



SHIFT

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TEST DRIVE



The local market has seen a surge of mid-sized SUVs coming in recently. A lot of people want to own an off-roader but can't afford to spend a small fortune on cars like Land Cruisers or Patrols, instead opting for slightly smaller, significantly cheaper but well-equipped SUVs. Take the Nissan X-trail, or the Hyundai Tucson. If you think you've seen too many of those, and want something different, then you have the new (big) kid on the block: the 2.0 liter SsangYong Rexton Diesel 2014. Millennium SsangYong Motors Ltd brings you the all new 4WD off-roader, a direct contender to the Hyundai Santa Fe or Honda CRV in terms of size, but at a much, much cheaper price. What you get for your 55 Lakhs is a great South Korean-made car that comes with a number of perks.

Stand some distance away and you see a very well-crafted design. Smooth lines, bold curves and a completely revamped look improving upon the older, blander predecessor. The front fascia is very humble. No spaceship-wannabe designs, instead just a simple chrome grill. To many this might seem boring, but I liked it. SsangYong did right with the rear and front lamps: projection HIDs in the front and LED strip tails in the back.

Step inside the cabin and you'll realize how much effort the Koreans put into making your drive a comfortable one. The car is a seven seater, and black leather wraps every single seat. Even the door pads have leather. The Rexton has two air conditioning units, the secondary being at the very back for the far rear seats. Overhead a fully automated sunroof lets you soak up that Dhaka City sun (maybe not a good idea this summer though). The steering wheel has audio and gear shift controls; there are power seats with three memory settings, and sunglasses and cup holders right where you need them. It does, however, miss out on a few key items such as a reverse camera, and the extent of its safety package is pretty poor with airbag protection for front seat occupants only. A little more effort could've been



applied when designing the dashboard, steering wheel and gauge cluster. Leg space is very good, and allows ample space for mid and far rear passengers. When not in use, the boot is big enough to cart a family load of gear but the loading height is higher in comparison to rivals.

The Rexton has a relatively small capacity engine for its size. The 2.0-litre turbo diesel, however, does a decent job at shifting its 1985kg mass. The brochure won't tell you that its turbo charged but our test car did have one, and the intercooler sat right behind the front grill. With 155 hp of power and 266 lb-ft of torque – which is on tap between 1500-2800rpm – it feels strong when on the move with good low-rev urgency and plenty of mid-

BUDGET BRUISER 2014 SsangYong Rexton

SPECS

Engine: 2.0L 4 Cylinder, 16 Valve turbo-diesel (155 hp; 266 lb-ft torque)

Transmission: 5 speed "E-tronic" automatic gearbox, part time 4WD

Features and options: 7 seats, leather, rear air conditioning with climate control, sunroof, cup-holders, front airbags, steering mounted audio controls, power seats with memory

Price: 55 lakh taka. For details, contact Millennium SsangYong Motors Ltd.

range punch for effortless highway cruising.

It's not as smooth or refined as the latest diesel engines as it hesitates to get moving while the turbo builds up pressure, but it does prevent diesel clatter from entering the cabin. The engine doesn't knock around and cabin noise is minimal. The fuel economy is fair, and improves when you take it on the highway. Our test car came with the 5 speed E-Tronic automatic gearbox, and 4WD with shifting on the fly. SsangYong tells us that it has a fuel economy of 7.8l/100km, which is competitive with other cars in its class.

On our test run, vast straights let me step down on the gas and the turbo did its magic. The acceleration was hesitant at first but once the turbo kicked in, the rise to 150 km/h was easy. Even with a six-passenger load the Rexton ploughed forward. Taking it to a nearby sandhill for the shoot, I maneuvered it down an almost 45 degree slope through loose mug and gravel, the Rexton kept composure and didn't slip. The diesel engine pumped out plenty of torque to wrestle through the rough terrain. During the drive back, I took a back seat. The chauffeur squeezed through traffic, between buses and rickshaws with not much trouble. The Rexton soaked up potholes and rough roads and didn't roll around as much as I expected. There was a slight vibration, from the engine, but that much you have to bear if driving a diesel.

Would I buy this car? Its a brand new car with a great design. It could take me to my office, drop the kids off at school and still help me make the weekend trips to the factory or weekend resort.

WORDS: MOHAMMAD AKIB NAWAZ
PHOTOS: RAHIN SADMAN ISLAM

Mustang EcoBoost coming to Bangladesh?



As far as halo cars go, Ford's Mustang is globally accepted as a true American icon, along with 5-dollar milkshakes and hotdogs.

The EcoBoost Mustang is a mouth-watering idea: 2.3 liter turbocharged V6 engine, 310 horsepower, 320 lb-ft of torque, rear wheel drive. Its nothing like the stupid American V8s which powered the original 60's muscle-cars and produced 200hp from a 6.5 liter V8. Oh no. Ford is all about packaging and super high-efficiency nowadays, and their EcoBoost series of engines are incredible in the way they squeeze out brilliant power figures from tiny engines. There's also the traditional V8 Mustang, but the EcoBoost model is mainly aimed at untapped markets in Europe and Asia, which prefer efficient motoring over V8 hooliganism. As a result, the EcoBoost Mustang gets a right-hand drive export version, the first in Mustang



history. Expect the handling characteristics to be of European sports car standards as well.

Due to the (relatively) small displacement of the EcoBoost Mustang, itsfavoured by the import duty structure placed on brand new vehicles in Bangladesh. While the V8 would be extremely costly to bring in, the EcoBoost is an exciting prospect for the Bangladeshi market, and AG Automobiles plans to boost Ford sales through the halo car.

In fact, insiders in the Ford dealership have hinted that the Mustang coming to Bangladesh as an officially sold model is highly likely. If, and when it does, expect order based imports. There are no indications as to what the pricing might be like, but whether it's going to be cost-effective motoring or not was never the issue. It IS a Mustang, after all.

Japanese Muscle

300+ BHP 1997 TOYOTA CROWN ROYAL EXTRA

The first thing that comes to mind when I hear Crown is that it's exactly the type of car a mafia kingpin would buy if they were affected by Bangladesh's tax structure. It's comfortable, unassuming and quiet, but it would make for a great sleeper if people realized the potential in them. Mr. Salman Farsy has, and the featured car today is the result.

In the flesh it's extremely large and white. The exterior is very neat with 18" Vossen wheels wrapped around Yokohama tires, sitting pretty on lowering springs. Some would say its boring, docile even. What lies underneath the hood makes up for the demure exterior in ways that you would never expect. It's a sleeper to the extent that I actually had to hunker down and look for the Greddy front mount intercooler hiding behind the bumper.

The 2JZ-GTE is derived from the last generation Supra, which itself is considered by many to be the crown jewel of Japanese sports cars. This epic straight 6 cylinder combines generous displacement, twin turbos, and valve-timing trickery to deliver gobs of power while sounding like an industrial shredder with more bass. From the factory, the Yamaha designed 3.0 liter VVT-i beast puts out a little more than 300bhp, with the bulletproof stock



internals capable of handling a lot more. It's a wild attack dog on a very short leash when cruising: sure it can be tamed, but when Salman floors it, all hell breaks loose. The rear end squats as 300+ horses are unleashed onto the tarmac, the negative G-forces makes you sink into the seat as the turbos reach full boost. I've never felt an Automatic transmission go this fast with four people onboard. The acceleration is just mind boggling. The engine sings the tune of speed in perfect harmony, the exhaust note is better than Skillet, I could listen to it all day long and still smile like an idiot. Braking from 160 km/h-ish speeds, it doesn't stop in the boring fashion most cars do these days, the tires screech and the car wants to go sideways. But you'd expect that when the brakes were designed for a purring 1G-FE

packing half of the punch of the 2JZ. If you ask me, this just adds to the "soul" factor of the car, it feels alive and kicking. The smaller turbo spools at lower rpm and when there is enough exhaust pressure, the larger turbo takes over to propel this rocket-ship into the moon and back before it's time for lunch. It's just THAT quick. Coming to the exhaust, it's a triple wastegate setup with twin high-flow catalytic converters and resonators on the downpipe ending at an HKS muffler, which makes it sound like nothing on this planet. In fact, the car makes the sound that I figure a planet would make if it had exhausts. Why this engine and chassis? "We had this car in my family for 8 years now, and I always wanted to do a JZ project, so when I saw people are finally doing 1JZ swaps

here, I took the leap. 1JZs are becoming common these days, which is why I opted for the more powerful 2JZ-GTE instead" says Salman Farsy.

When asked how it compares to his other cars, like his Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution X, he says "Well, it's fun. It doesn't handle like the Evo, but it's way more fun". A walk around his parking lot reveals another gem hiding in a corner: a turbocharged Axio GT. Salman is truly a turbo guy through and through, having a total of four turbochargers in three cars.

This project was not easy however. The engine was bought and stored for 4 months before Salman could get started. The swap required lots of custom work that saw him turning to unlikely sources for bits and pieces, as evidenced by the Evo X intercooler piping. This chassis was never designed to take this motor, the highest spec Crown had the 2JZ-GE naturally aspirated engine, but the twin turbo is a whole new ball-game. The ones not in the "know" would scratch their heads and wonder what the source of this sheer grunt is.

The owner plans to upgrade the brakes, handling and move to a single turbo setup in the future. After that ride-along, my Premio feels like a highly sedated, fully domesticated dog. Next to the Doberman that is the Crown.

WORDS: ZAER ZUBAB AHMED
PHOTOS: TASDID H. CHOWDHURY

COLLECTIBLES

Kinsmart's Subaru



Kinsmart specializes in making roughly 1:32-1:38 scale models. They are mechanical pull-back models aimed primarily at destructive kids. The thin rubber tyres are the first to go through a digestive system. Kinsmart's products are often hit and miss in every sense of the phrase. Collectors generally don't really go for it but once in a while they make absolute gems like this rally legend Scobie driven by Petter Solberg. It is correct down to all the badges and the roll cage. Only thing missing is Petter himself. Check out our scale model special online featuring this and the best and worst of Kinsmart.

Words & photos: Ehsanur Raza Ronny

VW Vento wins Golden Steering award

Volkswagen got a double treat at the Auto Bild magazine's "Golden Steering" competition, with the Vento DSG getting the top spot and the Polo grabbing the third spot in the prestigious competition which pits different cars in the same category against each other. The Vento's smart design, 7speed DSG gearbox and sharp, quick handling clearly set it apart from its competitors.

