Must-have college gadgetry

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THE Bangladeshi college campus, which was an omen of coming-of-age, is now being transformed by a more palpable force: a squadron of laptops, cell phones and connectivity!

As we evolve from unmanageable brats in schools to a bit more mature adults in colleges and universities, some of our parents often start trusting us with high-tech gadgets which the average college students may not live without. While, yet other students buy their own tech stuff using their pocket money or by doing odd jobs. Today we take a look at what some of the high-profile tech-freaks of colleges roam around with in their schoolbags.

"No kid can live without them especially in college" says Munia a Stamford University student. Yes she is talking about the connectivity revolution called **'cell phones'**. Browse through any bag of a college student and you are bound to find one. It ranges from average Motorola phone to the sleek MOTORAZOR and ranging from trendy people settling for hi-fi NOKIA N-Series mobiles which are quite popular with those who can spend a bit more than average. An SMS message from the front bench to the very end of the classroom during boring lectures is a common scenario, while at other times students silently play the brilliant games in the mobile phones while others doze away at the soft melodies from the mp3-phones. Cameras make it easier for college kids to snap their ridiculous moments with friends as well. "Nowadays nothing is called only mobile" says Pablo, a BBA student from NSU. Phone companies would make a major loss unless they incorporate mp3 players in their mobiles. This new generation is all about music in the palm of their hands.

Speaking of which, we come to the music gadgetry: mp3, **mp4, I-POD and I-POD Nano**. Mp3 players are the most common music system you could carry around on campus and usually they are pretty cheap. You can get good mp3 players for just 2000 bucks in Riffles Square and even Bashundhara City Shopping Centre. Mp3 players usually last for a little over one and half year if you behave well, and the memory ranges from 512 MB to 1 GB (I doubt whether it is actually 1GB, but they claim it so ...).

Mp4 players on the other hand are the 'IN' thing since most are equipped with small resolution cameras, and can record voice, play radios, video clips and music. The most recent one I saw in Bashundhara City cost 6000 bucks and it was a mind boggling white colored mp4 which looked somewhat like a PSP. It had games, organizers, cameras (high res) and the other necessities that an mp4 has. If you want an mp4, check out a little corner store in Bashundhara Level 5.

I-Pods are for those who always keep up with the latest gadgets but honestly think twice before you want to spend 20,000 taka in a go. Firstly, sorry no camera, secondly, who on earth would like to store 19,000 songs in the small gadget? I mean would you even have time to listen to all those songs? (Okay by now you do get it that I don't own an I-Pod!) Well, tech is evolving fast and so are the pod-casters, nowadays pod-lovers are opting for games T-Shows, Radios and also lecture-recording using their I-Pod. Sigh, I guess I am the one left behind after all!

With so many odd-jobs that a college student handles, it becomes hard to organize and remember their schedules properly, for this there is the handy-dandy **palm-top organizers** found in the mobile/tech shops. They might be quite expensive, some ranging from about 17000 taka to 30000 taka plus. However, it is worth the money if you are involved in student clubs like Business Club or are from student organizations like AIESEC, and have to manage odd-jobs and tuitions side-by-side.

With two new and popular private radio channels that opened up last year, Radio Foorti 98.4 FM and Radio Today 89.6 FM, many college students are buying **portable radios**. Of course those who have mp3s , music phones or mp4s have added advantage of listening to their own songs, but those who are a bit on the downside with pocket money, portable radio players are the 'shyte'. Ranging from a mere 500 tk to a maximum of 1000 tk, this antique still rules the world!

USBs are something no student can nowadays live without. Teachers and Professors are opting for more state-of-the-art (!) homework submissions: through e-mails, transferring documents from **pen drives** and also submission of final projects require nothing but the life-saving USB flash/pen drive. I suggest it is better not to spend more than 3000tk on this accessory since the average ones usually last just over two years if you handle carefully.

Laptops are fast becoming the basic necessity for a college student, but a major concern is about the safety of this jewel. Laptops can easily be mugged if you are traveling by public transport.

EDGE technology has helped us get information in our fingertips thanks to the mobile phone companies; most students who have WAP-enabled phones are getting streaming net-connectivity anywhere anytime. I have experienced 150 kbps and this, my dear friend is a lot compared to my shared broadband bandwidth of 30kbps! However, do not expect full functionality in mobile with WAP technology since there are many sites which are not WAP-enabled. Grameen Phone offers EDGE in two packages. One for prepaid which costs you Tk0.02 per kbps and another package which has unlimited access for a fixed rent of Tk1000.

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