

Isuzu D-Max Space Cab - The Transporter

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The world of pickups in India that is dominated by the Tatas (Xenon) and the Mahindras (Genio , Scorpio Getaway and Bolero pickups) will now see a third major player with the launch of the Isuzu D-Max, a pickup vehicle that is doing extremely well in overseas markets, especially Thailand. The Transporter is now ready for India.

It's a known fact that we all learn from other people's mistakes. It's also a known fact that pickups have not been a major hit among transporters in India, more so the ones with twin cabs or crew cabs. The reason is simple: Transporters believe in ferrying goods and the more the merrier. Over-loading in trucks, buses, cars and even on two-wheelers is a way of life in India. In a car meant for five, we have sometimes eight squashed in and on a motorcycle meant for two, we often see four riding merrily. Similarly, in a vehicle meant to carry one tonne of goods, for example, almost two tonnes is stashed up.

It is believed that Isuzu imported 10 twin cab D-Max pickups into the country for testing and getting a feedback from the people. All ten have been sold to keen buyers. But the company, as part of its strategy, did not manufacture these twin cabs, rather has concentrated on single cabs and space cabs. These vehicles are contract manufactured at Hindustan Motors' plant in Thiruvallur district near Chennai in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu.



If sources are to be believed, Isuzu Motors India may begin making the twin cab pickups once their own plant goes on stream in India 2016 near Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh. Currently, pickups in India can only be driven by those who possess commercial driving license. Even if those among the private citizens want to buy a pickup for their own recreational use, they cannot because private license holders cannot drive this vehicle, unless of course if they also possess a commercial driver's license.

<http://www.motownindia.com/Reviews/22/Isuzu-D-Max-Space-Cab-The-Transporter#.U6EulGdZrIU>

Senior government sources have indicated that the government is considering amending the Motor Vehicles Act and may allow those with private driving license to drive twin cab pickups soon. But this may take at least a couple of years to come into force and then perhaps Isuzu may begin manufacturing them at its own plant in India. Till then it would be only their single cabs and space cabs.

ON A TEST TRACK IN CHENNAI

A D-Max space cab and a test track somewhere in Tamil Nadu proved to be a lethal combination. Journalists took turns over a few weeks to assess the pickup and by Jove every one of that breed drove like a maniac thinking that this one was meant for the race track rather than our commercial sector. I too got carried away momentarily by the sheer power of the Isuzu diesel machine that churned out around 134 bhp of raw power @ 3600rpm and a massive torque of 294 Nm@ 1800-3200rpm. Riding on 215/70R15 radial tubeless tyres, the pickup felt more of a sports utility vehicle rather than just a transporter.

High speed cornering and drifting are all fun when a vehicle is bare and there's a good track for you to speed. But the moment you have got to balance more than a tonne of load on your head (I mean at the back of the vehicle) you have got to be careful of toppling over and losing your vehicle and life in the process. Nevertheless, the D-Max comes as a very nimble vehicle with great acceleration and great road handling abilities. Even while cornering at high speeds, the vehicle maintained its stability.

The single cab is ideally meant for those with the sole purpose of carrying goods from Point A to Point B. But it's the Space Cab that offers a wee bit more and there lies its value. Thus, your personal belongings etc can be protected within the seating cabin and that too in an air-conditioned environment. In fact, the space cab has a wee bit of space behind the two seats that allows one to even put a cushioned plank to be used as a seat or a bed for resting. It's an extremely practical feature.



Features like tiltable power steering, air-conditioning with heater, key and headlamp on reminder (Buzzer), 12 volt mobile phone charging point, sporty power bulge on bonnet, fabric seats and carpet, cup holders etc make this pickup at par with a comfortable SUV. As for the engine, it is simply a bull machine. It stands out as the most powerful in the pickup industry in India. A maximum speed of 175kmph, ensures that the D-Max is the

Lion of the Jungle. Once the Indian government allows those with private driver's license to buy and drive this vehicle, the sale of pickups could even beat those of SUVs. There is a huge market waiting to be tapped for pickups in the country. Circa 2016 will see a clearer picture emerging!

