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Toyota Fortuner Launch June 2009



The long-awaited Toyota Fortuner is finally making its way to India. The buzz surrounding the Fortuner has been growing over the past few years, but the fact remains that Toyota wasn't focusing on this project – a lack of manpower and capacity in the Bidadi factory had kept it on the back-burner. Then Toyota was waiting for the face-lift, which has just been launched in Thailand. The headlights and grille merge into one another, while at the rear, clear lenses have been used for the tail-lamps. The rest of the car remains unchanged.

Toyota will assemble the Fortuner at the Bidadi plant from completely-knocked-down or CKD kits. Only one engine – a 3.0-litre D-4D diesel from the same family as the Innova – will power the car. This unit produces 163bhp, but more importantly 35kgm of torque, since it has to shift the Fortuner's considerable 1.8-tonne bulk. This engine is mated to a five-speed manual gearbox, with the option of four-wheel -drive. In future, a four-speed automatic may also be on the cards.

The interiors are a plush place to be, and the Fortuner promises to provide very refined driving dynamics. It will be available fully loaded with climate control, AC vents for all three rows of seats, and a 2-DIN audio system with steering wheel-mounted controls. Coil-spring suspension at all four corners promises to provide a comfortable ride and sure-footed handling. The Fortuner can pack in seven people and their luggage, although the last row is best reserved for kids or Fido.

As with every product in India, pricing is key, and the Fortuner should retail for Rs 18 lakh, on-road. On specifications and price, its most obvious competitor will be the Ford Endeavour Thunder+, but don't be surprised if it makes a dent in CR-V and Captiva sales as well. This is an SUV which promises to be a pucca off-roader, people-carrier, and soccer mom wagon all rolled into one. Toyota has ambitious plans to sell 5,000 units a year in India, and to achieve this target, it will have to fulfil all these roles.

Source - ACI

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