

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. Yet, the City isn't an uncool car at all.

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

**SPECS****2015 HONDA CITY**

Engine: 1.5 litre 4 cylinder i-VTEC engine (118 HP @5500 RPM).

Transmission: "Earth Dreams" 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.

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.

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.

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DON'T BREAK IT AFTER YOU BUY IT:

THE DOS & DON'TS OF NEW CAR RUN IN

**OVERLOADING****SPEEDING OVER****90 KM/H****EXCESSIVE ACCELERATION**

ENGINE BREAK-IN
AVOID
FOR FIRST 1500KMS

**CROSSING 3000RPM****TOWING**

Well, you'll have to admit- the best feeling of getting a brand new car is peeling off the plastic wrappings from most surfaces and splashing in the new car aura. And there's the satisfaction of owning a vehicle which no one has used before. But what's disconcerting is, there have been cases of unnatural engine failure within a short while after owning a brand new car. We'd like to shake that off terming it as a "one in a thousand" case, but should you be a tad bit careful once you pay the green stuff and decide to jam the throttle from the dealership store like fugitives do with the getaway car?

Modern technology has spared the rigorous break in schedule required for old generation cars, but you still got to 'take it slow' for the first thousand kilometer or so. Many experts would disagree so, saying that new era engines are broken in at the manufacturing plant; but SHIFT logic being quite simple- 1, peace of mind, and 2, even the best of automobile marques such as BMW and Mercedes state out steps in the user manual to break in the car. For instance, the BMW M4 manual states the engine and vehicle speed should not cross 5,400 RPM and 170 KMPH for the first 2,000 KM and open wide throttles and kick-downs should be avoided. It also recommends not going beyond 220 KMPH although RPMs can be gradually increased between the 2,000 KM and 5,000 KM mark. Navana and Millenium Autos of Bangladesh were asked of this routine, and they suggested the same- not to push the car for the first "couple of thousand kilometers". Not only this, they also discourage full throttle at any point of owning an economy vehicle.

Then there's the mandatory oil change after the first couple of thousand kilos to ensure no 'extras' from our dusty air remain in your new car's system. To get the best out of this, a SHIFT tip would be to take the car to the authorized dealer service center and use genuine and recommended lubricants only. Just so that you know, you do NOT need a transmission oil change (be it manual/ automatic or CVT) for a brand new vehicle even after the 'taking it mild' period is over. Do however check all vital fluids (radiator/ brake) for the initial runs to ensure a smooth run-in of your brand new car without any hiccups.