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Small vehicles shoot up, so do accidents

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

A sharp and unregulated growth of vehicles, especially motorcycles and three-wheelers, over the last few years has resulted in a spike in the numbers of road crashes and casualties.

A total of 5.78 lakh vehicles were registered with Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) last year, the highest in a single year and 29.91 percent higher than that of 2021.

Astonishingly, around 88 percent of them were motorcycles.

According to Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, an NGO working on road safety, this increase in the number of vehicles contributed to around 10,000 people getting killed on roads last year, the highest in the last eight years.

Motorbikes and three-wheelers were involved in almost 55 percent of the 6,749 road crashes recorded last year.

“Unregulated growth in vehicle numbers, particularly motorcycles and three-wheelers, are directly linked to the rise in road crashes. However, this is not the single reason behind road crashes,” said transport expert Prof Mizanur Rahman.

Such a grim picture indicates deteriorating road safety despite a stringent road transport act that was enacted in the wake of massive students’ movement for safe roads in 2018.

Road Transport and Highways Division Secretary ABM Amin Ullah Nuri, however, said they don’t believe 10,000 deaths on roads, as mentioned by Jatri Kalyan Samity, is correct.

Asked about the rising number of road crashes, he said the number of vehicles and length of roads in 2015 and now have to be compared to reach any conclusion

as accidents increase with the increase of vehicles and roads.

They have intensified enforcement and awareness programmes to curb road crashes, he told The Daily Star last night.

He claimed that around 1 lakh cases were filed in November last year for traffic rules violations, resulting in a decrease in accident numbers.

RISE IN VEHICLE NUMBER

With the 5.78 lakh vehicles registered last

✓ Highest ever 5.78 lakh vehicles got registered last year.

✓ Around 88 percent of all vehicles registered last year were bikes

✓ At least 9,951 people were killed in 6,749 road accidents last year

✓ Bikes, three-wheelers involved in almost 55 percent road crashes

year, the official number of registered vehicles since independence is now 55.92 lakh, according to the BRTA.

Of them, 40.07 lakh, or 71.67 percent of the total, are motorcycles. Many motorbikes are not registered in the country.

Cars come in second at 3.98 lakh, or 7.13 percent.

Only 79,993, or 1.43 percent, of the registered vehicles are buses and minibuses, the main mode of public transport.

Interestingly, 28.12 lakh vehicles got registered since 2017, which is higher

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A large number of motorbikes occupy a major portion of a city street. The number of two-wheelers has risen sharply in recent years. The photo was taken at Bijoy Sarani yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Exports hit record on Christmas cheer

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Exports fetched a record \$5.37 billion in December as consumer spending centring on Christmas in the Western world returned in full swing after two pandemic holiday seasons marked by health fears and supply shortages.

Last month’s receipts take 2022’s export earnings to a record \$54.7 billion, up 23.7 percent year-on-year, according to data from the

Export Promotion Bureau.

Despite the record earnings, December’s receipts, which were up 9.33 percent from a year earlier, fell short of the month’s target.

As always, garments accounted for about 84 percent of the export receipts, bringing home \$4.67 billion in December.

The export receipts from apparel shipments are high because of the increase in unit price on the back of the elevated price levels for raw

materials like yarn and fabrics in the global market, said Faruque Hassan, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, the garment exporters’ platform.

The same garment item that sold for \$10 during the holiday season last year cost \$13-14 this year.

Moreover, Bangladesh also started exporting high-end value-added garment items for which the

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Fishermen from Barishal's Lebur Char drying their haul of freshly caught fish in wicker baskets on the Kuakata sea beach yesterday. After the fish have dried and turned into “shutki”, a delicacy enjoyed across the country, they will be sold to the traders of Kuakata wholesale market at the cost of Tk 150-500 per kg.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Ctg port’s anomalies cost govt Tk 258 crore

CAG finds 26 counts of irregularities by CPA in three years

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and DWAIPIYAN BARUA

The state coffers were robbed of Tk 258 crore for 26 counts of irregularities by the Chattogram Port Authority between fiscal 2017-18 and 2019-20, found the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

The irregularities include violations of Public Procurement Rules 2008, Income Tax Ordinance 1984, National Board of Revenue’s order and statutory regulatory order, Chittagong Port Ordinance 1976 and Central Public Works codes and breach of contract terms.

For each of the irregularities, the CAG sought explanation from the CPA chairman and the shipping secretary but got no answer, said the report, which was presented at the parliament in June last year.

CPA Chairman Mohammad Shahjahan, however, refuted the

allegation.

“We gave answers to each of the enquiries made by the CAG. It is the CAG’s duty to raise objection while our duty is to give explanation to those objections and we did that,” he told The Daily Star.

There was no financial irregularity on their end and everything was done following the rules, he said, while drawing attention to an irregularity mentioned in the CAG report over the procurement of a tug boat.

CPA signed an agreement with New Western Marine Ship Builders for the procurement of a high-power tug boat for Tk 37.75 crore, Tk 3 crore more than the shipping ministry’s estimated cost of Tk 34.72 crore, the CAG said.

The contractor was supposed to deliver the tug boat by June 2017, but as of May 2020, the tug boat remained undelivered, according to the report.

The shipping ministry asked the

CPA to take punitive action against the supplier.

But instead of taking any action against the contractor like cancelling the contract or confiscating performance security or blacklisting it, the port authority continued to pay the contractor in violation of the Particular Condition of Contract.

As of December 8, 2020, a total of Tk 23.09 crore was paid to the contractor, the CAG said in the report.

The tug boat was completed on December 2021 and delivered in the first week of January 2022, Sohail Hasan, managing director of New Western Marine Ship Builders, told The Daily Star.

In the same month, the tug boat was launched by Shipping Minister Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury.

“As Western Marine was taking so much time to deliver the boat, I personally took the initiative as per

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দক্ষিণ এশিয়াতেও সেরা হলো ইসলামী ব্যাংক

যুক্তরাজ্যভিত্তিক ক্যামব্রিজ আইএফএ ইসলামী ব্যাংক বাংলাদেশ লিমিটেড-কে দক্ষিণ এশিয়ার ‘সবচেয়ে শক্তিশালী ইসলামিক রিটেইল ব্যাংক’ হিসেবে স্বীকৃতি দিয়েছে। বিশ্বখ্যাত এ প্রতিষ্ঠান ইসলামী ব্যাংক-কে ‘বাংলাদেশের সবচেয়ে শক্তিশালী ইসলামিক রিটেইল ব্যাংক’ হিসেবেও স্বীকৃতি দেয়। এছাড়া এ ব্যাংক সিঙ্গাপুরভিত্তিক দ্য এশিয়ান ব্যাংকার কর্তৃক ২০২২ সালে ‘বাংলাদেশের সবচেয়ে শক্তিশালী ব্যাংক’ হিসেবেও স্বীকৃতি পায়।

এ অর্জন অব্যাহত রয়েছে ১৭ কোটি মানুষের অটুট আস্থা আর ভালোবাসায়। গ্রাহক, শুভানুধ্যায়ীসহ সকলের প্রতি আমাদের কৃতজ্ঞতা।

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