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e-mail: bytes@thedailystar.net

INFORMATION | GADGETS | TECHNOLOGY

BYTES

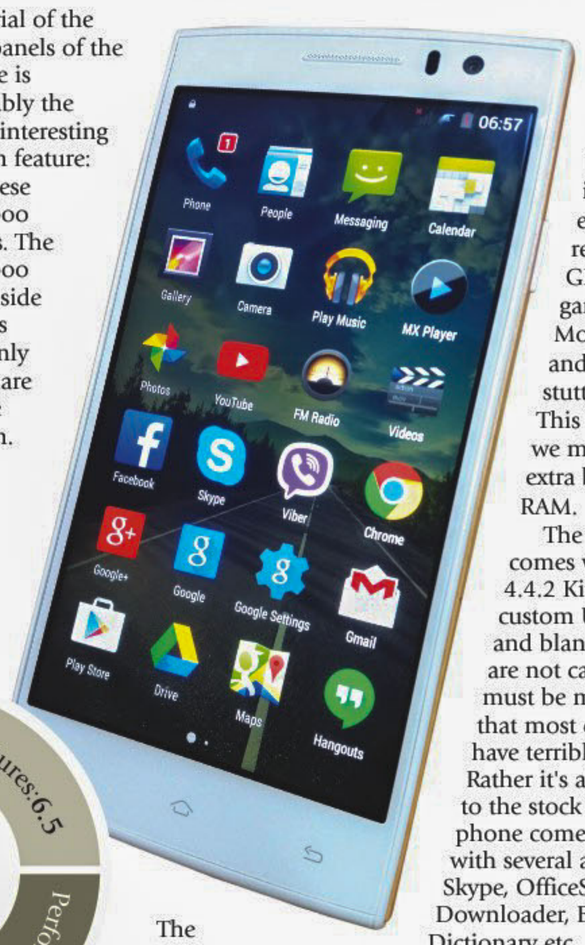
HANDS ON REVIEW

MAXIMUS iX KANE
BUDGET BIG BANG

Last year, Maximus took us all by surprise. From the feature phone market, it jumped into the world of smartphones. The plan was simple: to reinvent the budget smartphone experience. Hence they launched the iX series, the premium line of handsets by Maximus. This year's flagship model in the company's crusade with cost is: iX KANE.

Starting the review with iX Kane's display: the IPS capacitive gorilla glass-3 clad display comes in at 5 inches. It's an HD panel with a pixel density of ~294PPI. The clarity of the display was impressive. Color rendition was accurate and viewing angles were pleasant. Sharpness of the display was a bit off the because of the lower than 320ppi pixel density. Just above the display are the earpiece grills, a gesture sensor and the front facing camera.

The phone is made of light weight plastic. Our test unit was white. It wasn't the best color on a phone we saw but we could easily live with it. The front side had three Android navigation buttons on it, right under the display. The back-cover has a huge logo of iX KANE and Maximus on it. We also found the loudspeaker grill here. The back camera and the Xenon flash are encircled on a metal bezel. The material of the side panels of the phone is probably the most interesting design feature: Japanese bamboo sheets. The bamboo sheet side panels certainly add flare to the design.



The processor that runs the device is a MediaTek MTK 6582 Quad-core 1.3 GHz. The processor was able to run games and apps smoothly. Honestly; we are not big fans of MediaTek. We hope to see Qualcomm processors next time on the flagships of the iX series. It has 1 GB RAM which is good enough for regular use. GFX intensive games like Modern Warfare and Asphalt stuttered a bit. This is one time we missed some extra boost from RAM.

The phone comes with Android 4.4.2 Kitkat. The custom UI is plain and bland. The icons are not cartoonish (it must be mentioned that most custom UIs have terrible icons). Rather it's almost similar to the stock android. The phone comes preloaded with several apps such as Skype, OfficeSuite, Video Downloader, Bangla Dictionary etc.

The camera of this phone is something that we absolutely loved. Putting a Sony sensor and a 5-glass-lense certainly paid off. For a phone of this price it was able to take amazing snaps even in low light conditions. The sample images that we took were sharp and vivid when checked on a 24-inch screen display. The front facing camera was good too. Regular selfies? Check. Skyping? Check. Duckface? Yep.

We generally don't talk about GPS performance of smartphones. But this is no ordinary phone. Why do I say so? It's a phone that we found has GLONASS…in long time. The GLONASS is the Russian equivalent of GPS systems. When combined, GPS and GLONASS provide accurate and faster lock on your current position.

The battery is 2100 mAh. For a 5 inch IPS paneled phone that's OK. It lasted a day and half with a battery saver app. In this entire period we streamed 2 hours in YouTube over Wi-Fi, 1 hour in 3G, had nearly 1 hour of talk-time. The call quality was pleasing.

This phone also has OTG option. So you can directly access pen-drives or thumb drives from your phone.

VERDICT

iX KANE's greatest asset is that its light, playful and comes with a small price tag. It has a more than decent performance. Camera performance is stunning and can easily compete with a 30K+ price tag smartphone. The UI was good. The2100 mAh battery can handle all the everyday tasks with ease. Priced around Tk. 14 thousand, this device is definitely bang on a budget.

SPECS

Display: 5 inches, HD (1280 X 720) ~294 ppi
Camera: 13-megapixel, 2-megapixel secondary
OS: Android OS, v4.4.2 (KitKat)
CPU: Quad-core 1.3 GHz
GPU: Mali-400
Sensors: Accelerometer, proximity, G-Sensor
ROM: 8GB, RAM: 1GB
Battery: 2100 mAh

PRICE: TK. 13,999/-

REVIEW & PHOTOS: SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

Sample Camera Images

TECH PHOT

NASA & BASIS hosts
Apps Challenge

The Bangladeshi round of International Space Apps Challenge 2015- the largest hackathon competition organized by National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has concluded. After several rounds of assessment, four teams from Dhaka and Chittagong have been selected for competing in the international round of the competition. Moreover, two other teams were also nominated under the People's Choice Category.

1. Winner of the International Space Apps Challenge
2. Brainstomring
3. Coding continues
4. Judging

TECH HAPPENING

Dell gets a new Country Manager

Dell recently announced the appointment of Atiqur Rahman as Country Manager for Dell in Bangladesh. Based in Dhaka, Atiq brings in-depth experience to the role and will oversee the next phase of the business growth in Bangladesh.

"I am confident that Atiq's extensive knowledge of the business, appreciation for teamwork and passion for results will enable him to continue to take Dell Bangladesh and its Partners to new heights." said Shahzad Aslam Khan, Dell's General Manager for the South Asia Developing Markets Group.

Atiq is an IT veteran with 15 years of experience ranging from channel management and marketing, sales enablement, retail sales and product marketing. He has a strong track record in business development and building customer, distributor, channel and vendor relationships at all levels. He started his career with Siemens where he worked for 6 years and prior to joining Dell he served as Head of Business Development for Microsoft Bangladesh for 6 years. He's been with Dell for almost 3 years.

e-Krishok Initiative: Smart farming on the way

Bangladesh Institute of ICT in Development (BIID), Grameenphone and Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), together have awarded the most innovative ideas on 'How to use ICT in Agriculture which is part of the 'Smart Farmer, Smart Future' campaign on Tuesday, 7th April 2015 at the Krishibid Institution Bangladesh, Khamarbari, Farmgate. Mr. Hasanul Haq Inu, MP Honorable Minister, Ministry of Information, Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh was present as Chief Guest at this ceremony. In this grand event, top three idea winners were awarded, together with three best SAAO's. Moreover, three special ICT entrepreneurs were given special recognition for their contribution in ICT in Agriculture, as well as in this campaign.

'Smart Farmer, Smart Future' was an awareness building campaign as well as innovative idea hunting initiative to promote ICT enabled e-Krishok services in agricultural sector. The wide spread use of mobile phones, availability of shared access points and the constantly growing pace of high speed internet, provides a huge opportunity to provide the much required services and smart solutions for empowering our farmers and relevant stakeholders.

BIID has been working in the field of ICT4D since 2008 and launched the e-Krishok campaign in 2009 in 10 locations and transformed it into a service proposition in 2010. Later it was spread in 350 Upazilla's in collaboration with Grameenphone, Katalyst and ACI Limited. In 2012, BIID signed MoU with the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) to foster the effort to integrate ICT enabled services in extension service more efficiently. "Smart Farmer, Smart Future" is another initiative of BIID as its continuous effort to promote e-Krishok services, mainly 16250, the short code based solution.

Google organizes 5 workshops for females in Chittagong

Women Techmakers has organized 5 workshops in Chittagong highlighting the following issues: communication, innovation and celebration. The workshops were held in the Port City University, Asian University for Women, East Delta University and Islamic International University. HR Official of Google Bus Sajid Safwan, Technologist Sohana Drishti, Researcher Fahria Kabir, GDG Manager Arif Nezami and Lead Representative of Women Techmakers Rakshanda Rukham spoke at the workshop titled 'Seminar on Women Techmakers Bangladesh.' Port City University's VC Dr. Nurul Anwar and local GDG member Rakib Hassan and Saiful Hassan Rizvi also spoke in the event.

Fahria Kabir stated "Women can progress overcoming obstacles simply if they wish to. And to achieve that, will power and support from everyone are imperative." She also added that in this age, internet will be a powerful tool to overcome challenges and move ahead.

The last program of this 10 episode long event will be held at the University of Liberal Arts in Dhaka. To join, you'll have to visit this link.

Sponsors for the program are GDG Dhaka, Bikroy.com, Kokhon.com, Belancer and PreneurLab.

KASPERSKY SECURITY UPDATE

Deep Dive
5 threats affecting hardware (Part-1)

Certain firmware responsible for managing discrete hardware components has been getting increasingly complex and is subject to vulnerabilities and exploits. The worst thing is, that in many cases existing threat detection systems are impotent.

To cast some light onto this alarming trend, let's review one by one the top 5 dangerous hardware vulnerabilities that have recently been found in today's PCs.

#1: RAM

Our undisputed leader in the hardware threat hit-parade is the DDR DRAM security issue, which isn't possible to solve via any software patch. The vulnerability dubbed Rowhammer, was provoked by, unexpectedly, the progress in the silicon industry.

As IC geometry continues to shrink, the neighboring hardware elements soldered on the chip get closer to each other and start interfering. In today's memory chips this phenomenon might result in spontaneous switching of the memory cells when getting a random electric pulse from the adjacent cells. Until recently, it was widely acknowledged that this phenomenon was impossible to use in any real-life PoC exploit, which might help an attacker gain control over the affected PC. However, a team of researchers managed to escalate privileges on 15 out of 29 laptops using this PoC.

This is how the PoC functions: To ensure security, only a designated program or OS process is allowed to change a certain block in RAM. To put it simply, some important process functions are allowed inside of a well protected building, while other untrusted programs are left banging on the front door.

However, it turns out that if one stomps loudly in front of this door (i.e. change the contents of memory cells too fast and frequently), the door lock is bound to break down. Who knew locks got so unreliable these days…

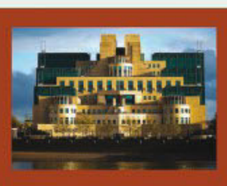
A newer standard-based DDR4 and parity-check enabled RAM modules (which are way more expensive) can sustain this kind of attack. That's the good news. The bad news, is that a very large chunk of modern PC-dom is hackable in the attack referenced above, and there's no remedy. The only feasible solution is replacement of all RAM modules.

TECH BITS

Bing's mobile homepage for iOS and Android gets a new look

Google's X lab is working on batteries that last longer

Spying case against UK government heads to Europe's highest court



LG inadvertently reveals its leather-clad G4 phone a little early

Amazon can finally test its delivery drones in the US