

ELECTRIC FUTURE

The global auto industry is slowly but surely moving towards an electric revolution – by some estimates, Electric Vehicles (EV), more specifically plug-in vehicles, could account for nearly 30% of all vehicles on the road by 2030 based on current trends and growth figures. While change of such magnitude generally does not sit well with all quarters, it is nonetheless a highly significant time for both petrolheads and general consumers alike – it's not often that you get to witness a technological revolution happening right in front of you. Here's our roundup of the most interesting electric vehicles on sale today – and considering our finance minister has finally clearly defined the import taxes of EVs, you can actually consider buying and driving one in Bangladesh.



FIAT 500E

The 500e doesn't really make much sense for Bangladesh – or indeed, any major city with loads of traffic. It's designed to be a EV city car with only 135 km of range from its 111 HP and 147 lb-ft electric motor and is currently only sold in the free-wheeling states of California and Oregon in the US. Considering its range and practicality, it's doubtful it'll be sold anywhere else, since it'll go through most of its charge sitting in traffic, reducing its range even further. It's a cool little car though, with lots of funky details.



FORD FOCUS ELECTRIC

Boosting your carrying capacity and your environmentally friendly bonus points is Ford's outgoing Focus Electric. An electric 5-door hatch is a fantastic proposition if used as a proper estate car. The 2017 model comes with a 185 km range once you charge it fully, with brisk acceleration delivered from its 143 HP electric motor. It'll also give you the highest MPG_e (Miles per gallon gasoline equivalent) of any electric vehicle sold in the compact class in the US. Worth a look at if you're thinking of importing a practical EV.

NISSAN LEAF

The brand new Nissan Leaf, showcased very recently, has bumped up range from its beefier lithium-ion battery pack and more energy efficient motors. The 147 HP and 236 lb-ft powertrain gives the Leaf 378 km of range, which gives it the dynamic performance you'll need for daily usage. It also comes packed with tech that you'll normally find on high-end gasoline cars – ProPILOT assists in highway driving, ProPILOT Park does your parallel parking for you and ePedal combines all pedal functions into one, whereupon you accelerate, decelerate and hold the car with just your right foot. It's also relatively cheap compared to rivals, so the Leaf is definitely a contender for the Bangladeshi market.



CHEVROLET VOLT

Chevy Bolt's bigger brother, the Volt, was originally designed to take Tesla head-on as a plug-in hybrid, before GM realised they'd been outclassed from the start. That still makes the up-market Volt a great car – you get a tiny 1.4 litre gasoline engine that barely comes in use unless you really need it as a range extender, while a pair of electric motors provide enough thrust for city use. The only hybrid in this list, it makes sense because the Volt is the perfect compromise – low displacement means relatively low import tax, gasoline powerplant gives familiarity and plug in charging means you don't spend as much on fuel as you normally would.



CHEVROLET BOLT

Often overlooked by consumers and currently overflowing reserve lots at dealerships all across the US, GM's mainstream EV is actually a thing of wonder. The Chevy Bolt has been eschewed in favour of the upstart Teslas since it was launched, but the amount of tech and dynamism packed into this egg shaped slice of the future needs to be taken note of. The 200 HP and 266 lb-ft powertrain gives the Bolt 305 km of range, with its cleverly packaged interior swallowing up whatever luggage you throw at it. It's also cheap. If you can get over the fact that it's a GM product, it really IS quite good.



TESLA MODEL X

The Model X SUV has falcon doors in the rear, which are "smart" – they won't open unless they know they won't scrape against stuff. It's an SUV designed for urban transport and comes with a bunch of nifty features that keep you safe, entertained and cocooned in a sleek package of noiselessness. The Model X has an astounding range of 475 km on a single full charge and makes so much sense as a daily driver car that it almost makes you wonder why gasoline was such a dominant force for so long.

BMW i3

The i3 and i8 made big splashes when they were launched a few years ago. They did the world of electric cars a big favour as well – when an extremely recognisable brand makes a pair of capable, cool electric cars, it gives others courage to try it as well. The i3 city car makes a great deal of sense – 200 km of max range from its 168 HP motor gives it more than ideal performance as an urban runabout. It's funky cool and is packed to the brim with typical BMW tech.



TESLA MODEL S

The Model S revolutionised the idea of the electric car with its jaw dropping looks, incredible futuristic tech and superb ability both in terms of range and straight-line performance. Before the Model S, critics dismissed the idea of a "proper" electric vehicle – after countless videos of the Model S completely demolishing other cars in drag races and showing off its 539 km (P100d) range, they've shut up. The figures are equally fantastic – 779 HP and 920 lb-ft torque from a 3-phase AC induction motor means the Model S accelerates like nothing else on earth. Much of the infrastructure that Tesla has developed for the Model S in places like the US and Norway will most likely be utilised for universal use by other electrics in the future, so the S is playing a significant role as the driver of change as well. If you need even more convincing, there are two Model S Teslas in Bangladesh already, so you know it works and functions properly here as well.



But can you actually use an EV in Bangladesh?

We have somewhat warmed up to the idea of environmentally friendly vehicles – both the reconditioned and brand new markets have had hybrid vehicles on sale at some point. Plug-in vehicles are much less common, but considering our recent proposed budget has finally made a proper distinction between plug-in electrics and gasoline hybrids, they are expected to get cheaper. Despite what you might believe, our electric power grid has improved many-fold in the past few

ANYONE GOT A POWER BANK?

BATTERY POWERED ELECTRIC CARS

EXISTING RATE OF SUPPLEMENTARY DUTY: 20%	PROPOSED RATE OF SUPPLEMENTARY DUTY: 25%	CHANGES? +5%
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Okay, you can't really expect to pay only 23% tax on a luxury electric car like the Tesla's Model S. But that's the official figure, and it's stated clearly: battery operated electric motor cars. Last we checked, the Model S is battery powered. It's also electric. So...red or grey?

years, with less power outages and greater coverage. It makes sense to switch from

CNG and petrol powered cars to electric cars – the cost involved in running a car

on electric power is marginally lower with a greater positive impact on our fragile and rapidly degrading environment. As we said before, there are two Tesla Model S being driven around Dhaka – as far as we've heard, they're not facing any problems with their top-of-the-line EV, so there's nothing pointing towards any great difficulties you're liable to face if you decide to go electric. Just make sure you don't go asking around for a thin Nokia charger to top up your EV.

CAR SPOTTING



A pair of clean Toyota Corolla 100s this week as our resident spotter and rooftop sniper makes his way to the ground. Photos: Shadman Al Samee.



Ford's top seller is back – all new F150

The highest selling automobile of all time is back with new tech and increased abilities. Ford's F150 has ruled sales figures and production numbers worldwide for decades thanks to America's fascination with the pickup truck, and it shows no signs of dimming as Ford continues to introduce new models every 2-3 years or so.

The latest F150 comes with all new Power Stroke turbodiesel V6

and new safety features like Pre-Collision Assist and Pedestrian Detection, as well as stop-start tech and better towing abilities thanks to improved engines. The new F150 also gets a range of luxury equipment like king-size seats, better materials and a smooth shifting 10-speed automatic to take the new model above and beyond the old one's traditional workhorse aesthetics.

AUTO NEWS



BMW's big nosed bruiser – X7 Concept

BMW's grilles are growing at an exponential rate. Over the past decade, the BMW kidney grille has stood for each specific model's place in the lineup – the 1-series got the smallest, while the flagship 7 got the largest in the model range. Now, with the X7 SUV concept, the grille is at its largest, signifying a new flagship SUV slotting in above the X5 as a uber-luxury model for those who want more elevation than the 7-series sedan.

There aren't any hints it'll be produced, although the design elements and complete interior suggest it's closer to production than you might think. Along with the sleek new Z4 concept, the X7 represents a bold new direc-

tion of BMW design – gone are the flame surfacing, replaced with slab sides and elegant proportions that neatly incorporate the traditional BMW wheels-at-the-corners layout.

The concept is packed with luxury tech – panoramic roof, dynamic lighting, leather and new-age materials – and the production version is expected to retain most of it.

Even if the X7 doesn't get built, which is unlikely, it's still an exciting prospect. Rolls Royce is rumored to be building up to a uber-luxury SUV as well and if that is indeed the case, then the X7 and the Rolls SUV will surely share components and chassis.

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