



TEST DRIVE

Family hauler

2015 Toyota Avanza



SHIFT ZONE

The Avanza is not a pretty car, but as a Toyota and an MPV, it's the motherlode of practical, reliable motoring. Fuel economy, ride comfort, interior space and everything else considered, the Avanza is an important car for Bangladesh, although we know more than enough car enthusiasts who would wholeheartedly disagree. It's not the kind of car you'd expect to hook the people who lust after the Supra and Celica kind of Toyotas, but that doesn't make it a bad option for a family buy. Practical motoring starts here.

- Shaer Reaz, Sub-editor, Shift



Plasticky interior covered in plastic. Plastic-ception. It's a nice place to be in, however.



VERDICT

Avanza is perfect if you want to build a fleet for your executives or if you have a tight group of friends with whom you frequently indulge on road trips, or even if you have a slightly bigger than average family. The base model (1.3L with automatic transmission) starts at Tk. 26.5 lakh and the premium one (1.5L with automatic transmission) is priced at Tk. 31.75 lakh. If you're looking for a no-frills automobile, offering comfortable ride and decent fuel economy then the Avanza is highly recommended.

SPECS

2015 Toyota Avanza

Engine: 1500cc 4 cylinder 3SZVE VVT-I gasoline engine (102 hp @6000 RPM, 100 lb-ft torque @4400 RPM); 1300cc 4 cylinder K3VE VVTI gasoline engine (90 hp @6000 RPM, 86 lb-ft torque @4400 RPM).

Transmission: 4 speed automatic.

Brakes: Disc brakes front, drum brakes rear, ABS.

Features: 7 seats; dual airbags; 4 speaker (1.3 Avanza) or 6 speaker (1.5 Avanza) stereo system with USB, Aux, and AM/FM/CD; LED brake light; rear wiper; 7 available colours.

Price: Starts from 26.50 lakh taka. For details, contact Navana Ltd.

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doubled by folding the last row of the seat. This makes your car really useful for carrying most sizes of luggage.

As mentioned before it comes with two different engines- 1.3L and 1.5L VVT-I. The 3SZVE and K3VE engines offer great mileage: with AC you can easily get 13 KM/litre urban mileage with mild traffic.

It was, surprisingly, a delight to drive. The shock absorber rebound rates are quite high which was evident after we drove smoothly over potholes and humps at more than average speed for Dhaka roads. The visibility is quite good. Any average Bangladeshi can see most of the hood from behind the steering wheel.

After the facelifted Avanza, Toyota's Multiple Purpose Vehicle (MPV), has become one of the hottest selling cars in the global market. In Bangladesh, two variants are brought in: 1.3L and 1.5L engines with automatic transmission. We got to review the 1.5L with automatic transmission, and we found it to be extremely practical. Passenger comfort, a thing that many vehicles in this category lack, was well taken care of.

Starting with the exterior, dimensions and design: the car we reviewed is the 2nd generation Avanza. Its slightly larger and wider compared to its predecessor. Another major difference that we noticed was the design makeover. The front got a Yaris-like snout making it look much better than the previous gen. The second thing that caught our attention were the arrow-like headlamps. The body used to be really plain in the previous generation but it now has curves. The car really hulked up a bit. We would definitely want to know which gym it joined. The 15 inch alloys of the Avanza might look a bit out of place, but we made our peace with it since it helps keep the cost down and ensures soft ride quality for the passengers.

Now for the interior. Let's face facts: the Avanza is a utilitarian vehicle, so its primary purpose is to move people or luggage. The interior of Avanza is nothing but utilitarian. The seatbacks are thin and the doors are trimmed to make more room for the 7 passengers inside the vehicle. Average Bangladeshi passengers will be able to squeeze in without making much effort. Both the S and TX model have power steering, electric windows and central remote locking as well as 2nd set of AC vents in the 2nd row, CD/AM/FM sound systems, USB input and dual climate control.

A quick glance at the dashboard: it's a plastic affair, light grey plastic to be exact. We think the choice of color could have been better. The latest generation comes with dual airbags for both the driver and the passenger. It lacks Bluetooth connectivity, something we expect in any MPV. The boot space can easily be



Ford Mustang Shelby GT350

A brand new way to completely destroy tyres while grinning like a madman

The upcoming Shelby GT350 Mustang is equipped with the most powerful naturally aspirated engine ever strapped onto a car with Ford's blue oval. Channeling the spirit of the original 1965 Shelby Mustang, right down to the silvery white paint-blue stripes combo, the GT350 features a flat-plane crankshaft 5.2 liter V8 motor putting out more than 500 horsepower and 400 lb-ft torque.

While the back end slipping and power oversteer are signature muscle car moves, whether original or retro, the GT350 is being marketed as a track focused Mustang, so grip is key. Getting the power to the ground is a 6 speed manual and a Torsen limited slip differential,



while stopping power is aplenty thanks to the Brembo braking system (6 pistons at the front, 4 at the rear, and 390 millimeter discs). The wider track also helps the car squat and stay level through the corners.

It's a pretty thing, the new gen Mustang. Gone are the brutish square edges of the last Mustang, replaced with effortless, Euro influenced elegance. It looks like a proper GT car now, wide, hunched front and rear quarters and a graceful roofline making it more grown up than its mother would like to admit. Set it next to the original GT350 and you'd say this is properly retro, capturing all of the right details and modernising where necessary. How it'll do against the next batch of revived American muscle car is going to be interesting.

HAPPENING

Shift @Nitol-Tata Rallycross Championship

If you follow Shift religiously and happen to think we're the bomb, be sure to drop by the second installment of the Nitol-Tata Rallycross Championship, to be held on the 11th of April at Bashundhara Convention City, 300 feet Purbachal Road opposite Bashundhara R/A. The event kicks off at 9:45 AM, and we'll be there for the duration of the event. We'll be present in the flesh, so come find us if you want to meet the people behind Shift. Plus, the 10th Dhaka Motorshow will be taking place at the same venue from the 9th to the 11th, as well as a motorbike show, so there's loads of things to see. You're definitely in for a treat.

SUN, DIRT, FUN

Rallycross, Bangladesh's emerging form of motorsport

Last year's highlight event for the Bangladeshi car enthusiast crowd was definitely the Nitol-Tata Rallycross Championship. It featured a whole day of loud cars going sideways on a dirt track, kicking up so much dust that some are saying the recent sandstorm in the UAE was a result of the dust having traveled across half a continent from the Trade Fair grounds, as Bangladesh's little revenge pack for the way they treat our migrant workers. Environmental after-effects and international relations aside, it was a blast, and this year, its back.

As far as first attempts go, the first installment of what we hope is a yearly event was a truckload of fun. Funnily enough, a truck full of dirt in front of a certain lady's office was what held back the preparations this time, as the event had to be rescheduled several times due to the ongoing political violence. The sponsors are ready, the track has been finely packed in (little to no dust expected this time, or so the organisers tell us) and the participant registrations are almost done.

What's different from last year? Well, the venue is completely new, for one.



UAE is suffering through a terrible sandstorm at the moment. Not (completely) our fault.

Last year it was held in the busy hub of the Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) field beside the BICC complex, but this year the event has shifted to the Bashundhara International Convention City grounds, opposite Bashundhara Residential Area. While a change of

venue might not be as interesting to the average Joe, it's a way of leveling the playing field between the new entries and the participants who competed last year. One major problem the organisers faced last year was ensuring track conditions stayed same throughout the day, since

dirt and sand has a habit of shifting about under weight and thus the conditions progressively worsened through the day. This time around, there will be construction equipment close by to repair the track and maintain similar conditions all through. As usual, fire and health safety is utmost, and the necessary precautions have been taken.

Things are looking up for Bangladesh. At the official press release ceremony, the organisers, Bangladesh Motorsports and CEMS Global, as well as the Bangladesh Tourism Board hinted at the viability of a permanent race-track to quench the thirst for speed that most teenagers and young adults have these days. There's also talk of more motorsport oriented events in the future, more refined and held more frequently. It can only go forwards and up from here.

See you on the track, and look for our coverage of the second Nitol-Tata Rallycross Championship, right here on Shift.

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for regularly updated automotive news, reviews, and everything in between. We will be running web-exclusive features on project cars, modification/maintenance tips and tricks, and more. As a bonus, you get access to exclusive hi-res wallpapers ready for download.

