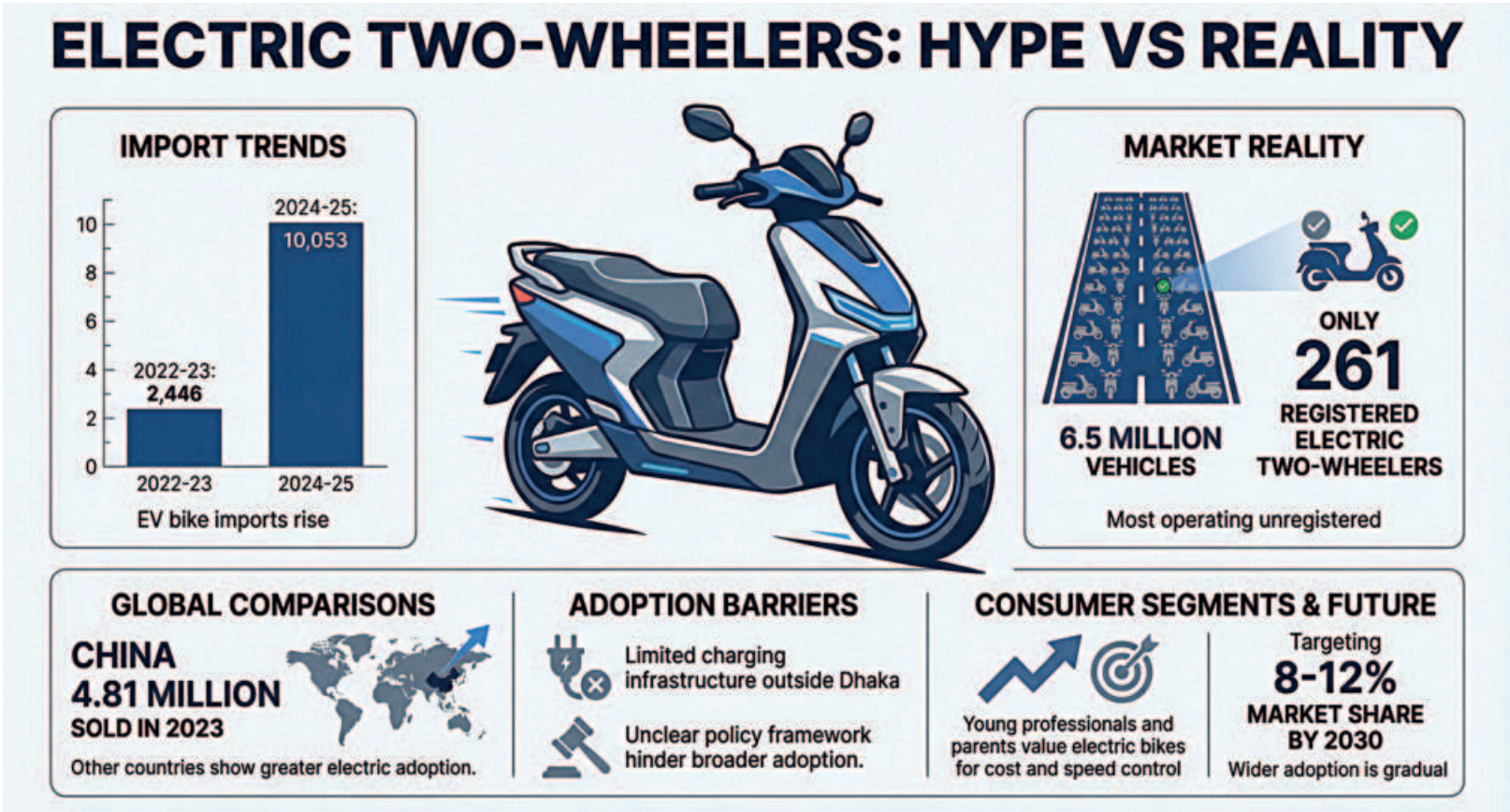


# The Next 25 Years Where Bangladesh's Motorcycle Industry Is Headed



FROM PAGE S1

Globally, the contrast is stark. China sold 4.81 million electric motorcycles in 2023, reaching 28% market penetration. India's electric two-wheeler sales surged under government subsidies. Indonesia targets a 25% market share by 2030, while Vietnam's EV sales jumped 98% in early 2025.

Bangladesh's own pledge under the Paris Agreement targets 30% electric vehicle adoption by 2030, implying roughly two million electric two-wheelers within five years. At the current pace, that target will be missed by a wide margin.

The constraints are structural. Charging infrastructure is limited outside Dhaka, and the policy

framework remains economically unconvincing for ordinary buyers. Duty cuts and incentives are repeatedly promised "from the next fiscal year." Chinese imports dominate, mostly fully assembled, while local manufacturing remains limited.

What is happening is narrower. Young urban professionals, particularly women, are adopting electric bikes for short commutes. Parents value controlled speeds. Running costs matter: charging a REVVO A01 for 75 km costs Tk 9.07, compared to several hundred taka for petrol. These are pockets of adoption, not a market shift.

The electric future will arrive, but slowly. Walton's Takyon, Komaki's

Dhaka outlets, and offerings from Runner, Green Tiger and Akij signal intent. Yet without major advances in battery technology, wider charging networks and stable electricity pricing, electric two-wheelers will remain a premium urban option. By 2030, an 8-12% market share appears more realistic than official targets; by 2050, 40-50% is possible if regional trends hold.

**EXPORT POTENTIAL: FACING THE HARD MATH**

In 2019, industry leaders predicted Bangladesh would export motorcycles to India's northeast, Nepal and Africa. Runner Automobiles began small-scale exports. Honda shipped 14 XBlade 160 motorcycles to Guatemala in 2024,

generating headlines but little volume. The economics are unforgiving. Manufacturing costs in Bangladesh run about 10% higher than in India, Thailand or Vietnam, even before duties. Import duties on components remain high, while duty drawback procedures can take over five years, tying up large amounts of working capital. Without duty-free imports against guarantees, Bangladeshi manufacturers struggle to compete globally.

Production capacity reached 800,000-1,000,000 units annually by 2024, while domestic demand fell to around 380,000 units. Excess capacity sits idle because export markets can source motorcycles from India or China for 20-30% less.

Meaningful exports require three things Bangladesh lacks: streamlined duty drawback systems, a developed component base (over 700 parts are imported per bike, with only chains, seats, stands and batteries made locally), and brand recognition abroad.

Could Bangladesh become a motorcycle export hub by 2050? Theoretically, yes. Vietnam managed it, aided by infrastructure, industrial

50,000-100,000 units annually by 2035-2040, serving price-sensitive niche markets.

**FINANCING, INSURANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES**

Motorcycles in Bangladesh cost Tk 80,000 to Tk 5 lacs, equivalent to 4-25 months of average income. Most purchases require financing, yet dedicated motorcycle loans remain limited.

City Bank's "City Bike Loan," launched in 2024, offers up to 80% financing, while Uttara Bank provides smaller loans. Penetration remains low. Banks classify two-wheeler loans as high-risk, requiring stable employment and income levels that exclude gig workers, small traders and ride-hailing drivers. Informal financing fills the gap, often at interest rates of 15-25%.

Insurance adoption is similarly weak. Although mandatory under the Road Transport Act 2018, enforcement is minimal. Most riders carry only basic third-party coverage, if any. Comprehensive insurance is rare, claims processing is cumbersome, and cashless repair networks are limited outside Dhaka.

Digital tools could ease these constraints. Alternative credit scoring, microfinance integration, mandatory insurance verification, and cashless repair networks are all feasible. Bangladesh has 120 million mobile financial service users and near-universal mobile penetration.

What's missing is institutional reform. Bangladesh Bank, IDRA and BRTA have yet to align regulation with digital capability. These are not technological barriers but governance ones.

Bangladesh has the market size and manufacturing base to sustain its motorcycle industry through 2050. But the next 25 years are more likely to be defined by gradual adjustment than dramatic disruption.

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policy and ASEAN access. Bangladesh has potential but lacks execution. More realistically, exports may reach

## Two Wheels, One Reality

### Rethinking Motorcycle Safety in Bangladesh

Motorcyclists in Bangladesh have an image problem and not entirely an undeserved one. To many road users, bikers are the chaotic element: squeezing through impossible gaps, riding the wrong way, jumping signals, and trusting reflexes more than rules. But beneath the stereotypes lies a harder truth. Motorcycles have become a necessity long before safety systems caught up.

Cost is the first barrier. A proper, certified helmet can cost more than a month's fuel for many riders. Jackets, gloves, boots? For most, those are "lifestyle choices", not essentials. As a result, safety gear remains the domain of a small group who see riding as a passion, not just transport. Everyone else rides exposed, vulnerable, and hoping today won't be the unlucky day.

The biggest causes of motorcycle accidents in Bangladesh are depressingly consistent: speeding on poor road surfaces, sudden lane changes without indicators, buses and trucks turning without warning, and riders misjudging

gaps in dense traffic. Add broken roads, poor lighting, and minimal lane discipline, and you get a system where survival often depends on instinct rather than infrastructure.

Then there's the aftermath. Unlike many countries, an accident

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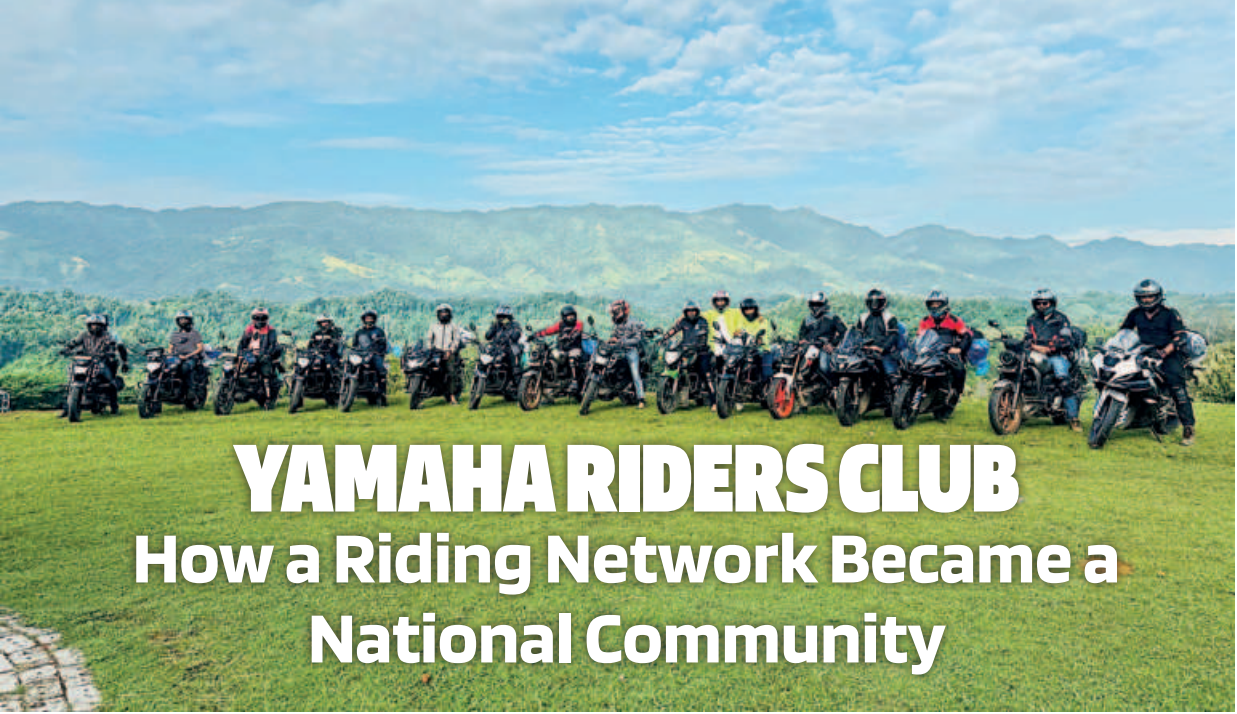
here isn't just a medical emergency, it can instantly become a social one. Crowds gather, tempers flare, blame is assigned within seconds, often

without facts. Riders, especially younger ones, can find themselves verbally or physically attacked even when they're not at fault. A rider involved in a minor collision near Farmgate recalled, "The accident wasn't serious. What scared me was how fast people decided it was my fault."

This is where something as simple as a helmet-mounted camera or dash cam becomes more than a gadget, it becomes protection. Video evidence can defuse mob anger, establish fault, and offer legal clarity when emotions run high. This is the biggest step toward self-preservation.

Ultimately, motorcycle safety in Bangladesh won't improve through enforcement alone. It needs affordability of certified gear, better rider education, realistic urban road design, and a cultural shift that treats bikers as road users, not intruders.

Until then, riding smart, gearing up where possible, and keeping proof on record may be the most practical safety system riders have.



FARHAN MUSFIQUE

Early on weekend mornings, long lines of motorcycles move in quiet formation across Bangladesh. Riders in matching blue jerseys communicate through hand signals and ride with unusual discipline. These are members of the Yamaha Riders Club (YRC), one of Bangladesh's largest organised biking networks. What started as a platform to connect owners has expanded into a movement blending riding culture with social responsibility and civic engagement.

**FROM OWNERSHIP TO BELONGING**

YRC was established to provide a structured community and long-term engagement for riders. Membership grew as owners joined for organised tours and the sense of brotherhood the club provided. Today, YRC connects over 25,000 registered riders through a coordinated regional network. "Once you experience that level of organisation and brotherhood, riding alone never feels the same again," says Iqbal Mahmud, YRC Dhaka Coordinator.

**THE CULTURE OF THE RIDE**

Group rides follow strict protocols: pre-ride briefings, maintained formations, and controlled

speeds. These measures reduce risk and build trust. National and international tours reinforce disciplined habits, transforming recreational outings into learning experiences that reshape how riders view their responsibilities to others on the road. Ahmed Nafiz Ifthakhar, a YRC Narshingdi warrior, said, "Yamaha Riders Club is the largest officially registered biking club in Bangladesh, built on four core pillars:

road markings and distributing educational materials. By positioning itself as a stakeholder in safety, YRC works to normalise disciplined riding practices in a culture often criticised for recklessness.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL COMMITMENT**

Members have planted over 30,000 trees across Bangladesh through coordinated drives. The club also



marks national days through large-scale human formations of national symbols. These events reinforce a collective identity that connects riding with pride in country and culture.

**A COMMUNITY THAT REFLECTS CHANGE**

As riders become more experienced, they seek long-term engagement beyond initial ownership. YRC provides that continuity. Its structure and shared values have allowed the community to scale effectively, demonstrating how a shared love for riding can evolve into a platform for meaningful impact.

