



# SHIFT

AUTOMOBILES



## TEST DRIVE

# SEGMENT BUSTING CUV

## 2015 Honda HR-V

**What is a CUV?** We like most of our things big. Cell phones, televisions, pillows, cars and roads. While most of these are getting larger by the day, our roads for sure aren't. Change is therefore, inevitable. Carmakers built a solution: kei cars. Kei cars can't traverse our roads, mainly because they are littered with potholes the size of kei cars. Enter the crossover (CUV- crossover utility vehicle), a new genre of automobiles which is NOT a marketing gimmick by automobile companies but a delightful solution to the pitiful road conditions we have.

**What is the HR-V?** Honda sleeved up to make a CUV, giving it the maneuverability of the Jazz hatchback and the versatility of its mid-size SUV, the CR-V. Here we have the LX edition of this new CUV, based on the Jazz hatch: the HR-V. Or in Japanese, Hi-rider Revolutionary Vehicle. Yeah, we'll just stick to HR-V.

**Would you want to ogle at it?** Well, it is a looker! The new HR-V's design cues suggest a distinct coupe like characteristic with two prominent bodylines highlighted. Why? Because one was not enough by Honda standards. At the front, the CUV features a horizontally barred grille that incorporates wide crystal headlamps. The rear slanted low roofline and squat stance add on to the coupe-like appeal of the crossover. Everyone likes coupes. They are sporty but not very practical for Flintstones sized families, and especially not for Bangladeshi roads for obvious reasons. So, with the added ground clearance, the HR-V is like a coupe high on practicality.

### SPECS

**Engine:** 1.5L SOHC i-VTEC 4 Cylinder (118 HP @6,600 RPM and 106 lb-ft @4,600RPM)

**Transmission:** CVT

**Brakes:** Front ventilated discs, rear solid disc brakes with ABS, EBD and brake assist.

**Features:** Keyless entry, automatic odour reducing climate control air-conditioning, leather interior, steering mounted audio switches and Cruise Control, Bluetooth hands-free, 7-inch touchscreen, radio, HDMI, multi-USB, MP3, aux-in, 6 speakers.

**Price:** 39.95 lakh taka. For inquiries, contact DHS Motors Ltd.



highlights. The door panel has a mix of soft mesh fabric blended with supple leather. With similar leather stitch finish, the dashboard and centre console also feel up market. The seats are perforated fabric upholstered with detailed stitching. There's a lot of sporty appeal to it as well. The multi-function steering wheel is relatively small and skins a patch of mesh design on the bottom spoke. It also sports a cruise control button, whose application in Bangladesh roads is pretty much unthinkable. Sort of like giving a diabetic person sweetened caramel pudding as mid-day snacks. The driver's instrument cluster features a "floating" illuminated blue ring. There are flappy paddle shifters too.

Honda has made the HR-V's interior as practical as it could get. There are nifty storage compartments for your large coffee latte and daily essentials. A cool feature has to be the tucked away slot with HDMI, multiple USB, and power outlet ports for all your appropriate devices that you can charge and seamlessly integrate with the 7" touch screen on the dash. The climate control gets a fantastic electrostatic touch panel display at the heart of the dash, which is very ergonomic and easy to access, even with your left arm cajoled by the soft leather wrapped auto shifter.

**How does it drive?** With a gentle push of the start button, the HR-V ignites with a soft purr and lights up the little 1.5 petrol i-VTEC motor. We made our way out into the scorching Dhaka sun with a full blast of aircon and yet, the throttle seemed light. Power and torque figures are not mind boggling (118 HP and 1406 lb-ft), but it is enough for our traffic.

What it provides is fuel efficiency- 8 km/L in the city and 17 km/L on the expressways. The automatic transmission is responsive and nippy.

What I have been itching for is a clearance amidst the traffic to throw the lever to S and try out the tiptronic mode. Eventually I did. My face lit up with a grin as the RPM climbed rapidly and held while the seemingly relaxed HR-V geared up for action. The paddle shifters are stubby, but soft and quick to respond. The crossover felt terrific to drive.

The electronic steering felt very light, although not very fast at responding. However, it communicates well with the torsion-beamed suspension, which is stiffer than most competitors and hence minimum body roll. The extra stiffness works like magic over speed thanks to the fantastic ground clearance, but the potholes are sometimes unforgiving and you would wish for a slightly softer tune. The HR-V has superb soft feel braking, owing to the front and rear disc assembly.

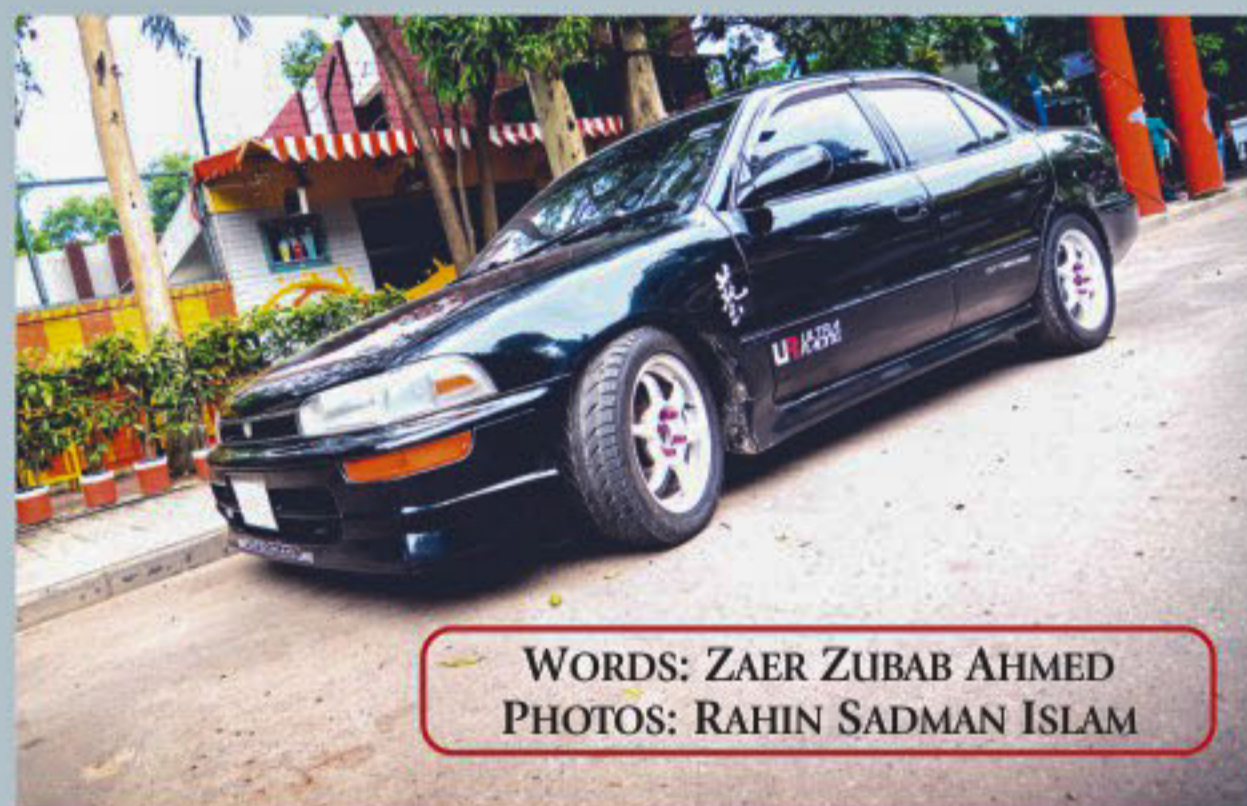
**Should you buy one?** Honda could have opted for an all-new identity for the 2015 HR-V. Instead, it waited almost a decade to revive the faded HR-V brand. Very clever of Honda as it probably chose the most fitting and emerging segment to position its competitive CUV in the market. Given all the aforementioned gizmos, an industry busting price of Taka 39,95,000, and 3 years warranty with 2 years of free service from DHS Motors, you are certainly in for a win.

For an extended review and exclusive shots of the HRV, head to our site: [www.thedailystar.net/shift](http://www.thedailystar.net/shift)

WORDS: MAHBUB HUSSAIN  
PHOTOS: TASDID H. CHOWDHURY

## Lightweight monster

This week's Online Exclusive Project Car feature is totally stripped out. Anything that isn't required was taken out of Zain Md Abeer's Sprinter: the entire air condition system, rear seats and door pads, all gone, saving more weight than a 10 year old can get with his Corolla wrapped in fake carbon fiber sticker from a certain decoration shop in Dhanmondi. Combine that with a significantly modified blacktop 4AGE and you have a winning formula. Visit [www.thedailystar.net/shift](http://www.thedailystar.net/shift) to read the full feature!



WORDS: ZAER ZUBAB AHMED  
PHOTOS: RAHIN SADMAN ISLAM

## Ford: 114 years on the race track

As Ford celebrates its annual Heritage Month in June, they're looking back at the significant racing history the Blue Oval has in its books. Ford's racing heritage dates back as far as 1901, before the inception of Ford Motor Company in 1903. At that time, Henry Ford was 38 years old, and after losing \$86,000 in a failed venture, was broke. But instead of giving up, Henry dusted himself off and put together a small team to build a car that was eventually called Sweepstake. Henry knew that racing fascinated the public, so he took the chance and raced in his 26-horsepower Sweepstake against the greatest driver of that time, Alexander Winton. The competition in Detroit attracted over 8,000 people; Henry won, receiving a cash prize of \$1,000 and, when added to financial support from investors, allowed him to found Ford Motor Company a few years later.

Ford's 114 years of racing heritage boasts more than 1,000 NASCAR and 176 F1 victories. Ford's racing lineage starts with Model T. Throughout its history Ford has produced a range of iconic racing nameplates such as the Ford GT40, that saw its golden days in the 1960s when it won 24 Hours of Le Mans four times in a row from 1966 to 1969. To date, the company's most successful racing vehicle is the Ford Focus RS WRC, joining the ranks of the cars that helped shape the automotive industry and left their imprint on the history of racing.

## Automobile engineering workshop held



Bangla Automobile School organized a day long training workshop on Automobile Engineering on June 5, 2015 at Akhtar Imam Auditorium, Segunbagicha, Dhaka, Bangladesh. The workshop was the first of its kind in Bangladesh. Mehrab Masayeed Habib, founder and trainer at Bangla Automobile School, conducted the workshop with about 30 participants. The Old Car Club of Bangladesh (OCCB) sponsored the event.

## BUDGET 2015-16 OVERVIEW

TRANSPORT SECTOR BUDGET IN 2015-16:

**7912**  
(CRORE TK)

ANNUAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FUND FOR 2015-16:

**5675**  
(CRORE TK)

133 ONGOING PROJECTS

39 TO BE COMPLETED IN 2015-16



EASING TRAFFIC CONGESTION THROUGH:

**300** DOUBLE DECKER BUSES

**100** ARTICULATED BUSES

**METRO** RAIL PROJECT

**TAX HOLIDAY**  
FOR LOCAL AUTO  
MANUFACTURING SECTOR

## Road network, infrastructure under focus in 2015-16 budget

When announcing the budget for fiscal year 2015-16, Finance Minister AMA Muhith, aside from announcing an ambitious 7.3 percent GDP growth target, thankfully kept the import duty on motor vehicles as is from last year. The focus of the budget has shifted to the development of the transport sector and easing traffic congestion. The budget allocation for the transport sector in 2014-15 was 6864 crore taka. That figure for 2015-16 has thankfully gone up to 7912 crore taka. Alongside the completion of ongoing development projects, the proposed budget has no allocation for the building of new roads, instead, the primary focus of the Roads and Highways Ministry will be in ensuring maintenance and expansion of the existing road network, much of which is in shambles at present. Another issue the budget puts focus on

is the easing of traffic congestion in the cities. Public transport will play a major role in that, with funds allocated for more double decker and articulated buses procured by the BRTC. The finance minister also suggested a separate body coordinating traffic management in the capital city. The highlight of the projects underway to reduce congestion and improve mobility would have to be the Metro Rail project. A defining characteristic of mega-cities abroad, an effective metro system is just what Dhaka needs to ease the load on the roads. Expected date of completion is 2019. Aside from the transport sector, the finance minister shone a positive light on new industrial undertaking, granting a tax holiday for local manufacturers. With Proton-PHP entering the newly minted automobile manufacturing sector in Bangladesh,

this is undoubtedly good news. The only downside to what seems to be a great budget with regards to the transport sector is the supplementary duty placed on imported car tyres, up to 20% from the existing 0%. While the move is mainly protectionist considering the growing local tyre manufacturers, it's a blow to consumers, who will likely give locally made tyres a wide berth due to their low-quality and safety standards compared to foreign brands. All in all, the 2015-16 budget should be great for the transport and automotive sector, providing the essential breathing space for importers and car owners. Or it would be great if proposed policy can be implemented effectively, so fingers crossed.

WORDS AND INFOGRAPH: SHAER REAZ

## Skylines everywhere

Skylines are special cars to petrolheads in the way pizza is special. You can't argue how special the R34 is. Some may not like it for its butch design and industrial sharpness. Others will find it beautiful. Regardless, it finds a place in most car guys' list of cars to have for its amazing handling, power and rock solid techno wizardry. It starred in a few instalments of Fast and Furious. This week we have an Autoart 1:18 provided by Rubab Momen and a couple of sibling R34s from our own stash. Bonus content includes how to replicate a broken and missing spoiler. Watch for it this weekend.

WORDS AND PHOTO: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

COLLECTIBLES

