

## The Daily Star DHAKA, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 2014 e-mail: shift@thedailystar.net

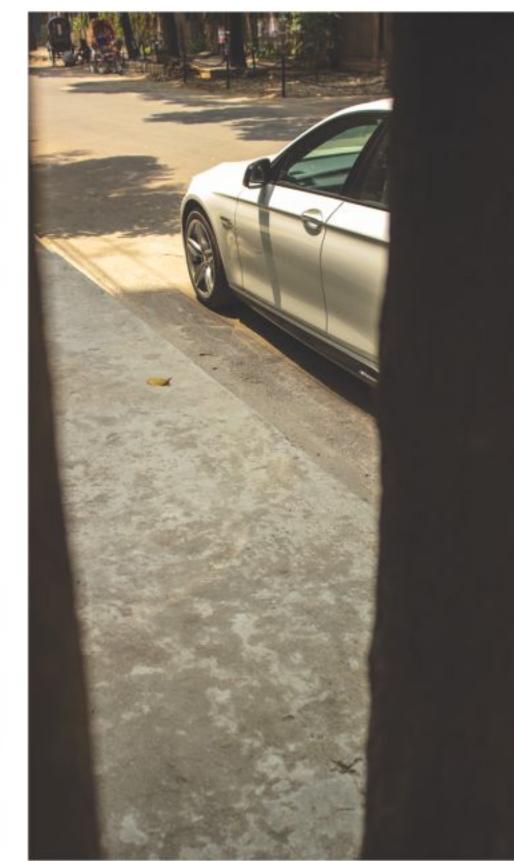
# HORSEPOWER I TORQUE I WHEELS





So many options to shift: Flappy paddles, manual stick or leave it all in D





#### What is it?

This, the 5 Series, is the 'more' version of BMW's widely popular and more regular 3 Series. There's more of everything in a way you don't get in a 3 Series. More length, more charm, more grown up. And thankfully, the oddly proportioned stick-on looking Bangle butt of the previous generation is gone. This 5 Series has all the right curves and creases in all the right places. Someone designed it to be looked at with admiration.

#### How is it built?

The car has the classic profile; long, low hood followed by a short deck. This particular model has the optional M Sport package with a carbon fiber front splitter that just out like George Clooney's chin. There are added sideskirts and a carbon rear spoiler coupled with a set of 19 inch rims in place of the stock 17-inchers. The traditional kidney grille is blacked out which offers a more sinister look than the usual chrome. Go for black trim, you can't go wrong with less bling.

Inside, there's enough leather and leg space to fit very tall people that want to meditate. This specific 528i we got for the test drive came with the darker wood finish: black and ivory white. That's class. There's also a typically wooden wood finish. Avoid that if you don't want to feel like you're sitting in a living room. Feel like a celebrity as you pull the privacy curtains shut. You can stretch, recline and think of world problems in peace. But, the real place to be in this car is right up front in the driver's seat.

The best part of all is that in the driving seat, I could see the whole long expanse of hood in front of me. There's at least two miles of sheet metal in front of

me stretching into the horizon; the car feels that long. And yet, it felt so intuitive I didn't get too flustered maneuvering it through the extremely tight spaces among murderous rickshaws. We went through some heavy rush hour traffic to get to our open roads and I felt I could sit inside all day and not worry.

#### Special features

All new BMWs come with a battery in the back with a cutoff system that disconnects the alternator, fuel pump and starter to prevent electrical fires in case of an accident. There's airbags galore with protection for side and front impact. The iDrive system provides all the access to all your requirements be it entertainment or car systems. Thankfully, gone is the previous generation big, fat, fussy dial that controlled everything. The previous system was complicated and lengthy. The upgrade that these new BMWs come with is intuitive. Turn the tiny knob, select, and move away. The new design puts everything you need where it should be. Yes, that all-important Comfort/Sport button and the much more interesting Traction Control Off button. More on that later.

You can pretty much sit in this car all day enjoying the music and the filtered cool air. Front seats have separate bass units fitted so you really hit the bass. Bluetooth enabled controls mean you sync up your phone for music and handsfree operation of phone calls. A tyre pressure monitor is standard, providing feedback in real time.

Environmentalists and baby seals in polar regions will appreciate the Stop-Start technology. It provides better fuel efficiency while sitting hours on end in traffic. The car shuts down the engine but all interior electronics continue working till you press the throttle again. But if that gets annoying or disconcerting, you can turn it off letting the engine stay on all the time. Environmentalists will pout but it's okay, mash the throttle and leave them behind in a cloud of tyre smoke.

#### How does it Shift?

The petrol 2.0 literengine gets a kick in the rear with a twin-scroll turbo. That means 245hp and 260 lb/ft of torque. Those are quite amazing numbers for a tiny engine like this. Except this car isn't tiny. So even though I was tempted by the Traction Control switch and how it can be turned off, I started off moderately. Gently. Comfort mode. The car shifts up without urgency suggesting I should relax, the 8speed gearbox thinking I've got a cup of tea in my hand. I press on but the car moves smoothly, which is great if you like that sort of thing. Most 5 Series owners will love it. The cocooned hush and the swift yet muted acceleration means your cup of tea won't spill. Enough, press the damn 'Sport' button! Instantly, the car started hitting the potholes a little harder and the engine note changed. Everythign felt like it stiffened up a little. Every car should have a Sport button, even a vacuum cleaner should have one. It makes life way more interesting. An open straight saw the car hold the revs beyond 6000rpm with the exhaust now louder, more urgent. This is what it excels at. It dresses like an executive saloon but sprints like an athlete.

The turns are surprisingly tight for a car this big. You expect body roll and a little skittering of the tail considering how big the wheels are. But things stay composed

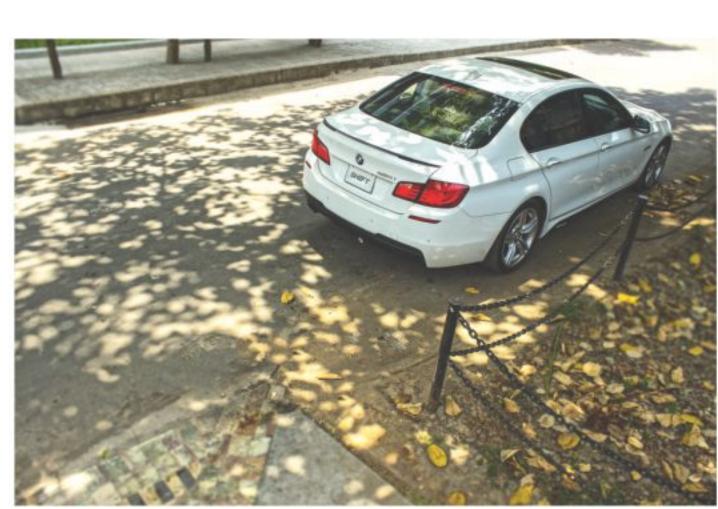
even over the annoying series of speed scrubbing strips that cause all cars to go ghat-ghat-ghat. The car originally came with 17 inch rims with 225 wide tyres. Now it sports the M Package upgrade with 19 inch 245/275 width tyres front and rear. The cabin remains muted with low road noise and slightly audible thumping from the potholes. Everywhere I went, there were speed bumps. I was worried of scratching that carbon fibre front splitter's shiny weave but the clearance was surprisingly good. You look at the cars profile and it is quite deceptive. The gap between the tyre and wheel arch is almost flush making me think I'd be scraping every speed bump, fallen branch and dead cat on the road. I didn't. The car is high enough, taking the bumps with ease and the adaptive damper levels things out quick.

#### Bang for buck

This is the sixth generation of the 5 series. Positive customer and consumer reports suggest the build quality is nearly bulletproof. The car has plenty of electronics but then, which car these days doesn't? Executive Motors offers two-years unlimited mileage warranty. The design has been sharpened to the point that it's nearly perfect now. When you want to press on, the car surprises with its agility and power delivery. And these hold their value pretty well over time given you maintain regular service intervals. It's a lot of money, but it's also a lot of car. Brilliant value if you want a subtle, sporting cruiser.

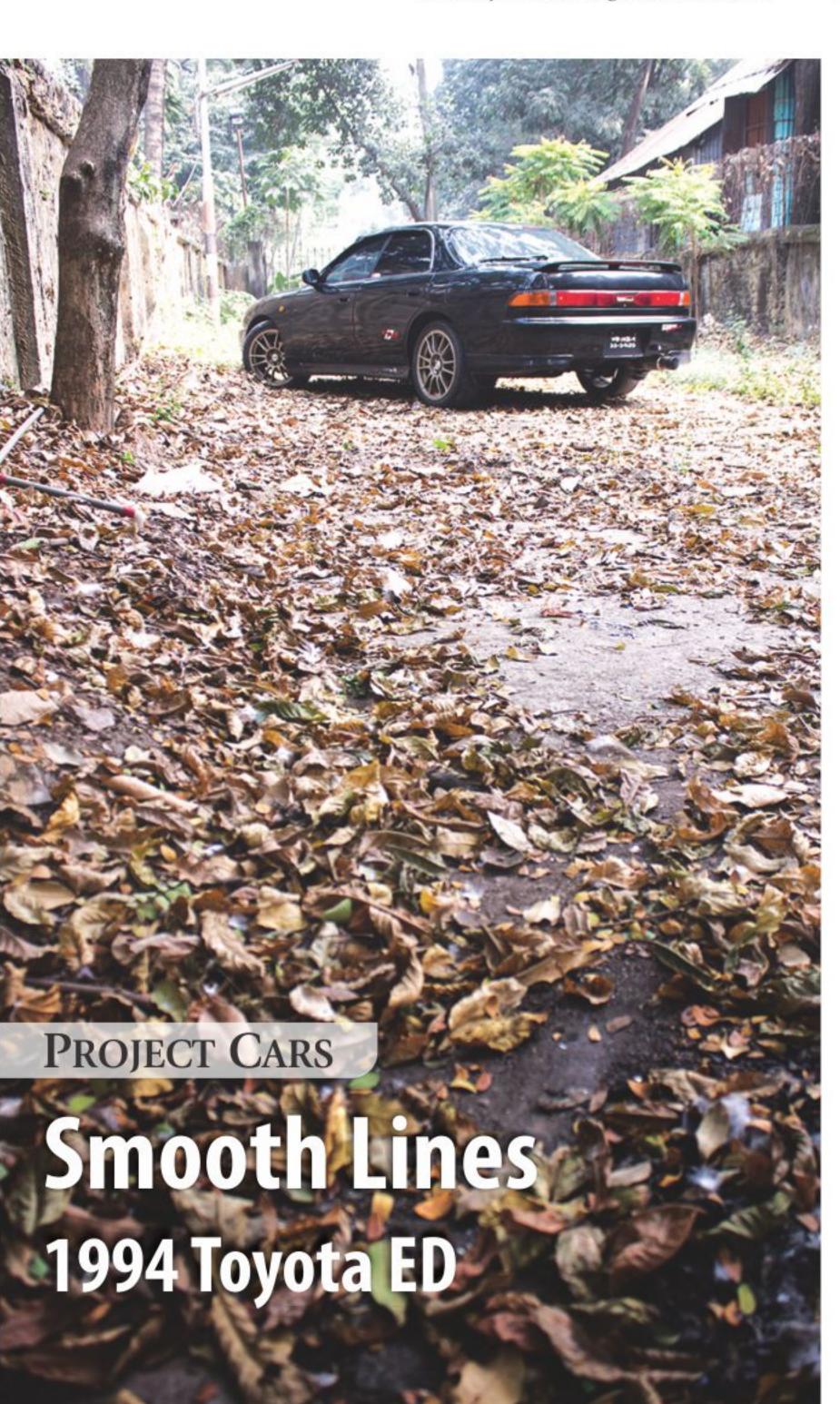
For inquiries on price and trim availability, contact Executive Motors.

WORDS AND PHOTOS: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY



George Clooney would be proud to have his chin associated with this bumper







In the early 90's, at a time when most other car manufacturers around the world were playing it safe with their design and engineering, the Japanese, spurred on by the need to overcome a sluggish pace in the economy, were reaching heights of experimentation. Toyota released a string of hardtop family cars with missing B-pillars, four-wheel steering, twin cam engines, and low, rakish designs, which must have looked cutting edge at the time. The Ceres, Marino, Camry Prominent, Exiv, ED, all worked hard at providing some form of cool factor to what might have been completely boring family cars, had they not been transformed into the warm, almost sexy sedans which would make people yearn for one in their garage two decades later.

Shoeb Tahseen has been a Honda man for the last decade or so. With a string of Civics and Integras with various levels of tune in his garage (we featured his clean yellow EK Civic on Shift, issue dated 17-01-2014), he actually isn't the hardcore kind of Honda fanatic you find elsewhere. He will give equal respect to a Toyota, and as proof, he has a customized AE91 Levin, a daily driver in the form of a AE101 Ceres, and the sleek black beauty you see in today's issue, a 1994 Toyota ED.

The most striking feature of the car as you walk up to it is how well it hides its bulk. Similar sized sedans look heavyset, a wall of steel and glass taking up road space and scaring off smaller fish. The ED has taut features, a rigid jawline housing a pair of handsome headlights and a sleek grille. The lines flow back from the headlights and wrap themselves around the sides of the car, culminating in the rear lights, which are

almost reminiscent of the iconic Porsche 959.

The car has a subtle custom lip bodykit, and the side skirts and OEM rear spoiler gives the car a bit

more muscle in the looks department. A set of bronze 17-inch OZ Racing Superleggara rims completes the exterior.

The visual drama continues inside, with a driver focused cabin inviting the driver to imagine the sharply sloped dash and transmission tunnel to be that of an Mk IV Supra rather than a compact family car. The dials are classy, each number slanted in an italic font, so your rise through the RPM range has a sense of occasion to it.

The 2.0 liter 3SFE engine under the hood, paired up to the 4-speed automatic transmission, puts out around 120 bhp and 125 lb-ft of torque. Those numbers might not be enough to cause a tightening in your pants, but when a daily driver is concerned, its actually more than enough in a city like Dhaka. An SARD air intake, NGK Iridium plugs and fatter plug wires give the 3SFE a slight edge in its acceleration, sharpening up the response.

The ED was always a good handler, and the ST202 chassis borrowed from the Celica gives the ED a tight feel in the corners, which is hard to find in a large FWD sedan such as this. Even though it's quite low with the slightest of negative camber at the rear wheels, the ride is compliant, the car loping up massive speedbreakers with relative ease.

Whatever your preference is with regard to cars from that decade, you will find some corner of your brain pondering over the prospect of owning as a daily driver, an example of the last generation of the ED produced. If you can afford the slight increase in fuel costs and maintenance over a bread and butter Corolla, then why not go for an ED?

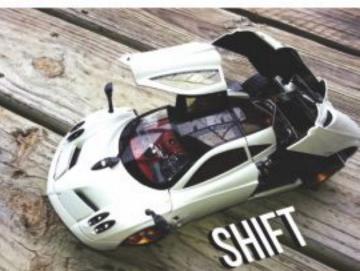
WORDS: SHAER REAZ

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### Stuff that happened on our FB page

We featured Joy Alam's monster Subaru Impreza STI two weeks ago. The 500+ whp Subaru competed in the Nitol Tata Rally Cross Championship 2014 and secured a very respectable 2nd place, while sliding around in the dirt like it had a T-Rex on its tail. Shadman Al Samee, our Rooftop Sniper and official car-spotter, manipulated Tasdid Chowdhury's image, below. Go to our Facebook page for more of his car-spotting and photoshopping antics.





Check our scale model section for some detailed 'toys'

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