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## Wearing standard helmet key to bikers' safety



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**T**hough motorcycles save both time and money, life is at stake. However, the risk is eventually reduced if the helmet is used. The main function of the helmet is to protect the passengers from head injuries. Not only the rider but also the pillion riding in the back seat with the rider must have a helmet on his head.

Helmet is mandatory for the safety of the bike rider's life, not just for the rules. In fact, there is no alternative for drivers and riders to use standard helmets to prevent motorcycle crashes.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), helmet use can reduce the risk of deaths from road crashes by 42% and the risk of fatal injuries by 69%. Therefore it is important to make the use of standard helmets mandatory.

Most people just use helmets to avoid police cases so they use very low-quality helmets at nominal prices. They may not know that they are risking their lives as well as others' lives to escape the lawsuit. A standard helmet can save the life of a motorcyclist and rider in a crash.



Malaysia has enacted a helmet law that has resulted in a 30 percent reduction in deaths from motorcycle crashes. Helmet use increased from 20% in 1996 to 98% in 2001 as a result of the enactment and implementation of helmet use laws in Italy. Compulsory helmet use in the United States has resulted in a 20% to 30% reduction in injuries among two-wheeler users.

According to various studies, the majority of crashes in the country are young motorcyclists. Moreover, motorcycle involvement is found in 32% of road crashes. About 80% of the casualties were pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists. Of the 3,556 road crashes in 2020, 30% were due to motorcycles.

The use of standard helmets will reduce the risk of unintended deaths. It will benefit the country financially as well. The use of helmets by motorcyclists on the road has increased comparatively. Due to the announcement of the use of helmets by the police, now both motorcyclists and riders use helmets.

Motorcycles have increased at a massive rate on the road without any awareness about the use of standard helmets so that they

are not able to protect themselves from crashes.

According to a survey conducted by the Accidents Research Institute, BIRT, a motorcyclist in Dhaka changes lanes up to six times in every minute. As such, the motorcyclist changes lanes up to 60 times in 10 minutes.

The study also found that 50% of riders suffer from insecurity in driving. According to another survey by the same institute, 30% of drivers use very low-quality helmets. In only 2% of cases, riders are given full-face helmets.

Compared to 2020, the number of motorcycle crashes has increased by 50.46% in 2021, which was 15% in the previous year. However other crashes on the road in the last two years were almost the same. Motorcycle crashes on the road are on the rise. Appropriate helmets can significantly reduce the risk of death of motorcyclist in these crashes.

However, sub-section (c) of the Road Transport Act 2018 states that a motorcyclist cannot carry more than one passenger on a motorcycle except the driver and both the driver and the passenger must use the helmet appropriately.

However, the law did not specify the standardization of the helmet. There is no scope to consider the standard or safety measure.



ures of the helmets that are currently available in the market.

At present, BIRT does not have the facility to test the standard of helmets. All helmets sold in the market are supposed to be manufactured and imported as per the standards prescribed by BIRT. Road safety will be further strengthened by bringing the use of helmets in line with international safety standards.

Since the use of helmets is a matter of life and death, we need to stop importing low-quality helmets. If necessary, the policy should be amended here. At the same time, it must be brought under the appropriate concern on how to make standard helmets in the country.

Wearing standard helmets for drivers and riders, not competing with drivers in ride-sharing, raising awareness and strict enforcement of traffic laws can reduce motorcycle crashes on the road. A crippled life cannot be desirable if one is injured in an unintended death or crash.

The concerned authorities have to come forward for the use of quality helmets. On the other hand, safe roads are important not only for motorcyclists to riders but also for pedestrians, public transport passengers, drivers and students as well.

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