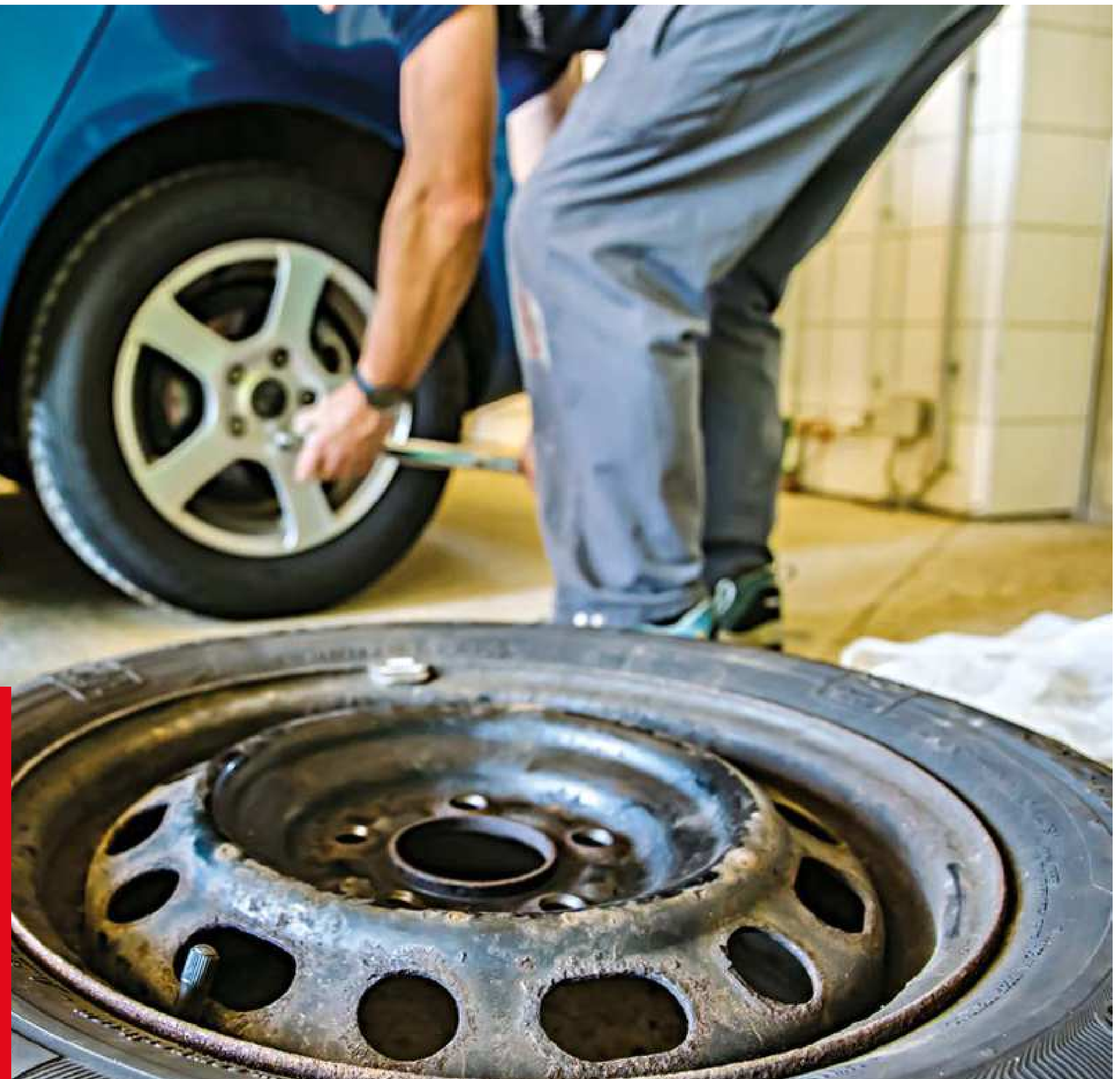
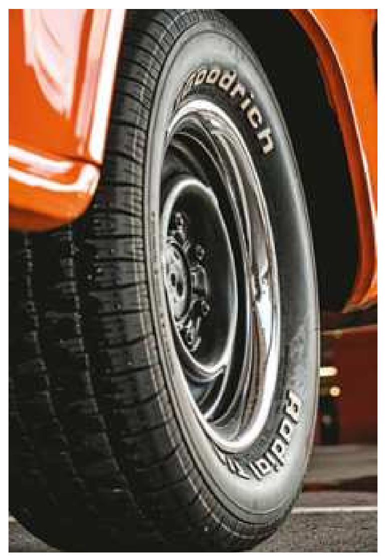
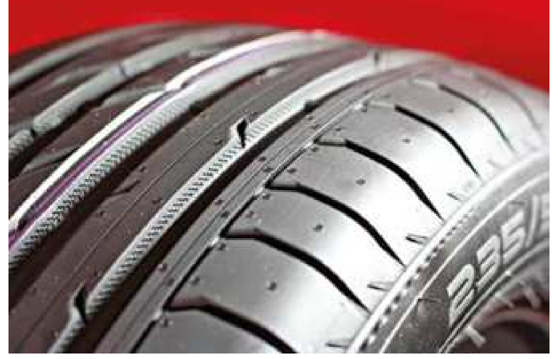




Tyres are one of the most important elements of a car. Not only are they fundamental in making the car move, but they also add a certain sense of flair and personality to the accompanying vehicle. Because of the plethora of choices available, getting a new set of tyres might seem intimidating at first. However, with the right direction, you cannot go wrong.



A handy guide to choosing the right tyres for your ride

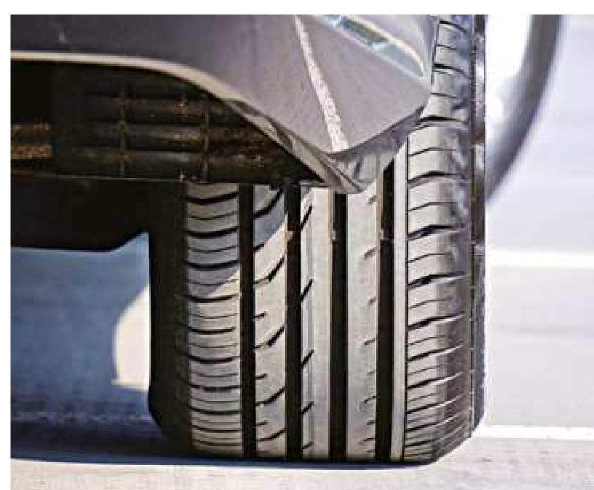
ARFIN KAZI

Before attempting to change your tyre, you should confirm if your car needs a tyre replacement in the first place. Check for tread wear on the side of the tyre wall. Only consider replacing the tyres if the tread has reached the midpoint mark, which is usually below 2/32″.

When buying the tyres, consider whether or not you want the exact same tyres again. You can choose to upgrade your current set, depending on if you want the road feel when cornering or a softer, dampened ride. Replacement to the same tyres is pretty self-explanatory. You see the numbers present on the tyre walls and get the same tyres. But upgrading has its own set of things to consider.

To understand the numbers present on the tyre walls (usually written such as 185/60R/15) where the first value (185) indicates the lateral width of the tyre, the mid-value (60R) indicates the ratio of width to the sidewall profile where larger the number, the taller the wall and the letter indicates the radial tyre design (R ratings have a 90-degree design), where most tyres available locally have the same rating. The last value (15) indicates the diameter of the wheel.

Once everything is set, it's quite straightforward to buy tyres in Bangladesh since our climate is on the warmer side. Winter tyres stay out of the equation for the most part. Our choices lie between all-season tyres or summer tyres, where the latter provides more performance than



all-season tyres in general. Although summer tyres provide better performances, they are usually more expensive than all-season tyres. When on a budget, all-season tyres do an adequate job in providing good ride and traction.

Another thing to keep in consideration is whether you want a road feel around the curve or a more dampened ride with fewer bumps. High-performance tyres give more road feel and touring tyres have a more dampened ride due to lower profile and a smaller coefficient of friction comparatively.

The streaming war was already brewing, then came the pandemic

MUSHFIQUE FAHIM

Since the coronavirus first broke out towards the end of 2019, the world was held hostage for nearly two years. The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted, restructured and reshaped every aspect of daily living. The way we consume content has also been affected by this global situation. Owing to the lockdowns and social-distancing regulations, our entertainment experience has steered gradually towards online streaming.

The World Health Organisation declared a global emergency in January and a worldwide pandemic in March of 2020. Nearly all events of public interactions were either cancelled or suspended. Movie theatres closed down, live concerts were dismissed and performance arts came to a standstill. Stress levels rose as people were confined to their homes and away from loved ones indefinitely. The demand for entertainment and media content rose drastically. This is where streaming services stepped in and stepped up.

When the pandemic hit, the video/TV streaming market was already saturated. Now, the industry saw an opportunity to redefine the distribution and consumption of content as online streaming remained the only available option. More and more services started competing to carve out a place for themselves in the ever-growing market. Eventually, the three services that emerged as the clear victors were Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and Disney+. Other services such as HBO Max, Hulu, Apple TV+ remained in close pursuit.

According to Forbes magazine, 48% of online US adults had subscribed to one of these services by June. Media watchdog Ofcom found that 12 million people in the UK subscribed to a new service that they had not used before. Data released by the Motion Picture Association show that global box-office revenues plunged by as much as 30$ billion while worldwide subscriptions to video streaming services crossed 1.1 billion.

The online streaming services left no stone unturned to capitalise on the lockdown measures. As people could not leave the confines of their homes, the streaming services churned out a massive volume of content at an exceedingly fast rate to help fill the void. Recommendation algorithms played a key role in building new consumption habits as they are responsible for enticing the user to click on the next content and ensure maximum engagement.

A survey done by WSJ in December 2020 showed that the overall number of subscribers to international online streaming was up by 50% since the previous year. Since streaming television is a non-rival good, meaning subscription to one service does not prevent consumers from subscribing to another, the varying multitude of platforms has seen a secular surge in business. Each platform uses data to determine the content with the highest potential demand and tries to specialise its niche. As a result, as Business Insider reports, the average US household currently holds 3 different subscriptions on average.

However, it's not just international streaming platforms that grew exponentially during the pandemic. Local streaming services have been on the rise for a few years now and have seen a recent surge of popularity due to the lockdown-enforced lifestyle.

Some prominent examples of Bangladeshi streaming platforms are Bioscope, Banglaflix and Robi TV+, hosted by Grameenphone, Banglalink and Robi respectively. While local telecom operators have certainly cashed in on the success of streaming content, there also exist independent platforms like Cinematic and Bongo, video-on-demand apps with extensive catalogues of Dhallywood movies and Bengali drama. All these local streaming services have catered immense popularity among the Bengali audience. According to reports from earlier this year, Bongo had over 83 million subscribers, and at least 210 million unique viewers every month on average.

The rapid shift of inclination towards online streaming services seems unlikely to be a temporary trend. These platforms were already fast gaining ground before the pandemic occurred. The ensuing lockdown rather acted as a catalyst to speed up the process of cutting the cord. According to experts, cable and network subscriptions are dwindling and will continue to do so. During the second decade of the century, offline TV/video consumption went down from 13 hours to 8.6 hours per week on average.

According to Forbes, 39% of consumers in the US preferred on-demand platforms to theatrical movie releases. Reports from BBC show that during the height of the lockdown, adults in the UK spent nearly 6 hours 25 minutes staring at their screens every day.

No such in-depth, data-driven studies, unfortunately, were done in the local market. But it can be safely assumed that the numbers wouldn't differ much. Locally and globally, it seems highly improbable that consumption habits developed and put firmly in place during these last couple of years will see anything but further growth.

Online streaming services have completely reconstructed our entertainment experience. The jolt that resulted from the pandemic only sped up the inevitable dominance of the on-demand media content. According to communication research firm Interdigital, 82% of all internet traffic will come from online streaming in 2022. We are all aboard the streaming train whether we realise it or not. And it will only gain momentum in the foreseeable future.

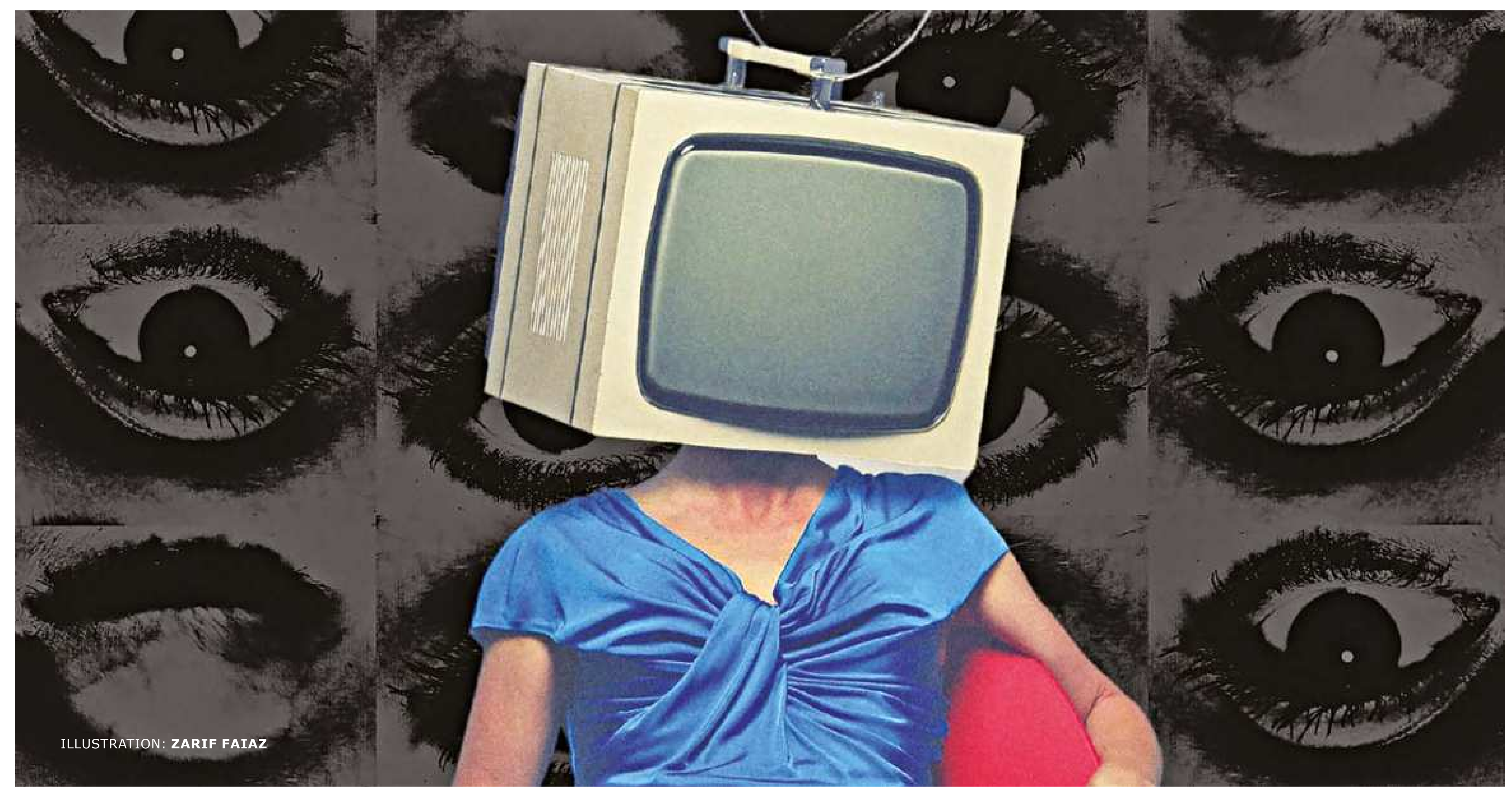


ILLUSTRATION: **ZARIF FAIAZ**