

SHIFT

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13 CUP HOLDERS, 2 MEN AND A TOYOTA RUSH TOYOTA RUSH 2018

TEST DRIVE

What is it?
Toyota and Daihatsu went and redesigned their aging five-door crossover into something resembling what people wanted: a not-so-mini SUV.

What was it?
The Rush was a badge engineering exercise in 1997 between Daihatsu and Toyota to save costs on a car that should have been very cheap to begin with. It wasn't, at least not in Bangladesh. Last we reviewed a grey market 2011 model that was being sold in 2013 for an eye watering TK 28 lakh. Yes, for a car that was basically a hatchback with added ground clearance.

It was a tiny car for the first two generations. It managed to squish in four adults and offered a choppy, uncomfortable ride thanks to the short wheelbase and stiff suspension. Want to know what 'jhalhuri' feels like? Go fast over Niketan's pocked roads. All that for 28 lakhs that people liked to call a small SUV. It wasn't even close to an SUV. Although the second gen was available with a 4WD system that I've never seen in Bangladesh. It was zippy for a city car though and the ground clearance meant you could run over most things on the road. But it was not much of a car.

Does the new one look the part?
Yes. Wow. They have actually outdone themselves. The new design looks very well sorted out and resembles a small SUV. The dimensions are all there. You have a pointy snout and a tapered cabin section that slopes down to the tail. The wheels are tucked into very bulging arches that give it a more purposeful look than it may be capable of. Some may refer to it as a baby Fortuner and that is a great thing for those wanting a small SUV. It finally looks like something the buyers want.

Does it have the go-go bits?
It has a 220mm ground clearance. We did the difficult math for you and it's 8.6 inches, more than any awkward hidden speed breaker our government can make during monsoon. More height than you can ever get your Allion to rise with 'baati' suspension. It also has a wading depth of 600mm (close to two feet) which is terrific news because our roads go under water whenever there is a rain and dance number on TV.

The upturned bottom of the front bumper means you get a 31-degree approach angle to slopes. We have seen some nasty slopes on apartment building where most cars scrape their bumpers. You can't keep a new Rush out of these poorly designed apartment buildings. The body is also bolted directly onto the chassis like most SUVs which may be a little old school, but it makes it much easier to



repair in case of serious shunts. Unlike a more capable off-roader, this only comes with 2WD powering the rear wheels.

How is it inside?
There is a lot of plastic. You won't notice that till you start poking things. There is just a lot of hard plastic with embossed stitching. On plastic. See? I cannot get over it. At first glance it looks like there is a lot of artificial leather but tap it and be amazed. Whatever happened to padded surfaces like in older Corollas? Admittedly, this will be way more durable and easier to wash and clean off the lighter colours.

Aside from the hard plastic, the design is very well sorted. It is very standard layout but it is also one that works. You have an infotainment system, digital controls for aircon and pleasantly bright dials on the dash.

The big new change here are the seven seats. Seats are comfortable, firm but rather flat. That helps in the rear which still isn't

made for three WIDE adults. But one person can sit in the middle while grumbling, which was almost impossible in the older Rush. The rear seats are accessed through the rear door by lowering the centre row and then pretending you are a bit of an Olympic level gymnast. My photographer and I are moderately slim and we jumped easily in and out. But our rather well rounded sub-editor, who you will see doing weird things on video, managed to climb in huffing and puffing like a fairy tale wolf. Perfectly sized for children, complete with seat belts.

When you do not want to punish your heavy friends, those benches can be laid flat, creating a massive boot space. It has 609 litres of space without the seats folded down. And if you are looking for more storage spaces, this thing has 13 cup holders. Or did we miss a few? This car is trying to tell you that you need to stay hydrated in this hot weather.



How does it ride?
You no longer feel like 'jhalhuri'. The suspension is stiff to accommodate seven people. And the rear gets bouncy but you will be putting your least favourite people in there anyway. The steering is very light while the seating position offers a commanding view over the road. The power comes from a 1.5 litres engine mated to a four speed automatic. It has 103 HP and offers 101lb-ft of torque. The automatic is a little lazy and won't respond quickly to your throttle inputs—much like how the office responds to my requests for buying pizza every day for lunch. You will have to mash it to get it to quickly accelerate.

The tall ride height gives it a bit of body roll which is normal. But it always felt stable. It felt stable enough to try making a few small donuts on a sandy flat area after turning the traction off. Road and engine noise creeps in as you hit beyond 80km/h.

SPECS

Engine: 1.5 litre Dual VVT-i 2NR 4-cylinder petrol (103 HP @6000 RPM, 101 lb-ft @4200 RPM)
Transmission: 4 speed automatic, RWD.
Safety: 6 airbags, ABS, EBD, TRC, Brake Assist, Vehicle Stability Control, Hill-start Assist, parking sensors, 5-star ASEAN NCAP rating.
Features: Dual air-conditioning system with heater, multi-function steering wheel, infotainment system with reverse camera, CD/MP3/USB/AUX, 8 speakers, USB charging, 13 cup-holders.

Price: Starting from TK38,50,000. For details and availability, contact Navana Ltd.

How much fuel does it consume?
Our test wasn't long enough to give an accurate fuel economy reading. We pushed it mercilessly and left it started with AC on for most photo shoot takes. Yet it still showed a decent 7.2 km/l reading. Which you will improve upon normal driving.

What else?
It has a nice audio system equipped with eight speakers. Every row comes with a USB charger so your devices can be always juiced while you are stuck in traffic. And here is a cool feature you will surely appreciate: the centre row has its own roof mounted blower for additional cool air. Cool.

Verdict
Has Toyota hit the right buttons? The Rush looks good from most angles. It appears the right amount of muscular that we all want in a sort-of SUV. The ground clearance makes it capable of handling poor road conditions and it has a tons of safety feature including six airbags and a 5-star ASEAN NCAP crash rating. It will seat seven people of various sizes comfortably while still offering plenty of storage. While it has a decent engine, it won't really Rush, so to speak. But then that is not what it is made for despite the name. What it misses out in outright power, it makes up for in styling, size and utility. Finally, Toyota has an excellent, everyday mini SUV for those not ready to jump to a Fortuner.

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AUTO NEWS

Hyundai Tucson gets fresh face for EU



Hot on the trail of the redesigned Santa Fe comes the new iteration of the smaller, more popular Tucson. Although limited to a facelift for the European Union, we're most likely to see the cosmetic changes reflected in the global markets, including Bangladesh. The face is sleeker with more seamlessly integrated LED headlights, while a lower but wider grille reduces the visual height of the Tucson's front end. The rear gets a single-side twin-tip exhaust, along with new taillight clusters and a hip-line that accentuates the rear door. The interior is more of the same—decent build quality, ergonomic design and durable materials. No news on whether the drive-train upgrades are going to be reflected globally.

The Tucson is a good seller both home and abroad, and we hope Hyundai Motors Bangladesh Ltd. brings in the facelifted Tucson before the current model gets replaced.

2019 Suzuki Vitara-efficient engines for hot prospect

The last generation of the Vitara sold in Bangladesh was a handsome, square jawed SUV that had a surprising level of off-road ability. It was fairly well-built and had its merits, but it was a design from the early 2000s—having aged well, Suzuki didn't bother replacing it. Till now.

The new Vitara takes cues from more modern urban-lifestyle inspired SUVs, with a more rounded design and sleeker, funkier styling. Underneath the modern

exterior lies a couple of brand new engines that should excite displacement concerned Bangladeshi buyers—1.0 litre and 1.4 litre Boosterjet turbo petrol 4-cylinder motors will mean lower tax brackets and a decent on-the-showroom price. Provided Suzuki brings it over, that is. The jury's still out on interior quality and driving dynamics though—two of the biggest factors keeping Suzuki slightly lagging behind other Japanese manufacturers at the moment.



COLLECTIBLES



Made in Bangladesh pride 1/18 SUBARU IMPREZA

When you think of things made in Bangladesh, your mind no doubt reverts to plastic "chairman" chairs, plastic buckets, plastic mugs and generally things made of plastic. So when you come across a high-end, albeit closed shell, 1/18 scale model made from die-cast metal, it's bound to be a source of pride. Made by Altaya in a factory somewhere in the EPZs of Bangladesh, this 1/18 casting offers impeccable paint-finish, decal accuracy, minute details in the otherwise inaccessible interior (like accurate lettering on the belts, floor mounted fire-extinguishers, and gauges) as well as the kind of weight associated with much higher end models. The closed shell and non-steerable front wheels are enough to bump

it down to a price that's much more affordable than the similarly built-but-open-model Autoart version. Paying close to TK 5,000 for a new one might scare you off from getting a closed shell, but the "Made in Bangladesh" lettering on the otherwise non-descript packaging is a good justification. Alongside the blob-eye GD Subaru Impreza rally car, the Altaya series also has a fantastic GC8 Impreza, both decked out in full Subaru World Rally Car livery and bearing some of the most iconic names in rallying history—Peter Solberg and Colin McRae included. If you want some rallying history and bright livery gracing your display shelves, these come highly recommended.