

THE KING OF OFF-ROADING

Ford Endeavour, Mitsubishi Pajero Sport and Toyota Fortuner battle it out to determine who is the real champ of off-roading.

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When you go to buy a SUV (Sports Utility Vehicle), what is it exactly that you look out for? Drive, space, comfort or is there something else that fires your imagination? Well for me, it was the "off-road" experience that mattered when I set out to review Ford Endeavour, Mitsubishi Pajero Sport and Toyota Fortuner. So, let's find out who comes out on top when faced with some serious mud and slush bashing.

FORD ENDEAVOUR

The Ford Endeavour has been one of the forerunners ever since its launch back in 2003. Its sheer muscular appearance and massive ground clearance have been its main attractions. Having said that, its updated looks, especially the face lifted front end, does add character. But somehow, when it comes to the drivability factor, especially off-road, the experience isn't that great. When I took it through an open field run, the Endeavour failed to impress me in the handling department. Its overall ride quality feels a bit compromised, while rest of the features, such as space and comfort, are fairly satisfactory.

MITSUBISHI PAJERO SPORT

The latest generation of Pajero Sport scores high on the style and brand quotient meter. Its curvaceous exterior appeal will surely fascinate onlookers, but its real USP is the

positive attitude to go anywhere and tackle any sort of terrain quite successfully. The interiors are up-to-date and the comfort factor does not go unnoticed. Having said that, the car's heavy steering does make city commuting a bit of an issue. However, highway cruising is more suitable for long trips.

TOYOTA FORTUNER

This is one of the most sought after 4 wheelers in the market. Its modern looks, interior space and current features on offer, make it one of the most preferred SUVs around. Its on and off-road capabilities have won it novice as well as hardcore off road enthusiasts. To be precise, its handling and ride characteristics are quite smooth, no matter what comes in its way. Be it city roads or the highway, the Fortuner will not fail to impress you with its on and off-road capabilities.



Specifications

	ENGINE DISPLACEMENT (CC)	POWER (ps)	TORQUE (NM)	PRICE (Ex-showroom delhi) (only top-end models)
Toyota FORTUNER	3000	171	343	₹24.26 lakhs
Ford ENDEAVOUR	3000	156	380	₹23.5 lakhs
Mitsubishi PAJERO SPORT	2500	178	400	₹23.91 lakhs

VERDICT

Comparing all three machines on just hardcore off-road capability, it would be Mitsubishi Pajero Sport on top, followed by the Toyota Fortuner and Ford Endeavour. However, since a country like ours is price sensitive, the Endeavour would top the list due to its cheaper price tag, with Fortuner coming in at second, and Pajero Sport at third. On sheer passion and experience, we feel that the Toyota Fortuner is an ideal fit for both on and off-road utilization, as the Pajero Sport comes closest as the next best option.

PHOTOS: AKHIL VERMA, WASEEM GASHROO, MANOJ VERMA