




Visual: Star


A recent government report has revealed a concerning statistic: the number of students in all primary-level educational institutions in the country has reduced by over 8.32 lakh in 2023 from the previous year. The implications of this decline is no doubt significant, as primary education is the foundation for bringing up a skilled, informed generation to ensure Bangladesh's prosperity. While officials have highlighted the country's declining birth rate and a new, more accurate software at the Directorate of Primary Education for this decrease,

The Covid pandemic dealt a major blow to education, as financial struggles brought on by it forced many to take their children out of primary school or transfer them to Qawmi madrasas. Infact, financial insecurity continues to be one of the biggest detriments to primary education. According to UNESCO, households account for 71 percent of total education spending in Bangladesh, one of the highest in the world. The average annual family cost per child in 2023 was Tk 17,294 for primary education, stated the Education Watch 2023 report. To put things in pective, the average monthly family income in 2022 was just Tk 32,422. News of parents taking their daughters out of school and marrying



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All that ails our primary education

In this scenario, this year's budget for education is Tk 94,710 crore—only 1.69 percent of the GDP, the lowest in the last 16 years. The drop in the number of students, revealed by the Annual Primary School Census 2023, might  well be due to a falling birth rate and improved software, but we cannot ignore the contributing factors that have been plaguing the sector for

Bangladesh

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primary education

school dropout

Must commuters risk their lives every Eid?

The government must take effective
actions to prevent road crashes



quoted the BRTA data and warned about the urgent need for policies to regulate motorcycles and easy bikes, which accounted for most of the recent crashes. While we are glad that the minister has expressed concern over this issue, the history of three-wheeler bans or the government's feeble attempt to prevent unfit and unlicensed vehicles from operating on the road and then backtracking on their decisions don't give us much hope that any such policy will be formulated or implemented soon.



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communication infrastructure, but it has failed to make those very channels safe for people to use. The reasons behind road crashes are not unknown, neither are the solutions. Even simple measures such as increasing traffic monitoring on the roads after Eid could prevent many deaths.

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must start treating the epidemic of road crashes with the seriousness it deserves.

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Air pollution is now the biggest killer in Bangladesh




Take action against those responsible for this situation

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comparison, 200,000 deaths occurred due to high blood pressure, 130,100 due to tobacco use, and 130,400 were linked to poor diet. This deserves critical attention.


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Dhaka's air is now so bad it is causing cancer

 Like other major causes of deaths, air pollution is something that affects everyone, particularly children. In fact, in 2021, the country ranked fifth globally in terms of deaths among

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Why do policymakers care so little about pollution?

Despite these severe health impacts—and the resulting burden on the nation—we wonder why the government has failed to make any significant progress in reducing air pollution. A number of previous studies have shared similar findings, which make it obvious that  has turned into a silent killer that must be urgently addressed. According to a study by Clean Air Fund (CAF), between 2017 and 2021, Bangladesh received \$2.3 billion to curb air

Curbing air pollution should be our top priority

Major pollutants like construction dust, traffic fumes, factory emissions, and brick kilns continue to be unchecked to this day. According to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), of the 60 lakh registered vehicles in the country, about 6.17 lakh run with no or expired fitness certificates. Additionally, Bangladesh produces about 30 lakh tonnes of e-waste every year—most of which contain carcinogenic elements. Brick kilns, too, continue to heavily pollute the environment. In other words, the  government has done little to nothing to address the killer air that citizens are breathing in.

Environment (DoE) for failing to take effective steps to control air pollution in Dhaka despite its repeated directives. But even that seems to have changed nothing. It is high time, therefore, for the relevant state institutions as well as polluting entities to be held responsible for their negligence or contributions in this regard. Perhaps then they will finally start to act as they are legally bound to do, and help prevent needless deaths of citizens.

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