



# NEW DOG, OLD TRICKS

AHBAAR MILKY

PHOTO: AHBAAR MILKY



## COVER STORY

The very first land cruiser, like most modern Toyota off readers, was an instrument of war for it existed through reverse engineering a Willys Jeep which the imperial army captured in the Philippines during the Second World War. One even climbed up to the sixth station of Mount Fuji by a factory test driver. Everyone involved was impressed as the Japanese police agency put orders in and made the bare-bones cruiser their official patrol car.

Then came the Korean War which prompted Toyota to replicate a newer blueprint of the Willys jeep at the request of the US army. The land cruiser's life in trenches officially ended then and there, although most rebel forces in war-torn parts of the world can be seen using modern land cruisers to this date, unfortunately.

Up until the J60, the land cruiser's purpose was to deliver what the land rover promised, and deliver it did. For there are only a handful of places on earth where a land cruiser is yet to cruise on. The J60 and J70 filled the suburban lifestyle hashtag to compete in the emerging global SUV market, equipped with creature comforts like air conditioning and coil springs.

The J60 also earned its keep in Pablo Escobar's protocol and collection, namely due to its factories being set up in South American countries like Columbia and such. 1990 saw the christening of the J80,



the first modern land cruiser, offering all safety features such as ABS and airbags, and full time 4WD in the American market. The rear doors also mimicked the tailgate and hatch, as seen on range rovers.

It was the era of the land cruiser cementing itself into the suburban American narrative. But make no mistake, the new dog still could memorise old tricks, for 1996 saw two unmodified, bone stock land cruisers, on factory wheels and tires finish first and second in the Paris Dakar rally in unmodified class. Later models such as the J100 and J200 saw Lexus badge engineering as the SUV market favoured luxury over capability and morphed into the big wheels and big

body kit era of abomination as we know it. The featherweight champion soon fought in the heavyweight category, as the United Nations put in about a gazillion orders for the J200.

S.M Fahim Rifat is no stranger to the previously orange pages of Shift, as we've featured his bullet-like 2ZZ E90 project car, the fastest in Dhaka once and his butter-smooth freight train like JZX81 mark ii restorations before. Meantime, he went knee-deep in the proverbial mud as the off-road bug bit him, building a V43 Pajero for casual off-road use, but as he yearned for more space and practicality, the hunt for a land cruiser began. He soon found a workhorse petrol FJ80 Land Cruiser, which was probably on the last stage of its life, being run on LPG and rear-wheel drive. He soon exchanged the Pajero in favour of this land cruiser, and the tinkering started in late 2020. The lethargic LPG run petrol six-cylinder was binned as he found the lucrative diesel 4.2 litre 1HDT with the help of MotorWerks, which was then transplanted and 4WD was made to work again.

The newfound bump in power and torque was almost corruptible, as said by Fahim. Parts were sourced from Dubai and Australia to transform the suburban cruiser into the purpose-built terrain cruiser that it is today. The ride height has been lifted and improved by the Tough Dog shocks and a two-inch lift, while the 33-inch mud tires wrapped around the 17-inch alloys translate to a level of fitness desirable on most of Dhaka's roads. Sound deadening materials were also installed and all factory clips were replaced to negate the rolling noise from the tires and interior.

There's a K&N drop-in filter paired to a snorkel intake for when Fahim fancies a dip. A fully reworked exhaust system translates the 1HDT's voice note into what can only be described as a Kraken. While the J80 came in a combination of bizarre yet amazing two-tone colour combinations such as green and red, this J80 has been repainted to a muted shade of silvery grey, still respectable and OEM like.

But he's not done yet. The off-roader is about to see another host of mods, including front and rear diff lockers, in addition to a bull bar and winch. The transformation of the land cruiser thus far has been a test of patience and an excellent example of why not to give up on cars. Life also goes on in its own accord and speed, as Fahim, melancholically reflected upon his life of cars through his past creations as life promoted him to move on, leading up to the land cruiser.

