

HANDS-ON REVIEW

VIVO V17 PRO

Killer camera, average performance

Vivo's latest phone the V17 Pro comes out 6 months after the release of the V15 Pro. The successor to the successful V15 Pro pulls out all the stops in the camera department, quietly making a category for itself in the smartphone game. Unlike the OnePlus 7 or K20 Pro, which are approximately BDT 10,000/- more than the V17 Pro, vivo's answer to this corner of the market is similar to how Google approached the flagship game – killer cameras. Suffice to say, the vivo V17 Pro's quad camera and dual front-facing pop-up cameras excels at its jobs and the pictures really speak for themselves. This makes the V17 Pro a good choice for people who want to dabble in mobile photography and other camera hijinks. After spending nearly a month with the phone, from fighting with the not so fun parts of the OS and everything else good in between, it's time I get into the crux of things.



BUILD

First off, the phone is covered by Corning Gorilla Glass 6, front and back. There is a plastic frame on the back, basically meaning that the phone does not have wireless charging. The V17 Pro features quaint choices of colours for the back glass – Crystal Black and Crystal Blue; the former being a subdued shade of navy blue while the latter (the model I had) was modelled after a fluorescent shade of aqua or the lightest shade of blue you can think of.

SCREEN

The 6.44-inch Super AMOLED display works well in almost all lighting conditions and this is where the first signs of good AI come into play. The adaptive brightness is quick and responsive, responding on the go to all lighting settings. And while I enjoyed my time with the phone, viewing content, surfing the web, there was a clear reflective quality to the display. While it was by no means a hindrance, it is just one of the quirks that I happened to notice. The V17 Pro comes with an



under-display fingerprint sensor and it was smooth and receptive to touch. There is an animation time that happens when the phone unlocks but it is hardly noticeable.

CAMERA

The first thing that springs into mind



is the dual front-facing camera. A 32-megapixel and an 8-megapixel ultra wide lens make up the front. While there is an air around the overkill factor of this design, if you're getting good selfies then who's to complain. But if you're like me and you don't like what these Chinese phones are up to with beauty mode, then it's okay to be on the fence because the V17 Pro, even with all the beauty mode settings turned to zero, produce selfies which have some additive AI work going on in the background. Nevertheless, the front-facing cameras really do a good job, producing social media ready pictures and having wide-angle makes the vivo V17 Pro a good choice for parties. The quad camera setup produce some of the best pictures you can get within this price range. The pictures taken with the phone don't have the visible over sharpening and saturating that you would find on other phones in this category but it does come with some caveats. The main sensor is a 48-megapixel wide lens which is accompanied by an 8-megapixel ultra-

wide lens, 13-megapixel telephoto lens and a 2-megapixel depth sensor. The camera UI is snappy too, letting you switch from ultra-wide to bokeh to super macro shots all with one or two taps. The pictures come out looking great too, with natural light and feel not being an issue with the back cameras. While, pictures in ultra-wide has grains and AI sharpening involved, and the bokeh effect has some over smoothing issues along the edges, it can be chalked up to either the V17 Pro punching above its weight or under, depending on how you want to look at it.

PERFORMANCE

Powering everything is the Snapdragon

SPECS

Processor: Snapdragon 675 (11 nm)
GPU: Adreno 612
OS: Android 9.0 (Pie); Funtouch 9.1
Rear Camera: 48 MP f/1.8 (wide), 8 MP f/2.2 (ultrawide), 13 MP (telephoto) and 2 MP f/2.4
Front Camera: Motorized pop-up 32 MP f/2.0 (wide) and 8 MP (ultrawide)
Display: 6.44-inch, Super AMOLED 2400 x 1080 pixels
Memory: 8GB RAM
Storage: 128GB internal memory
Battery: 4100mAh lithium-ion
Price: BDT 39,990/-

675 chipset, which going by the 40k price point is terribly underpowered. And while apps ran smoothly, multi-tasking wasn't tedious and PUBG ran on high settings, the phone lagged at times, chugging when too many things were thrown at it. And if you've used the K20 Pro, One Plus 7s, Realme XT, Oppo Reno 2 or anything in the same ball park then you will feel the rigidity of the V17 Pro's hardware performance. It's by no

VERDICT

An 8GB/128GB vivo V17 Pro will cost you a smooth 40k and if there are any stand out features then it would have to be the dual selfie cameras. As it stands, the Redmi K20 Pro has a better main camera, beating the V17 Pro's 48-megapixel with its 64-megapixel lens. And both the K20 Pro and OnePlus 7s have it beat in terms of hardware, but not for price. So if you want to make hard sacrifices in the hardware and UI department while having a good main camera setup and a great selfie setup, then the V17 Pro has got you covered.

means egregious and you can do a lot worse in terms of the spec-spread. **FUNTOUCH OS AND BLOATWARE** Funtouch OS and bloatware really takes this phone down a notch in terms of overall likeability. The easiest way to explain it is that the UI is an Android-iOS hybrid with the bulk of the functionalities available in a slide up tray. There is a slide down tray similar to what you'd find on Android but it houses only the notifications, Jovi and a scanner. Receiving calls was confusing the first time too, requiring you to move a circle top or bottom. There's also a bunch of bloatware apps on the phone but by the time you're done figuring out the UI, you won't notice V-Appstore, i Theme, vivo.com, vivoCloud, EasyShare, etc. It wasn't all bad and I was used to the UI in a couple of days. The iOS style bottom drawer/slide up tray actually grew on me and made accessing tiny apps like calculator, flashlight and split screen easy.

WORDS AND PHOTOS: ASIF AYON

Are you making full use of Google Maps?

Google Maps has been rolling out features consistently for the last two years, live traffic updates becoming vital for regular commuters of Dhaka city. While local users primarily rely on the map for traffic congestion information, here's a host of other features that you may have missed.

Google's integration with Waze, a GPS navigation software owned by Google into Maps gave Google Maps its most important feature – traffic updates. The live traffic feature not only shows congestion during rush hour, it can also show fuel stations, shops etc. without messing up the entire trip. Google has done this through combining Google Assistant system to Maps. So whenever you say, "look for

traffic, you can also stay notified about nearby Gas Stations.

Another important update that old users will enjoy is that you can run Spotify or Google Music while running Maps. While the update has been around for a while, it wasn't a feature always and it went a long way towards eliminating one of the long-time annoyances of using Maps. Spotify now creates curated

Explore. The Explore mode is basically an Encyclopaedia for the user's surrounding region. It shows interesting landmarks, cheap places to eat, places to shop and much more. Additionally, the app also has a "Group friendly dining" section, designed to showcase restaurants which can accommodate a large number of people. Users can upload reviews and photos for each of the locations, recommending or warning people about places. And if you're travelling abroad or planning to do so, Maps also shows a list of hotel-listings and approximate costs of booking of your chosen location. It acts like a mini survey tool of sorts, where you can sift through hotels, its pictures, surrounding locations, etc.

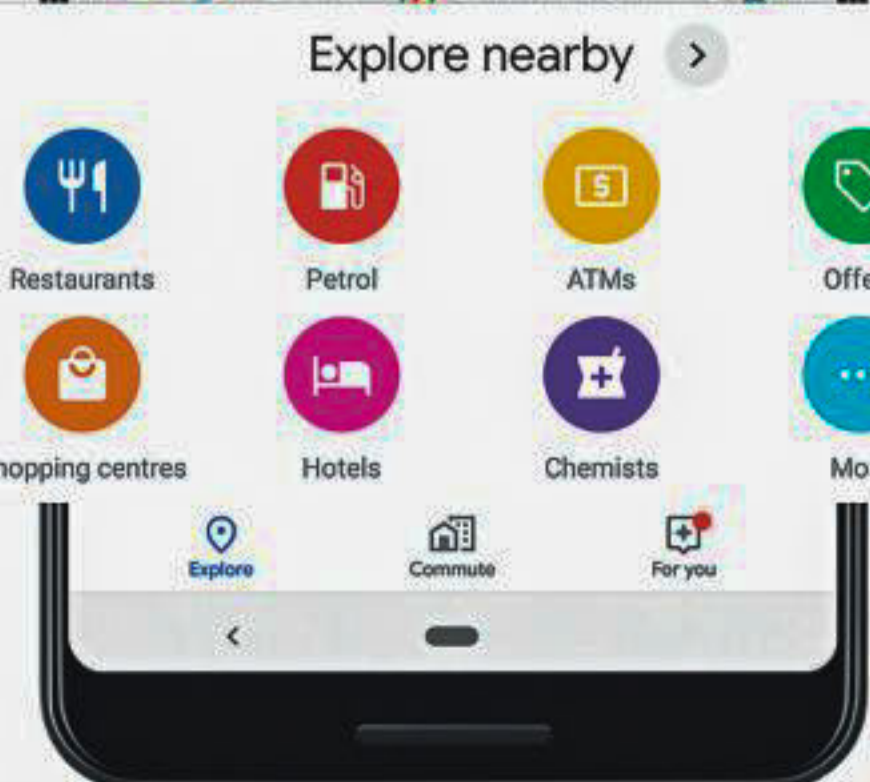
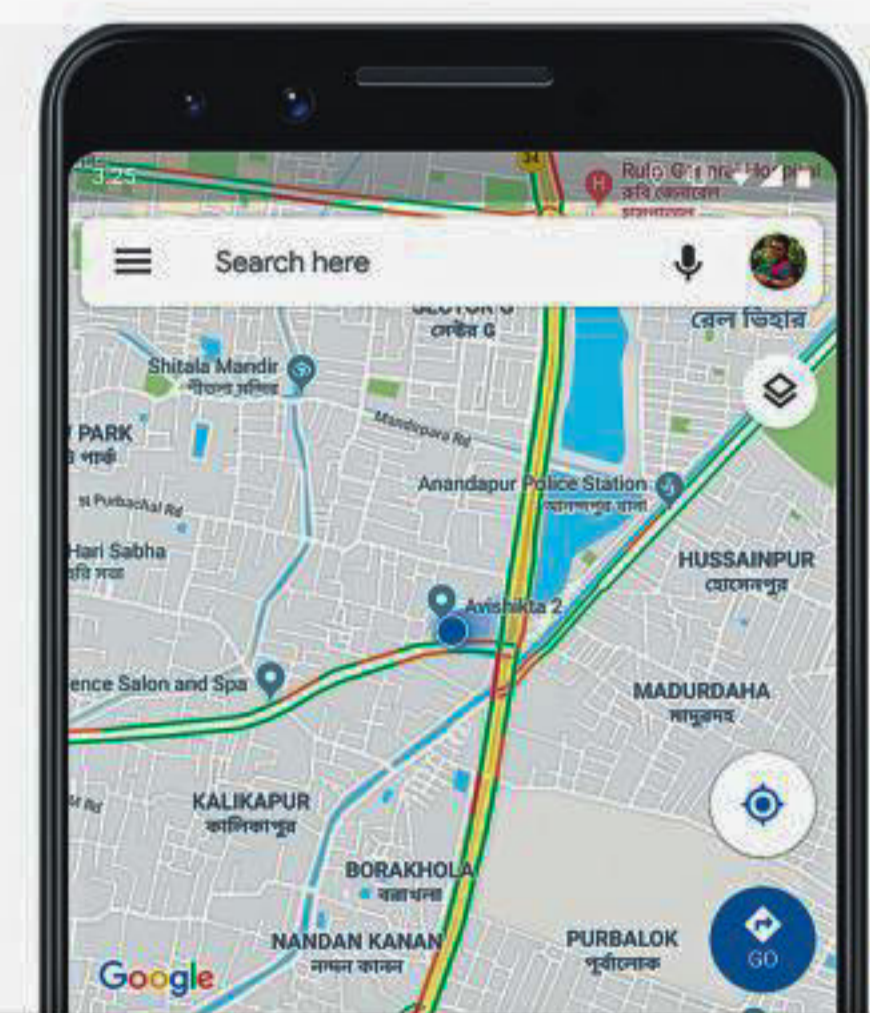
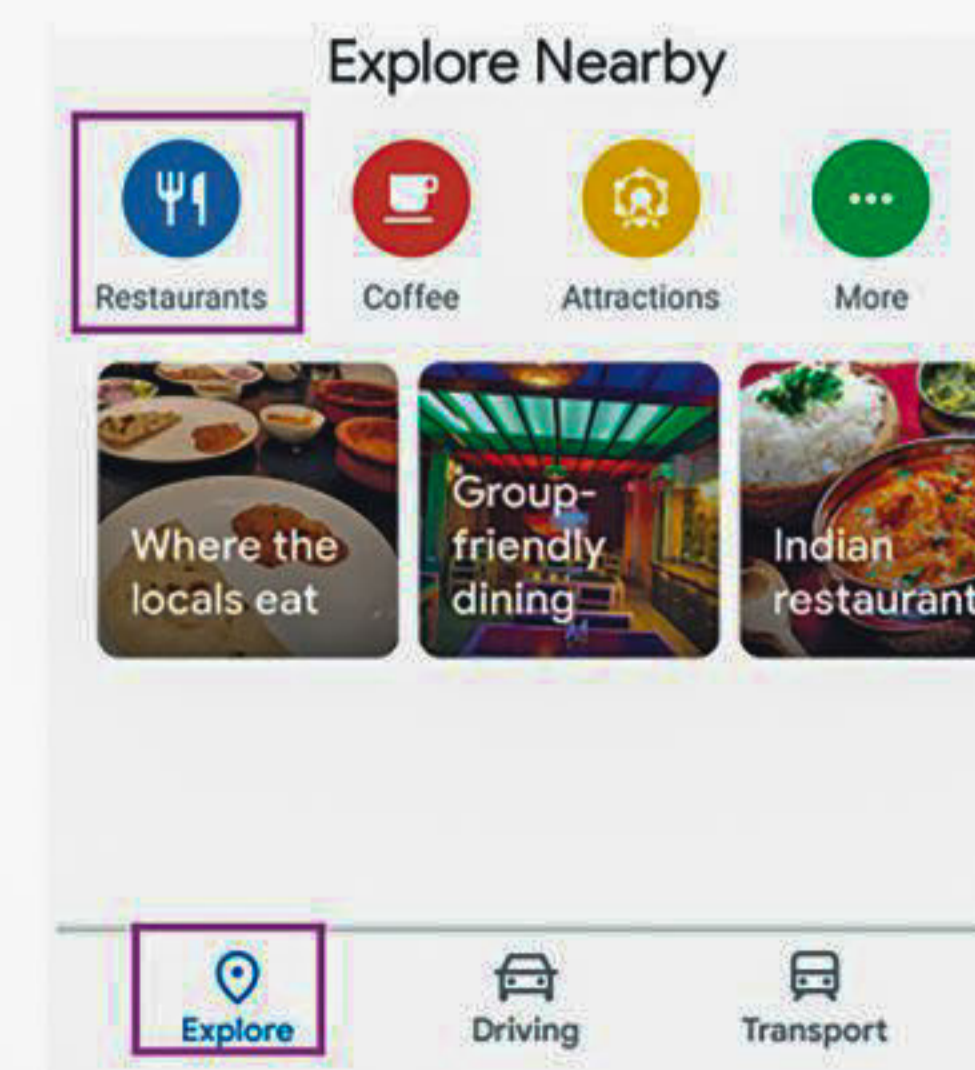
User reaction to these features have been mixed, most people agreeing that traffic updates has been the most necessary addition. Partha Pratim, a fellow commuter, said he uses the map's traffic feature to plan his trips. He also uses the new "share my trip" feature to share his trips with his wife.

Haseeb Chowdhury, a massive car enthusiast and foodie, said he has used the Explore option several times to find cheap dining options, particularly when he is attending meetings and photoshoots. He has also used the "Group friendly dining" option a few times to find a good place to eat with his friends.

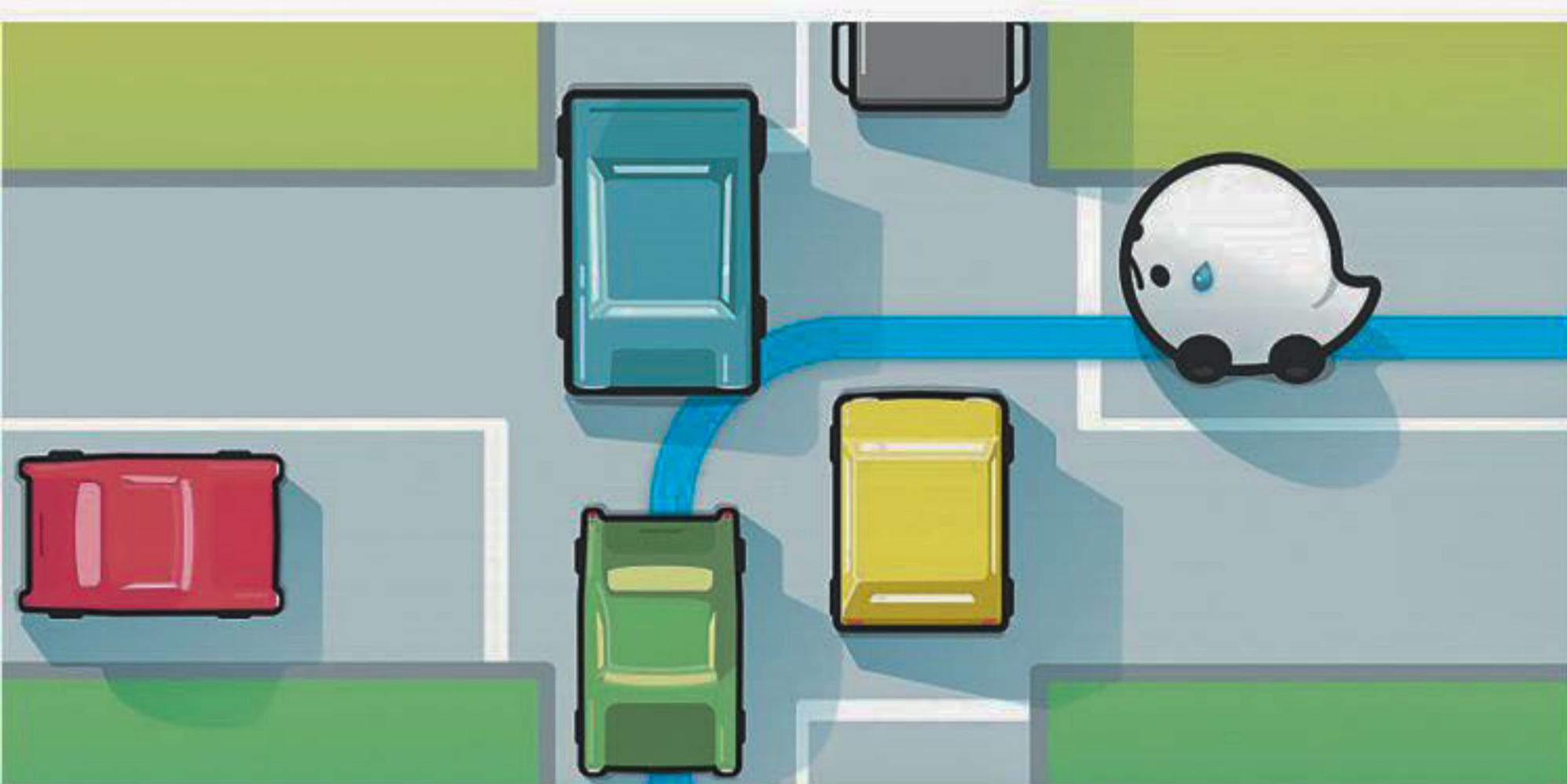
Google Maps has come a long way from its original roots of being "just a navigation tool" and has now slowly become a Swiss Army

knife in its own right. The US version of the app now features items like "For You" which is a personalized version of "Explore". The upcoming "Group planning" feature will allow multiple users to plan a trip together.

Finally, Google is working on integrating their augmented reality technology into the app, combining Maps with Google Lens. This will allow Google Maps to provide directions through actual real time footage instead of a CGI map. It's not too long before these features hit the worldwide version of the app, subsequently making its way to users in Bangladesh.



RAHBAR AL HAQ



Waze integration with Google Maps

the nearest fuel station" and whatnot, it will automatically adopt its path without overriding the original path. So while you're making the trip across Tejgaon, keeping an eye on the

playlists, catering to the destination and duration of your travels; a feature that is yet to make it to Bangladesh.

Another great and rarely used feature is

