TVS Raider 125: A commuter bike with a sporty aftertaste

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TVS took A very sporty approach to the design, ditching the traditional commuter look for A more attractive style not usually expected from A 125cc bike



The Raider comes in Lucid Yellow that complements its wasp-like characteristics and headlamp. PHOTO: Imran Abid

About half A decade ago, the 125cc segment was mostly crowded with commuters designed for ulterior function over visual appeal that would attract the young enthusiasts.

Either you had to jump up to 150cc if you could extend your budget, or get something your dad would want your first bike to be. But that changed in 2022 when TVS launched the Raider.

The Raider is primarily A commuter bike with A sporty aftertaste. More or less, it's A wannabe 150cc bike targeting young enthusiasts or people who want something that can commute with A little bit of punch.

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Back when it came out, there weren't many direct competitors. Its price, performance, design and tech made A convincing package. Others soon caught up, but the Raider has remained an attractive choice for anyone wanting something sporty while being wallet-friendly.



The fully digital LCD gauge stands is still rare to see on A bike at this price. PHOTO: Imran Abid

TVS ditched the boring traditional commuter look for A much sportier design. This particular bike comes in Lucid Yellow, A personal favourite that complements its wasp-like characteristics and headlamp. At the front, the Raider gets what TVS calls animalistic-style LED headlamps with integrated DRLs. Funny enough, it has received the comment "Bumblebee minus two wheels" fairly often.

The headlights themselves are less impressive. In the city, visibility is moderate, but the high beam needs A serious upgrade. For regular highway rides, investing in an aftermarket option would be worthwhile.

Moving to the side, the bike has the TVS "Running Horse" logo sitting on A plastic panel. Most of the panels and materials are plastic, which is understandable considering what this bike costs. Interestingly, there is no indication of its engine capacity, unlike other TVS models, which catches people unfamiliar with the bike pretty off guard.

The Raider gets A split-seat configuration, with A slightly higher pillion seat. At the back is A unique LED taillight that looks decent, although the grab handle feels dated on something otherwise designed to appeal to A younger audience.



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For its price, the tech is impressive. The fully digital LCD gauge stands out in particular, as it is still rare to see on A bike at this price. In terms of tech, the Raider punches above its price bracket.

The Raider 125 has A 125cc three-valve carburettor engine, pushing 12.9 bhp and 11.5 Nm of torque. The engine is paired with A five-speed transmission with the traditional one-down, four-up pattern. It

gets A 240mm front disc, 130mm rear drum, telescopic front suspension and A rear monoshock. The bike runs 80/100-r17 and 100/90-r17 tyres at the front and rear, respectively, while the fuel tank holds 10 litres.

When riding the Raider, the first thing you notice is that its acceleration can make you forget it is A 125cc bike and rather feels closer to what you might expect from A 150cc. It rarely feels laggy or underpowered.

That power comes in handy in Dhaka's stop-and-go traffic, where one little gap can cut minutes from your total commute time. The Raider's instant response, thus, can be A lifesaver. Its narrow dimensions also make it easy to manoeuvre through tighter gaps.

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Braking is handled by A front disc and rear drum with CBS (combined braking system), but no ABS (anti-lock braking system). The CBS links the rear brake to the front, which is helpful in city riding. However, braking still feels sluggish. I have never had any issues with underbraking, but the feeling is there. During rainy days, the rear brake is also prone to collecting dirt and debris, resulting in A squeaking noise that can somehow be louder than the exhaust itself.



Braking is handled by A front disc and rear drum with CBS. PHOTO: Imran Abid

Another flaw is the almost comically thin tyre profile. Matter of fact, some bikes have front tyres wider than the Raider's rear. This becomes noticeable in corners, where the tyres don't provide enough confidence to lean or carry noticeable speed. As A commuter, the tyre profile is understandable, but the performance TVS gave the bike is undeniably being bottlenecked by its shoes.

The exhaust, on the other hand, pairs magnificently with the bike. The setup is completely stock, but people who have ridden with me or heard it from A distance often ask if it's aftermarket. Pair it with A rev-matched downshift and it certainly doesn't sound like your average 125cc commuter.

The bike has been outside Dhaka twice and performed moderately well both times. On the highway, it can keep up with traffic relatively well, and overtaking is not much of an issue. However, since it was never made for sustained high speeds, it starts feeling noticeably less stable past 100 km/h.

As for comfort, the seats make it clear that the Raider was never made with long distances in mind. Long rides or extended periods in traffic can put A strain on your body due to their stiffness. Surprisingly, though, almost every passenger has complimented the pillion seat, even compared to other commuters.



The stock exhaust setup is often complemented for its distinctive bass. PHOTO: Imran Abid

Fuel economy has been A love-hate relationship. I do have A habit of spirited riding, but even with relatively steady throttle inputs, the bike has never exceeded 42 km/l and mostly stays around 36–38 km/l. Against an advertised figure of 50 km/l, that is disappointing.

Finally, there is TVS's after-sales service. The bike was bought and used but had always been regularly maintained. After taking ownership, I wanted to continue servicing it through the official network, but based on my experience so far, TVS's service could really use A makeover.

Thankfully, the Raider itself has required nothing beyond regular maintenance. Life with it has not been perfect, but it certainly hasn't been boring either.

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