Vivo Y15s released in Bangladesh

On 12 December, Vivo announced the launch of Y15s in Bangladesh, the newest member in the Y series of smartphones. The focus of this new model is catering to the youth with innovative new features.

The phone features 5000mAh battery, side-mounted fingerprint technology and 13 MP AI dual camera system. The 2MP Super Macro back camera has a 4 cm focus. Vivo Y15s comes equipped with 5V/1A Reverse Charging, which enables the phone to act as a power bank as well. It has a 6.51-inch Halo FullView display with HD+ (1600×720) resolution and a special Eye Protection Mode that can filter out harmful blue light.

Vivo Y15s is packaged in a 8.28mm thin body with a 3D back cover, with 3GB RAM, 32 GB memory space and FunTouch OS 11.1. It is available for the price of Tk. 12,990/-.

Facebook opens up its first virtual world to public

On 10 December, Facebook's parent firm opened its Horizon Worlds virtual reality platform to the public in North America, in a step toward building its metaverse vision for the future. Horizon Worlds is far from a fully realized metaverse, a future internet where online experiences like chatting to a friend would eventually feel face-to-face thanks to virtual reality (VR) headsets.

But headset-wearing users in the United States and Canada can now gather with friends or others, play games and build their own virtual worlds on Horizon as long as they are 18 years old and have the proper equipment.

Since last year a testing version of the platform has been available to a limited number of users. Facebook renamed its parent company to Meta in October to emphasize its aim to shift from a scandal-prone social media platform to its virtual reality vision for its future. "We want Horizon Worlds to be a safe and respectful environment, so everyone must follow our Conduct in VR Policy," Meta said in announcing the opening.

"You have several safety options... which lets you take a break and then block, mute or report people," it added.

Meta-owned platforms Facebook and Instagram have been fighting to put behind them a crisis unleashed in September by reams of internal studies leaked to journalists and US authorities by whistleblower Frances Haugen. The documents underpinned damaging articles that generally argued the firm knew its products could harm users, but chose growth over safety.

The firm's metaverse push also includes tools for remote working, which has boomed during the pandemic. Facebook in August unveiled technology for 'workrooms', allowing remote collaboration for people using its Oculus virtual reality gear. The "Horizon Workrooms" project makes it possible to switch back and forth from virtual reality to web conferencing to adapt to different situations.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Helping families reunite

We often run into cases of missing kids, but find ourselves unable to help. Fortunately, times are changing. Check out our Cover Story on the 'Nikhoj' app, which can find details regarding lost children using facial recognition technology. Perhaps now you can help families reunite! This week we also covered local indie mobile game developers, top picks in free antivirus software, and in Shift, an exclusive feature of the latest Haval H6 launching. As always, plenty to pick from! Stay safe everyone, and have a great weekend.

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Team from Bangladesh wins NASA Space Apps Challenge

NASA Space Apps Challenge is an annual global contest held by NASA that features ground-breaking concepts for space exploration created by aspiring space engineers.

This year, the contest had over 28,000 participants from 162 countries and included 28 challenges and over 2,800 projects. Among them, the team 'Mohakash' from Bangladesh won Global Finalists in the category 'Best Mission Concept'.

Team 'Mohakash' consisted of Barnita Basak Trisha and Md. Momenul Haque from BAUET (Bangladesh Army University of Engineering and Technology) and Sumit Chanda, Samir Imtiaz, Shishir Kairy and Alvi Rownok from KUET (Khulna University of Engineering & Technology).

Sumit Chanda, team leader of 'Mohakash', expressed delight at being able to represent Bangladesh on an international stage, "On the official NASA website they mentioned our team and country's name. That is a huge honour for us, and we hope this achievement will inspire the youth to explore aerospace engineering."

The theme for NASA Space Apps Challenge 2021 was 'Virtual Planetary Exploration V2.0', for which participants had to create interactive 3D models of geology tools that astronauts can use when exploring surfaces of celestial bodies or planets.

Team 'Mohakash' came up with the concept of 'Advanced Regolith Sampler System (ARSS)': a battery-powered motor tool consisting of bucket blades. These buckets are placed in a certain sequence to easily scoop materials known as regoliths, which are fragments found on planetary surfaces.

"We found that in almost every mission, astronauts complain about regolith. Because regolith fragments are ionized particles, they tend to stick to spacesuits and often cause damage. Also, because they float, collecting them takes a lot of time and resources. Thus, we came up with the ARSS, which astronauts can use to easily clean surfaces of planets and celestial bodies," stated Sumit.

Regarding the importance of regolith management, Sumit added, "Recent research has discovered that oxygen can be extracted from regolith fragments. Since mankind is planning for accommodation in outer planetary bodies, production of oxygen is crucial, which makes the proper collection of regolith an extremely important task."

According to Sumit, NASA has already expressed interest in working with team 'Mohakash'. The ARSS project is still in its electronic configuration phase, but the team hopes they will be able to produce a prototype within the next four months.