

EMK Center unveils new AR-VR lab

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The EMK Center has set up an augmented reality and virtual reality (AR-VR) laboratory with an aim to provide hi-tech features to Bangladeshi youths and help them develop innovative products and services. The laboratory was designed by M K Aaref, Founding Director, EMK Center, and inaugurated by Helen LaFave, Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy Dhaka, on October 28, 2021.

Titled 'Golpo Studio', the new AR-VR laboratory of EMK Center is soundproof and equipped with four VR headsets, two computers and two filmmaker kits. It also has a green screen, three cameras and necessary lighting facilities. The studio can be used by anyone to develop and examine their respective desirable cutting-edge products and services.

Access to this AR-VR lab requires one to be a member of the EMK Center. Any Bangladeshi above the age of 16 can enjoy membership with an annual fee of BDT 500. This facility is accessible to members from 10:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

Wire: a digital marketing firm for SMEs

With a walk down the inner streets of Banani or Mohakhali DOHS, one would perhaps cross at least 10 digital marketing agencies in every block. With nearly a zillion firms running after the largest brands in the country, in a market as saturated as this, how do you stand out and thrive?

One particular agency, working from an inconspicuous space in Banani road no. 5, has the answer. Meet Wire, a 365 digital marketing agency renowned for its unique client-centric services, that has been breaking new grounds in the industry by primarily targeting SMEs, restaurants and local brands for digital marketing. Over the years, Wire has worked from the ground up to help multiple brands set up their unique brand identities in the market. Some of its key clients include Tourino Tyres, Minister Group, and popular local restaurant chains such as Tarka, 138 East and BFC. Starting in 2016, Wire now has more than 47 clients, served by a team of more than 40 in five departments.

Restaurants, in particular, have been Wire's forte since its inception as its track record of delivering quality, affordable digital marketing services to restaurant brands has earned them a trusted spot in the industry. Putting clients at the front and centre of their business model has also helped Wire navigate the pandemic at a crucial time when the service-based industry was going through unprecedented uncertainty. Wire ensured that its clients, mostly SMEs who took the heaviest tolls during the pandemic, didn't suffer and that their businesses didn't go bankrupt during the lockdown phase. Wire gave a lot of its clients a line of credit that allowed them to carry on with their marketing activities and to give sales pushes.

A client-centric model, targeting a gap in the market, along with fast and affordable service--that's how Wire plans to go big. Right now, Wire is set to expand outside Dhaka and target SMEs in other megacities across the country.



SPOTIFY

to retire 'Car View' feature

Released in early 2019, Spotify's Car View feature was a blessing for regular commuters. The feature was famous for making the Spotify app much easier to navigate while driving, as well as cutting distractions during rush hours. In a recent community post by a Spotify moderator, it was confirmed that Spotify is permanently retiring this much-beloved feature, at least for Androids.

Spotify users have made complaints regarding this sudden decision, especially considering that no replacement for the feature has been announced yet. Spotify has also not confirmed whether the feature is going away on the Android version only, or

on all platforms. At the time of writing, the Car View feature still works on iPhones, though it is unsure if that might change anytime soon.

In a follow-up community post, another Spotify moderator added that the in-car 'Now Playing' view for Android version of Spotify will be removed as well. The comment also included that such features are being removed to make room for better, more user-friendly features.

The moderators specified that the alternative features will allow hands-free use of Google Assistant, as well as Google Maps, to help navigate while driving and listening to music or podcasts.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The never-ending streaming wars

Look, I took a break from binging my latest Netflix show to write this note. You see where this is going? Kidding. Anyway, this week, we take the lead on discussing how the pandemic has fuelled a new revolution in the global (and local) streaming industry. Turn to the centrefold to read our take on this. As for the rest, we try to prepare you for your next killer job interview on page 3. We beg you to take good care of your laptop on page 7. As it's December, we also don't miss the mark on our usual Netflix viewing guide.

We hope you enjoy this issue. Have a good weekend!

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Bangladesh impresses at World Robot Olympiad 2021

World Robot Olympiad (WRO) is an international robotics competition organised every year in over 85 countries around the globe. Hosted by the non-profit organisation World Robot Olympiad Association (WROA), this contest is divided into several categories for students ranging from 8 to 19 years old. At WRO 2021, held online this year, Bangladesh placed top spots in two different categories.

Team Prodigy, consisting of Md Sazzad Islam and Tausif Samin, ranked 10th in the world ranking of the 'Future Engineers'

category. Team Powerium, consisting of Tanjim Zaman Khan, Md Ashrafuzzaman Fuad and Muhammad Abrar Zawad, ranked 16th internationally in 'Open Category (Senior)'.

For the 'Future Engineers' category, the task was to build an autonomous robot, based on current automobile technology, that could drive around a track with the help of a steering device. Participants of 'Open Category' could build anything that followed the theme of WRO, which this year was building a 'Powerbot' to advocate

energy sustainability.

According to WRO rules, every team that participates in the international round is required to clear a national round hosted by a local association. This year, Bangladesh Open Source Network (BdOSN), a non-profit organisation, hosted the national competition, where around 22 teams participated. Team Prodigy and Team Powerium won the national round and were eventually selected for this year's international competition.