

Meet the indie studios fuelling the mobile games industry of Bangladesh

NAVEED HUSSAIN

The mobile games market in the country is growing everyday. Bangladesh ranks 7th in terms of the global population and the local market is an important market for the global mobile gaming industry. New jobs are being created in this arena continuously as foreign investments are pouring in.

In the latest round of foreign investments in the local mobile gaming scene, Stillfront Group, a Swedish-based mobile games maker, has recently acquired a 100 per cent stake in Moonfrog Labs of India and their Bangladesh affiliate Ulka Games Limited for around Tk. 750 crores. **The indie mobile game studios of Bangladesh**

Over the past few years, Bangladeshi companies have been making relentless efforts on their own initiative to capture this huge market. But unfortunately, our contribution to this potential market is well below one per cent.

However, some young entrepreneurs are representing Bangladesh in the international gaming market through their own efforts. Games like Ludo Club, Tin Patti Gold, Adda and Carro from Moonfrog Labs and Ulka Games Limited have become very popular all over the world with more than 16 crore downloads globally.

Alpha Potato, another renowned game studio in Bangladesh, has already created several popular games in association with their publisher Lion Studios. Battle Ballet, Cake Master 3D, Icecream Run, Pon Shop Master and Prank Master 3D are a few notable games from them. The games have already been downloaded more than 14 crores.

Another well-known studio Hamba



ILLUSTRATION:
ZARIF FAIAZ

Games has released three popular games in a joint venture with their publisher Tasty Pill. Pick Me Up 3D, Line Color 3D and Road Race 3D have all been downloaded around 200 million times.

Rise Up Labs was the first to get on the market with their tap tap game. They are currently working with Robi on a game called Treasure Island and a Mina game with UNICEF.

Free Pixel Games is the oldest studio in Bangladesh that has been working well with fantasy games for a long time.

Among the newcomers, Thunder Games and PlaySense are working with well-known foreign publishing companies and are trying to come up with new games.

On Monetisation

Ershadul Haque, Founder and CEO of Rise Up Labs, said that gaming studios make money from their games through advertising, subscriptions and in-app purchases. "A certain amount is earned from different types of ads during the game. Moreover, all mobile games usually have a virtual store. Players purchase virtual products or subscriptions from this store to enhance their gaming experience. This is where the game earns the most. The more popular a game is, the more its virtual products or subscriptions are purchased."

Jamilur Rashid, CEO of Ulka Games Ltd, said, "Games made in our country are now being monetized through online and

offline distribution." This income is mainly from game ads, subscriptions and in-app purchases. Domestic listed companies pay VAT to the government from this income.

According to Jamilur, in the fiscal year 2019-2020, Ulka Games Limited has paid a total of Tk 4.98 crore to the Government of Bangladesh as VAT; he hopes it will touch 100 million in the 2020-21 financial year.

Jamilur Rashid said that policies are needed to move the video game industry forward. With proper care and patronage, many more gaming studios will contribute to the foreign exchange earnings of the country. In addition, foreign game studios could be encouraged to set up local offices and development centres in the country.

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