

Germany's push to an electric future

AHBAAR MILKY

The Frankfurt auto show can't come to the phone right now. Why do you ask? It has been rebranded as the inaugural IAA mobility show in Munich. The event lasted 5 days from September 7th till the 12th, where Germany's greatest showcased their vision about their future of the automobile. Spoiler alert: it's all levels of autonomous (and uninspired, but that's just me) although the use of sustainable materials seemed to be all the rage this year. Audi shipped over the 'Skysphere' concept revealed at pebble beach just over a few weeks ago, and unveiled the 'Grandsphere' concept, an autonomous all-electric take on the A8 limo, while offering test-drives to the RS e-tron. BMW brought hydrogen back to the table, unveiling a hydrogen fuel cell-powered X5 while showcasing their all-electric iX and i Vision concepts, boasting a lavish and plush interior. Mercedes continues to expand on their EQ lineup, unveiling the RS e-tron rivaling AMG EQS 53. The future is electric, and if The Weeknd couldn't convince you with the EQC, perhaps the Maybach EQS or the electrified G wagon (the EQG) might. But perhaps, the biggest surprise came from Porsche, as fans expecting a hardcore 718 GT4 RS were in typical Porsche fashion, met with the Mission R concept. An electric race car with a cockpit doubling as a simulator, the word on the street being a production electric Cayman is in the works.



This IS (200) the definitive guide to getting yourself into a Toyota Altezza

HASEEB CHOWDHURY

If you missed the play on words at the title of this guide, fear not, as it shall be explained soon below right after this short introduction. The Altezza was a luxury sports car, and an expensive one at that when it first came to our market. However, since the 16 years Altezsas stopped rolling off factory shelves in 2005, they have become more and more attainable to the everyday buyer.

What is it?

A rear-wheel-drive sport sedan



designed to tempt buyers away from Germany to Japan. This was a luxury car made by Toyota in the late 90s to rival the ever prominent class leader, the contemporary BMW 3 series at the time, the E46. Having owned both, their ethos is eerily close; there are many differences in the way both cars behave and feel, but both lean more towards driver pleasure and enjoyment than their successors of the modern age.

Lexus? Toyota? IS? RS? Altezza?

Here is where it gets confusing. The Altezza was sold under different names in different regions, under two different brands. Let's break this down.

For those of our readers who are not familiar, Lexus is a sub-brand of Toyota, specializing in more luxurious cars whereas Toyota focuses on economy, utility and sports cars. The XE10, which is the chassis code Toyota refers to it by, was sold under two distinct brand/name variations. The Lexus IS, which brought upon the advent of countless internet fluffs, and the Toyota Altezza, exclusively for the Japanese and few other small markets. These names will be used interchangeably throughout this article. The globally available Lexus IS was sold with two engines, a 2.0 litre 6 cylinder (1GFE), and a 3.0 litre 6 cylinder (2JZGE), the latter being the only choice for the American market. Since we import our cars directly from the Japanese domestic market, we will be concerned today with the Altezza variant. It also comes with a 2.0-litre 1GFE engine making 154 horsepower, but a sportier version



was available with a 2.0 4 cylinder engine. It may have two-thirds of the cylinders, but the 3SGE BEAMS engine made 207 horsepower. This BEAMS equipped Altezza is also dubbed RS200. Confused yet? Don't worry, we are too.

Set your priorities straight

What are your requirements for the Altezza? Do you absolutely need a 3SGE equipped vehicle? Is a particular type of transmission a must for your usage? Your criteria and subsequently, the budget will change along with these requirements. The IS200 equivalent (154hp) will be slightly



easier on the wallet than an RS200 (207hp). A manual transmission is rarer to find and is gradually becoming more coveted and sought after among the enthusiast crowd. My IS is automatic, and I desperately wish it wasn't one. Although it does have manually shifting capabilities actuated through buttons on the steering wheel, nothing beats the appeal of three individual pedals. I digress. Certain colours are more sought after as well, and cars without previous accident history also demand a higher price.

Pros and Cons

The biggest pro-IS (yet another play at words, I did indeed pat myself on the back as I wrote it) that it is a Toyota after all, therefore the reliability aspect is almost eerily unparalleled. It has good power and is the perfect blend of sporty and practical; the rear-wheel drive layout contributes to the fun aspect while the four doors make it practical enough to carry enough people to occupy an entire Ludo board. However, the Altezza is far from economical. Even at its lowest engine size, fuel efficiency is far from its priorities. At least in the current market, it is difficult to find an Altezza that is in an above decent condition. It

shares its fair share of common issues, which brings us to the following point.

Common issues

At this age, all cars have developed their lion's share of issues—whether due to wear and tear— or just because of how long it has been since they rolled out of the factory. Most Altezsas available in the local market have been touched up or have seen some degree of bodywork, so paint is usually not a cause for concern. It is a cause for concern if it has been in an accident, however, this advice applies to all used cars, not just this specific one.

One of the main issues that occur is the timing belt which, if left unattended for too long, can lead to a catastrophic engine failure. Oil leaks are also a common thing to look for, and a common thing to expect with a car of this age. These engines are reliable, but the old wives' tale that says Toyota engines are impossible to kill is certainly not to be held at their word. Another weak link in the lower ball joints up front, and one of the more niche issues, which occurs under constant hard braking, is where the calliper clips come loose.

Should you buy one?

As a completely unbiased owner of an Altezza, I think one absolutely should get themselves into one, if not at least experience one. The seating position is comfortable and easy to see out of, but the handling and steering feel insinuates something that goes beyond the typical Lexus. This was Lexus' way of getting out of the "grandpa car" image that they acquired through the unparalleled successes of luxurious yet reliable land yachts such as the ES, GS, LS and so on. This was their gateway into the sportier, and subsequently younger thrill-seeking demographic. 15 years later and for a third or fourth of the initial cost, this still provides all of the stir—without as hefty a dent in your wallet. The Altezza/IS achieves an equilibrium between the pragmatic problems in life while also pleasing the inner child that we try oh so hard to suppress, all the same. A fair balance with little trade-off, not a bad way to get into enthusiast car ownership, IS it?

Best Bangladeshi games to keep an eye on

TASNIVA KINNORI

If video games are your passion, you're likely to be stoked about the latest happenings in the gaming scene. From the first look at the much anticipated God of War Ragnarok to the sequel for Marvel's Spider-Man or the release date for Horizon Forbidden West, there's a lot for gamers to be excited about.

But there's plenty of excitement to be had for games being developed right here in Bangladesh too. From the days of Dhaka Racing to the upcoming open worlds and tactical shooters, game development in Bangladesh has come a long way. If you're looking to experience the progress first-hand, here are some of the best Bangladeshi games you should check out:

Agontuk

Remember the good old days of endless misadventures in the Bangla dubbed GTA Vice City? If you want to relive that nostalgia or just stay updated about the most talked-about game in Bangladesh right now, keep an eye on Agontuk.

Set in a fictional re-imagining of Dhaka city, Agontuk is set to be the country's first open-world game. A joint project by the studios Attrito and M7 Productions, the GTA-esque game has garnered significant attention since its gameplay reveal trailer dropped last year.

While there have been few updates since about a release date, the excitement for Agontuk persists. From the sneak peeks alone, the game promises players a Mafia inspired experience based in the city we all know and love. So if you've always dreamed of tearing up the streets of Dhaka (in a video game) as a hardened gangster, Agontuk is one to watch out for.

Zero Hour

While you wait for Agontuk, there's another joint project by Attrito and M7 Productions worth checking out.

A slow-paced online tactical shooter, Zero Hour launched globally last year to receive a widely positive reception.

Zero Hour differentiates itself from other titles in the genre with its realistic execution of tactics and team planning. Players can choose to play as the SWAT task force or as terrorists. Complete with a plethora of weapons, shields, traps and gadgets to tip the battle in your favour, Zero Hour is worth the try for fans of popular tactical FPS games like CS:GO or Rainbow Six Siege.

Annihilation

Do you unwind on the weekends with Fortnite or Apex Legends? Or is Valorant more to your liking? If you're asking for a battle royale or tactical shooter that's made in Bangladesh, the answer is the country's first battle royale game, Annihilation.

Developed by Crisis Entertainment, Annihilation is an online multiplayer 5v5 and 60 player battle royale. While the game is yet to be released, it has been going through some heavy tweaking based on player feedback from the demo.

If the thought of alien invasions in pop culture being oddly specific to certain parts of the globe ever occurred to you, then the plot for Annihilation will make you think twice. In this game, the player gets to fight against alien invaders right on the streets of our very own Dhaka. Choose from a variety of weapons and characters with unique abilities as you pass by familiar streets, movie posters, local shops, rickshaws and CNGs on your quest to save the city. While the game provides some basic dialogues in Bangla, the biggest tribute to the Bangladeshi culture would be having the iconic Salman Shah as a playable character.

2170

Developed by Firefly Studio using the Unreal Engine, 2170 boasts a unique premise with graphics that impressed just from the sneak peeks.

A futuristic third-person sci-fi shooter, 2170 is set in the post-apocalyptic premise post World War III. While not much is known about the plot itself, in 2170 players will be tasked with travelling through a post-apocalyptic Dhaka to vanquish humanoid robots. So if you're curious to see how familiar locations like Chondrima Super Market would look like in a catastrophic future, 2170 is a game worth keeping an eye out for.

Project Judgement

Developed by Ran Technology with investment from Crisis Entertainment, Project Judgement is another upcoming FPS that will launch on PC and consoles. The game comes with an offline story mode as well as an online multiplayer mode. For fans of games like Call of Duty, there will be something extra to look for in Project Judgement— with the latter offering a survival shooter experience in the premise of war. While this game too awaits the announcement of a release date, the developers are continuing to tweak and polish the final game before launch.

Other than the to-be-released and upcoming releases, the gaming scene in Bangladesh has been making strides across all platforms— PC, Consoles or Mobile. Though the hype in Bangladesh mostly surrounds the more expansive PC games, mobile games made in the country are also stirring up attention with titles like Heroes of 71 Retaliation, Bangladesh Cricket League, Mukti Camp or the satirical entertainer The Hero Alam game. Regardless of the platform, if you're a gamer wanting to judge the advancement of Bangladeshi video games yourself, take your pick from the ever-expanding list of made-in-Bangladesh video games and dive into all the wondrous worlds just waiting for you to push start and begin.

