

New Yaris ticks all the right boxes

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MAKING ITS debut in India almost two decades after it was launched in Europe in 1999, Toyota Yaris is set to hot up the already competitive B category sedan segment with several firsts in the segment that includes cars such as Honda City, Hyundai Verna and Maruti Suzuki Ciaz. While a lot will depend on Toyota's pricing strategy, which it will announce sometime this week, it is expected to come with starting price tag of around Rs 10 lakh.

Loaded with safety features, the car boasts of 7 SRS airbags as standard across all the four variants along with ABS, EBD, BA (anti-lock braking system, electronic brakeforce distribution and brake assist) as standard feature.

Targeting the growing number of women car owners, Toyota is offering its automatic variant – 7-speed continuously variable transmission (CVT) – across all four grades – J, G, V and VX.

Powered with a 1,496 cc engine, the car is available with six-speed manual and 7-speed super CVT-I transmission. While the car delivers a maximum power of 107PS@6000 rpm, it delivers a maximum torque of 140 (NM)@4200 rpm. The company claims a fuel efficiency of 17.1 Kmpl for the manual transmission and 17.8 kmpl for the automatic one. The six-speed manual transmission version is the one that provides a sportier ride. The CVT suffers from its infamous rubber band effect, is noisy and can be frustrating on the highway but will appeal to those



looking for ease in city traffic.

Though it is spacious and offers enough room for both the front and rear seat occupants, it lacks the youthfulness that some of its competitors offer. While it lacks the head turning attributes of the new Verna, it also misses out on the rear leg room of the Ciaz. Targeting those in the upper middle class in the age group of 30-40, company officials say that Yaris is built on the company's philosophy of QDR (quality, durability and reliability), and it offers a distinctive design, spaciousness, quality and comfort comparable to higher class vehicles.

The highlight of the car is its ride quality. Toyota claims it has tuned the suspension set up significantly over the one on offer in Europe to cater to the demands of the Indian road and it shows. It handles bad roads and potholes with ease. Also, it would not be far fetched to say Yaris has the best brakes in the segment even rivaling some European cars like the VW Vento and Skoda Rapid. In a nutshell, Yaris is a balanced car that looks to tick all the boxes rather than offer something exhilarating or out of the box.

(The correspondent was in Bengaluru at the invitation of Toyota Kirloskar Motor Pvt Ltd)