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Fri, 22 Apr-22; Bombay Times - Times Of India - Mumbai; Size : 481 sq.cm.; Circulation:893796; Page : 10



REVIEW

All charged up

Volvo's smallest SUV in an electric avatar is as handy as its petrol variant

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Swedish car maker, Volvo, had announced its intentions to go fully electric in due course. The date for that is set in the year 2030. By then it aims to have a model line-up that will be free of tailpipe emissions. While it has always been known for safety, Volvo Cars hope that eventually it will also be known for sustainability by being one of the front runners in the race of going electric.

Volvo's current range in India is skewed towards SUVs so it is no surprise that it's first electric car in India is an SUV too. The XC40 Recharge seems to be a sane choice for that given that it has less weight to lug around allowing

it a longer range and a price (not announced yet) that won't be too unreasonable.

While internationally the car is available in multiple power options, in India, Volvo will be assembling it with a 78kWh battery pack that can be charged in 2-2.5 hours at most upcoming DC fast chargers in India. At high capacity fast charging stations, an XC40 can be juiced up from 10-90% power in just half an hour. At full charge, as per international testing standards, it can do 410km. During our test run, we could manage just over 300km but it was kept "idling" for a fair bit and we did push it to 3-digit speeds regularly while checking its dynamic stability.



With a 0-100 time of just 4.9s, a XC40 Recharge treads on sportscar territory. But it is not a surprise given the max torque of 660Nm available from standstill. Pedal to

metal action is met with a violent pinning to the seat backrest, even unnerving for unaware passengers. The steering is light but confident during quick lane changes. A low centre of gravity thanks to the battery underneath the floor makes it less prone to rolling too. The suspension is a bit stiff though and a bit disconcerting at low speeds even over small potholes but ride quality on the move is worthy of a luxury car. It does glide through while letting know every details about the road to the driver. The stiff suspension helping keep things planted better.

The XC40 Recharge comes with a host of safety and driver assist systems as in other Volvo cars. Additionally, it also has a One Pedal drive mode which essentially makes the brake pedal redundant. With this switched on through the infotainment menu, the car brakes automatically when the driver lifts off his or her foot from the accelerator assuming that you need to slow down. It may need a bit getting used too. The Indian XC40 Recharge will be the one with twin 150kW motors which means permanent all-wheel drive.

Inside, the cabin is com-

touchscreen. While it may not be the roomiest SUV, it has a reasonable large 414-litre boot. Additionally, there is the 'Frunk' - which is a front trunk under the hood. It's around 31 litres - that's twice the size of an underseat storage of a scooter. Handy for quick shopping.

XC40 Recharge features an in-built SIM so it is always connected. Owners can access the car any time from their smartphone. There is no ignition switch in the car. It senses the key and the

driver's presence. All one needs to do is get in, belt up and it is all systems go. The car gets an inbuilt Google assistance too so one can seamlessly use your Google apps with the car directly. Strangely there is no guest mode unlike in some other cars as in India we do tend to hand over the car to friends and family more often than in Western countries.

The Volvo XC40 Recharge is a fun car that is serious about the environment. It looks cute, is capable on the move and has owners covered when it comes to being connected. At 300-350km real world range and a fast enough charging time, it could be an apt daily driver too. Bookings are set to open in July this year and first deliveries in Oc-

SPECIFICATIONS:

LxWxH: 425x2034x1651mm

Ground clearance: 176mm

Weight: 2188kg

Top speed: 180kph

AC (11kW) charging time: 8 hours

tober. With additional features such as AWD, panoramic sunroof, 360-degree camera and hill-descent control, we reckon it to be priced between Rs 60-70 lakh. While that is substantial money, it does look like a practical SUV that fills a large void between electric cars in the upper segment.