. One that you could waste hours after hours on. Here's to the best of the Need for Speed lineage and an overall amazing game.

BAREESH CHOWDHURY



## Eid Spending Sprees for Car Geeks

This is the ultimate guide to modifying your car with the *salaami* received on Eid. We are assuming you are young enough to receive *salaami* but not yet old enough or smart enough to realize that you really can't buy worthwhile car parts with that kind of money.

If you're smart, though, you can put whatever meager sum you get to good use. However, this guide should not be taken seriously, at all.

Stickers, stickers everywhere. Stickers are one of the favourites of the cash strapped "tuners" (read: 15 year old kids who want their car to look extra flashy when they got to school every morning), and one of the main reasons for this is that they are cheap. 200 to 800 taka will get you almost any kind of sticker you want, from the uncool parts

manufacturers decals to the slightly

cool JDM stickers (Eat-Sleep-Race, JDM "Shoshinoya", Turbozilla, etc.). If you're slightly touched in the head and you want to grab a lot of attention, splurge your "hard earned" cash on a stickerbomb, but if you must, restrict the stickerbombing to small areas.



Breathe easy. Chinese air intakes are a relatively inexpensive way of freeing up your car's breathing apparatus, but this is only recommended for older cars without



Mass Air Flow (MAFS) Sensors. Newer cars, including Dhaka favourites like Toyota Allions and Corolla X/Gs will not perform well with these cheap air intakes, so avoid at all costs. If your car runs on CNG, these intakes usually mess with your RPM range and mess up the tuning, so regular tuning required. A cone filter, metal tubing and the rubberneck joint will cost you around 2500 taka, but the much improved throttle response and slightly throatier engine noise might be worth it for some people. We would recommend waiting until you can afford a proper, branded air intake.

DIY Paint. Want some custom colour on your car or bike? Grab the colours you want in spray paint form (250 taka each, get BOSNY for good spray quality), choose the spot you want to colour, mask the surroundings with tape, spray away, then spray on a layer of clear coat. It will be amateurish, it will flake away in extreme heat, it will have bubbles and it will be uneven. Why do it, then? To appease that bug in your head that's telling you that you're bored of your stock car.

These "modifications" won't cost you much, but if you have an itch to spend your Eid *salaami* on your car, then this is what you can do.

Our recommendation? Save up, get proper parts.

SHAHER REAZ

