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The Toyota Yaris gets ready for its much-awaited India debut

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The Yaris is sold in more than 100 countries around the world and Toyota sells around 3 lakh of them every year. But it has taken some time before the Japanese car maker decided to launch the car in the Indian market. It was first shown to the Indian audience at the Auto Expo this February and really became the talk of the town. The fact that it's going to enter one of the most popular segments in the Indian car market has got everyone talking about it. Can it upstage the likes of the Hyundai Verna, Honda City and the Maruti Ciaz, that's the big question and we were invited to the Home of Toyota, Bangalore to sample the Yaris.

LOOKS

The design is appealing to say the least. The front gets nice-looking projector headlamps that integrate well into the grille. The fog lamps have been designed well too but there's a lot of plastic on the radiator grille that doesn't justify the segment the car comes in. The bulge on the bonnet though is a nice touch. The profile is appealing too as is evident from the multiple lines that flow on the upper and lower portions of the doors. The big tail lamps are integrated nicely into the boot and give the rear a premium look. In fact from many angles the Yaris looks like a slightly smaller version of the Altis.

INTERIORS

Beige is the primary colour theme inside the Yaris across all variants as Toyota feels it denotes luxury. The raised dashboard reminds you of the Innova Crysta so does the instrument cluster. There's a 7



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inch touch screen system that has navigation as well as a rear parking camera. The Yaris also comes with a CD player that's neatly hidden behind the screen. Press a button and the screen folds down to make way. There's no Apple CarPlay or Android Auto here but thankfully the system gets mirror-link support. And this is not a BMW 7 series but it does get gesture controls for audio. A small digital screen on the instrument cluster gives a whole lot of information to the driver who also gets an electrically adjustable seat. There's keyless entry and the good

thing is that it's available on all the 4 variants. The Yaris gets climate control but the size of AC vents could've been bigger. Also the front armrest would've been more useful if it was placed a little forward. The car might be slightly smaller in length than all its rivals but more importantly it is wider and that means 3 people can sit comfortably on the second row. The floor is absolutely flat and there are roof-mounted rear AC vents as well, thereby making the drive comfortable. And finally the rear windshield also gets a curtain. Boot space stands at an

impressive 476 liters and the car gobbles the entire luggage thrown at it with ease.

ENGINE

The Yaris runs on a 1.5 litre petrol engine that churns a maximum power of 107 PS and peak torque figure of 120 Nm. All the variants get a 6-speed manual and 7-speed CVT gearbox options. However the Yaris misses out on a diesel engine. In terms of being responsive the manual is definitely better than the CVT. The latter does take a little longer to deliver and there's more power available at your disposal in the manual at the time of your choice. The CVT is surely more suited to take on the challenges thrown by the chaotic slow moving city traffic. For the open road and where the need to overtake is more frequent, the manual is surely a better bet. However, a combination of manual mode and paddle shifts

may do the trick for the driving enthusiast within you. The CVT also does not get a dead pedal which is a bit of a letdown.

RIDE & HANDLING

Ride quality is one of the best attributes about the Toyota Yaris. The suspension is tuned well to take on the good and bad roads alike and the sedan gives a comfortable drive on both rows. The car provides the stability you're looking for even at high speeds. The steering wheel is light and that will be good for the city drive but can certainly do with some more feedback. Another important factor is the ground clearance which at 152 mm is lesser than most rivals and that will force you to be a little more careful while negotiating tall speed breakers and potholes. The car gets 15 inch wheels again a size smaller than many rivals. The Yaris also gets disc brakes on all the wheels to give you a more reassuring braking experience. There's ABS & EBD also available to add to that.

VERDICT

The Yaris is a mix of many hits and some misses. It really scores well when it comes to things like looks, features and safety (the car gets 7 Airbags—a segment first). And of course there is the famed Toyota reliability on offer. But no diesel engine option may keep a few away from buying the car. The launch is still a few weeks away and that is when we'll get to know the prices. But Toyota has already given an indication that they will charge a premium because many features are coming as standard on the car and that will take the cost of car up.

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