



The power to do more

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INFORMATION | GADGETS | TECHNOLOGY

BYTES

Internet as an enabler

Once access to internet was restricted to selected urban few and that too within their homes through fixed lines, but today internet is much more proliferated thanks to the efforts by the mobile industry. While Bangladesh is still at an early stage of internet penetration, there is tremendous growth opportunity moving forward. For many in Bangladesh, their internet enabled mobile phone will be the only gateway to the Web, and the belief is that with better awareness, affordability and easy configuration, more and more Bangladeshis can get online and engage with the world.

Due to the mobile operators 2nd generation internet technology, which they cannot upgrade in absence of a 3G license, they are lagging behind in speed in comparison with Teletalk (who have already deployed 3G), Citycell's EVDO service or even the WiMAX operators. However, it is also a fact that we have really not seen the existing high speed players reach the level of coverage of many of the mobile operators (e.g. Grameenphone) who have made it possible to access mobile internet from anywhere in Bangladesh. The country is eagerly awaiting the successful auction of 3G license when we can un-leash the true potential of high speed mobile data access for the end users.

The explosion of mobile internet occurred in April of 2010 when Grameenphone first launched a sensible & affordable Minipack 15MB data offer for BDT 29 targeting the internet enabled handset users. Today the mobile industry offers a wide range of data packs catering to the usage needs & device types for a range of segments.

Operators now offer bite sized micropacks (1MB) for as low as



BDT 2. For smartphone and tablet users who demand more, the ideal should be 1GB packs. From operator to operator, the price of 1GB packs varies from BDT 275 to 300. And finally, there are unlimited packages (with Fair Usage Policies) which one can hook up with a modem for regular PC/laptop/ heavy usage.

Telecom Regulator deserves a round of praise for guiding and directing the operators to become more customer-centric. As of July 2013, the mobile industry has also taken another praise-worthy step to reduce their Pay As You Go data pack prices in order to make it more affordable for the newbie's. This has been a long pending expectation of BTRC as well as from consumer activists group, who felt that the pay as you go

prices did not come down since its inception even though the price of bandwidth had come down significantly over the years. Grameenphone, on a very bold move, slashed their pay as you go tariffs by 50% which is the highest drop amongst any operator. The "New Pay As You Go" internet pack will charge simply 1 paisa per KiloByte over a no-use no-pay modality. This is by far the lowest pay as you go price within the industry. Being the largest mobile Internet Service Provider in the business, Grameenphone's EDGE network has the widest coverage (99% of the population) in the country to allow its valued subscriber easy access and seamless data access across the country.

However, the tariff reduction alone is not enough to getsubscribers onboard. A big

barrier to adopt cellular internet was their concern of 'bill shock', particularly from new mart phone users who were unaware of the bakend consumptions of internet in their smart devices. Reazing this, GP (first amongst the operators) introduce maximum usage threshold in a month (for their PAYGo data pack) so that there is a capping of the maximum amount of internet usage (accidental or intentional) that can be racked up in a particular 30 day period. This max threshold ensures zero bill shock & complete peace of mind for the first time internet customer. In additional to bill capping, customers will also get proactive volume usage notification at 50%, 80% & 100% usage and also be able to check internet volume usage at any point through SMS and

USSD free of cost. These advanced features have been incorporated by Grameenphone to facilitate transparent billing & to help customer have control over their usage of internet.

It is our expectation that mobile operators will play a leading role in enabling internet adoption and thereby putting an end to digital illiteracy. We believe fast, easy and reliable mobile internet access is a right of the Bangladeshi citizens and they can really play a vital role in making the dream of digital Bangladesh a reality as long as it is backed with proper support from the government.

The writer is General Manager in Wireless Broadband Department in Grameenphone.

SHABBIR HOSSAIN



Virtual currencies in Bangladesh

In a country where there is no existence of Paypal, Moneybookers or Alert-pay; virtual currencies are a bit over stretch. It does not mean that it's out of the play, rather there's nowhere to play with it. Many Bangladeshi Forex traders, freelancers and tech-mongers are getting more and more in to virtual currencies now-a-days. Since it is very handy and a 'cooler' way to buy stuff online, especially illegal stuff like hacking tools, drugs and S&M gadgets; popularity of virtual currencies in South Asia sky-rocketed in the last two years. There are now communities that trade, sales and buys virtual currencies in Bangladesh and some Indian's who run this business in Bangladesh. Bitcoin, most popular out of all, is the most traded one. One unit of Bitcoin (BTC) is sold at Tk. 8970 and bought at Tk.8930 (August 22, 2013 & Rough figures). There are many facbook groups that now trade Bitcoins in Bangladesh now. One of them is 'Bitcoin Bangladesh', a non-profiteering facebook group that trades bitcoins, various virtual currencies and does digital money transfers. Talking with them, we got to know that Bitcoins are yet to be popular in Bangladesh. Mostly people come to them are for money transfers via Paypal or webmoney.

Besides Bitcoins, Facebook credits and Amazon coins are also becoming popular in Bangladesh for apps, gift and other nifty virtual purchases. Not so in style now, but these currencies are expected to pick up as Bangladesh Bank is formulating guidelines for virtual currencies. Indeed it is good news.

And if you are not familiar with bitcoins or any other digital currencies, go through this first: <http://www.thedailystar.net/beta2/news/the-buzz-about-bitcoins/>

SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

Bigger screens please PPIs can wait

See, it all started way back when Apple introduced the iPhone 4 with its 'Retina Display', meaning it had a screen with a pixel density of over 300 pixels per square inch of its surface. While it was and is still an impressive display, the pixel density of the screen wasn't necessarily the only thing making it as good as it was.

While Apple may have patented the term Retina Display and vigorously marketed it, and successfully; it relied on the IPS LCD panels produced by LG (mostly) to get those viewing angles, contrast and sunlight legibility.

Now Android top dogs these days seem to be pouring out 1080p displays that have pixel densities crossing 400 PPI. Even our very own Walton has done it! Overkill? Hell Yeah.

Adding so many pixels improves the image clarity and sharpness but the cost it has to pay is perhaps in need of a revision. Increasing the resolution means it need more power to push those pixels. This means your processor and GPU needs more power to show the same image in a higher resolution screen. As a result, your battery also has to eke out more juice, leading to a shorter battery-life.

In general, people are not concerned about pixel densities but rather, they are more aware with the term, Retina display. Yes, indisputably pixel density of a screen is important, especially when reading text, but it is not the biggest factor determining its quality. It's time manufacturers took notice and stopped with the pixel density overkill.

SHAHNOOR RABBANI

JUST IN

ASUS's A43E laptop with IceCool Technology

ASUS has introduced a new range of laptop: A43E. This laptop comes with an innovative new IceCool Technology to keep palm rests cool, placing heat-producing components away from users. It sports a 14-inch display of 1366 x 768, Intel HM65 chipset and 2.5 GHz. speed of Intel 2nd Gen. Core i5 processor. With a sleek metal design and elegant color scheme and textures of aluminum, the laptop offers a combination of technology and expressive style. The laptop is also equipped with Intel GMA HD graphics, 2GB DDR3 RAM, 500 GB HDD, Wireless LAN and more.

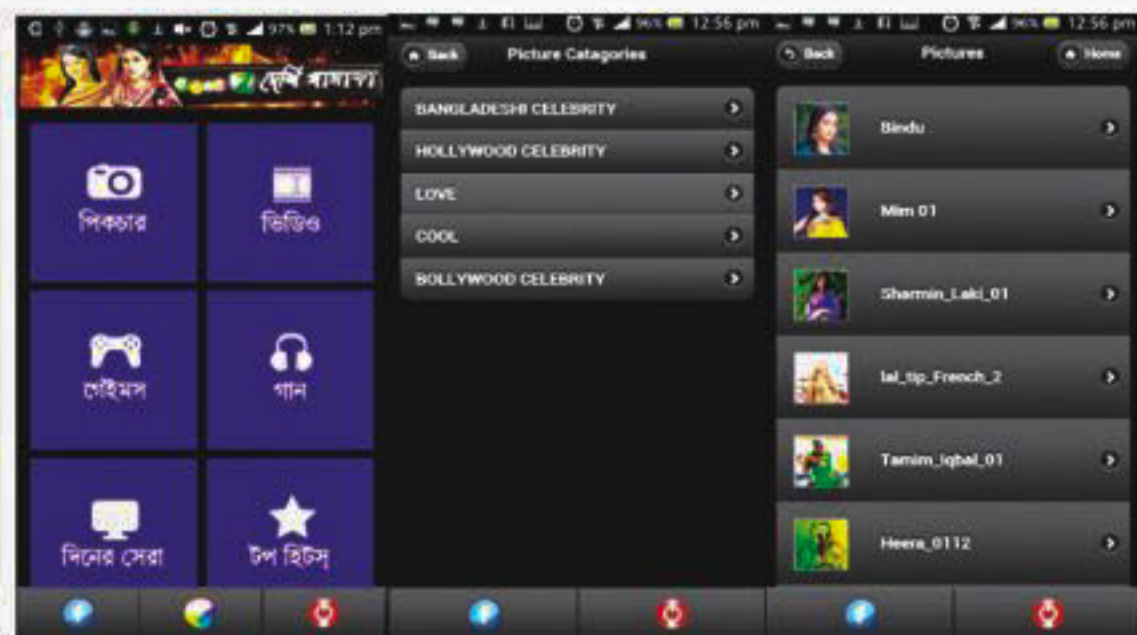
Price: Tk. 43,500/-



Budget friendly Samsung S23C350H monitor launched in Bangladesh

Recently 23" monitor of Samsung S23C350H in the local market. So now whether viewers are working on a spreadsheet or enjoying a movie, with Magic Upscale even grainy images look brilliant in this glossy and stunning display. It supports Full HD 1080p resolution (1000:1) which works together with a high dynamic contrast ratio. In addition it is built in with LED backlighting that has uses energy efficient technology that works in parallel with Eco saving mode to deliver brighter and more stunningly clear onscreen images and text.). Input facilities include VGA, HDMI and Audio. Priced Tk. 21,500 and comes with 3 year warranty.

Price: Tk. 21,500 and comes with 3 year warranty.



VU Mobile launch ClubZ app for Google Play

VU Mobile, a prominent VAS company of Bangladesh, has launched the ClubZ mobile application in Google Play. Here in ClubZ members can download local and international songs, videos, games and images to their mobile phones. Moreover this is the first of kind Bangladesh that allows a mobile subscriber to download contents and pay for it using cellphone credit. The service now has more than 400,000 subscribers from all mobile operators of Bangladesh. Within one month of beta launch, the ClubZ application has been downloaded more than 3,000 times. VU Mobile will soon launch the J2ME version of the application which will be compatible for feature phones.

Google Play Link: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.vumobile.clubzed>

HP ElitePad 900 now in Bangladesh

HP Elite Pad 900 is now shipped in Bangladesh. Just 9.2mm thick and weighing less than 1.4 pounds, with a CNC-milled aluminum back, a front that's covered in Gorilla Glass 2, and rounded corners, it comes with a Windows 8. The 10.1-inch size is ideal for typical tablet functions. Actually, the HP ElitePad 900 is a tough son of a tablet. It is built to survive being dropped, dinged, dusted, and handled roughly enough to make an iPad cry. HP has tested it to the military MIL-STD810G standard for dust, vibration, temperatures high and low, humidity, altitude, and drop-proofing for heights of up to 30 inches. So it is likely saving you in hartals. Though it has underperforming 1.8GHz single core Intel Atom processor, it makes up for it with the ruggedness.



Price: Tk. 93,000/-

KasperskyLablaunchesInternet Securityforandroiddevicesin Bangladesh

Kaspersky Lab – launched its latest security package for Android devices. "Kaspersky Internet Security for Android" is a unique premium protection for Android smartphones and tablets. The previous versions of

Kaspersky Mobile Security and Kaspersky Tablet Security were separate products to be used according to devices. This new version unifies the product to be used across all android devices (smartphones & tablets) with richer and more powerful Internet Security features. This new entry provides antivirus protection, web protection, anti-theft protection along with remote web management, call & text filtering and privacy protection to android mobile computing devices confirming optimized interface and performance.



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