



# SHIFT

AUTOMOTIVE PUBLICATION OF The Daily Star

## TEST DRIVE

# THE DIESEL MINION

## 2015 Ford Ecosport Diesel

Couple of months back, we drove Ford's EcoSport 1.5 petrol. Good vehicle - a car like soft-roader which handles Dhaka traffic relatively well. That was an automatic, 5 speed to be precise. What fun is that? What we secretly have been waiting for is to go check out the manual variant. That happened finally, and it's a diesel.

Diesel? That means a lot of engine rattle. To our sheer surprise and joy, there is very little diesel chatter from the EcoSport. Cabin sound proofing reduces the noise even further while you are inside the vehicle. This dramatic reduction of diesel chatter has raised our expectations from Ford to a significant height. Almost makes us question other (better) European manufacturers' refinement capabilities.

Major differences from the petrol? Like most manufacturers do with diesel models, Ford did the same with the EcoSport diesel - cosmetic downplay. Interestingly, the omission of chrome bits from the front grille is something we fancy. Makes it look more rugged. The fog lamps are missing and the cover plastic is a bit tacky. The interior gets a lot of space age styled vents and clusters similar to the petrol, besides comfortable ergonomics with a raised seating height. The cross-over comes with a modern diesel motor and that means slightly reduced power and torque figures from the petrol version we drove earlier. Naturally, there is a stick shift lever instead of an automatic.

So can it be more fun than the petrol? You do not have to wait for the vehicle's computer system to decide when to signal the transmission to shift. That's for the lazy ones. You would want to take charge of the transmission yourself and juice the 1.5 diesel motor. To make the experience joyous, Ford ensured clutch engagement is soft and shifting is butter smooth. No sporty mechanical clunking noise though. However, it gets better. The diesel motor has a turbo, which certainly gets us excited. Although it is small, it does its job well at assisting the measly 1.5 diesel motor throw in some extra rumble higher in the RPM range. When you start holding the RPM just a little longer (which you can't do in the petrol automatic) at each shifts, you will notice that a diesel

motor is not bad at all! In fact, in this case, it is certainly more fun than the petrol variant. If we talk numbers, 204 Nm of torque builds up gradually between 2,000 to 3,000 RPM, lurching the mini SUV forward. There is no drama initially, but as the turbo spools up, 90 BHP is formed that can crack average speeds of 130KPH at ease. Despite the fairly smooth



EcoSport looks just as large as its bigger brother, the Escape. Visual trickery?

upshifts from the five speed manual, power soon peters out, resulting in a sluggish 0-100KPH of under 14 seconds. In spite of the little power, it is the short ratio of the shifts that makes the driving experience enjoyable.

All that can be done at great comfort too. The suspension is on the soft-er side, it can get jumpy on several ups and downs. The seats are relatively firm and gives the right kind of support. The multi-function steering is also quite light, but lacks feel. This is considered good for our gravel embedded roads. There is a fair bit of roll, but the cross-

than the petrol? Generally, fun is always inversely proportional to economical. You want to have fun- go to the movies or eat out with friends. These are not economical options. It would be equally fun and easier on the wallet if you just get the ingredients home, cook the meal, download the movie and watch it in the comfort of your living room couch. That too, with the friends over at your place. The EcoSport diesel is like that. You are in for the fun factor and with a lower diesel price, you are also better off as



over strives to stay in line around corners. Rear passengers do not have to fight for leg-room although it will get a bit stuffy if three large adults want to share space side by side.

So, is it more economical



you get to save some bucks travelling from point A to B in the slow Dhaka traffic. In addition, the high mileage of this little turbo diesel would console you for not getting a petrol variant and converting to CNG.

The snout has a cat-fish resemblance, no doubt. After all, it is a cross-over based on the feisty Fiesta hot hatch. It has piggy tail lamps, seeming like a cute, shying away boar. Because it is not a car but something larger, Ford wanted to give a bit of aggression to the EcoSport with a collection of stacked grilles, flared wheel arches and matte plastic wrap around underbody panels. Despite all that effort, it glides towards cuteness. The not-so-high ride height gives the tiny cross-over a Chihuahua appeal- small, jumpy, relatively quick and always excited to zip around. The best comparison would be to a Minion. Yes, the EcoSport Diesel is not yellow but it is petite and gets work done exactly the way Minions do Gru's chores.

It has enough ground clearance to tackle the cave-sized potholes in and around Dhaka. Even slight off-roading is manageable. We tried it. And it was fun! Given the FWD characteristics, there is no rear differential hub to come in the ways of obstructing boulders. The Fiesta cross-over gives the EcoSport a relatively small wheelbase which is a blessing in disguise to

help deal with steep slopes. And what about the monthly groceries? The EcoSport diesel has plenty of boot space for not only the oversized bags but for our photographer and his gear too.

So, like a minion, Ford's EcoSport Diesel needs to be told what is to be done and it does it well.

### SPECS

**Engine:** 1.5L DV5 (1498 CC), 4 cylinder turbo-diesel (90 PS @ 3,750 RPM and 204 Nm @ 2,000 - 2,750 RPM)

**Transmission:** 5 speed manual

**Brakes:** Front ventilated discs, rear drum brakes with ABS

**Suspension:** Independent McPherson strut with coil spring and anti-roll bar at the front and Semi-independent twist beam with twin gas and oil filled shock absorbers at the rear

**Features:** Power windows, central & remote locking, power swing gate release, rear power mirror and center console, radio, MP3, aux-in, 4 speakers, MFD screen.

**PRICE:** 31.5 lakh taka. For inquiries contact AG Automobiles Ltd.

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## COLLECTIBLES

### Jada: toy or collectible?

Jada Toys isn't a new name here to most die-cast collectors. We're used to seeing the over sized rims and bling-bling versions of popular cars. Typically they are low on detail and high on flash. It's an American manufacturer of diecast as well as radio controlled vehicles. Founded in 1999, Jada says the die-casts are collectibles not recommended for children. But they are very durable so I don't see why children can't play bumper cars with them. Is it for you? Find out this Friday at [www.thedailystar.net/shift](http://www.thedailystar.net/shift)



WORDS AND PHOTO: E.R. RONNY

# RISE AGAINST THE STORM



### Why the love for AE101s?

Some said it's a Corolla, it's affordable and exciting. Others agree on that it can be anything from an affordable, cheap to run daily driver to a fun street-car which won't require you to sell off your organs if something goes wrong. The 100 corolla was a big success in this country, everybody either liked them or accepted them. They were the car you'd pass on to the young ones when they were old enough to drive.

By storm I don't mean the rain, there was plenty of that, but in general the harsh environment of this country. I can see why this such a great platform: 25 years in this country, it has seen many pot-holes and scrape-bumps, crashes, rush-hour traffic almost all day long, and yet they don't give any impression of tiredness. They are the unsung hero, truly, serving day in and day out for more than a decade now.

Aside from the reliability of the Corolla, this particular generation is a little special, because of the endless options this chassis offers. You get to choose from a catalogue of exterior bits, interior trims and drivetrains to make it truly your own. This is why each car in this meet is a little different from the rest.

### The highlights:

Starting with Farshad Bin Aziz's AE101 Factory GT. The BZ face is hard to miss, the car is exceptionally clean, powered by a 4AGE and it's a perfect example of "less is more". This car came with everything from factory, parts that a Corolla enthusiast would look for when building their project car.

Khandakar Tahmidur Rahman's Corolla had the GT treatment done, 4A-GE blacktop 5 speed M/T swap and full GT spec interior. On the outside, he decided to take a simplistic approach, a beautiful



blue paintjob, dropped height and a set of 15" Rays alloys. It's elegant and shows that you don't need to do a lot to make a 100 Corolla look good.

Zain Md Abeer's awesome Sprinter was a part of the herd too. Fully stripped out, and the only car there running aftermarket cams, and some serious performance modifications. It was also the only Sprinter there, mainly because there aren't many people that do projects on 100 Sprinters due to its rarity. Look out for a full feature on this car next week on Shift.

A more powerful 1.8L 2ZZ-GE VVTi engine sourced from the newer 9th generation Corolla T-

Sport powers Omar Shah's grey bullet. He previously had a 4A-GE in the car, but he got bored and in search of more power, he decided to do the very first 2zz conversion in the country. Look out for an exclusive feature of this in the near future.

Dr. Moonsun's Ceres GT is certainly a looker; the Corolla Ceres featured low-roofed, sporty proportions, with unobtrusive center pillars that were virtually invisible when the windows are rolled up. This particular car also packs enough power for Dhaka streets with its 4A-GE 20valve heart.

Last but not the least; this is where everyone goes to look for rare parts on their sedans, the BZ Touring Wagon. Rafayet H. Jamil has had this car since 1997, it's been sitting around in his factory for a long while, and when the opportunity to restore this presented itself by the means of a BZ Touring half-cut, how could he not do it? We certainly approve.

### The meet.

The 7th generation Corolla is one of the few cars that had an actual meet. This is probably due to the unity and bond of the AE101 community. The usual suspects of the AE101 community, Ahsan Al Farad, Intekhab Zaman, Quazi Raheeb Hossain and Mohammad Ashrafal Huque came to the meet, along with a few new faces and a couple of other cars.

If you are planning a similar car meet in Dhaka, let us know by messaging us on our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/thedailystar.shift](http://www.facebook.com/thedailystar.shift)) or shoot an email to [shift@thedailystar.net](mailto:shift@thedailystar.net) and we'll be there!

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## ONLINE EXCLUSIVE

### Myth: cut springs, yay or nay?

**CUT SPRINGS?** LOOKS GREAT, EXCEPT ITS HELL DRIVING ON: ROUGH SURFACES, OVER BUMPS, GRAVEL, DIRT, WET ROADS, DRY ROADS, TARMAC, ASPHALT, GRASS, LEAVES, BUTTER, TRAIN TRACKS, AND PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING.



Besides installing a fart cannon or "hawlar", lowering the vehicle seems to be one of the cool things in the modification checklist of the average Johir, Jahangir and Fokir. Cutting the coil springs of your Premallion with a hacksaw will certainly lower your car. It would do so too at the expense of your car's comfort. So would we recommend that from The Daily Star SHIFT desk? To find out, check the SHIFT site over at [www.thedailystar.net/shift](http://www.thedailystar.net/shift) on Friday.

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