Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

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You can question the sanity levels of the engineers who make the fire-breathing speed slasher like Hennessey Venom GT that packs a mind blowing 1500 horsepower and reaches a top speed of 287 mph mined from a poisonous 7.0-litre twin-turbo V8 engine.

Named after a Spanish fighting bull of the 1940s, the Lamborghini Reventon features a 6.5-litre V12 engine that produces 650 horsepower and 478 lb-ft of torque. Top speed is pegged at 211 miles per hour and the sprint to 60 takes 3.4 seconds.

These are beasts of a vehicle but they can zap your bank account faster than they can dash to 60 mph from a dead stop.

Now check this out.

Five final year mechanical engineering students at BUET (Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology) have built a car that cost less than Tk 70,000 or $875.

If you are looking to impress your date, this is not it. But it is fast, safe and, oh by the way — it has a fuel efficiency of about 45 kilometres per litre of octane. The Toyota or Nissan sedan that you drive or in your case, your driver does, has an average mileage of less than 10 kilometres a litre.

Interested?

The steering is not power-assisted, but the car's light unloaded weight and tight turning radius makes it nimble. Despite its seeming power deficit, it is more of a hare than a tortoise. Taking into consideration the road conditions in Bangladesh, it was designed with a high ground clearance. At a test drive at the final competition, it hugged corners and stopped on a dime. Smaller than a mini Cooper and built on a 100 cc engine, it can easily zip around the ponderous buses, wheezing rickshaws and noisy CNGs clogging the streets.

It makes no noise. You turn it on, and there's total silence. If you are riding in it, the only way



The Dynamic Team-From L to R-Sharof, Yasin, Dr Monon Mahbub, Bakhtiar and Nahian. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS