



TACKLING THE URBAN JUNGLE

The Land Rover Defender is one of the only cars that can claim to have an instantly recognisable shape. Released at around the time that the British Empire was slowly losing its hold on vast swathes of land all across the globe, the Defender became an icon of the post-Second World War attempts at rebuilding nations and creating new ones. For nearly three decades, the boxy, utilitarian Land Rover brought aid and care to the suffering masses, helped bridge remote locales with civilisation, and sometimes enforced the peace where necessary. From the United Nations to the British Army to hospitals in rural Bangladesh, the Land Rover was seen and heard by millions of people across all social divides and social classes.

The Defender you're seeing today is seen and heard by high school students and teachers at coaching centres all across Dhaka. The sticky heat of the forests of the Congo have been replaced with the sticky heat that emanates from hormonal teens scared of professing their love for one another. The swamps and the waterlogged savannahs have been traded for impenetrable traffic jams and impassable potholes. Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to what might be one of the few daily driven Defenders in Bangladesh – that too, an open top, black as the night piece.

We caught up with its owner, Navid Neel, high school kid and old-school enthusiast, and asked him what it's like owning a daily driven Defender.

Why do you like the Defender? How often do you use it? What is it like driving on Dhaka roads?

"I love the Defender because I saw one being used on the farm in Shaun the Sheep, a cartoon I grew up watching. I've wanted a Defender ever since. I do all my classes everyday with the Defender and roam around the city with my friends on week-ends. Potholes are never a concern when driving an off-road legend, and I have to say it really is fun driving such a car in Dhaka."

Is it better to have an open top Defender or a closed shell one? What are the mechanicals?

"Soft top Defenders are head-turners, especially on roads filled with Prem-allions. Currently it has a 2.5 litre 300 TDI diesel

engine with 5 speed manual, worked on by Sujan Hannan at MARM Automobiles."

What is the maintenance cost like?

Fuel costs? What breaks down most often?

"Zero. Literally ZERO. Gives around 5-6 kmpl inside Dhaka. The clutch plate is the only thing that requires regular replacement, along with the basic maintenance which doesn't cost much at all."

What accessories are necessary for daily driving an open top Defender?

"Shades are a must. Always need to carry clutch oil (DOT4 brake oil)."

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PHOTOS: FARHAN AHMED



Gumpert's intense emotions

When a bunch of ex-Audi engineers leave a big brand and decide to forge ahead with their own hypercar manufacturing startup, how long do you expect them to last? Most sane people with even a modicum of business sense would say that hypercars aren't profitable enough and the business would go bust in maybe 2-3 years.

Not the case with Gumpert. Decidedly owning the terrible name and possibly the ugliest hypercar ever produced, Gumpert is still managing to put out a new model of their flagship, the Apollo.

Now called the Apollo IntensaEmozione, the ugly, snouty design of the original Apollo has been given a gracefully mean makeover. Part

Mazda Furai and part Lamborghini Veneno, the final result is far better than the zany designs produced by major manufacturers recently. The naked carbon, the winglets and scoops all work together, giving the Apollo IE a purity and a sense of purpose that seems to be missing from recent hypercars like the AMG Project One. You know, just by looking at it, that this wheeled monstrosity will tear your face off if you don't respect it.

Here are the facts: 6.3 litre naturally aspirated V12, 780 HP, 560 lb-ft torque, 1350 kg of downforce at 300 km/h, Brembo carbon-ceramic brakes. The entire chassis weighs just 105 kg.

Big engine, incredible power, massive aero and super light. Quite the combo.



AUTO NEWS

2018 Toyota Land Cruiser



A common preference for the social elite of Dhaka, the Toyota Land Cruiser has served faithfully as the chariots of the rich and powerful for more than six decades now. The Land Cruiser Prado was the slightly smaller, slightly cheaper younger sibling to the full bore Land Cruiser, and found its niche in tax heavy third world markets like ours, where affording a V8 Land Cruiser means dishing out so much cash that it makes the Range Rover a viable alternative.

Good news then, since Toyota is bringing back the Prado. Designed for the European and Asian markets, the 2018 Land Cruiser doesn't yet bear the name "Prado", although we are likely to see the name reappear on grey market recondition imports from Japan.

Under the hood, the new LC comes with a choice of 2.8 D4-D direct injection 4-cylinder diesel, 2.7 VVT-i 4-cylinder petrol and 4.0 Dual VVT-i petrol V6 engines. The diesel and the petrol motors will be the ones likely

brought into Bangladesh, since the tax for the 4.0 litre model is going to be prohibitively high. Still, not like the 4-cylinder motors don't produce enough power – the 2.8 D4-D puts out 177 HP and 272 lb-ft torque, while the 2.7 VVT-i manages 161 HP and 181 lb-ft torque. The usual amenities of a large SUV are to be expected.



COLLECTIBLES



1998 Lotus Esprit V8 Turbo by Autoart

Lotus always made fun, quirky, light and fast cars. They weren't always known for their reliability though, earning the acronym 'Lots Of Trouble Usually Serious'. The most recognisable Lotus was the wedge shaped Esprit that changed little in silhouette over nearly 30 years. In 1996 the 3.5 twin turbo V8 was released, pumping out about 350bhp.

Autoart released the 1998 model in 1:18 and 1:43 scale. The smaller one is still officially available from their site for \$40. The real beauty is the 1:18, complete with pop up lights, a carpeted interior and small hinges for the hood and trunk. It's discontinued but goes for about \$100 on eBay. The dashboard features lovely woodgrain and switchgear that can be easily read. The engine bay does have a very detailed motor but like the real thing, it is hidden under stylised meshes and a red cover. One issue I've found is the spring-loaded headlights do not quite sit flush.

The yellow with black interior is quite possibly the best of the lot but the red is also quite rare. This one came in for a few repairs from another collector - Rubab Momen of DCCCB. The black one is coming soon for my own set and features a tan interior, which unfortunately looks a little like plastic.

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