

Lithium-ion battery technology dhaka

At least three million battery-powered vehicles are currently operating, with around 75 percent of the population riding them at least once a day

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When M Stanley Whittingham, John Goodenough, and Akira Yoshino were independently working on the development of stronger rechargeable batteries in the 1970s and 1980s, little did they realise that their efforts would one day revolutionise the technology and become a vital cog in the wheel of environmental sustainability.

Their groundbreaking work, which earned the trio a joint Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2019, paved the way for leading auto manufacturers, such as Tesla, Mitsubishi, Audi, and Toyota, to develop today's lithium-ion batteries to power electric cars, which are gaining popularity worldwide due to their environmental friendliness.

During his Nobel Prize acceptance speech in Stockholm, Goodenough, who passed away last month in Texas, said, "We thought it would be nice and helpful in a few things, but never dreamed it would revolutionise electronics and everything else."

Bangladesh, too, is making strides in the green energy game by using lithium-ion batteries in locally made public transport. Over the past decade, battery-powered "Easy bikes" or "Tomtoms", as they are locally known, have become a popular means of public transportation, particularly outside Dhaka.

According to data from the German Agency for International Cooperation, there are currently at least three million such vehicles operating on Bangladeshi roads, with at least 75 percent of the entire population of Bangladesh using them at least once a day.

These vehicles currently use lead-acid batteries based on 19th-century technology to power them.

Compared to lead-acid batteries, however, lithium-ion batteries are smaller, have a longer life cycle, and require less time to recharge.

The only drawback of lithium-ion batteries is that they are slightly more expensive than alternatives. But now, companies like SOLshare are stepping forward to help remedy that issue as well.

Under a flagship programme, SOLshare, a self-styled climate-tech company, has developed a business model to power Easy bikes or Tomtoms across Bangladesh with lithium-ion batteries. They are collaborating with



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credible microfinance institutions in the country to extend loans to the ride owners at a low interest rate.

Salma S Islam, head of project (fundraising and communication) at SOLshare, says that the company has already installed lithium-ion batteries in Easy bikes across 23 garages located in Dhaka, Sylhet, Rajshahi, Bogura, and Cox's Bazar.

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