

PROJECT CARS



If you have seen our feature on the Tesla Model S P100D a couple of weeks ago, you'd know what an insanely capable zero-fuel-drinking, no noise making, earth saving acceleration monster that thing is. This week, we have something very different, something that emphasises pure driving pleasure combined with above average handling dynamics, despite being low on power.

This week, we are going to talk about a globally loved platform—the Toyota GT86. This car has been dubbed “the national sports car” of Bangladesh—obviously, because there are so many of them. What else can you buy that looks this good and performs like it does under 50 lakh Taka? After Toyota halted production of the Celica, there was a gap in Toyota's lineup of sports cars. Bangladeshi buyers are very loyal to Toyota, and it is proven by the massive number of Toyota GT86 imports once Toyota took help from Subaru to develop the boxer powered RWD coupe.

Amongst the hundreds of units that zoom across the streets of Dhaka, there are only a handful that have been turned up to eleven. The Jackson Racing supercharger casually wrapping itself around the manifold of this beautiful green unit suggests that this has indeed been turned up to eleven.

The exterior of the car is adorned by original Modellista front lip, side skirts, rear body kits and a TRD spoiler. The car is coated in British Racing Green, and no amount of automotive literature can tell you how majestic this color looks in person. The 86 looks absolutely stunning from a design standpoint—long hood, short deck, perfect wheelbase that just makes it look right. The car sits on 17 inch Volk TE37s wrapped around 245 section Zestino semi-slick tyres.

The exterior is great, but it doesn't tell you how

well set up this car is on the inside. In stock form, a majority of the people complain that this car doesn't have enough power, but the owner Shafquat feels the car finally has the power that it looks like it should have from the factory. Under the hood lies a Jackson Racing Supercharger, the only forced induction GT86 project that has been successfully completed locally. All of the boosting is managed by an aftermarket engine control unit from EcuTek, and has been tuned by DeliciousTuning, famous for all things modern Subaru.

On the interior, not much has been changed visually, but the ergonomics have been improved massively. The owner has upgraded clutch springs that give much better feedback than its stock counterpart, and almost every bushing in the shifter and clutch assembly has been replaced to give an overall tighter feeling.

For suspension the owner has Tein Flex-A coilovers with EDFC motors, which can adjust the dampening on demand with an interior mounted controller. The driver's side AC vent has been removed to support a gauge to show the car's vital parameters like engine and oil temperature.

The car is immensely capable on the road. No matter how much wrinkled laundry the owner manages to throw at the car, they all come out of the other side pressed and neatly folded. First, second, third gear and we are already well above speeds that will get me grounded if my mother finds out. The EDFC system makes the suspension adapt very well to our road conditions. One press of a button, and it feels like a comfortable economy cruiser. Another press, and your back is ready to give out from being in proximity to a set of race tuned, ultra-stiff coilovers.

It adjusts the stiffness of your ride on the go, and should be very convenient on the track in different conditions. The owner has found a sweet spot, where it is soft enough to soak up bumps yet stiff enough to effortlessly glide through a corner. It makes for a moderately comfortable ride that does not misalign the discs in your vertebrae but still brings out all the fantastic handling characteristics of the 86 on the road.

“I want a car that is capable of being a perfect daily driver, even if I don't drive it daily.” Shafaquat's philosophy stood out to me, because it is a very unique way of going about the game of automotive customisation. Shafaquat is so serious in this philosophy that he hasn't moved to an aftermarket exhaust system yet. He does plan on getting one eventually though. The car is calm and composed, tranquil, even. The best compliment I can give the car is that it feels like it should have come like this from the factory. There's no way of telling that the car is supercharged—on idle and across most of the rev range, the centrifugal supercharger makes little to no noise. When the owner steps off the throttle, the rattle snake-esque blow-off sound and the amount of grunt this car has on throttle is the only way to tell that this car is far from what originally came out of Gunma, Japan. And there you go, we managed to feature a Toyota GT86 without its famous predecessor, the AE86 Trueno, or the anime that made it famous, Initial D. You're welcome. Wait...

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9TH GEN BMW 7-SERIES LAUNCHED

BMW's flagship luxury sedan is back for a ninth generation and has officially hit Dhaka streets. Launched at the Executive Motors showroom on September 12, the new 745 Le x-Drive is an AWD, 3.0 litre inline six (394 HP, 600 NM torque combined) powered behemoth of plug-in hybrid luxury. There's surround sound (courtesy of Harman Kardon), 360 degree cameras, display keys, Executive Lounges (think first class seats on airplanes), subtle ambient lighting, gesture control, heated and massaging seats, M-sports pack (bodykit, wheels) as well as your very own tablet so you can control all these features without ever having to reach for buttons like a mere peasant. If there's one word that describes luxury in motion, try 7. Oh wait, that's a number. Here's a few more: 2,50,00,000 Taka starting price.

PHOTO: AHBAAR MOHAMMAD

AUST engineering seminar held

“Automobile Engineering and AUST: Past, Present and Future” was held on September 16 at Ahsanullah University of Science & Technology. Organised by the Department of Mechanical and Production Engineering, the seminar showcased the success of their students in various international competitions and discussed career opportunities on this sector in Bangladesh.



One Hummer H3, one Russian, one world tour

Meet Vladislav Sherengovskiy. He has been on the road for 45 countries so far and he's looking to travel the rest of it in his yellow Hummer H3 (follow his road-trip on his Instagram @becauseiamyellow. In late August, he touched down in Bangladesh and last week, we caught up with him to have a chat.

Tell us about yourself. What profession were you in before you became a world traveller?

I have been a businessman all my life. I start up a business, develop it, and then sell it for a profit. It is my main profession. Right now I'm partnered up with someone to invest in the film industry.

What made you want to travel the world?

There is a story behind the Hummer. I bought it in the US 11 years ago and used it to search for my grandfather, who was living in a different country at the time. It was a nice three week journey that was full of surprises. I started to travel more after that and one day I thought OK, travelling the world is not impossible. I should just organize a little bit and do it.

How are you financing the trip and what's involved in planning it?

99% of it comes from my businesses and savings, but I'm also planning to open a travelling coffee shop. My world trip is divided into seven parts and so far I have completed my Europe and Balkan tours, visiting 45 countries in the process. The Asia tour is the third part. After I finish it, I'll spend three months at home, preparing for the next part. Then I'll go to tour Africa, which will take about a year.

Have you faced any difficulty in border crossings? What is the one experience that stands out in Bangladesh?

Not much difficulty in crossing borders, but some crossings took longer than the others. The longest one was in Bangladesh, coincidentally—it took five hours



in Benapole. When I was in Chattogram, I really wanted to visit the place where they break up ships. I wanted to visit it even before I started my trip. But even after multiple tries I found it impossible because it was restricted area. However, while I was returning from some Sunset Point one day, I came across someone whose car was stuck in a swamp. He had been trying to get out for a few hours without any luck. I helped him out with my car and he invited to me to have dinner with him in his restaurant. During dinner, I met some people who said they could help me get access to the ship-breaking yard. The next day

gave me an exclusive tour and showed me everything: how it works, how they buy, how they sell, how they cut up the ship, etc. It was quite interesting.

When I was preparing for my trip in Bangladesh, I actually didn't find many information about the country in Russia. People kept saying “Why are you going to Bangladesh? It's dangerous!” I even had to put protective film on the windows so if someone tries to break in, it will be hard to steal something. Now I see that it was not needed. People here are really nice!
Why the Hummer H2? What have you done to it in preparation?

The Hummer is a choice not by logic or brain, it's a choice by heart. Although it's a very tough and comfortable car, it's not about logic. You know the feeling when you go home and park your car, turn around for a second and think “Damn, that's a nice car”? After 11 years I still feel that. All in all, I can't explain it.

As for preparation, for every trip it is different. For Asia, I added additional fuel cans, and a bicycle for places that are inaccessible with the car. For Africa I will take off the roof tent and install solar panels. *Considering this car has a 6.0 Vortech engine, did you face any issue with fuel economy and high altitudes?*

The cost of fuel is not that important if I drive the car for long distances—rather, shipping costs tend to be the biggest costs incurred. Besides, the fuel economy is not as bad as people say it is. I think it's around 20-30% more than average. But for that compromise I can use any quality petrol from any country and the engine will eat everything without any complaint.

The car breathes fine but there is another problem. My car is so heavily loaded from souvenirs that I actually don't like driving in hilly areas as it is difficult to drive in that kind of terrain with so much weight.

Where to next?

India, then Sri-lanka.

Special thanks to i-Works Ltd. and Auto Rebellion.

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