BEST LAPTOPS OF 2019

2019 has been a good year for laptops, with manufacturers introducing a lot of new technology and establishing new benchmarks. Here is a roundup of the best laptops of the year and ones you should consider getting for the turn of the decade. Prices listed here are approximations taken from various local online sites.

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DELL XPS 13
Price: BDT 166,010/-
The best laptop overall
Dell's new XPS 13 was the first laptop to feature Intel's latest 10th generation processors. The laptop is amazingly thin, made out of exotic materials such as precision milled aluminium and carbon fibre, making it very light and comfortable in tablet form. It can output 4k+ Ultra HD visual display and amazing sound with its Dell's Cinemasound system. Overall the best daily use laptop one can have, assuming one can afford the price tag.

HP SPECTRE X360
Price: BDT 155,000/-
Best 2-in-1 experience
The Spectre is one of the few 2-in-1 laptops this year which managed to deliver on their promise without sacrificing too much of anything. The x360, while being thin, still retains most of its IO, with the 15-inch version going as far as having an HDMI port. Also unlike many of its competitors, it also retains its HD webcam. This, combined with decent construction, included stylus and sharp edges makes it a rather great combination laptop and tablet. Though be prepared to deal with some pixel and input lag when using it as a laptop.

APPLE MACBOOK PRO (15-INCH, 2019)
Price: BDT 203,000/-
Apple's best yet
Apple's 2019 15-inch MacBook Pro went all out with the best specs sheet ever on a MacBook. Its design also fixes a plethora of flaws found in previous MacBooks. The cooling has been improved, keyboard has been fixed, the body is less bendable and there is now an actual escape key. This along with the new gigantic battery and great new speakers, Apple users can finally enjoy a laptop that isn't riddled with questionable design choices. While the new 16-inch MacBook Pro is out already, it is relatively new and is the more premium version of the 15-inch MacBook Pro.

DELL G5 15 5590
Price: BDT 152,000/-
Best in budget gaming
For those who wish to game on a laptop but don't want to drop an obscenely large sum of cash, the Dell G5 15 5590 will do just fine. The laptop is bulky, thick and without a doubt the least attractive looking laptop on this list. The screen and webcam is also a bit dated and not the best options for professional use. But, if you are on a tight budget and want an RTX 2060 with 16GB of RAM along with enough cooling to not have them spontaneously combust, this is the best laptop to go for.

HUAWEI MATEBOOK 13
Price: BDT 97,500/-
A bang for your buck
Huawei's clash with the US overshadowed the fact that they had released one of the best budget laptops of the year. The MateBook 13 is sleek, stylish and offers a lot of features that are surprisingly not found at this price point. The screen supports 4k, the keyboard is better than expected and there is a touch screen button on top of the power button. While the laptop is most certainly more expensive than a lot of people can afford, it still manages to pack in premium features without having a premium price tag attached to it.

Capitalizing on Black Friday

Black Friday is upon us once again – a weekend full of crazy discounts and too good to be true deals are about to swarm various retail and online stores throughout the world! But before jumping in, there are a few things to get through.

WHAT IS BLACK FRIDAY?
Black Friday is an event that occurs in The United States on the first Friday after Thanksgiving. The origin of the name itself has conflicting roots, some saying that it dates back to the Fisk-Gould scandal of 1869, when the price of gold skyrocketed. This instability caused many folks to spend their money quickly, resulting in a large buying spree. Others claim that the name was coined by the police of the state of Philadelphia, who called it Black Friday after shoppers managed to cause a massive traffic jam while looking for best deals. Either way, the short version of it is that on Black Friday, the 29th of November, most retail stores offer massive discounts and lucrative bundles.

WHAT ARE THE BEST DEALS?
Black Friday deals are already on offer over on Amazon and other e-commerce sites. For example, the Amazon Fire HD Tablet is currently selling at a $50 discount at $100. For iOS users, there is a $100 discount on Apple Watch Series 4 and other smaller discounts on Apple products. Tech products are usually the most discounted items during the sale and that includes consumer tech like Televisions, Cameras etc. So if you are looking to upgrade your old phone or thinking about getting a new smart watch, this is the best time to do so.

SHOULD I PHONE A FRIEND?
Phone a friend, text them the link but be wary of the indefinite waiting period that comes with relying on friends living overseas. There's also the issue of your trusted friend not having the money required. So assuming your friend lives in a country where Black Friday is a thing, make sure he can afford the item over there and if possible, best to deposit the payment in your friend's local account after he confirms the purchase.

THE ONLINE WAY, YAY OR NAY?
While most people in the know have relied on the friend-courier method for the longest time, there are now multiple online stores in Bangladesh that deliver items from foreign online stores for a fee – Backpack Bangladesh and Airposted being two of the most notable examples. These sites have dedicated websites, some of which even listing Black Friday deals. And while the payment process is straightforward and there is a specific date of delivery, most of these websites outsource the delivery process to freelancers. So there is a risk of getting your delivery without original packaging, instruction manual, accessories etc. In worse cases, the item may even be damaged or tampered with. So if you are using one of these sites, make sure you specify how you want your item to be delivered in the "additional instruction" section.
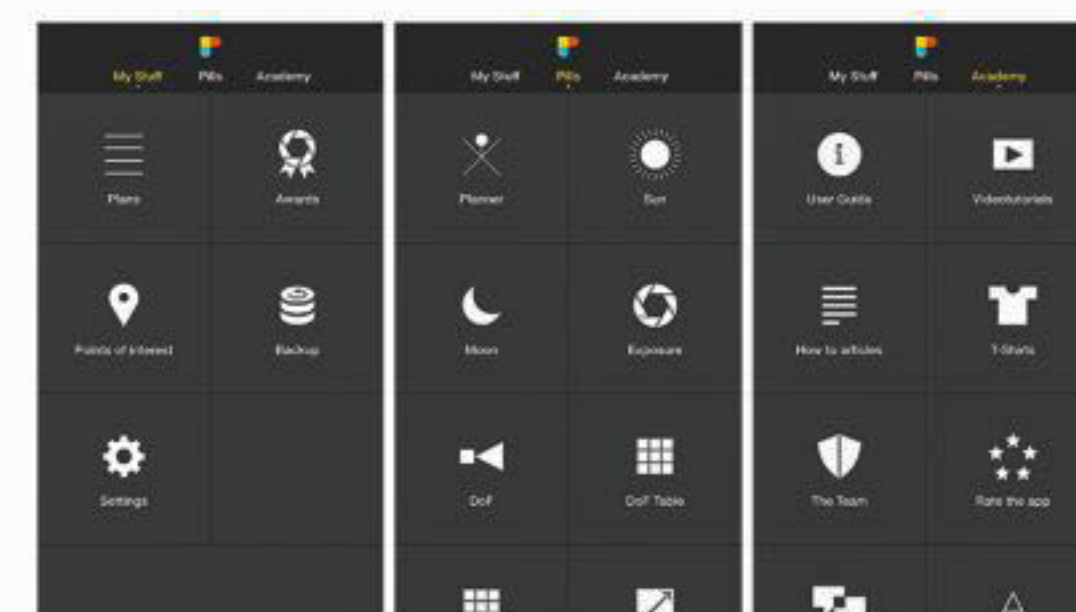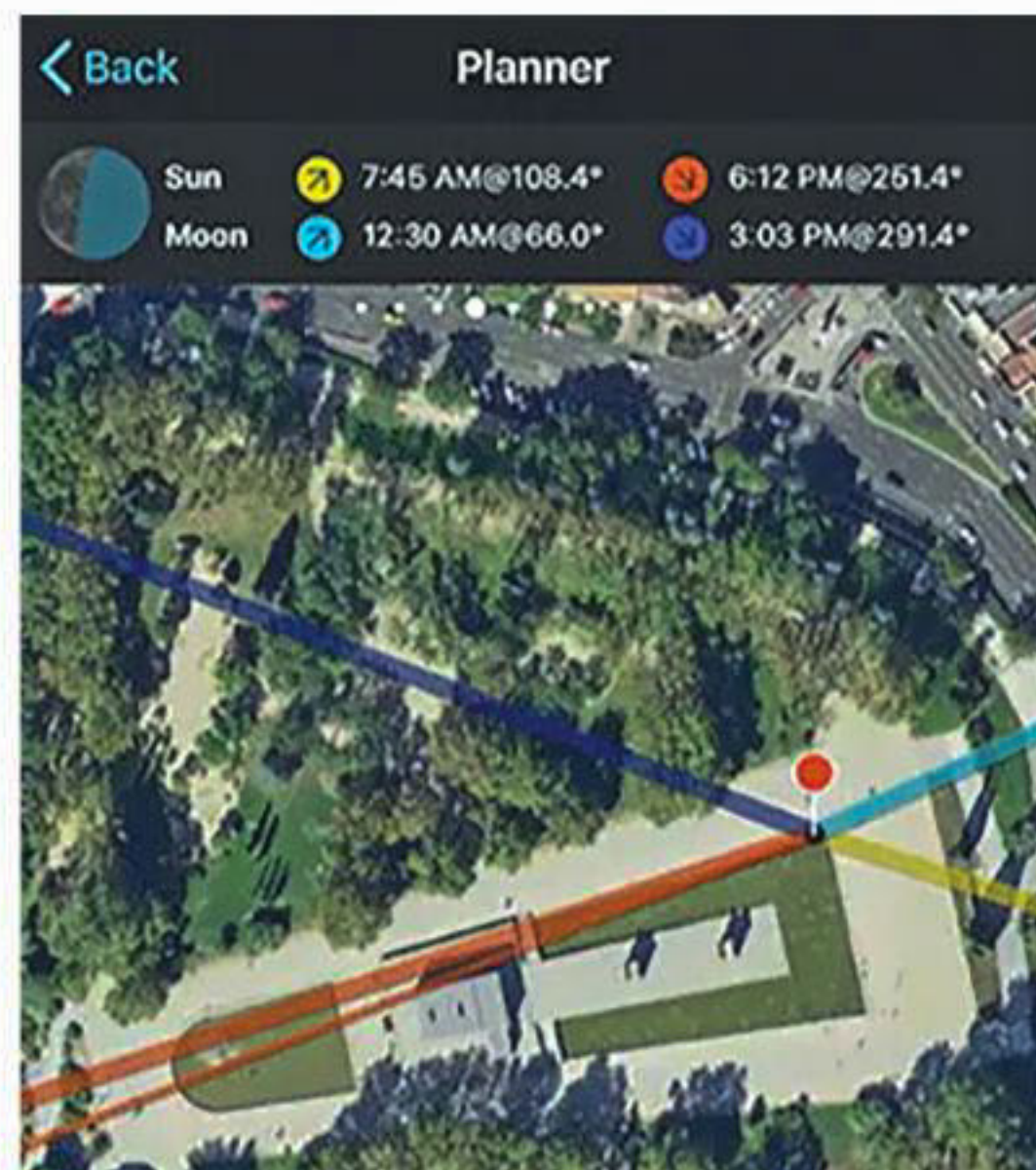
RAHBAR AL HAQ

Worth the buck
PHOTOPILLS
For pictures that are out of this world

AVAILABILITY: ANDROID, IOS
Price: BDT 900/- (Play Store), $9.99 (App Store)
It's rare to come across a photo editing app that cuts above the rest and delivers a unique experience. PhotoPills is just that – an expansive toolbox full of tricks and features which can let you create some jaw dropping pictures. But it's for a price and this review will tell you why it's worth the buck.

PhotoPills offers utilities in the form of "pills" and its best for natural photography of the sea, sky, moon and everything else cosmic. Some of these tools are for planning purposes like the 2D Milky Way feature. You can visualize the pathway of the Milky Way with the aid of Augmented Reality. PhotoPills' main feature revolves around using AR and there are a couple of cool things it does. The app uses AR to superimpose the position and path of the sun and moon on your screen, as well as the directions of the sunrise/sunset for the day, and moonrise/moonset for the night. So essentially, like star viewer app StarChart, PhotoPills uses similar AR tricks but takes it further to help you plan shots, take pictures in the moment and create effects that you wouldn't be able to create with other photo apps.

There is also a Sun/Moon pill which gives you data for each phase the celestial bodies would be on each day of the year. There is a time-lapse feature and a calculator for figuring out star trails. And the app also offers a widget which shows the time of sunrise, sunset, golden hour and blue hour all according to your location so you'll know when to take the picture you've been dreaming of. So if your phone has a half decent camera, PhotoPills with all its AR goodness can take your pictures to the next level.