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SHIFT

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THE OVERLOOKED BUNCH

The car buying crowd in Bangladesh has a peculiar habit of opting for the largest, least impractical and most fuel sipping vehicles they can afford in their income brackets. It's not uncommon to see a family of four opting for a large, semi-luxurious Premio when their needs could be met with a much smaller, much more efficient hatchback. For most Bangladeshis, a car is a status symbol, a thing of pride - the larger the car, the more the prestige. However, there is an alternative: you can be practical, efficient and stylish with certain cars. This week, we take a look at eight vehicles that should appeal to the intelligent car buyer, if only they were readily available here.



FORD ECOSPORT ECOBOOST 1.0 3 CYL TURBO

AG Motors imports the Ford EcoSport min-SUV in 1.5 litre petrol/diesel variants. The 1.0 EcoBoost turbo motor isn't imported because apparently a 1000cc's is not enough for Dhaka - most people would rather buy the 1.5 and convert to CNG to save money on fuel costs. Doesn't that seem a bit redundant to you, especially when the 1.0 EcoBoost turbo 3-cylinder is a more efficient and powerful engine than the 1.5?



VOLVO V40 1.5 4 CYL TURBO

AG Motors brings in brand new Volvo's into the country, however, they focus on the luxury end of the spectrum with big, thirsty SUVs. The smaller range of Volvo's are brilliant cars, the V40 being a great mix of style, driving pleasure, standard equipment and overarching safety features. It's also one of the best looking hatchbacks ever made.



HONDA CIVIC 1.0 4 CYL TURBO

We at Shift love the 10th gen Civic Turbo. DHS Motors only brings in the 1.5 Turbo VTEC variant though, and the aversion to small displacement motors in Bangladesh means no one will want to buy the Euro spec 1.0 Turbo, which has an even better horsepower per litre figure than the 1.5. The 1.0 would be cheaper to run and would sip less fuel, but no one cares.



TOYOTA AYGO 1.0 3 CYL

Brilliant exercise in packaging means the Aygo can fit in all your shopping, zip around town taking your kids to school and never have to worry too much about parking spaces. The tiny motor still puts out 66 HP and 67 lb-ft torque, but since there's no weight to lug around, it's highly efficient. It comes with Stability Control and six airbags, so this tiny car will keep you safe as well.



MAZDA 2 1.5 4 CYL

The baby Mazda has done well in Thailand and Malaysia, where people don't always equate the size of their cars to their egos. The 2 has a long list of equipment and has the traditional Mazda driving characteristics of zippyness, and if there's one thing that'll serve you well on Dhaka's chaotic roads, its manoeuvrability.



TOYOTA PRIUS C 1.5 4 Cyl

Efficient hybrid powertrain in a funky hatchback form that has loads of interior space and sips as little fuel as possible. The Prius C makes more sense for a Bangladeshi market than a hybrid executive sedan like the Camry as it's smaller and easier to own and drive. Also, unlike the regular Prius, the C actually has a face that isn't twisted and deformed for the sake of aerodynamic efficiency.

NISSAN PULSAR 1.2 4 CYL

The 1.2 Pulsar produces 113 BHP and is part of Nissan's push into the European hatchback market following the withdrawal of the Tida. In Euro spec, the Pulsar comes with its fair share of equipment and has all the amenities that a city dweller would need. The only access to Nissan hatchbacks in our part of the world is the horrendous Datsun range sold in India. We don't even get those.




KIA RIO 1.2 4 CYL

The Rio is the hip, modern, handsome younger brother of the Optima, and a darn better car than the Sportage, the most popular KIA model sold here. The Rio was actually sold in Bangladesh as a sub-compact sedan, with only one or two of the hatchbacks brought in by Meghna Automobiles. However, as expected, this sprightly and well-made hatch obviously did not catch the attention of buyers.



SHIFT BUYING GUIDE



HONDA CIVIC ES1

What is it?
Honda Civic. Built from 2000 to 2004. Both JDM and export models available. Export models were sold brand new by DHS Motors, had beige interiors, sunroof, and VTEC.

Who is it for?
Serves very well as a second car that is reliable, comfortable, handles well and looks sleek. Want to reward your kid for making it to university despite all odds? This will be great for commuting to and from uni, or doing the school run in style.

Does it have potential?
It's a Civic, so that's a no-brainer. It'll give mostly good mileage and small upgrades can make it stand out from a dull crowd of Toyotas no one wants to look at twice. Get the JDM model for a more appropriate interior, manual gearbox would be perfect as auto sometimes has issues.

Better than buying...
A used Toyota Corolla. Or even a recon Toyota Axio. The Civic is more engaging to drive. Looks better, too. You'll stand out.

What can go wrong?
The front suspension setup and steering box - Civics from the EG, EK and ES generations are notorious for having the weakest ball joints ever fitted to a car, or so it seems. Expect to hear plenty of noises from the front of the car at regular intervals - replaced parts will last you about 6 months or so if you have a habit of not giving a damn about potholes or speed bumps. To make them last longer, get the genuine Japanese ball joints/steering and treat the car like a child's dolly when going over bumps. The power window motors might give occasional problems as well.

What performance upgrades can be done?
D15B VTEC will serve all purposes well and has decent power on tap. Honda B-series motors are very easy fits, with instant VTEC power and rev-happiness. K20A would the mental (and hugely expensive) swap. To make it a potent machine, brake (rear discs at least) and suspension/handling upgrades are absolute must.

What exterior upgrades make it stand out?
Give it a nice set of wheels, get LED taillights and smoke headlights, lower the car. All you'd need, really. The stock Ferio bodykit on JDM models is more than enough. Subtle roof spoiler and rubber lips will make it more squat.

How much will it cost?
Don't pay more than **7,50,000** Taka for one in absolutely mint condition. The JDM models have less equipment on offer, but might be in better shape generally, so get that if a sunroof isn't a vital part of your plans.

Prices of typical parts:

- Front shocks: 18,000 TK.
- Rear shocks: 12,000 TK.
- Ball joints: 3,500 TK.
- Headlights: 15,000 TK.
- Taillights: 10,000 TK.
- Foglights: 3,500 TK.
- Engine mounts (set of four): 19,000 TK.

Prices are for brand new parts and are approximate.

Infographic: Shaer Reaz
Illustration: E.R. Ronny

COLLECTIBLES


Audi Quattro 1:24

This week we have the legendary Audi Quattro in 1/24 scale, a car designed only using set squares by a man wearing square lensed glasses. It's a box, but a very appealing looking box thanks to those bulging arches over the wheels suggesting meaty wheels beneath. 205/60VR15 tyres were plenty wide back in 1986. They offer that width on family sedans these days. This car was famous for having a turbo 4WD family car that could also drift across and dominate rally stages and Group B circuits.

This particular model is made by Leo Toys. No, we haven't heard of it much before. Which is surprising because the model is very well detailed. Doors, trunk and hood open to reveal plenty of detail.

Pros:
Super smooth casting creating a very straight body. Take that overpriced, super wavy Maisto. Window frames for open doors and separately molded windshield wipers are a rather nice touch. Excellent engine detail full of all the important bits and thingamajigs. Clear, sharp decals.

Cons:
Headlights look bland with no concave reflector beneath. Tail lights on the real car are smoked

unlike here. Plastic bits such as bumpers have visible mold lines.
Missed out: Those thick dog leg hinges look awkward. Doors could have been spring loaded units that open inside the front fenders like real cars.
Verdict: Brilliant model of a brilliant car at a very reasonable price. Available online for under 2500BDT. Keep an eye out on DCCCB buy/sell group such deals.

WORDS & PHOTOS: E.R. RONNY

AUTO NEWS

C63 S AMG COUPE: BENZ BRUISER

Mercedes Benz have launched the latest in their portfolio of mad luxury sports cars - the 2017 AMG C63 S.

It's powered by a 4.0 litre twin-turbo V8, thundering out 503 horsepower and 516 lb-ft of torque onto the tarmac via a seven speed automatic. The "regular", non-S C63 puts out 469 HP/479 lb-ft torque, while the C63 S holds a commanding lead over rivals - the BMW M3 has a 78 HP deficit in comparison.

The C63 S coupe obviously has less weight compared to the 4-door C63, reaching 60 MPH faster, clocking in at 3.7 seconds. The S also comes with high tech carbon-ceramic brakes, electronically controlled differential, and a Race setting for the drive selector that takes things to a whole new level of madness.

AMG insists the C63 coupe is not just a 4-door C63 with fewer entry points, it's wholly re-engineered to be a proper GT.




1.8 TURBO BOXER 4. 95HP. 124 LB-FT. HUGE POTENTIAL FOR TURNING A GROCERY RUN INTO A RALLY STAGE.

SUBARU BRAT

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