



HANDS-ON REVIEW

HELIO S60

Helio by Edison Group has been churning out smartphones for a few years' now but went into a bit of hiatus in the last couple of quarters. But now they are back with a brand new smartphone: Helio S60. Inspired by the design of Apple, the Helio S60 is probably the first notch-display smartphone we are reviewing by any local brand. Besides swaggering in with its good, the phone also comes with a two-vertically-stacked-cameras on the back and a true-face-ID security feature. What else does this phone have to offer? Dig in to know more:

Design & Display

Starting with the display and the form factor: if you put the iPhone-resemblance out of the way, there's a notched display, but with this, a 6.2-inch FHD with 402 PPI pixel density. It does come with a super skinny bezel running across the phone which is only noticeable in the front. The screen is sharp, the colour rendition was superb and the touch was responsive. Not bad for a mid-range phone.

And let's take a step back from the display and appreciate the design for a bit. A seductive all-glass in the back (minus the fingerprint scanner) and polished metal bezel that rolls seamlessly is helping the phone stand out amongst the competition. Our review unit came in a silver gunmetal colour scheme which we adored. The power charging is a USB-C in the bottom accompanied by dual speaker grills. No 3.5 mm port meaning you will have to carry a USB-C to 3.5mm con-



SPECS

Display: 6.2", FHD with 402 ppi
OS: Passion UI 1.1 based on Android 8.1 (Oreo)
CPU: MediaTek 6771 2.0GHz Octa Core
GPU: Mali G72 Mp3
RAM: 4 GB
ROM: 64 GB
Camera: Back-16MP + 5MP (PDAF+FF) with Back flash, depth sensor & Front- 16MP (FF) Camera
Features: Fingerprint Sensor, AI processor, 3D Face ID, Wireless Charging etc
Battery: 3000mAh
Price: Tk. 25,990/-

verter (comes with the box) along with you if you are an audiophile.

Hardware & Performance

About the hardware: Helio tried to get the best hardware possible without cutting many corners for the price that you are paying. Meaning, the hardware screams premium without robbing you blind. Inside, Helio is using the new MediaTek 6771 2.0 GHz Octa-core processor coupled with an ARM Mali G72 MP3 700 MHz graphic pro-

cessing unit. The performance was great except some occasional stuttering when you are playing graphic-intensive games. While playing Asphalt 8, we noticed a bit of loss of frame when the game was initialising. We also tried Marvel's future fights and we were able to play it without choking out the phone for a bit.

Camera

The camera is one of the few places where the Helio cut some corners to make the phone wallet-friendly. On a hardware level, the rear camera sports a 16MP + 5MP (PDAF+FF) camera with f/2.0 aperture. The photos taken

VERDICT

Helio certainly took an audacious move by bringing out a notch display phone that comes with a price-tag of BDT 26K. Everything you would want in a phone with Octacore 4GB RAM'ed phone, you have got it. The camera is probably the weakest point of the phone but even that can take snaps good enough to taunt the competition. Summing up, Helio S60 is certainly a step towards the right direction for Edison Group and we would love to see more devices like these

over most of the UI we have seen on Helios so far. It is very close to the vanilla android. The Oreo 8.1 itself has a sleek UI; Passion just moulded it a bit for the local market. The only complain is the hideous startup animation we are greeted with when restarting/powering up the phone.

Battery

The battery of the phone is 3000mAh, meaning you will be able to manage an entire workday if you are not using the internet every now and then. The phone comes with USB-C, so charging won't take much longer. But as most people around you are unlikely to have a USB-C port phone, so it's best to carry a USB-C cable all the time with you.

What else?

The phone comes has some cool add-ons: hardware-based Face ID, thanks to the AI-powered processor. The Face-ID is adaptive, but I couldn't grow my beard long enough to test it out. Despite being a mid-range phone, the Face ID worked swiftly most of the time. The fingerprint scanner was on the back and was super-responsive. The phone weighs a bit more than most other 6.2-inch phone and probably its because of the glass back. Speaking of glass on the back, it supports wireless charging. In the box, you get a free wireless charger where all you need is to place to phone and voilà- it's charging. Interesting, we tried out Samsung S8 to charge using the wireless charger, and it worked. Most 'qi-wireless-charging' enabled phones can be charged from this platform. Pretty neat, right?

WORDS AND PHOTOS:
SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

Apple plays it safe with new iPhone lineup



Apple has recently launched three new phones and a new Apple Watch on the latest Apple launch event at the Steve Jobs theater. Two of the phones are a sequel to last year's iPhone X and X Plus, which are named iPhone XS and XS Max respectively. They have also launched a new so-called midrange phone in the new iPhone XR. Apple have barely updated their phones from their last years stock, and have chosen to play it safe with their new lineup. So how does this launch effect Apple, it's market and the rest of the telecommunication industry?

PREDICTION FOR THE NEW PRODUCTS

The new lineup has effectively replaced the old lineup of iPhone X and X Plus with one key exception, the iPhone XR. Priced at \$749, it's the cheapest phone Apple has launched this year. It is a spiritual successor to the C and SE series', both of which were targeted at consumers looking for a midrange phone. However, the key difference of C/SE series' phones and the brand new XR is the price. At launch, both C and SE series phones started at a much cheaper price than the new phone. The iPhone SE, when it was launched, was retailed at \$399 for the 16 gigabyte version. For the sake of an apple to apple comparison, let's compare the 64 gigabyte model with the new XR, which starts at 64 gigabytes. An iPhone SE with 64 gigabytes of ROM was launched at \$449, which is still signifi-

cantly higher than the new iPhone XR. Not to mention the new XR has only an LCD screen, instead of beautiful OLED like it's counterparts from this year.

Overall, the product line did not change drastically this year. They all still sport notches, which was the biggest design change last year. They are all fairly similar in specs to last year's phones. Sure, the XS Max is a bit bigger at 6.5 inches compared to the iPhone X Plus, but at the end of the day it's hard to think that a user of iPhone X or X Plus will have to update their models this year. The XS and the XS Max may get a lot of buyers thanks to the loyal consumer base, but the people might lose interest in XR. Many in Asia will surely choose another device over the iPhone XR.

REACTIONS

The reactions to the new products have been lukewarm at best. The only product that really brought some useful new tech to the table was the new watch. Other than that, all the new phones seem like the same products from last year but slightly upgraded in function. Apple has also decided to ditch the fingerprint scanner for good, and there has been some mixed reactions about that as well. Not to mention the XR costs way too much for a midrange phone, and many are speculating whether just getting an iPhone X, which is now priced at \$799, is better than getting an iPhone XR.

Many of iPhone XR's direct completion, such as the Pocophone F1, OnePlus 6 and other Chinese brand phones, have better screens as well. Not that having a better screen than a fairly old 720p display is too difficult to achieve.

Apple saw a slight spike in share prices following the launch ceremony, but the share prices have since steadied. Goldman-Sachs has in fact cut profit estimates of Apple following the release of the new lineup. The firm lowered Apple's fiscal 2019 earnings per share estimate to \$13.77 from \$14.53 and reiterated its neutral rating for the company's stock. This doesn't mean apocalypse for Apple, as they will still have loyal consumers worldwide who will buy their product regardless of how little innovation the product has seen. However, that means that Apple have committed themselves to those consumers, and are not trying to expand. Huawei, Oppo, Xiaomi and other phone companies, however, are trying to just that. Huawei has even overtaken Apple in smartphone sales already. The others will also inevitably catch up as well. It will be interesting to see what Apple does then, when it no longer has a massive lead over other companies, and have to actively defend themselves from multiple Chinese aggressors.

NAVID IMTIAZ

APPS ON THE FLOOR

Trio for Audiophiles

By- ASIF AYON

"Hey your new JBL Flip 4 sounds amazing. Oh and those Beats Solo3 headphones are epic, my dude. But wait, what's that? You want me to show you how to crack open Spotify Premium on your phone, do you?" Okay, stop before taking one step further. You've got the right gear but you are clueless as to which apps might be perfect for your "audiophilic" needs. Well fear not, for these apps are the perfect playlist and music curators out there, free of charges and region locks.

SHAZAM

Platform: Android and iOS

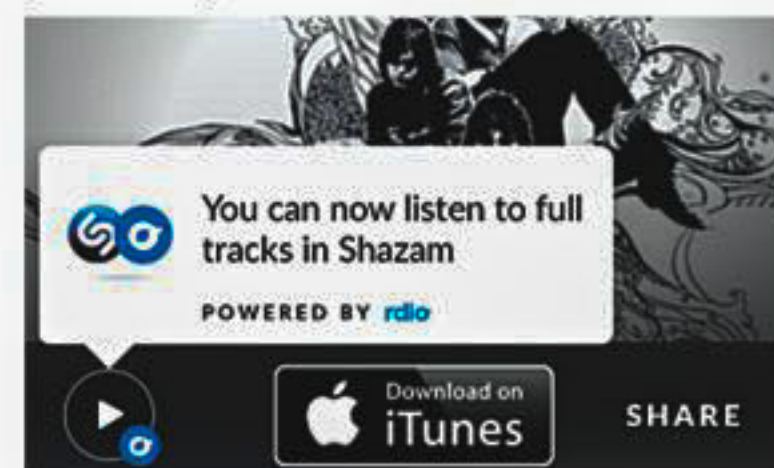
Shazam is a free music listening app which picks up any song playing in the background through your phone's microphone and finds the title and artist for you. Don't know the tune? Well, just Shazam it!

Pros

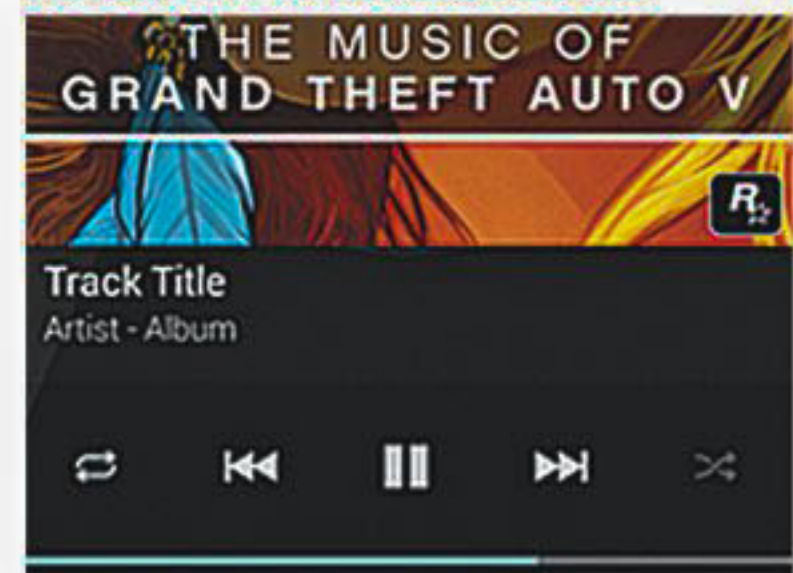
- Works offline & saves the results for later.
- Shows YouTube video links and Deezer audio links of the song.
- Saves its own Shazam playlist.
- Displays the Artists' other notable works.

Cons

- Discover tab comes with only popular music news and no recommendations for music similar to what you've already found on Shazam.



BLACKPLAYER MUSIC PLAYER



Platform: Android and iOS

Forget Google Play Music, this is the real deal. Customisability, Features and Looks, BlackPlayer's got it all.

Pros

- Voice Play feature saves you the hassle of manually finding songs.
- Shows lyrics and lets you add lyrics to songs directly from the app.
- Immense customisability options.

Cons

- Takes time to recognize newly added songs.

LOFFEE MUSIC - LO-FI MUSIC

Platform: Android and iOS

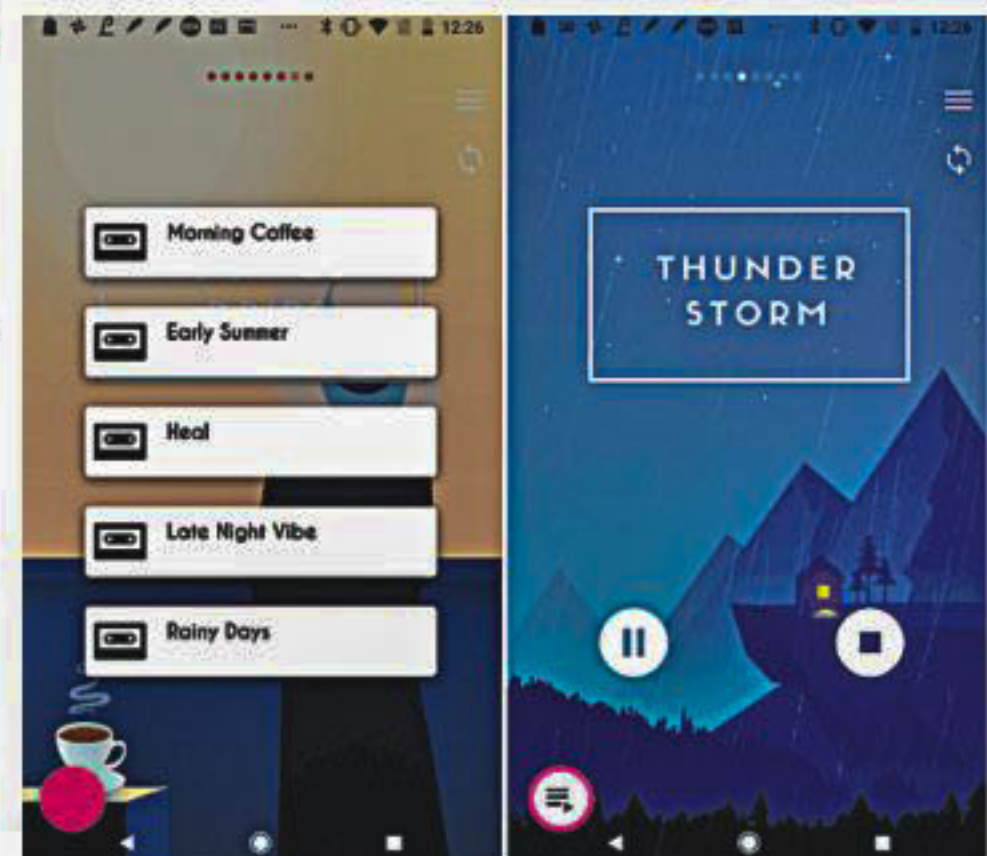
Loffee Music is a simple Lo-Fi Hip Hop Radio app for anyone looking for some easy listening music on the go.

PROS

- Works offline. Probably this is the reason why people love this app so much.
- Five different playlists with 8 different songs, with moods and times of day labelling the songs.
- Beautiful artworks and clean text gracing the apps UI.
- Loop option.

Cons

- No sliders available for dragging songs to a certain time stamp.
- Does not come with the feature to save playlists or access to previously uploaded developer playlists.
- Playlist not updated frequently



Golden Gate Ventures closes new \$100M fund for Southeast Asia



Microsoft acquires Lobe, a drag-and-drop AI tool



This insect-inspired robot can fly a kilometer on a charge with its flappy wings



Facebook's new 'SapFix' AI automatically debugs your code



US lawmakers warn spy chief that 'deep fakes' are a national security threat

