

The lion-tooth design of the chrome grille and the scoop on the bonnet give the pick-up a macho look

Creating a new segment

Isuzu entered the pick-up truck segment in India with its second product offering, the D-Max. We get behind the wheel to determine the practicality of the Japanese pick-up

PICTURES: GURDEEP BHALLA



India has had its share of pick-up trucks, albeit only from local manufacturers. This is the first time that an international manufacturer has attempted to prise open the pick-up truck segment, hoping to generate volumes. Isuzu believe they have the right product in D-Max that has the potential to rev up the segment in India and establish the brand in the country.

Our first impression of the D-Max was a positive one we caught the sight of one at WABCO proving grounds on the outskirts of Chennai. The metallic blue D-Max with its arched deck stood glittering in the harsh Chennai sun.

The D-Max is offered in three variants – the entry-level variant with a flat-deck, a flat-deck

space cab and the top-of-the-line arched deck space cab. Isuzu says that it's mainly targeting people with small businesses in the city that necessitates the use of a pick-up such as restaurants, grocery shop owners, owners of a plant nurseries and those who would also want to use the pick-up as a regular everyday car.

The front end looks very aggressive

While both the flat-deck variants are more suited for commercial uses, the arched-deck variant not only gets more features, but also body-coloured bumpers, chrome wing mirrors and a mean-looking chrome grille along with chrome door handles. We would have loved

had Isuzu given at least an option of alloy wheels, but we were told that add-on accessories will be made available by the end of the year. Overall, the D-Max has the looks on the outside, which makes it perfect for use as an everyday car as well.

As is the case with all pick-up trucks, the first question that one has in mind is the usability of the loading bay. The arched-deck variant can take payloads up to 1,200kg on its cargo deck area, which measures 1,920mm by 1,720mm. The side panels of the arched-deck measure 480mm in height. Good enough to load things of a small household. The surface of the loading area is ribbed, which prevents loaded goods from slipping about and the loading height is low that makes it easier to load stuff

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The profile of the car could have been better with the addition of alloys, not that it looks bad with the standard metal wheels



Isuzu D-Max

Isuzu D-Max

- Engine:** 2.5-litre, 4 cyl, diesel
- Max Power:** 132bhp@3,600rpm
- Max torque:** 294Nm@1,800-3,600rpm
- Gearbox:** 5-speed manual
- Wheelbase(mm):** 3,050 mm
- LxWxH(mm):** 5,030x1,720x1,665
- Top Speed:** 175kmph (claimed)
- 0-100kmph:** N.A
- Price:** Rs 7.13 lakh (ex-Delhi)
- On sale Now**

although the wheel arches eat into the space a little bit.

The interiors on the top end arched-deck variant are well done. The quality of finish is surprisingly good. Creature comforts include power steering, power windows, an air-conditioner unit and central locking -- all of which are missing in the flat-deck variants. You do not get height adjustment for

The 2.5-litre engine is the best-in-class

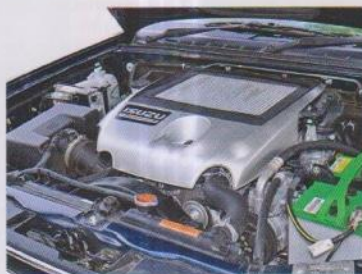
the seat, although the driver's seat is more than comfortable and offers good visibility. The seats are supportive and cushion well. The cabin can only two people and the space behind the seats can be utilised to keep personal stuff or small bags at the most. It also gets two cup-holders.



Above: The clocks are a simple affair with the speedometer taking centre stage. Below: The D-Max arched-deck variant gets air-conditioning



Above: The dash is basic. Left: Quite a bit of space for luggage behind the seats. Right: The cabin feels airy with good overall visibility



The engine is a 2.5-litre unit and churns out 132bhp of max power with best-in-class 294Nm of peak torque. The loading bay has lots of space



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Isuzu D-Max

For a different market

The flat-deck variant will be targeted at the rural markets of the country, especially in the hilly areas



The flat-decked variant of the D-Max has two variants – one is the single cab, while the other is the space cab. The space cab variant gets an extra 1.5-foot space behind the seats to keep luggage and other personal stuff. Where the flat-deck varies from the arched-deck version is in the fit and finish department and in terms of features. The interiors are basic and

the fit and finish levels can be much better. Also, there is no AC unit, which makes it completely utilitarian and bare-basic. The other features that are missing are power-windows. The absence of these two might restrict its utility even in the up-country markets. However, the practicality remains the same. Coming to the looks, the flat-decked variants do not have the styl-

ish chrome grille or body-coloured bumpers, which again make it, less desirable. The arched-deck variant is simply finished way better than its lesser cousins. The flat-deck offers slightly more loading area. Isuzu says that the target audience for these two variants is strictly limited to rural areas, which have a good market potential for pick-up trucks.



Left: The interiors are bare basic with minimal features, not even an AC. Right: The loading space is more than that of the arched-deck

What we like Looks The D-Max arched-deck variant looks cool with the chrome grille and the air scoop.

What we don't Not a four-seater Isuzu could have given two more seats at the rear to the D-Max.

What surprised us Performance The D-Max feels sprightly on the move and is a fun-to-drive vehicle

Verdict ★★★★★

The D-Max holds a lot of promise and is sure to spark some interest amongst the pick-up truck buyers in India. We loved the looks of the D-Max and along with a best-in-class engine. These two aspects along with features make the D-Max a good proposition. Sure, it could have done with more features, but one does not buy a pick-up for its features. Power and practicality is more necessary, and the D-Max has both in plenty.



Kingshuk Dutta

