

Huawei records phenomenal growth in smartphone sales

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Huawei has recorded 232 percent year-on-year growth in smartphone sales in 2016 in Bangladesh, the company said in a statement.

The growth is largely driven by flagship handsets such as Huawei Mate 8 and Huawei P9 in the country, according to the annual worldwide performance figures revealed by Huawei Consumer Business Group.

Huawei introduced its flagship device Huawei P9 in June last year in Bangladesh, which saw a great success in both global market and local market, the company said.

Huawei P9 is widely praised because of its dual lens Leica camera and a stylish body design. Recently, the company also launched a new dual camera handset—Huawei GR5 2017—for the Bangladesh market.

In Bangladesh, Huawei is now the third largest smartphone brand with a 14.5 percent market share in terms of volume and a 19.1 percent market share in terms of value, according to a GfK report. "In line with our consistent growth in the global market, Huawei has maintained a steady growth in the Bangladesh market," said Ingmar Wang, director of device business at Huawei Technologies (Bangladesh).

"This can be attributed to our consumer-centric approach to focus on creating meaningful innovation, as well as our ongoing commitment to building a premium brand, reinforcing our global channels and service capabilities." "Bangladesh is a very important market for us, and in 2017 we will keep up bringing innovative and high-quality products in the country," Wang said.

"We will continuously bring new models to the Bangladesh market so that the users are benefited with new phones." "Huawei is dedicated to invest in research and development, bring innovative features, international standard quality control to make sure the customers have the good quality product," he said.

For 2016, Huawei Consumer Business Group predicts global sales revenue of \$27 billion, which is 42 percent up from a year ago, achieving steady growth for the fifth year.

Smartphone shipments also reached 139 million units globally with 29 percent year-on-year growth in 2016, according to International Data Corporation, an American market research company.

Huawei P9 and P9 Plus global shipments exceeded 10 million units, making them the first Huawei flag-

ship handsets to break 10 million sales, according to the statement.

The Huawei Mate 9 series, shortly after its launch in November 2016, have achieved an overwhelming demand and its sales in the first two months were 50 percent higher than those of Mate 8 for the same period.

For pre-sales and after-sales, Huawei has built five global service centres that support 105 countries through hotline services. Huawei also has over 460 service stores covering 45 countries around the world.

For channels, Huawei improved its open market channel capacity and the share of open market channels rose to 71 percent in 2016, up from 13 percent up in 2015. Huawei's global retail network has over 70,233 stores.

Huawei holds over 15 percent market share in 33 countries and over 20 percent in another 18 countries, close of half of which are European countries, according to data released in October by GfK.

In the north-east Europe and Western Europe, Huawei's market share exceeded 15 percent and 10 percent respectively. In China, Huawei's market share exceeded 20 percent for the first time in November 2016 and dominated the \$500-\$600 high-end market.



President of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Nihad Kabir along with the new office bearers of the chamber meets with Finance Minister AMA Muhith, at the latter's office at the secretariat in Dhaka yesterday. Story on B1.

Novoair completes four years of operation

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Novoair completes four years operations today after starting its domestic flight operations on January 9 in 2013 with the launch of flights from Dhaka to Chittagong.

Novoair has always given priority to

its customers' safety and security, said Mofizur Rahman, managing director of the airline.

"By ensuring the top of the class and on time service, Novoair has earned trust and satisfaction of its passenger which is exemplary for others."

Novoair has so far operated 11,665

flights and served around 1 lakh customers on domestic and international flights, the airline said in a statement yesterday.

At present, Novoair has six aircraft in its fleet of which three are 49-seater Embraer and three are 68-seater ATR 72-500.



Ramendu Majumdar, president of Advertising Agencies Association of Bangladesh, and Sanaul Arefeen, convener of Advertising Club, Dhaka, pose with the participants of a daylong workshop—Sharpener 2016—jointly organised by the association and the club on January 7.



Abdul Muktedir, chairman and managing director of Incepta Pharmaceuticals Ltd, attends the annual sales conference 2017 of the company at International Convention City Bashundhara in Dhaka yesterday. Hasneen Muktedir, vice chairman, was also present.

Parliamentary committee to question RBI governor on cash crunch

REUTERS

A parliamentary committee, probing the government's decision to scrap high-value bank notes, has sent the country's central bank governor a list of questions on the demonetisation process and asked him to appear before it on Jan. 20.

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has asked the governor of the Reserve Bank of India, Urjit Patel, to explain how the decision for demonetisation was taken and for details on its impact on the country's economy, PAC Chairman KV Thomas, also a senior member of the opposition Congress party, told Reuters.

Patel, under fire from some politicians over shortages of replacement currency and restrictions on depositing old notes that have caused long queues at banks and ATMs, is already set to testify before another parliamentary committee.

Last month, the RBI unexpectedly kept its key policy rate unchanged at 6.25 percent, despite calls for action in the face of an intense cash shortage that threatens to slam the brakes on the world's fastest-growing large economy. The bank was widely expected to cut the rate by at least 25 bps.

Pressure on the central bank and Patel has grown since Prime Minister Narendra Modi stunned the country on Nov. 8 by abolishing 500- and 1,000-rupee (\$7.34-\$14.69) notes, removing 86 percent of the currency in circulation in a bid to crack down on the "shadow economy".

The PAC has asked Patel to provide details on the value of currency that has been returned to the bank, the quantity of "black money" it has received and the amount of new currency released so far, Thomas said. Thomas added that the governor has also been asked about the country's preparedness to handle cashless transactions.

"We had decided to call the RBI governor sometime in December but because the prime minister had asked for 50 days, we decided to postpone it to sometime January," Thomas told Reuters. "We did not want to give it a political colour."

New VAT law will be introduced in phases

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The finance minister shouldered the blame for the rules not being made yet. "I have become much slow."

Before the law is put into force the rules must be made, he said.

The leaders of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry told the finance minister that the economy has made commendable progress in the past one and a half decades by way of steady growth of the gross domestic product, per capita income, export earnings, foreign exchange reserves and poverty reduction.

Bangladesh aims to become a middle-income country by 2021 and

a developed economy by 2041, and to realise the goals the GDP will need to grow at an annual rate of at least 8 to 10 percent in the coming years, the MCCI said.

Despite notable successes there are many weaknesses in the economy, some of which are quite serious.

For instance, new investment is not coming up because of a weak investment climate.

The MCCI identified the problems as: inadequate supply of infrastructure, inefficient government bureaucracy, inadequately educated workforce, high tax rates and cumbersome tax regulations, crime and theft, insufficient capacity to inno-

vate and poor work ethics in the labour force.

To tackle them, the country's oldest chamber suggested a strong legal framework, a favourable political environment, good governance and policy continuity.

"Acceleration of economic growth will require a series of difficult second generation reforms."

The reforms should go far beyond mere consolidation of macroeconomic stability. It should comprise measures to build up supply capacity in major production sectors, improve public administration and ensure well-functioning financial and labour markets.

Clerics to motivate people to pay taxes: NBR

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He said clerics of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity will be trained on VAT, tax and customs duty so that they become aware of the need to pay taxes and motivate people.

Rahman said the NBR will consider the recommendations from businesses. Finance Minister AMA Muhith will soon sit with the businesspeople, he added.

At the workshop, Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shafiqul Alam called upon all not to evade taxes.

"There is no heroism in dodging taxes," he said, adding that one deceives himself by evading taxes.

Alam said the government aims to improve the business environment by easing rules and regulations, providing hassle-free services and making offices people-friendly.

He said all these will help improve Bangladesh's position in the World Bank's 'ease of doing business' ranking.

The NBR said businesses will not be affected for the implementation

of the VAT law. Under the new law, SMEs having less than Tk 30 lakh in annual turnover will be exempted from VAT payment.

Businesses, registering turnover from Tk 30 lakh to 80 lakh a year, will have to pay 3 percent turnover tax.

VAT, now the main source of revenue, accounted for 36 percent of the total tax of Tk 155,519 crore collected in fiscal 2015-16.

The government introduced VAT in 1991 to increase revenue collection from domestic trade and industries.

Senior official of SBI to reach Dhaka tomorrow

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Sujit Kumar Varma, chief general manager of international banking group at State Bank of India's corporate centre in Mumbai, India, is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka tomorrow.

During his three-day visit to Bangladesh, he will review the operations of the bank in Bangladesh and also meet with the customers and the top officials of Bangladesh Bank and other important institutions.



RanksTel rebrands itself with new logo

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The industry is evolving everyday and RanksTel's new service is part of that, said Imran Ahmed, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on the telecom ministry. "Through this, the country will achieve its goal of establishing Digital Bangladesh before the estimated time."

Shahjahan Mahmood, chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, said they are very happy that the company adopted a new service with voice.

"For survival, the landline operators need to adopt new services like internet and video and that trend is increasing across the globe." The regulator wants to work as a facilitator for the local telecom entrepreneurs and work closely with the government to adopt new technology, he said.

Rahman said they expect the market to be data-driven within a short time and RanksTel to be the leader among the competitors. RanksTel started its business in 2005 as a private landline operator.



Standard Bank Chairman Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed opens the 111th branch of the bank on Pharmacy Road in Pirojpur on January 5. Managing Director Mamun-Ur-Rashid was also present.



Ashraful Haque, director for marketing at Edison Group, the owning company of Symphony, opens the 200th experience outlet of Symphony at Mirpur 10 in Dhaka.