

The e-commerce kaleidoscope

Before the pandemic, how many of us have ever thought of doing groceries online? Taking it up a notch, how many of us ever considered purchasing a sacrificial animal for Qurbani Eid via the Internet? Almost no one!

Then, COVID-19 hit, changing our lives drastically — from the way we socialise and work to the way we shop — forcing us to adapt.

And at the centre of it all is the Internet. It is now more useful than ever! Just imagine what the COVID-19 pandemic would have looked like if there was no Internet and smart phones! With all those Zoom meetings and social media platforms, we are being able to work from home, attend classes, stay connected with friends, and much more.

The pandemic has forced us to think of alternatives and get on board with new



habits and ways of doing things.



Just take the payment of your utility bills as an example. You can easily pay with your mobile phone. Not that it was a

service unheard of in pre-pandemic times, but due to the current circumstances, many people who were previously adamant about these are now more open to them.

Even those who were not tech-savvy before have now embraced the power of the Internet as a tool. To illustrate, many parents of school children opted for better Internet connection at home and perhaps even dedicated a tab or a computer for online classes.

Particularly zeroing down on e-commerce, one may dare say that the pandemic has been a blessing in disguise — for businesses, start-ups, and aspiring entrepreneurs, and of course at the core of them all, the customers, who can shop from the comfort and safety of their homes.

To sustain and survive, many businesses have been forced to open online platforms. Particularly during the general holiday or lockdown, when many brick-and-mortar stores were closed, revenue from online platforms lent a helping hand.



Moreover, we have seen an increased interest in F-commerce. To illustrate, many home chefs took to social media, opening Facebook pages to offer myriad delicacies. Even the concept of cloud kitchen became rather popular just in the last few months or so.

This empowerment came with smart phones and the Internet.

Now, the question of sustainability remains to be answered. Time shall tell. It may seem apparently simple to start a business online by just opening a Facebook page and not having to rent a brick-and-mortar store, but all the

challenges of running a business is still very much there — from production and management to logistics and supply chain.

But, rest assured, the pandemic has posed as an opportunity for e-commerce businesses, as more people are now open to the idea of buying things online. The acceptability of the notion of e-commerce has increased and is becoming a norm.

Hopefully, when the pandemic is over, we shall retain some of the lessons learnt and some of the habits that we formed. Oddly enough, this pandemic has given us a push towards a more digital and tech-friendly attitude!

For now, this week, Star Lifestyle looks at the world of e-commerce, exploring various brands, platforms, and services.

Happy and safe shopping!

— LS Desk

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

Model: Shaker Bin Shams, Shahida Chowdhury, Aynaaz Shams, Golam Kiyaaan Wazir Chowdhury, Mrs Wali Khan

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