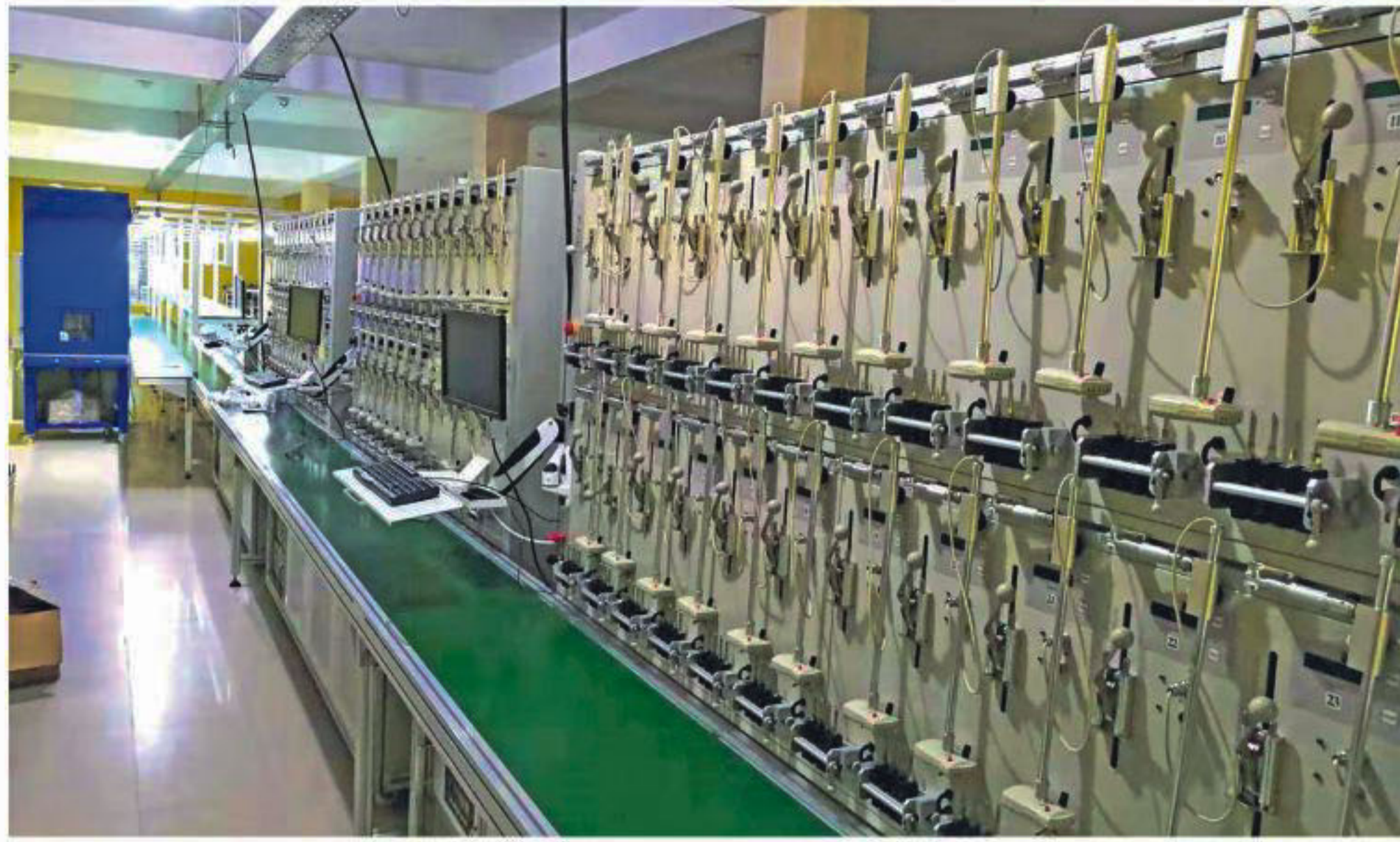


First smart prepaid metre plant ready to go live in Bangladesh

Setting a new milestone, the first-ever state-owned smart prepaid metering factory is all set to start its production. Dubbed as 'Bangladesh Smart Electrical Company Limited', this manufacturing plant is a joint venture between state-owned Power Distribution Company of Bangladesh West Zone Power Distribution Company Limited (WZPDCL) and Hexing Electrical Company Limited. Hexing, a multinational conglomerate headquartered in Hangzhou has been operating in Bangladesh for nearly twelve years with a track record of implementing smart prepaid metres in several government projects.

Located in a rented space in Khulna, this mammoth production plant will be producing around 5 lakhs prepaid metres of which 4.86 lakhs will be single-phase metres and the rest will be three-phase metres. Once going into full production, this plant will be able to support 56% of the clientele of West Zone Power Distribution Company. The erection, installation and commissioning of the production equipment are almost done and the plant is expected to go live within the next month, according to sources involved in the project. Approximately, 200 technical and non-technical staff will be working in the factory to ensure single shift production once the factory goes operational.

Engr. Md. Shafique Uddin, Managing Director of Bangladesh Smart Electrical Company said, "We are hopeful that we will be able to meet the expectation of the consumers of Bangladesh. Our mission is to ensure a quality product at an affordable price. We shall be working with other distribution



Production line and most of the capital equipments have been installed. Production to go live right after inauguration.

utilities of Bangladesh to try and make sure every consumer gets the best service at their doorstep."

The local production of the smart prepaid metre will save foreign currency, will create scopes of employment and increase the chance of exporting the smart metres once local demand has been met. Sources working in Power Division informed that, the current price of a prepaid metre in the market is around Tk. 4,500/- and the locally produced metre will be around Tk. 3,780/- saving around Tk. 720/- taka in foreign currency.

The need for checking the feasibility

of prepayment of electricity bill was first started in 1995, when the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) together with the German Development Bank KfW decided to investigate the concept of prepayment, as an option to reduce system loss and to reverse the financial drain on utility. In May 2000, BPDB selected Fichtner, a Stuttgart-based consulting firm, to help define the scope of the prepayment metering system, select a supplier of the metres and a private operator, create a new tariff structure, carry out a one-year test phase and deliver training and capacity building. After the year-long test phase in



Production Capacity: 500,000 units per year (single shift production)
Employment Creation: Appx 200
Cost of Setting up the factory: Authorised Capital- Tk. 50 Crore
Paid-up Capital-Tk. 28.60 Crore
Certification: ISO, KEMA & BSTI (Approval pending)
Why manufacture in Bangladesh:
Saving in foreign currency in export Reduction in cost and time for import
Creation of new employment
Localisation of product, R&D and after sales support
Scopes of export to other countries in future

Production Unit with the technical assistance of IICT, BUET at Mirpur. In the first phase, 5,000 single-phase metres were supplied by BUET from their production house. In the second phase, another single phase 5,000 metre and 1,000 three-phase metres were produced in DESCO's own production house. Up to August 2011, about 10,261 numbers of prepaid metres have been installed in Uttara residential area.

SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

Hands-On Review

Symphony i97



The Symphony i97 had been mistakenly called a Pixel 2 on not one, but three separate occasions by my friends and colleagues during the course of this hands-on review. The thin form factor coupled with stock Android 9 really goes a long way to make this budget device feel premium. But is that as far as it can go?

PERFORMANCE AND BUILD

The phone is made of plastic and taking off the back cover reveals its antiquated Li-Polymer battery. Opening the gradient-finished back cover reveals two Nano Sim Card slots and an SD card slot. Over to the front side and its 18:9 LCD screen. While the screen is good for what it is, the colours do feel a little washed up and the brightness for outdoor use is less than ideal. The same can be said about the fingerprint sensor, which was slow at best and unresponsive at worst. What lies underneath however makes this phone a tick in all the right boxes for me. Stock Android and lack of bloatware makes this phone perform really well and it really does feel like a Google Pixel experience.

Don't expect heavy duty games like PUBG, Asphalt 8 to run smoothly on this device though. The 2GB RAM and budget GPU can however run Free Fire (an alternative to PUBG) and a host of other games without a hitch. The phone didn't slow down during my time with it except when I was running RAM hungry applications side-by-side with other apps.

CAMERA

The camera was as I had expected from a budget device. It can take pictures visible pictures in day light, but don't expect night vision come dusk. Selfies display the same lack of detail but given the price, I wasn't complaining. Overall, the colours looked dull and the focus functionality seemed confused. So while it's difficult to recommend it as an aesthetic pictures daily driver, it would do just fine for capturing moments of your day or important information.

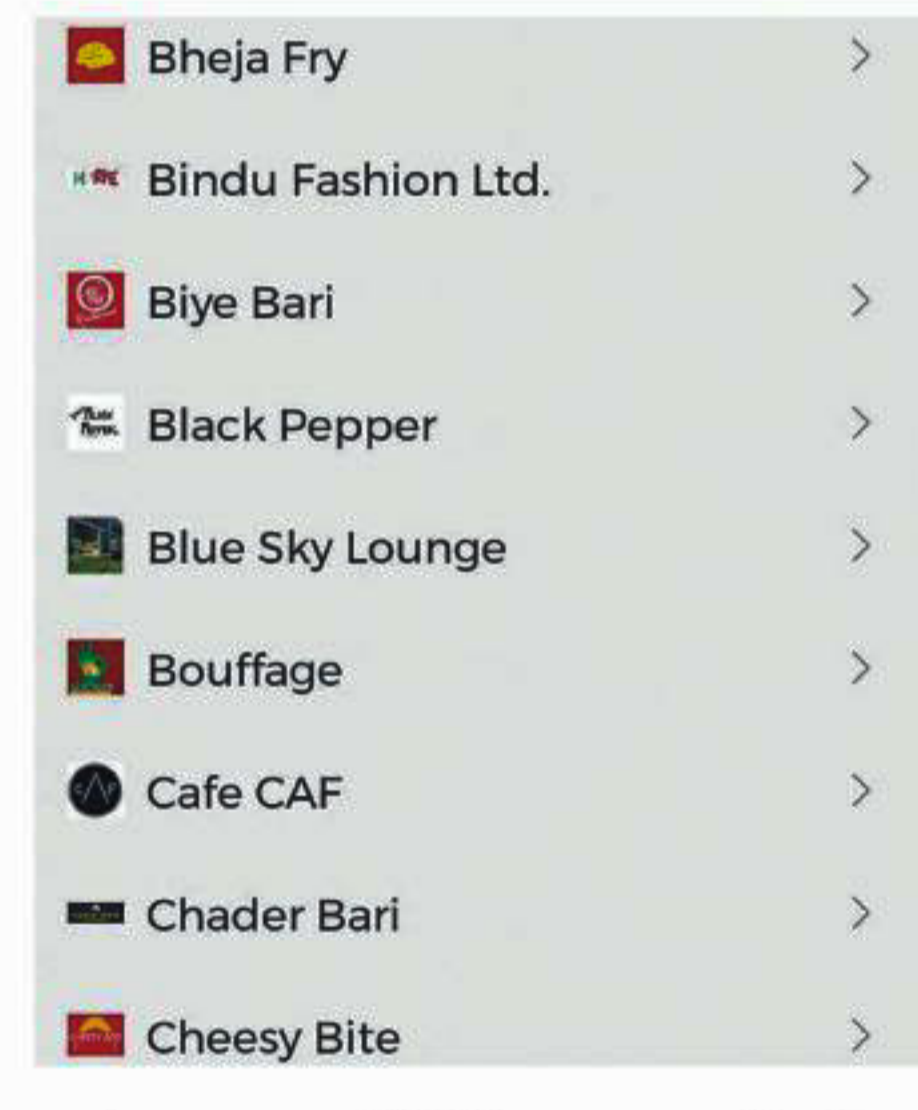
BATTERY

The 3200 mAh battery got me through my day on almost all occasions. The device isn't very power hungry and you can get 5 hours of screen-on time with the device, so roughly 4 hours with mobile data or WiFi on. The use of a li-polymer battery does make it a less than ideal choice for long term use as the battery will get significantly slower over time meaning that the 5 hour SOT will shrink to around 3 hours within a year or so.



Going the Xtra mile with gifts

Xtra is in essence an app where you can send discount coupons for various restaurants and retail stores across Dhaka to someone. It works on a person to person basis and the person availing the gift/discount can use it across stores around Dhaka. You can also send corporate gifts with the app as well, sending bulk gifts to employees of another company on behalf of yours.



The home screen of the app showcases all the gifts you have sent and received with the main action happening with the gift icon to the lower right of the app's interface. Here you can select recipient, select merchant, enter gift amount in BDT amount and also leave an optional message for the receiver. Merchants are divided by name in descending order and trend. You can send mobile recharge amount as well with the app. The app currently has 43 merchants mostly comprised of restaurants, retail stores and fashion outlets. You can also select various locations in Dhaka, Chattogram and Khulna.

The app has a very clean look with an

options menu which lists your notification, profile, a counter for gifts received and sent as well as a favourite gifts option. The discover merchants option divides them up into several sub categories making it easy to pick and choose vendors from. Other than restaurants and fashion stores, there are also electronics stores, hotels and resorts to choose from.

Xtra is free to use and is available on both Android and iOS. The maroon interface gives the app a very professional look and the categorization of various merchants is simple to understand and to pick and choose from.

TECH HAPPENING NEXT APPLE EVENT ON THE CARDS

Apple has sent out invitations for its annual iPhone event which is scheduled for September 10th. It is anticipated that the company will announce the iPhone 11 here. The event will take place at the company's Apple Park headquarters in Cupertino, California. Will it be a triple camera system or will it house a bigger screen than the iPhone XS Max? We'll find out very soon and we'll be all over the iPhone and other products that Apple will showcase at their grand unveiling event.



By innovation only.

VERDICT

While it's not the fastest in budget-class, the Symphony i97 is reliable and easy to use. Stock Android is a breeze to use and the phone excels because of it. Everything else just works on this device and while that's not the most flattering thing to say about the device, it was never unusable and at times even felt better to use than other more expensive phones.

SPECS

Display: 5.7" IPS HD+, 720 x 1440 pixels
OS: Android 9.0 (Pie)
CPU: Octa core A55, 1.6 GHz
RAM: 2 GB
ROM: 16 GB
Camera: Rear- 13 MP Front- 8 MP
Battery: 3200 mAh Li-Polymer Battery
Price: Tk. 7,490/-

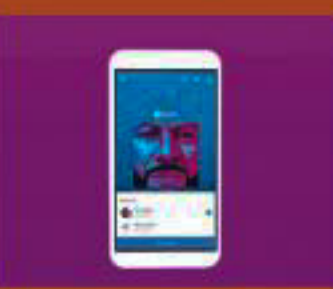
WORDS AND PHOTOS: ASIF AYON

TECH BITS

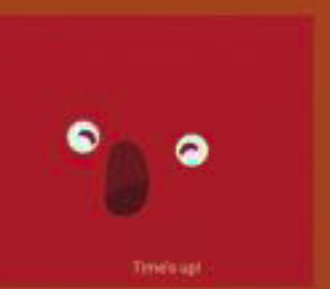
Gmail can now notify you of whether the recipient is on vacation or on leave before you email them



Spotify now lets you share music on Facebook Stories



YouTube Kids now has its own website



Google will now pay security researchers who find and report Android apps and Chrome extensions misusing user data



Facebook has added a Facebook Gaming tab on the app

