

THE ALL-NEW BMW X1.
STARTING AT 77 LAC*

Inclusive of 5 years Free parts, Repair & Service

Know More

01709 674488, 01709 674489 *Conditions apply

SHIFT

AUTOMOTIVE PUBLICATION OF The Daily Star



People in Bangladesh, especially over-anxious, fidgety teens complain about how there's little else to do in this country other than going out to eat with friends. With some degree of accuracy, one can assume the rapidly expanding guts and overweight kids frequently spotted hanging around the back-roads of Dhaka have some correlation with this lack of activity. Automotive enthusiasts will claim they're of a different sort, that their passion for cars gives them a better lifestyle than those burger fed, cheese-added teenagers. They'll say things like "my manual gearbox keeps my left leg fit", "doing wheelies on my bike keeps my forearm strength up" or something equally obnoxious and inaccurate. However, there might be some truth to it for a special kind of auto enthusiast – the ones willing to stray off the tarmac.

HOONING ABOUT

Off-roading in Dhaka may not seem all that special considering every person out there has driven across Malibagh in a car designed for road use (in my case, a lowered Toyota Vista). When you do it properly though, or at least find a place to go off-roading properly, it can be quite the experience.

When we got in touch with Zaheen Tajowar to feature his Land Rover Defender 110 wagon, there was only one condition: we'd have to take it off-roading, shoot the king of off-roading in its natural habitat. He

agreed, so at 8 AM on a Friday morning (perks of being an automotive journalist - waking up early on weekends to go shoot someone else's car that I can never afford with my salary) we met up with him on 300 feet road in Purbachal and headed to our top secret off-roading track. The sun was out, miniature photographer Farhan was ready with his inadequate equipment, and we were ready for some dirt.

After some initial confusion about how to engage the low range gearbox, this being

Zaheen's first time going off-road properly, we set off deeper into the nearly-deserted stretch of land where the roads hadn't yet been built. The Defender, equipped with skinny tyres and steel wheels, bounded over mounds of dirt and down sloping crests with ease, although if you're uncomfortable outside of your air-conditioned cocoons of luxury, you'd have had a terrible time being lobbed up-down-left-right constantly inside the Land Rover. The basic ruggedness of the Defender and its "go-anywhere" attitude has made it a



global icon, and it's easy to see why the Land Rover is one of the most recognisable automotive shapes all across the globe – the United Nations used the Defender in every role imaginable for over 40 years. It was usurped by the Toyota Land Cruiser in recent years, but Defenders still make up a huge portion of the UN's humanitarian and aid efforts.

What about when the rugged beasts themselves require some TLC? We found out firsthand, as Zaheen's 110 broke down after a few over-ambitious attempts at getting across sizeable drops in terrain. The fuel pump, notorious in petrol powered Defenders for going bust occasionally with overuse, had given up and refused to work. After some head scratching and moaning, Zaheen and I decided we'd leave the rest of the crew with the Defender and walk towards a garage on the main road. On the way, we lost track of where we were, failed at getting a lift from passing trucks, filled our shoes with sand, and when we finally reached the garage after a 45 minute walk

and 10 minute drive in a sleeper 4AGE powered Corolla, we couldn't convince the mechanics to help us out. Instead, we decided to call Land Rover restorer and local expert Asad Moyeen, owner of Motorwerks, the guys who'd helped install the air-conditioning in Zaheen's Defender. He suggested a tip only LR experts would know – tap the fuel pump with a wrench while trying to start the car. With the information relayed back to Zaer Zubab, our resident hater and ricer-extraordinaire who had stayed back with the Defender, we made our way back.

Off-roading in Bangladesh is definitely a hassle. There are so many things that can go wrong in so many ways, it's going to be messy and stressful if you aren't prepared. It's a continuous learning process, but at the end of the day when you're sweaty and covered with a 2-inch layer of dust, you'll have lived.

WORDS: SHAER REAZ
PHOTOS: FARHAN AHMED



WANT TO GO OFF-ROAD BUT DON'T WANT TO BE UNCOMFORTABLE IN AN OLD DEFENDER? GET A...

FORD RANGER XLT

All pickup trucks in Bangladesh are work trucks. Few people look beyond the load carrying capacity and see the pointlessly cool allure of a pickup truck. The Ranger isn't your typical work truck. Padded interiors, plenty of buttons to answer all your comfort needs and a stylised look fit for posing with the sun behind your back. It's that kind of truck: for work and for plenty of play.

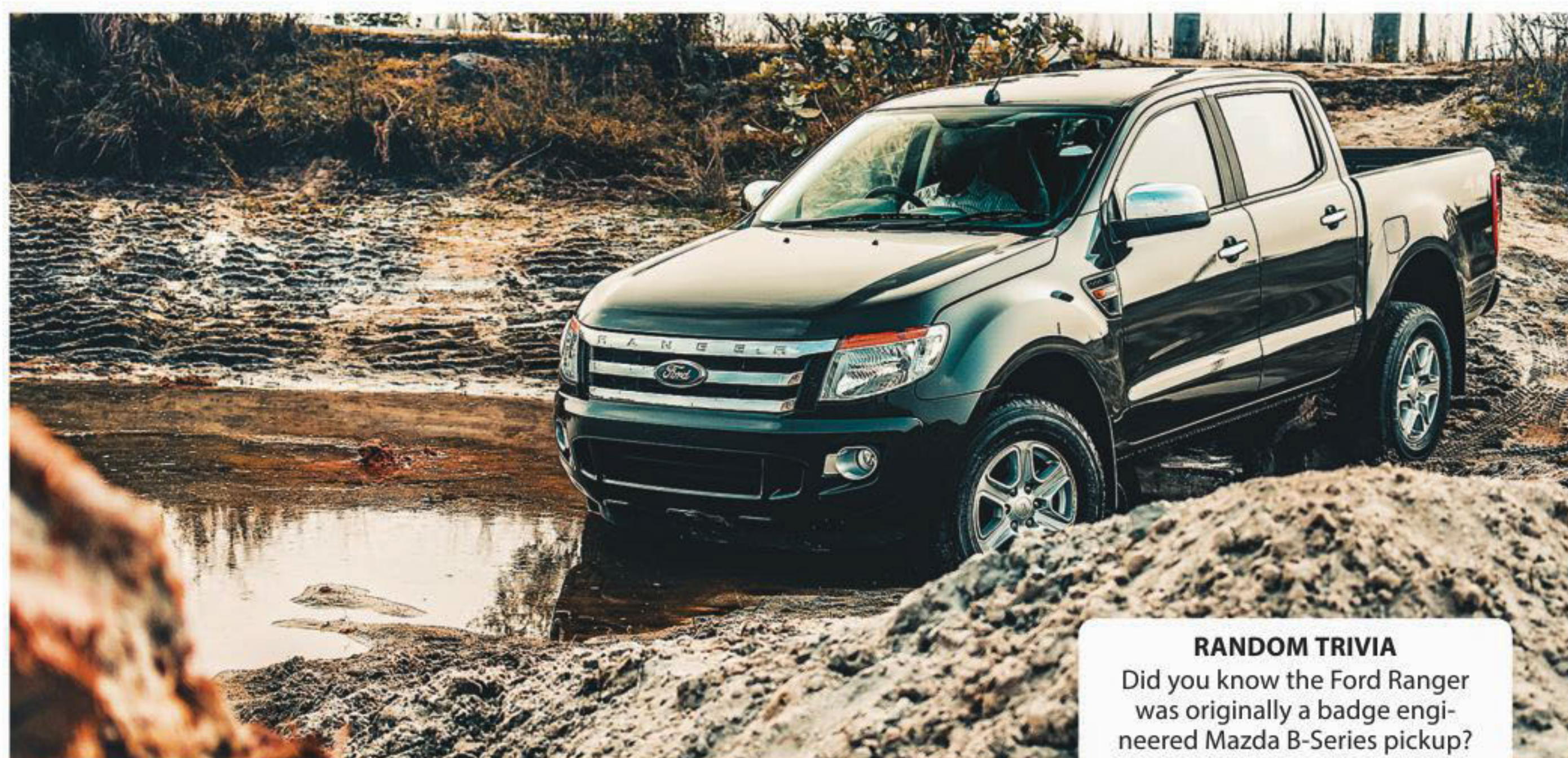
The ones we went to check out all have four-wheel-drive selectable with a knob on the dash and dual range gearing. It's a light truck as well so it should make for easy travelling over most soft terrain. But you would still want to watch out for really soft wet sand. We didn't and we got towed out by Ford's support crew. Mind you, this has the best in class wading depth of 800mm, which we checked rather unknowingly. It works, but you could still get stuck if you don't check your ground conditions first.

SAFETY

You get Bluetooth so your connectivity mostly remains hands-free while driving. Picking the right song still requires you slow, stop and scroll the playlist. It has ABS, stability control and plenty of airbags in case of side, head and frontal collisions. The Ranger is on the top of the safety charts for light pickup trucks with a 5-star NCAP rating.

POWER

A 2.2-litre four-cylinder turbo-diesel throws out about 210 lb/ft of torque, paired to a 5-speed manual. The turbo feels a little reluctant to kick in but progress seems zippy enough especially in a large vehicle such as this. Fuel consumption averages around 12 kmpl with the



manual, which was in our test truck.

HOW DOES IT RIDE?

We had the double cab because everybody goes for the double cab. There is plenty of space up front with decent space in the rear for three people. The controls are kept simple and easy to reach. The Ranger

is built upon a ladder frame chassis with stiff leaf-springs at the rear to manage the load capacity of over one tonne. This means un-laden ride characteristic is a little jittery at the back especially over the terrible roads typical of Bangladesh. But rear passengers are situated right in the centre, meaning the choppiness is mostly

kept far, far to the back. Steering and cornering still appear car-like meaning it won't be a lumbering brute to manage in the middle of city traffic.

WORDS: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY
PHOTOS: RAHIN SADMAN ISLAM

RANDOM TRIVIA
Did you know the Ford Ranger was originally a badge engineered Mazda B-Series pickup?

SPECS: FORD RANGER XLT



ENGINE: 2.2 litre Duratorq 4 cylinder turbo-diesel (118 HP, 210 lb-ft torque).
DRIVETRAIN: 5 speed manual gearbox, Easy Select 4WD with Limited Slip Differential.
SUSPENSION: Independent double wishbone with coil spring (front), leaf springs (rear), 800mm wading depth.
BRAKES: Ventilated disc front, leading and trailing drum rear, ABS, ESP.
FEATURES: CD, MP3, Aux, Bluetooth, 4 speakers with 2 tweeters, SRS airbags, keyless entry, premium fabric seats, power adjustable mirrors, rear window defroster, 17 inch alloy wheels.
PRICE: Starts from 44 lakh taka.

For further details, contact AG Automobiles Ltd.

ALL-NEW XC90
PODIUM FINISH

THE MOST AWARDED SUV OF THE CENTURY

EUROCAR UTARA | TEJGAON

Volvo Bangladesh +880 17292 86586