

Karl Benz, the German credited with making the first working internal combustion engine and revolutionising the motorised vehicle forever, was probably just tired of using horses. With time (more than a century of it), enough examples of cars were made that one could predict the characteristics of a car based on the people that made them. So when a German invents a motorised vehicle, you'd probably be right in assuming he's just looking to save time and energy and dispense with the horsing around that seems to eat up so much of his time.

Nowadays, you can guess, to some fair degree of accuracy, which nation built what car—based on how they feel, drive and generally behave. If it has large cupholders and there's more of them than there are seats, it's most likely made where milkshake cups are the size of oil barrels and Burger King is king. If it keeps beeping at you and reminds you 200 days in advance that it's scheduled for a service or else it'll start Blitzkrieging the nearest workshop, it's most likely a European powerhouse. If it's easy to park and goes out of its way to provide you space and utility, it's an overly courteous Asian. These vaguely racist, generalised statements DO make sense in the real world—cars are made for and by people using design principles that make sense to them.

And now, with Bangladesh slowly heading towards manufacturing its own cars, it's high time we define those design principles. We already assemble cars, so the day isn't far off when we do our own design for our very own car. What will it look like? How will it perform? What message will it convey to the rest of the world about our national heritage?

For one, it'll be hugely problematic to identify the issues with the car when it undoubtedly breaks down.

The gauges will tell you nothing's wrong, but the smoke emanating from the engine bay will be a clear giveaway. Once it is absolutely impossible to deny it any longer, the car will blame the owner's previous vehicle for all its present troubles—for the purposes of illustration, a handy "Check Previously Owned Vehicle's Engine" light can be included. It'll most likely require a mandatory service every five years, where the service centre will take a cursory look at the mechanical components and declare the car fit for another five years of duty, while conveniently ignoring the thousands of rats chewing through the brake lines right under their noses. On activating cruise control, it'll be stuck at 7.1 km/h, and constantly remind you at convenient intervals how the car is making steady progress. It might even be a hybrid employing super-critical technology, where the alternative hybrid power will come from the steady feet of hired help, pushing your chariot to its destination and leaving only natural gas in its wake.

A neat feature for our roads would be the duplicated designs for front and rear—for turning those pesky trips down the wrong side into wholly legal joyrides of convenience. When you aren't utilising the aforementioned feature, though, you'd be perfectly happy looking at the rev counter, which will be reversed

between two extremes—"progress" and "stagnancy"—and will vary depending on whether you're moving or stuck in traffic. Free roads and open highways, where your car can attain significant speed, will be labelled as "stagnancy", while being stuck in traffic will be a sign of "progress" because everyone can now drive cars and clog up the roads. At least you'll be perfectly cushioned, as the car will be equipped with the world's greatest suspension system so you can absolutely ignore the gaping potholes on the road. And if you DO manage to commit any offence on the road,

the loose change holder will be conveniently placed under the front driver side door handle, within easy reach of our esteemed law enforcement.

Whether this greatest-of-all-cars will be popular on a global scale or not will depend largely on the marketing, where delusions of grandeur and bold claims will definitely make it a popular product in the post-fact age. The world will be our oyster and our locally designed car will be the king of the road. Onwards, Bangladesh!

*Shaer Reaz is in-charge of Shift, automobile publication of The Daily Star.*

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# THE WORLD'S FIRST BANGLADESHI DESIGNED CAR IS HERE, AND ITS FANTASTIC

SHAER REAZ



ILLUSTRATION: SHAER REAZ

## মাদার নতুন নাম

কালার গার্ড

কাপড়ের রঙকে রাখে  
নতুনের মতো ঝকঝকে

মাল্টি বুস্টার

কাপড়ের যে কোন দাগ-  
ময়লাকে নিমিষেই দূর করে

সবচেয়ে ফাস্ট, সবচেয়ে কার্যকরী ..