

Motown

INDIA



FIRST DRIVE VIDEO



FIRST DRIVE

2019 FORCE GURKHA XTREME



FIRST DRIVE

2019 TOYOTA CAMRY HYBRID ELECTRIC



FIRST DRIVE

ALL-NEW MARUTI SUZUKI WAGONR



FIRST RIDE

DUCATI SCRAMBLER 1100



ELECTRIC VEHICLE SPECIAL [PAGE 36]

2019 FORCE GURKHA XTREME 4X4

REAL BEAST

Report: P. Tharyan; Photography: Afsar Baig & Neeraj Panwar

“The new **FORCE GURKHA XTREME 4X4** from Force Motors is a true definition of a real beast. It may have a bland cabin but when it comes to its engine, transmission, transfer box, suspension and build, it's every off-roader's dream come true. Mind you, this vehicle is not for those who love to be pampered by a host of electronic buttons and up market upholstery. Off-roaders as well as the entire defence forces in the country will find this vehicle a real value for money.”



SPECIFICATIONS

- ENGINE** 2149cc, 4 Cylinder, Inline, TCIC Common Rail, Diesel Engine, 16 valve DOHC
- TRANSMISSION** G 32/5 Synchromesh with Dual Mass Flywheel, Overdrive 5 Forward, 1 Reverse [Manual]
- POWER** 140hp@3800rpm
- TORQUE** 321Nm@1600-2400rpm
- TYRES** 215/60 R17
- PRICE** ₹12.99 lakh [ex-showroom Delhi]

The new Force Gurkha Xtreme 4x4 from Force Motors is a true definition of a real beast. It may have a bland cabin but when it comes to its engine, transmission, transfer box, suspension and build, it's every off-roader's dream come true. Mind you, this vehicle is not for those who love to be pampered by a host of electronic buttons and up market upholstery. Off-roaders as well as the entire defence forces in the country will find this vehicle a real value for money.

EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR

The Gurkha is styled on the lines of legendary Mercedes-Benz G Wagon. The exterior of the vehicle has undergone a facelift with a bold new front fascia, bonnet mounted LED indicators, new front, and rear steel bumpers. And what comes standard in this Gurkha Xtreme are the signature chrome finish air intake snorkel for deep water wading, muscular side cladding, new attractive bold graphics, clear lens headlamps, front fog lamps, large ORVMs, sturdy and full-length slip resistant footboards, and increased width all-terrain tubeless tyres. The vehicle that we drove had Maxxis off road tyres which make the vehicle even better and masculine.

As for the interior, it's very plain Jane with just the basics. The seats are very comfortable. The doors do not have any storage within its inner panels. But there are few storage spaces on the floor console. The switches and gauges look dated and the gear lever, the 4-wheel

lever and the two diff lock levers are not the least attractive to look at. But it's only when you get to drive the vehicle that you realise that this vehicle has the heart of a beast and moves like one too!

PERFORMANCE

The 2019 Force Gurkha Xtreme 4x4 is a fairy tale come true for the off roaders. The Gurkha Xtreme with a high strength C-in-C chassis is powered by the Mercedes-Benz sourced OM 611 derived common rail diesel engine. It is the same engine that the company had raced for three years at the tough Rain Forest Challenge in 2014, 2015 and 2016. This engine develops 140 hp and 321 Nm of peak torque with dual mass flywheel that ensures excellent drivability and low NVH.

Sumeer Tandon, a successful textile businessman has influenced the making of this vehicle. Sumeer's tech savvy mind has ensured that the vehicle is not wanting when it comes to performance. He says the engine is very light, has got aluminium heads and very light parts imported from Mercedes. The torque curve is almost flat. The beautiful redline is at 4100rpm. Usually the best of diesel engines redline at 3800rpm. The peak torque is limited to meet the emission norms.

To handle this high torque, the company has fitted a new gearbox that goes by the name G32. This is also a Mercedes derived gearbox that is compatible with the dual mass flywheel. This ensures that the vibrations are controlled and the ride is smooth. The lower end torque harmonics



are not transferred to the body shell. And now to get a very smoother ride with one additional feature it has from the RFC Gurkha, it is the Divgy Warner transfer case.

All the leading SUV makers in India go to Warner to buy their transfer cases. Warner has two types of transfer cases. One is selectable four-wheel drive; the other is all-wheel drive. The all wheel has a central differential. It does not have a two-wheel / four-wheel option. Differential takes care of the speeds between the wheels. But between the two axles, there is again a small differential into the gear box. A Divgy base manual model that the Xtreme has, typically meets the army specs. Army needs a manual selectable one because they do not want their four-

wheel drive to be kicked in always. There is a lot of wastage of fuel.

Since the rear axles of Force vehicles were always known for their proven qualities, the front axle has been developed with the same technology as of the rear, using the German Steyr technology.

Something very interesting about the vehicle is that it also comes with a virtual lift in order to raise the height of the vehicle. It is primarily to accommodate larger tyres for those keen to do so. It is, to put it correctly, ready for an off roader to use immediately. Even if bigger tyres are put in, you do not disturb the mechanicals. Now it has also become mandatory in the country with the recent Supreme



Court ruling, you cannot go against the CMVR or Central Motor Vehicles Rules and disturb the mechanicals or suspension of the vehicle. In short, no modifications of any kind can be carried out in a vehicle that you buy. In such a scenario, the Force Gurkha Xtreme is like a dream come true for the off roaders.

By putting the lifts at the OEM level, the Force Xtreme has done a great

service to the off roading community. They can simply go ahead and put in larger tyres without disturbing the suspension set up or flouting the CMVR norms.

Competition vehicles in this price range are no match to the Gurkha Xtreme. One of the popular models from across the stable does not have a rigid front axle. Nor does it have coil spring suspension. This vehicle has springs in front and rear making ride quality top notch.

The Force Gurkha Xtreme has a live rigid front axle. It is proven for off road abilities and definitely for defence. The new Gurkha Xtreme also has provision to fit hub locks on the front axles that helps saving fuel as well as reducing stress on the drivetrain while in 2WD.

The new Force Xtreme

comes with differential lockers both for front and rear. This feature will come very handy if your vehicle is really beached. Essentially, what diff locks offer is something which goes much beyond the purview of the four wheel drive. While a four-wheel drive brings out a vehicle from sticky situations, it become helpless in cases of extreme situations where you lose traction on both the axles. That's where diff locks come to your help and pull out the vehicle free. Situations beyond the scope of diff locks can then only be tackled with the help of a winch.

Mind you, diff locks have to be unlocked the

moment you are out of a sticky situation or it can lead to a lot of damage to your vehicle. Moreover, deploying the front diff lock needs to be done with great care and the front wheel needs to be kept pointed straight. Again, once the use of the diff locks is over, they immediately need to be unlocked.

Another interesting feature of this driveline is that it has inbuilt crawl and hill descent control. In 4L mode the vehicle can crawl up a steep hill with the rpm holding steady at

1000+ level. Also, while coming down a steep hill, you need not use brakes; it can come down gently in the 4L brake. Of course, on city roads and plain surfaces, one should drive on two wheel drive to get better fuel efficiency.

What is of concern is that the new Force Gurkha Xtreme does not come with airbags, nor does it have ABS. The mandatory norms for these will kick in soon in India and then Force Motors has to reengineer the Xtreme and ensure that it still remains an off roader's dream.

