

British heritage, Chinese production 2020 MG HS

ZARIF FAIAZ



PHOTO CREDIT: AHBAAR MOHAMMED

What's an MG?

Although an icon of the British motoring industry, the Morris Garage is not a familiar badge in these parts of the globe. Founded in 1924, this Morris-car-dealer-turned-performance-branch-turned-independent-carmaker was best known for their two-door performance coupes.

The company had quite a wild history, it was swallowed up by the ill-fated British Leyland in 1968, handed over to British Aerospace in 1986 after BL's collapse, bought by BMW in 1994, who left it to dry in 2000. After a failed attempt at revival, what's left of the brand was bought by the Chinese Nanjing Automobile Group, which itself merged with Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation (SAIC) in 2007.

If you're scratching your head, here's a summary. MG is a British sports car maker currently owned by a Chinese company and now makes cars that are more practical than sporty.

The new MG HS is a definitive testament to the fact that Morris Garage really wants to shade off its sports car manufacturer tag and shift its focus to volume sales. The latest SUV from MG boasts a fantastic interior, drives fairly well, and is packed with tech that sometimes can get overwhelming. We drove it, so you don't have to. Unless, of course, we convince you to get one. Read on to find out what we have to say.

The design

Elegantly generic, if you forgive the oxymoron. The design of the HS is pretty much what comes to mind when you think of a modern SUV, a big plus if you're not the flaunting type. The front is restrained and conservative, while the body is free of the bizarre lines found in other—generally Korean—brands. Ride height is decent thanks to the 18-inch alloy wheels, making it quite competent for the streets of Dhaka.

The car uses LED on all sides, a rare feature in this price point. The "SAIC"

letters can be found on all the windows and both head and tail lamps, reminding you that this British car is in fact made in China. Which somewhat flies into the face of local MG marketing, which often touted such bold claims as the marque being "As British as Fish and Chips".

What's inside

For a medium segment SUV, the interior of the MG HS is beyond impressive. The seats are comfortable, well suited for cruising on a long road trip, the grip on the steering wheel, wrapped in tactile leather, is a pleasure to hold on to, and the dashboard and the doors are fitted



with swathes of faux leather and soft-touch plastic. There's an ambient lighting feature that comes as an added bonus. The panoramic opening sky roof is a nice touch as well.

There's a large 10.1-inch touch-screen infotainment system at the centre of the dashboard and the features on it are easy to use. However, the air conditioning controls are accessed through the infotainment screen instead of physical switches or buttons, which we thought was an odd quirk and may take some time to get used to.

Speaking of features, the SUV is full of them. Powered and heated seats, 360 camera, digital instrument cluster, electronic handbrake, and many more. For driving, the MG pilot suite includes speed limit assist, adaptive cruise control, blind-spot detection, high beam, traffic jam, and lane-keep assists are only a few of the features that we've discovered so far. Getting used to all the tech of the car will take a few days. However, we particularly found the blind spot detection and intelligent speed limit assist pretty useful if you're looking for a safe drive in the city.

SPECS

ENGINE: 1.5T- Turbo Charged GDI 4-Cylinder (162PS, 184 lb-ft of torque)

TRANSMISSION: Seven-speed dual-clutch, FWD

SAFETY: MG Pilot suite, ABS with EBS, front, side and curtain airbags, 360 camera, blind spot monitor

FEATURES AND OPTIONS:

Ambient lighting, panoramic sunroof, daytime running lights, 6 speaker audio system, powered seats, multifunction leather steering wheel

PRICE: 39.50 LAC

As for visibility, the lean windscreen pillars, large side windows, and large side-view mirrors do a fairly good job, only to be let down by the exceptionally low mounted rear-view mirror that blocks a good portion of the view—particularly problematic for tall drivers. The seats also don't go low enough, although can be adjusted in six ways and includes lumbar support.

The seats on both front and back have more than enough leg space for a comfortable ride and the rear cargo compartment has a large enough storage

space. There's an additional covered storage area beneath the boot floor that holds a spare space saver wheel and basic repair kit.

How it drives

Depends on what drive mode you're on. The HS has four, Eco, Normal, Sport, and Custom. The Normal mode is ideal for urban driving and makes for a smooth and fun driving experience. The car handled speedbumps pretty well and the additional parking sensors come in handy when squeezing in a tight space. The blind spot detector was a fine feature that would really help out urban drivers against rowdy motorcycles, CNGs and rickshaws.

At the sport mode, the SUV picks up quick from low revs. The cornering and brakes were smooth and the suspension system strikes a good balance between comfort and handling. There's a big red button on the steering wheel that you engage without fiddling with the drive mode selector. We strongly recommend against pressing it after a long day at work.

What we really liked though, was how quiet the car was, even at cruising speeds. One disappointment we had with the HS is its lack of 4WD, which we thought was a big miss out.

The other two features are Eco, which is similar to the Normal mode and the Driver Customisable mode for the true petrolheads.

Verdict

MG HS is the ideal family car that focuses heavily on luxury, comfort and space but also doesn't shy away from upholding its sports heritage. The only thing to consider should be the visibility issue. Other than that, the MG HS offers a good value for money and is definitely a ride worth considering.

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GRADUATES TALK

Are unpaid internships worth your time?

OISHEE EERADA MAUDUD

There has been an exponential increase in the number of unpaid internships in recent times. Doing internships has long been a way for students to gain some real-world experience before entering the job market. Internships should be educational and help students understand if they would like to pursue a career in that particular field. On the other hand, interns do have to work for the organisation, even if it is not to the extent that full-time employees do. Hence, the rise of unpaid internships has incited some debate.

Students who commit to unpaid internships often do it in hopes of the internship helping their career after graduation. But do unpaid internships pay off in terms of better career prospects?

Benefits of unpaid internships

The most prominent benefit is work experience.

justice system," she said. "UNODC Bangladesh is a small office and therefore I had tons of opportunities to learn. We simultaneously worked with the UNODC HQ's national projects as well as global projects. I feel this sort of exposure to a truly international environment is rare, especially in Bangladesh. I am currently at a corporate law firm, which is quite a leap from the UNODC. While the content is not similar per se, I feel the administrative and logistical know-how that I learnt from UNODC will be useful for any sector I will be contributing to."

The other side of the coin

Unpaid internships are not just unpaid; they cost the interns money. As Karim (pseudonym), currently a territory officer at a renowned multinational, said, "Going to Mirpur DOHS from Shantinagar regularly for my internship at a social business incubator was a heavy hit to

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by free labour.

As for whether unpaid internships do have positive outcomes, as per a study by ILO, paid internship opportunities are associated with better outcomes compared to unpaid ones. This may be because companies that offer paid internships may be doing so to recruit well-performing interns in the future. It could also be because the payment relieves interns of the need to find a second job for the income, hence spreading themselves too thin.

Furthermore, a study on the impact of unpaid internships on job-hunting success by the National Association of Colleges and Employers has found a negative relationship between participation in unpaid internships, and the students' salary and employment outcomes. Participation in unpaid internships is correlated with longer searches for jobs, too.

To do or not to do unpaid internships

As Karim said, "Unpaid internships teach you to get accustomed to certain things. When you first enter the corporate world, one of the hardest things you have to learn is how to say no. Having a constant can-do-everything attitude can leave you with tons of work that undersells your abilities, and the stress that comes with it. I also learned how to gain traction with the boss, how to handle different types of people, know what I can do well, and know my limits as to how much work I can take on at one time. You may do such internships during the earlier years of your undergraduate. But if you do get the chance to do paid internships, do not undersell your labour."

If you can take on unpaid internships, try to make the most out of it. Take on internships that will allow you to develop yourself professionally in the career field of your wish. Try to pick up useful skills and if possible, find a mentor who can guide you after graduation.

There have been questions regarding how much productive work unpaid internships or jobs entail. If you find yourself stuck in a place that does not allow you to learn, reassess your priorities.

Can unpaid internships have benefits? Yes. Are those benefits exclusive to only internships that do not pay remuneration? Absolutely not.



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

Interns have a glance at what goes in a real workplace, with deadlines, various colleagues, and more. Internships can sometimes result in a full-time job offer after graduation if the interns manage to impress their supervisors as well.

Academic institutions and students both benefit from the real-world experience the students derive from their internships. It allows students to extract a richer educational experience as a whole. Thus, the institutions get more skilled graduates with more industry connections, who can go on to build stronger alumni networks. Strong alumni networks can make the university more desirable in the eyes of prospective students.

If the interns are given good tasks that help them learn, they get a taste of what working in the industry may feel like in real life. Interns can also build their professional networks through work. They may get the chance to receive feedback or career advice directly from industry professionals themselves, which is invaluable.

Rifat Z. Khan, a trainee lawyer at a corporate law firm, had a wonderful experience during her six-month-long unpaid internship at UNODC. "I had always wanted to work with the criminal

my wallet. Unpaid internships sometimes have undefined hours as well."

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Zuhrat Inam, a research associate at BRAC JPCSPH, said, "I was fortunate enough to get course credit and even received a scholarship because my university understood the plight of unpaid internships. I am also privileged enough that it wouldn't have mattered to me even if I didn't get the scholarship. But that doesn't make it okay. Yes, I learned a tremendous amount in terms of project management, information sorting and compilation, administration work etc. Those things are helping me in my full-time work now, but I also gave a lot to the organisation. Then why wasn't I paid?"

Such internships also harm the labour market. They incentivise companies to offer fewer entry-level, full-time paid jobs as the companies get the chance to get their work done