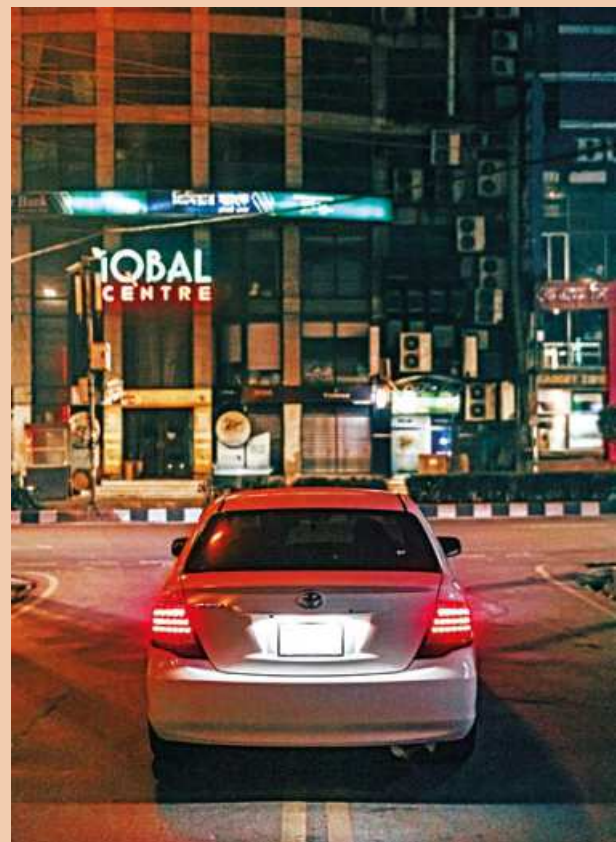




THE AXIO'S SINISTER VARIANT

AHBAAR MILKY

The Japanese exclusive Super GT series, previously known as the JGTC (think DTM but with a dash of wasabi) was always an oddball because one round always took place in Malaysia or Thailand).



However, the 2009 season was odd in ways more than one. Team APR, a Toyota outfit decided to retire their outgoing MRS, and then transplanted its organs into a corolla Axio (which we all know and love) and weaponise the humble econobox into a race car designed to tailgate the big guns (mostly the GTR, Soarer and the NSX).

Looking back at team APR taking inspiration from dr Frankenstein, this feat was perhaps not as daring as taking to the track with a cannibalized Toyota Prius for their 2012 Super GT season. Although the super GT Axio and the road running off the Aichi mill couldn't be any different. The firepower came from a 2GR-FSE V6 from the GT300 MRS strapped to the middle of the carbon fibre bodied race car. The final product shared only the headlights, grille and mirror with its mochi flavoured counterpart.

Toyota could have left the dim-witted, CVT drone riddled Axio alone then and there, but I like to think they cashed in on the race on Sundays, and sold a livelier corolla (loosely) based on the race car the next day; the Axio GT.

Kazi Tahzid, after having his fair share of owning a standard Axio, finally warmed up to its slightly sinister variant. I had the pleasure of photographing his pride and joy when he bought it two years back, and we've been friends ever since.

I also had the absolute pleasure of experiencing the firepower of a manual and turbocharged 1NZ, that too while hauling four persons. The sense of speed is just ridiculous in a car as ubiquitous as the Axio. And without further ado, here's a crash course on the wasabi infused Axio, by Tahzid.

There's a significant difference between both the

variants. I owned both for a good amount of time to be able to tell the difference.

A standard Axio does a pretty great job at being a daily driven workhorse in Dhaka. It's comfortable and economical, and that is pretty much it. There's nothing more to crave from it. The performance of the 1NZFE with a CVT gearbox is just dull, an on-off switch pedal that doesn't do much other than making whiny noises going any faster than 60 kmph.

An Axio GT however, is a bit livelier. It is a genuine sleeper. It has a small turbo strapped to the 1NZ along with a 5-speed manual gearbox, larger front brake rotors and a few TRD goodies, making



the car feel stiffer than standard, and it is due to this stiffness that the added performance just goes along with it much more nicely. The first 2 gears are a joy to row through. The turbo spools up really quick, allowing you to feel the torque.

I would personally say that this car is just perfect for Dhaka, and for anyone who wishes to daily drive a reliable turbo car with a manual gearbox. It doesn't have much power, but it has just enough for one to utilize it completely all the time instead of waiting for empty roads at night. It is fairly economical than most sports cars; You don't have to worry about things breaking down all the time, and all I had to do for the past 2 years in terms of maintenance is just the oil and filter change, except a bit more frequent than the standard naturally aspirated Axio's.

Gender gap in mobile phone usage remains to be closed, study finds

ZARIF FAIAZ, NAHALY NAFISA KHAN

GSMA, an industry organisation that represents the interests of mobile network operators worldwide has recently published a report on the gender gap in mobile use.

The report includes updated data on the gender gap in mobile ownership (including smartphones), the gender gap in mobile internet use in LMICs and how these figures have changed, a review of the barriers preventing male and female mobile users from adopting mobile internet, and new information on men's and women's confidence performing tasks on mobile and how they could learn new tasks, and qualitative insights from India and Kenya that highlight how the Covid-19 pandemic has influenced women's use of mobile internet and access to smartphones.

The findings show that women are now 7% less likely than males to hold a mobile phone in low- and middle-income nations, resulting in 143 million fewer women owning phones than men. Women are also 15% less likely than men to own a smartphone, compared to 20% in 2019.

Gender gap in mobile use

A 2021 report by GSMA, an industry organisation that represents the interests of mobile network operators worldwide, outlines how women's mobile access and use are changing in Bangladesh.

Women's access to mobile internet continues to rise in low- and middle-income nations, but mobile phone ownership remains stable: 83% of women own a phone, and 58% use mobile internet. While the overall gender difference in mobile ownership has remained essentially unchanged since 2017, the gender gap in smartphone ownership has narrowed for the first time

since then, with South Asia leading the way.

The country segregated data show that the gap between male and female mobile owners is 24 per cent in Bangladesh and the gap between male and female mobile internet users is 41 per cent. A mobile phone owner is defined as a person who has sole or main use of a SIM card (or a mobile phone that doesn't require a SIM)

and uses it at least once a month. Mobile internet users do not have to personally own a mobile phone.

The study showed that family approval, literacy and skills are the key barriers to women owning mobile phones. It also showed that the percentage of female owners watching free videos weekly increased from 11 per cent to 20 per cent, while this percentage saw an increase from 14 per cent to 29 per cent among the male owners.

According to the report, Bangladesh shows a gender gap of 66 per cent between male and female beneficiaries of mobile financing services, which is crucial in light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic that increased the dependence on cashless transactions all over the world.

Another interesting finding from the study shows that female smartphone users believe they are less capable than male smartphone users of learning a new activity on their own. However, after they have completed a task, their confidence in their ability to complete it again is nearly equal to that of male users.

