

# Yoshihiko Matsuo and how the 240z became a design icon

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Petrolheads are more opinionated about cars than the cast of Jersey Shore are about spray tan colours. Some cars are so perfectly designed that they shut down all argument. Such is the Datsun 240Z. It is so aesthetically pleasing you cannot take a bad photograph. Perfect from every angle and that is a rare thing for cars.

Yoshihiko Matsuo was the lead designer responsible for this. He passed away July 11 at age 86.

## How the man began

Matsuo was born on July 10, 1934 in Himeji of Southern Japan. According to Japanese Nostalgic Car, he helped design the popular Daihatsu Midget while attending the Nihon University College of Art. From there he went to work at Nissan.

Datsun at that time needed an affordable, quick sportscar that could take on the European competition comprising of MGB Roadsters, Fiat 124 Spiders and the Mini Cooper.

Matsuo helped redesign the Bluebird 410 sedan. Pininfarina designed the 1964 Bluebird but Matsuo did not like it. He commented on the drooping rear lines of the sedan as “like somebody squatting on the toilet”. Sales were low as the consumers did not like it either. Matsuo then helped clean up the lines by giving the rear a more raised appearance.

The SSS (for Super Sports Sedan) under his direction got floor-mounted shifter and twin carburetors for more sporty oomph. Sales quickly picked up.

## How the 240z began

That gave him the acclaim needed to be placed as lead designer for the original 240Z, known as the Nissan Fairlady Z in Japan. Instead of a roadster though, Matsuo

future upgrades that would have to be accommodated and all that in line with maintaining cost of production.

Japanese Nostalgic Car, in its obituary of the designer last week, said he made “countless individual

for excellent handling.

In 1969, the car because a major success in America selling around 150,000 units till 1973. That is where it

and the company cemented its reputation as a growing giant in the automotive field. It is a big deal to make it big with a small engine in a country that believes ‘there’s no replacement for displacement’. It further proved its abilities in multiple racing series as well as winning the gruelling 1971 and 1973 East African Safari rallies.

## The future of the Z

The 240Z is now an icon of design where form meets functionality without subtracting points from either. It grew up into the 260Z, 280Z and 300ZX as times and power requirements progressed. The current, slightly chubby looking Nissan 370Z continues the traditions.

Matsuo also penned the Cedric 230 (also known as the Datsun 200C/220C) and the cult classic Bluebird 610 before he left Nissan. Perhaps Nissan will actually create the 400Z they have been teasing us with this year. It is the best modern interpretation of the original 240z, a perfect homage to one of the most iconic designs in automotive history. Matsuo would surely approve.



focused on a low-cost, fixed-roof GT car. No one really asked for it but he went ahead against Datsun’s tiered management structure.

Matsuo’s team was responsible for the design, for how the car looked. But they also had to keep in mind the materials to use,

decisions that built the Z bit by bit. He even did some test driving.”

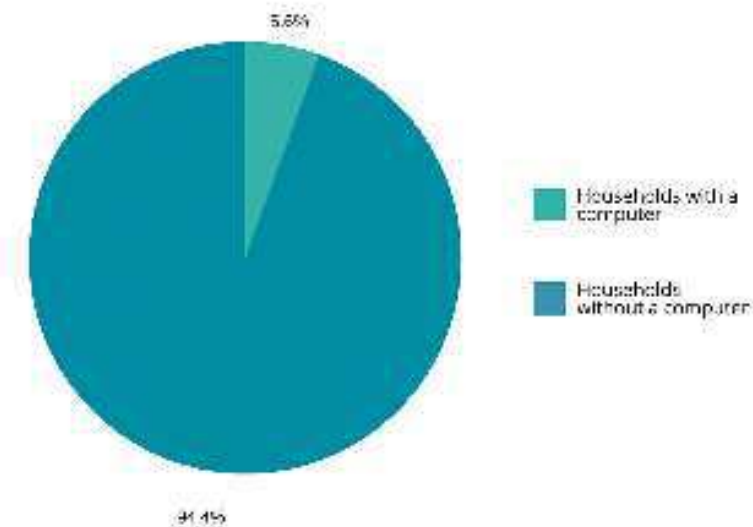
A 2.4-liter inline-six capable of a then-impressive 150 horsepower at 6000 rpm powered the two seater. It originally sold for \$3500 equivalent to about \$23,000 today. It had four-wheel independent suspension

# Designed to divide

A look into the grim reality of online education in Bangladesh amid the pandemic

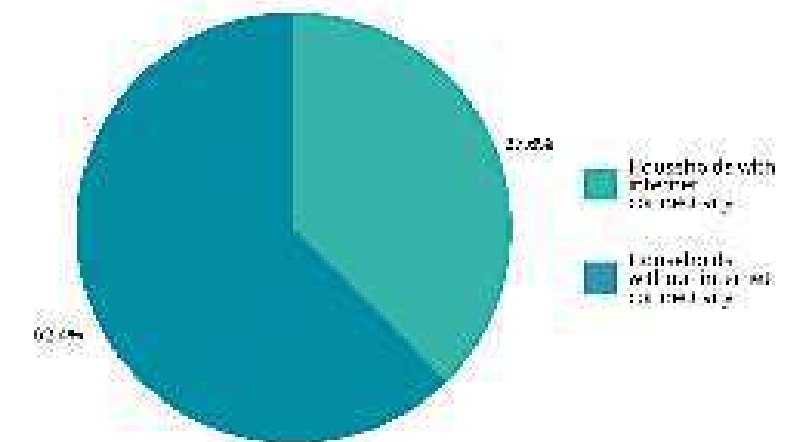
NOMROTA SARKER

PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH AND WITHOUT A COMPUTER



Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics’ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019

PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH AND WITHOUT INTERNET CONNECTIVITY



Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics’ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019

Ever since the pandemic struck, it massively affected the normal course of education, economy and naturally brought about a thousand more inconveniences in a country of 170 million people. Even though in the last 3 months of the collective turmoil, businesses are learning to adapt to the new normal. The only sector that is potentially the biggest struggling variable is the education sector since just ‘going online’ isn’t really ensuring an all-inclusive reach throughout the country.

Even though some institutions tried adapting quickly to the crisis, some are still bound and limited by national policy changes regarding the issue. Perspectives of educationalists, faculties, and student experiences from prominent institutions throughout the country shed light on the bigger question here -Is Bangladesh really ready for the transition imposed?

## Is accessibility the only variable to consider?

Dr Atiq Rahman, a professor at the Economics department of North South University, shares his experience: “I have been in the teaching profession for 27 years now. All my life, I have been emphasizing on my interactions with my students and this is really important to me as an Economics faculty. Due to going online and my lack of immediate proficiency in the abruptly shifting technological aspects, it is difficult for me to conduct a proper interactive class. I cannot understand if all of my students are equally attentive and are actually grasping the concepts.”

Although the country’s noteworthy private universities have made an effort to continue their academic activities as conveniently as possible, the entire system isn’t as responsive to the shift. According

to sources, these universities are reporting a handsome percentage of student attendance in the online classes, but it isn’t the only metric to ensure an effective learning environment. Discrepancies in the income levels can majorly influence the accessibility of such facilities as well.

Nazmul Amin, a student of East West University, living in a boys’ hostel in Rampura describes his struggles amid the pandemic: “I used to tutor students to accommodate my living expenses while

the internet. It also found that only 5.6 per cent of households have a computer.

While students in Dhaka city are relatively more entitled to better connectivity, students outside the region suffer beyond comprehension. Students who had to return to their villages are either deprived of the technology needed to access online classes or simply devoid of it.

“I’m currently staying at my village home in Gaibandha. I don’t have WiFi

assignments.

“My WiFi connection at home is terrible, so I have to go through a lot of troubles to attend online classes. I left my laptop in my university hall, so I might not be able to attend classes regularly or meet my deadlines, which worries me a lot,” said Shamoli Jannat, a student of Economics at Dhaka University, when asked about the challenges of online classes.

When asked what measures should be taken to make this system convenient for everyone, she said, “I think it’ll be easier if we are provided with class or tutorial videos. Classes can be recorded so that we can cover up for if we miss them by chance because of network issues. These issues make it very hard to attend live classes.”

## Student-teacher interaction, a fading tradition?

“I faced two problems in conducting online classes: lack of interaction with the students, and lack of stable connectivity. In most cases, it is challenging to engage the students over zoom or other platforms.

Also, a lot of students do not have access to a stable internet connection. Internet service offered by the telecom operators is not stable, and very expensive for long uses.

There is also the issue of service with Zoom, the most common platform used for online classes, which is hampered due to heavy traffic. I think the teachers will adjust and adapt new pedagogy which will enable better student engagement, while the infrastructural problem can be solved with active planning from the relevant stakeholders” said A.T.M. Jakaria Khan an Assistant Professor at IBA, University of Dhaka.



my parents took care of my university tuition fees. With my tuitions gone, I am now barely able to manage my expenses. It is now a do or die situation where I either have to study or drop out. I cannot afford the expenses required to avail of an online degree.”

## Questionable practicality of remote learning

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics’ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019 shows that only 37.6 per cent of households in the country have access to

connection here, so have to attend classes with mobile data. The network is not good enough inside the house, most often I have to go out in the open to do my classes. Since I’m not well connected, I don’t always get notified about them and so I’m missing classes as well.” said Akhlaqur Opu, a student of the Economics department of Dhaka University.

Many have left their gadgets in their University dormitories. As a result, they are having to attend classes on their mobile phones. This is causing a hiccup in the timely delivery of their academic



NOW YOU KNOW

## A lighter body is good for corners

If you ever drove a truck or SUV of an older design, you might have noticed they can be quite difficult to steer. This is because these vehicles are built around strong metal frames, whose weight takes a significant toll on the steering system. Modern cars, such as the **Mitsubishi Xpander**, solve this issue by using three different MPa classes of high tensile steel in its structure. This lighter body is just as strong, giving the large vehicle much better handling characteristics and a nimble turning radius of just 5.2 meters.

