

FERRARI UNVEILS \$320,000 hybrid sports car



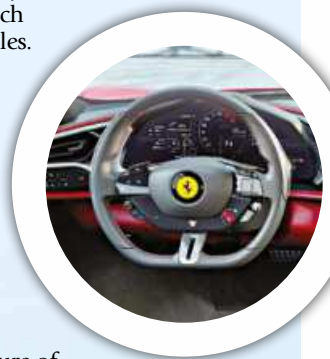
Ferrari unveiled a new first plug-in hybrid car on Thursday as the luxury sports car maker famed for its roaring combustion engines retools its range for an electric era.

The 296 GTB is Ferrari's third hybrid to go into series production, which excludes limited-edition vehicles. It follows the SF 90 Stradale in 2019 and a convertible version, the SF90 Spider, last year.

Ferrari Chief Marketing and Commercial officer Enrico Galliera said the 296 GTB created a new segment.

"If the SF 90 was designed to reach the peak of performance, this has been designed for the peak of pleasure of driving," he said in a web presentation.

"We expect this will also help us attract clients who



are not driving a Ferrari now." The two-seater will cost 269,000 euros (\$321,000), reaching 302,000 euros for its "Assetto Fiorano" high-performance version. It will have a top speed of over 330 km per hour (205 mph).

Ferrari unveils its new sports car 296 GTB in Maranello, Italy in this updated handout obtained June 24, 2021. Scuderia Ferrari Press Office/Handout via REUTERS

The Italian company known worldwide for its prancing horse logo and red racing cars has promised its first full-electric model in 2025.

"It's a process which started a couple of years ago," Galliera said. "We're working to cope with regulation and the task of reducing emissions." Ferrari and its rivals are wrestling with how to shift their line-ups to battery power without losing the high performance that supports their premium pricing.

Porsche, part of the Volkswagen group, already offers a full-electric vehicle with its Taycan model, but Ferrari is ahead of its arch-rival Lamborghini, also part of Volkswagen, whose first full-electric car will not appear until the second half of this decade.

To drive into the new era of electrification, Ferrari has picked technology industry veteran Benedetto Vigna as its new chief executive.

The 296 GTB will be fitted with a 6-cylinder (V6) mid-rear turbo engine, the first on a road car with a Ferrari badge, although such engines have roots dating back to the 1950s in Ferrari racing cars.

Ferrari road cars are normally powered by V8 or more powerful - but also more polluting - V12 engines. Still, the V6 engine, coupled with a 122 kW electric motor, can produce a massive 830 horsepower.

Like the SF90 Stradale, it can deliver 25 km of silent electric-only power. First deliveries are expected in the first quarter of 2022, starting from Europe.

The 296 GTB is the third of three cars Ferrari has promised for this year. Its first-ever SUV, called Purosangue (Thoroughbred), is expected next year.

IS BANNING APPS REALLY A VIABLE SOLUTION?

OISHEE EERADA MAUDUD

'Laundering of money online through Likee', 'Luring of girls through TikTok to trafficking them abroad', 'PUBG and Free Fire addiction leads to suicide of teenager'—these are some of the headlines that have been making rounds on social media lately. In light of these situations and with India's ban of 59 apps including TikTok and PUBG (recently launched again as Battleground Mobile India), questions about whether Bangladesh will take similar steps have been circulating for some time now.

Concerns regarding the use—and abuse—of such apps have existed for a while. With numerous arguments on both sides, this controversy continues to draw different opinions from different groups of people across the country.

Various types of concerns have surfaced regarding the use of these apps. Recently, the chief of Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) made a statement urging for the ban of video-sharing apps such as TikTok and Likee, following the arrest of suspects belonging to a human trafficking gang who used to lure victims using TikTok. And this is not the first instance of such crimes. Numerous similar incidents have been reported in the past where the victims were lured by the promise of shooting TikTok and Likee videos. Law enforcement officials have also attributed, to some extent, these apps to the rise of juvenile gang culture in the country. On the other hand, games like PUBG and Free Fire are causing 'gaming addiction' among teenagers, according to several media reports. Bigo (parent company of Likee) is being investigated now by CID for an alleged money laundering scam. Even globally, some of these apps have been at the receiving end of vicious legal actions. In the USA, the Trump administration even tried to ban TikTok in September 2020 over national security concerns. Pakistan and Indonesia had actually banned TikTok over negative, "obscene" content in the past. They later lifted the ban after receiving assurance from TikTok that content will be moderated and security mechanisms strengthened. In these circumstances, banning these apps and services might seem the easy way out. But is it really the solution?

The platforms from their end, have been taking a stance to curb these kinds of incidents in the future. TikTok has taken some action to curb the spread of negative and misleading content in the past. The short video platform is periodically upgrading its Community guidelines and introducing fact-checking programs in 8 countries. After the very recent human trafficking issue, they have started the #HoiShocheton campaign in a bid to raise awareness. The campaign, joined with several TikTokers including actress Mehababein, Singer Imran, Model Mahi etc to promote being safe online and offline. When asked, a TikTok spokesperson said, "Irresponsible online behaviour is an industry-wide concern and a shared responsibility. We continue to take proactive steps to prioritise the safety and well-being of our communities. We remain

committed to protecting users against any form of misuse and maintain a safe and positive in-app environment."

However, some might still have questions about the extent of implementation of TikTok's policy against negative content inside the app as negative or 'culturally inappropriate' content still floods the app in masses.

There have been privacy concerns regarding Likee too, mostly because its privacy settings are relatively unsophisticated. On Likee, users can still watch videos of people they have been blocked by. Any new Likee accounts will automatically have their locations set to public, which the users will have to change themselves. Users can also filter searches by gender. Such features cast suspicions over user safety.

When asked on the topic of efforts to counter harmful content and behaviour, a Likee spokesperson said, "We spare no efforts in combating objectionable content that violates our policies. From

ICT Journalist Forum and IT Editor of Ittefaq says, "In the past, students used to stay at school until a certain time. With the advent of online classes, students have had increased exposure to the internet. As such, they are growing addicted to such apps. They are now more concerned with likes and views than they were in the past."

However, there are arguments against the ban as well. Many complain about students becoming addicted to PUBG and neglecting their academics. Unfortunately, there is no healthier option being offered to students. At present, playing games like PUBG is simply one of their primary ways of letting off steam. Especially since the onset of the pandemic, children have had less access to the ever-scarce physical playgrounds or in-person meetings with their friends where they could enjoy spending their free time. Playing video games with friends and communicating with them on social media platforms have become their only ways of staying in touch with the outside world in these COVID-19-

Additionally, TikTok and Likee are just two of the many apps being misused for circulating negative content. Such content can be found on other social media platforms as well. Banning a few is very likely to be a surface-level "solution". As Ayesha Atiq, a model and content creator on TikTok, opined, "TikTok and Likee are no different from other platforms like Instagram where content creators post entertaining and engaging videos. While there are concerns of pornography and human trafficking linked to some of these apps, banning the app is not the solution when the problem lies in the lack of a proper legal system to prosecute the perpetrators and the lack of social education and moral values."

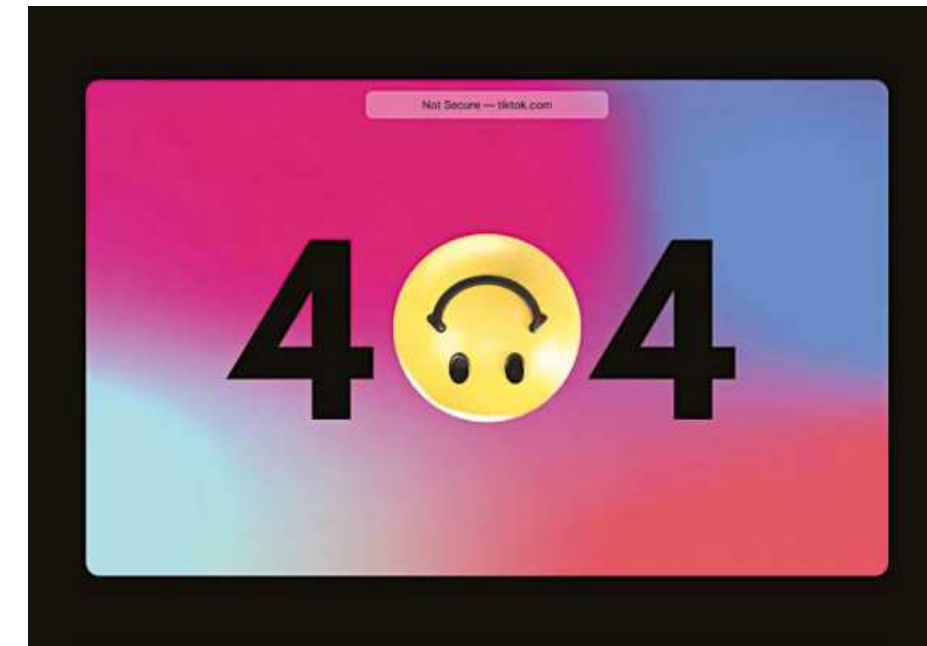
Dr Farhana Rahman, a faculty in a leading medical college believes family bonds can play a pivotal role here. "As a family, we need to be more vigilant about the on-screen activity time of our youngsters. Parents need to make sure they continuously engage with their children about risky online and offline activities so that children can make the right choice."

The spread of "indecent" or "immoral" content is also something that worries many, and a reason that has gotten TikTok banned in some countries in the past. However, standards of what constitutes "acceptable" forms of entertainment are purely subjective. Leaving it up to any institution to determine what the entire country should think of as "decent, moral, acceptable content" is unacceptable in itself and reeks of the infamous Thought Police Orwell so warned us about.

Assenting to the ban of such apps now could lead the way to bans of more mediums of expressing thought in the future. Welcoming such bans just gives the institution in charge of such action more control over the narrative and information available to the masses.

Banning these apps can also lead to information disparity. A prime example would be China, where apps such as Twitter, Facebook, and even search engines like Google are banned. Lack of access to such major platforms creates space for discrepancies in the information available there and the rest of the world. Such discrepancies can hence have adverse effects on education and innovation.

Overall, there are valid concerns regarding the negative impacts of using apps like TikTok, Likee, PUBG, etc. But how viable a long-term solution banning the apps still remains a question. As Zohaina Amreen, a digital creator on TikTok, said, "Banning the modes of expression cannot be the answer when the root of this issue goes much deeper." Where the root causes of the problems lie needs more thought and attention, and it is those causes that need addressing. Perhaps the answer lies in raising awareness—awareness about what mindsets and content are healthy and indiscriminate, what are good ways to spend time other than on the internet, and what online activities one should be wary of.



January to May this year, Likee has banned a total number of 42,751 accounts due to violations, and around 8.7 million video penalties were given per month. This year, compared to 2020, the number of moderation team members in Bangladesh has increased by 161%. With a complete content security mechanism in place, Likee inspects the contents in various scenarios, for accurately combating negative information such as fraudulent information, pornographic links, etc., and controlling abnormal contents in real-time. We have a team working around the clock to ensure that all reported content and accounts are handled properly."

The impact of such apps on academic performance has also become a topic of discussion. Fervent young users often utilize large chunks of their time gaming with PUBG, Free Fire and similar games, even to the extent of neglecting studies to do so. Mojahidul Islam, President of Bangladesh

ridden times.

Moreover, apps like Likee and TikTok just serve as a platform for self-expression. Content on such platforms is only a reflection of mindsets and ideas borne by the content creators. Some creators are using these apps for educational purposes too. As Muhammed Asif Khan, co-founder and CEO of Alpha Catering, said, "Apps like TikTok are only the beginning of a new age of democratization of talent. Previously, if you wanted to be a star, you would be at the mercy of record labels and film producers who got to decide whom to promote. YouTube probably opened the first door for a content creator to be able to reach the masses directly. Newer apps are just taking it a step further. There will be more down the line, and trying to prematurely ban one or two of them won't blunt that movement. Rather, we can think of policies and regulations to help make these apps safer."