



SHIFT

AUTOMOTIVE PUBLICATION OF The Daily Star

TEST DRIVE

CITY TOUR

2015 Honda City



It's possible I'm one of few in the Bangladesh car scene to have driven all six generations of the Honda City. It would have sounded cooler if I could have said I've driven all generations of the Honda Type R variants (only two Civic R's so far). Yet, the City isn't an uncool car at all. Well, most of them aren't.

Throwback
The City was always a light, economical, sharp handling car. The 3rd gen had a D15B 1.5 engine with about 115 bhp coupled to a fully independent suspension. Then it all changed with the horrendous 4th gen cab forward design that was more cockroach on wheels than car. Someone stepped on it after five years of production. 2008 onwards things looked up again.

Looks
The current gen is the sixth so far. It looks literally sharp with all those creases breaking up the tall sides neatly. Look at the pictures again. You don't need me telling you that that's a good looking car, especially with that Modulo body kit. Admittedly, those are terrible wheels. Replace those dull factory 16 inch rims with a set of aftermarket TE37s and you have a looker. It looked especially fine in the blue or the reddish metallic brown we took out.

Inside
We'll tell you what really matters though



- how it feels inside. This is a car targeted for those who want sporty but within a budget. None of the interior design or materials feel budget. It's quiet, well thought out and spacious. The same day I also took an Accord out. The difference in those two cars of two segments is how the engine behaves. The Accord moves effortlessly. With the City, engine noise is apparent inside at higher revs. Otherwise, both are almost eerily similar in comfort. That's high praise.

Tech

It's designed for the millennials who walk around with their noses leaving smudge marks on their smartphone screens. The car has Bluetooth connectivity for Apple and Android smartphones. You can stream your audio and be able to mirror your iPhone screen on the large display in the dash. It's quick and seamless and my subeditor who is the only user of Blackberry in Bangladesh managed to sync his phone in an instant.

Power

The engine is a 1.5 and the CVT can smoothly squeeze out all 118bhp. But if you want to hold on to the revs, the paddle shifter is there with 7 ratios to choose from. It's fun but I doubt it helps much with the fuel consumption. Despite our throttle mashing the fuel consumption showed 8-10km/L on average when moving around in light traffic.

Handling

The brakes are responsive with the traction and ABS making sure you're never skittering about. We had it on a day when traffic was really light so I got to push it. It accelerates well if you leave it out of the Eco mode. Those who buy this car to drive themselves will enjoy the tight turning radius and brisk acceleration. A standard reverse camera makes things all the more effortless. Those who prefer being driven, the rear has one of the largest seating areas in this segment allowing three people to sit comfortably without too much awkward knee touching.

SPECS

2015 Honda City

Engine: 1.5 litre 4 cylinder i-VTEC engine (118 HP).

Transmission: Continuously Variable transmission (CVT), paddle shifters.

Brakes: Ventilated disc front, drum brakes rear, ABS, EBD, Vehicle Stability Assist.

Suspension: Front strut, rear axle torsion, gas pressure shocks.

Features and options: 7 inch touch screen infotainment system with Bluetooth and iPod connectivity, HDMI port, 3 power outlets, 2 USB 2.0 ports, 8 speakers, Smart Entry, push start, cruise control, steering mounted audio controls, 2 airbags.

PRICE: 31,50,000 TAKA.

For details, contact DHS Motors Limited.

VERDICT

For the price, the car has an extensive list of standard features which is rare in this class in Bangladesh. The 536 litre boot space is one of the biggest we've seen in this class although the boot opening is a little narrow. The interior is beautifully designed and built and the rear suspension is well damped so that rear occupants hardly feel a thing. It's not a mushy ride though. Body roll is acceptable so that weekend drives out of the city can be a lot of fun. It's one of the best selling cars in India and Philippines and it's not difficult to see why.

WORDS: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY
PHOTOS: RAHIN SADMAN ISLAM

COLLECTIBLES

Bburago Ferrari



When my good friend Saif wanted to go scale model shopping after a hectic final semester at university, we actually had a couple of decent 1/18 scale Lambos in mind. Saif is a Lamborghini guy, already owning several pieces including the Murcielago SV, Reventon, and a rare Miura.

What we found on the market were Bburago Ferraris, a whole bunch of them in varying scales and covering a wide range of models, from the seminal F50 to the 550 Maranello and the recent La Ferrari. Won over by very good engine bay and body details at a relatively bargain price, Saif decided to take a 1/24 La Ferrari, which unfortunately had only one open-able compartment: the rear deck. When opened though, you can see the surprising amount of detail in the Ferrari V12 lurking underneath. Issues with the 1/24? The paint is a little too thick in some places, giving the die-cast a pasticky feel.

The real surprise, though, was the 1/64 range of Ferraris. Saif got a Ferrari 458 Italia, while I got a



F50 for myself. The F50 had very good body detail and had a good amount of weight to it, but the wheels were a let down, as expected from a cursory glance while it was still inside the packaging. The design is pretty accurate, mind you, it's the finishing and the fit that is the issue: the wheels feel cheap and there's a certain "toy" feel to it. The 458 had good detail as well, exhaust tips and badging replicated perfectly. However, the 458 had build issues where the windshield was a bit warped. Shift top-tip: if you're getting 1/64 Bburago Ferraris, make sure you get the hardtop models and not the open top ones.

The scale isn't true 1/64, but overall, you'll be happy with the level of detail that Bburago Ferraris offer. We'd stick to the 1/24s and the smaller scales, the 1/18s are actually not that good of a bargain deal at the moment. Hot Wheels has well and truly been trumped.

SHAER REAZ

AUTO NEWS

2016 Ford Ranger details out

Okay so we've established the new Ranger is not quite as pretty as the outgoing model, and that it will definitely reach our shores soon. Here are the details.

The Ranger gets new engines and transmission mountings, calibrations and an all new mechanism for the manual model. It'll have a new Electric Power Assisted Steering system that smooths out the driving experience on roads and off road, and makes everything more lively. Overall, the fuel economy figures for the Ranger has seen slight improvements over the outgoing model, but that probably won't make much of a



difference in the real world.

The base model is the XL, with single cab models powered by a 2.2 litre turbo-diesel four-cylinder engine, more likely to be popular as company cars and government lot purchases. The turbo-diesel offers a huge amount of torque. The XLT model and the dual cab XL Ranger will get a 3.2 litre five-cylinder turbo-diesel, which offers even more horsepower and torque. Bangladesh will most likely get both variants, which is good.

The Ranger is supposedly more refined, quiet and efficient than ever before. We can't know for sure till the 2016 Ranger arrives and we get our hands on one for a test drive, so watch this space.

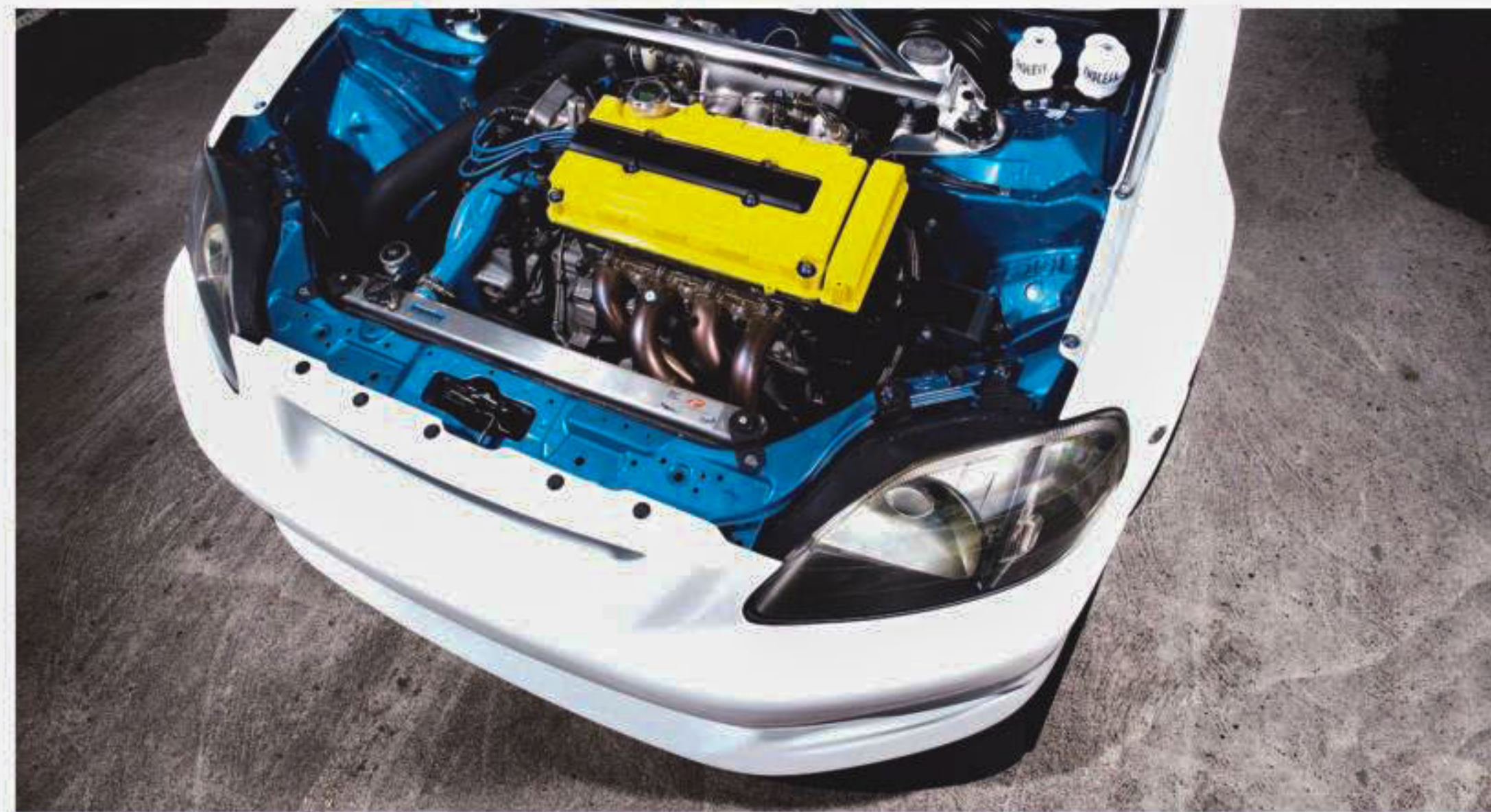
SHIFT GARAGE

Engine swap woes

Engine swaps are a common thing these days. With all the gas conversion, bad fuel, oil and Dholaikhal parts ruining the original stuff of your 5 year old car, chances are the engine does not perform well nor is efficient as it originally used to be. This is where engine swaps come in, the idea is to replace the tired ol' lawnmower that performs like those buses for a fresher engine. In an ideal budget you'd look for something with low mileage, which is easy for newer generation cars but can be tricky for older cars. Most people go about replacing with an engine of similar specifications, but sometimes owners decide to swap to a different engine entirely, which means everything might not fit the way it did before. Having somebody who has done it before to guide you is the best help you can get in this regard. Otherwise, here is a short-list of problems you might run into or more like the major issues I ran into during my swap.

ENGINE MOUNTS: In some cases you can get away with changing a couple of mounts with a different model car, but in most cases, some cutting, welding and trimming is required for it to fit.

AXLE: If the transmission is also changed, the axles might not fit, but fear not, Dholaikhal surely has something that does.



INTAKE SYSTEM: A stock panel-type box designed for your engine can be sourced, otherwise you could order an intake from abroad that fits your application and if you're on a budget, fabricate an intake yourself with a cone filter. Warning: Fabricated intakes don't usually work as good as OEM pieces.

EXHAUST: In this case, fabricating a custom downpipe is usually a better solution than trying to source the OEM downpipe, better if the flanges, gaskets and the other components are sourced beforehand.

WIRING: This is the most critical aspect ensuring your



Chevrolet LS7 V8 in a Porsche 911? Why not.



Chevy V8 in Mazda Miata. Tiny car, huge engine.

engine runs and functions the way it is designed, it's best to get it done from a reputed wiring mechanic and check for fault codes after the swap to ensure everything is plugged in properly. While an orange

symbol glowing on your dash may add to your headlight decorations, it may be an early sign of a disaster waiting to happen.

SENSORS: Some sensors might not work properly

throwing a code and causing malfunctions; in my case, the water temperature sensor and oil pressure switch were damaged and had to be replaced to get rid of the check engine light.

OVERHEATING: This can't be stressed enough, as the water lines were dry for a long time, air clogged into them causes your car to overheat and boil the water resulting in the overflow bottle vomiting steaming hot water. While it may be useful in cold winter morning baths, it's not particularly healthy for your car. Another reason could be the radiator not being able to cope and might need replacement.

BUDGET: This is the single most important aspect to take into account. Your budget will be exceeded no matter how generously you draw it.

ZAEER ZUBAB AHMED