

Singer launches new year carnival offers

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Singer Bangladesh Ltd has launched a 'New Year Carnival' campaign under which it is offering up to 100 per cent discount on refrigerators, televisions, washing machines, air conditioners, computers, and microwave ovens.

The customers can avail up to Tk 15,000 discount under exchange offers on refrigerators, up to Tk 6,000 on TVs, up to Tk 3,000 on washing machines, up to Tk 1,500 on sewing machines, and up to Tk 2,000 on microwave ovens, says a press release.

The buyers of the electronic products will get a kitchen appliances discount coupon against every purchase.

They will get a five per cent flat discount for a bundle offer under the new campaign for which they have to purchase at least three selected products together from these products. Singer gives installments facility for up to 12 months.

Coppertech signs deal with Mohammadi Electric Wires

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Coppertech Industries Ltd (CIL) has signed a contract to supply copper wire worth Tk 52 crore annually to Mohammadi Electric Wires & Multi Products Ltd.

The copper products manufacturer will supply 40 tonnes of copper wire each month to Mohammadi Electric Wires, said SK Miraj Ali, company secretary of CIL.

Earlier, the company disclosed the agreement in this regard through a post on the Dhaka Stock Exchange website.

Coppertech closed marginally lower at Tk 39.4 per share yesterday.



NASA Administrator Charlie Bolden (C) speaks with former astronaut Steve Lindsey (L), who is the director of flight operation of Sierra Nevada Corporation's Space Systems Dream Chaser, and deputy director of NASA's Dryden Flight Research Center Patrick Stoliker at his side after unavailing of Sierra Nevada Corporation's Space Systems Dream Chaser prototype space-access vehicle at NASA's Dryden Flight Research Center in Edwards, California.

PHOTO: AFP

Space business: The final (profitable) frontier

AFP, Las Vegas

The snub-nosed craft resembles a shuttle-airplane mashup, and is the latest entrant in a profit-seeking push with staggering potential -- and risks -- for humans to visit, work or even live in space.

The display of technology like the life-size model "Dream Chaser" ship at the CES tech show in Las Vegas is a sharp signal that the commercial space era is upon us.

Experts see a path for companies to power an unprecedented era of rapid advances, but with the near certain peril that space disasters will occur and lives will be lost.

Sierra Space, a subsidiary of private aerospace contractor Sierra Nevada Corp., plans to have the 30-foot (nine-meter) "Dream Chaser" flying missions this year, making the reusable spacecraft key to its off-Earth ambitions.

"Before governments were the only ones that could do it. Now, it's getting down to regular human beings who can get a ride to space," Neeraj Gupta, the company's general manager of space destinations, told AFP.

The craft is meant to carry people and equipment to and from commercial space installations the company envisions building in the next decade, including a system of inflatable structures to house humans in orbit.

Sierra has a deal with NASA for unmanned flights to the International Space Station that are to start this year, and is working with Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin to develop a commercial outpost off-Earth.

"We really see a market opening to take more and more people to space," Gupta added. Commercial space efforts have been growing rapidly and captured lots of attention, especially launches of Elon Musk's SpaceX rockets that have been carrying astronauts for NASA.

Bezos's own spaceflight last year alternately fascinated fans and outraged critics of the so-called "billionaire space race". Yet companies like Sierra are proposing something in addition to tourism -- a commercial hub in space that could be used to make products, and a ship that can provide transportation.

A video of their "space plane" shows the

unmanned version of the craft cruising back to Earth and landing on a runway like any other commercial aircraft.

Companies have proposed a series of ideas which until recently sounded like long shots, such as asteroid mining -- but they have also suggested less far-fetched biomedical applications or production of some types of technology.

Mason Peck, an astronautics professor at Cornell University, said that until the last five years making things in space and bringing them back to Earth just didn't make sense.

"Now there are companies... who are actually focused on this question: How can I make a buck in space?" he told AFP.

"This has never been the way that people articulate the benefits of space. It's always been something a little bit broader, like the benefit to mankind or humanity or the sake of science," he added.

But the power of profit has the potential to vastly accelerate efficiency, technological advances and capacity in ways that is not in the slow and purposely deliberate approach of NASA or the European Space Agency.

Self-driving race cars zip into history at CES

AFP, Las Vegas

A racecar with nobody at the wheel snaked around another to snatch the lead on an oval track at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas Friday in an unprecedented high-speed match between self-driving vehicles.

Members of Italian-American team PoliMOVE cheered as their Formula 1 racecar, nicknamed "Minerva," repeatedly passed a rival entered by South Korean team Kaist.

Minerva was doing nearly 115 miles per hour (185 kilometers per hour) when it blew past the Kaist car, easily beating the top speed hoped for by race organizers.

But every racer was deemed a winner by organizers who saw the real victory as the fact that self-driving algorithms could handle the high-speed competition.

"It's a success," Indy Autonomous Challenge (IAC) co-organizer Paul Mitchell said to AFP before the checkered flag was waved.

The race pitted teams of students from around the world against one another to rev up the capabilities of self-driving cars, improving the technology for use anywhere.

In October, the IAC put the brakes on self-driving F1 cars racing together to allow more time to ready technology for the challenge, opting instead to let them do laps individually to see which had the best time.

"This almost holds the world record for speed of an autonomous car," PoliMOVE engineer Davide Rigamonti boasted as he gazed lovingly at the white-and-black beauty.

The single seat usually reserved for a driver was during this race instead packed with electronics.

PoliMOVE had a shot at victory at another race in October in Indianapolis, clocking some 155 miles per hour (250 kilometers per hour) before skidding out on a curve, according to Rigamonti.

Friday, it was the South Korean entry that spun out after overtaking a car fielded by a team from the University of Auburn in the southern US state of Alabama.

"The students who program these cars are not mechanics; most of them knew nothing about racing," said IndyCar specialist Lee Anne Patterson. "We taught them about racing."

The students program the software that pilots the car by quickly analyzing data from sophisticated sensors.

The software piloting the cars has to anticipate how other vehicles on the course will behave, then maneuver accordingly, according to Markus Lienkamp, a professor at Munich, TUM, which won the October competition.

Nearby, Lienkamp's students are glued to screens.

"It plays out in milliseconds," said Mitchell.

"The computer has to make the same decisions as a human driver, despite the speed."

The IAC plans to organize other races on the model of Friday's -- pitting two cars against each other, with the hope of reaching a level sufficient to one day launch all the vehicles together.



Safiul Alam Khan Chowdhury, managing director of Pubali Bank Ltd, receives a certificate of appreciation from Md Tazul Islam, minister for local government, rural development and co-operatives, for its contribution and cooperation in collecting service delivery fees of Dhaka Wasa from the latter's customers for the period of 2020-21 at a city hotel recently. Muhammad Ibrahim, additional secretary to the local government division, Prof Shibli Rubayat-Ul-Islam, chairman of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission, and Taqsem A Khan, managing director of Dhaka Wasa, were present.

PHOTO: PUBALI BANK



Abdul Kadir Molla, chairman of South Bangla Agriculture and Commerce (SBAC) Bank Ltd, inaugurates the bank's Annual Business Development Conference 2022 at Le Meridien Dhaka on Saturday. Mosleh Uddin Ahmed, managing director of the bank, Mizanur Rahman, vice-chairman, Mohammed Ayub, Md Moklesur Rahman, Mohammad Nawaz, Muhammad Helal Uddin and Anwar Hussain, directors, Mohammad Moqbul Hossain Bhuiyan, independent director, Md Abdur Razzak, chairman of the Shariah supervisory council committee, M Shamsul Arefin, additional managing director, and Md Altaf Hossain Bhuyan, deputy managing director, also attended the conference.

PHOTO: SBAC BANK

Amazon files new legal challenges in dispute with Future Group

REUTERS, New Delhi

Amazon.com Inc has filed fresh legal challenges in its long-running dispute with Indian retailer Future Group after the national antitrust agency suspended a 2019 deal between the two sides, leading to a halt in their arbitration, four sources told Reuters on Sunday.

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) last month suspended its approval of Amazon's 2019 deal with Future, denting the US e-commerce giant's attempts to block the sale of Future's retail assets to Indian market leader Reliance Industries.

The suspension jolted Amazon as subsequently a New Delhi court halted the arbitration proceedings between the two sides.

Europe nuclear plants need 500b euro investment by 2050

AFP, Paris

The European Union will need to invest 500 billion euros (\$568 billion) in new generation nuclear power stations from now until 2050, the bloc's internal market commissioner said in an interview published at the weekend.

"Existing nuclear plants alone will need 50 billion euros of investment from now until 2030. And new generation ones will need 500 billion!" Thierry Breton told the Journal du Dimanche newspaper. Breton also argued that an EU plan to label energy from nuclear power and natural gas as "green" sources for investment was a vital step towards attracting that capital.

The EU is consulting its member states on that proposal, with internal disagreement on whether the power sources truly qualify as sustainable options.

France has led the charge for nuclear power -- its main energy supply -- to be included, despite robust opposition from Austria and scepticism from Germany, which is in the process of shutting all its nuclear plants.



PHOTO: DHAKA BANK

Akhlaqur Rahman, senior executive vice-president of Dhaka Bank Ltd, and Ahmed Kamal Khan Chowdhury, adviser of Software Shop Ltd, shake hands and exchange signed documents of an agreement on cash management services at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently. Emranul Huq, managing director of the bank, was present.

Rethinking the future

FROM PAGE B4

consumers to know more about a product or service better before purchasing/availing has now been extended to multiple such micro-moments as they are spending a significant amount of time to know more about products and services. Additionally, consumers are increasingly preferring purchasing sustainable products and services.

Their concerns about the environmental, social and governance aspects of production processes are becoming stronger and manufacturers and retailers need to become more serious about this trend. Consumers, particularly white-collared and affluent workers, are increasingly preferring to

describe themselves as eco-friendly.

Such behavioural change in consumers is going to have a dual effect on businesses in Bangladesh. Retailers, especially the online ones, need to start sharing information more transparently with their consumers. Modernising their existing technology infrastructure will enable retailers to efficiently collect data from multiple sources, including the origins of production, and meaningfully disseminate that data to consumers as and when they demand for it.

Many buying decisions will be influenced by this transformation and depend on how successfully retailers adopt modern technologies to address

this need.

Secondly, a sector such as apparel manufacturing, which is one of the country's leading export sectors, must review and reconfigure its production process to address the preferences of overseas consumers. Such a sector will also have to adopt technology and innovate sustainable processes to ensure that it adopts sustainable manufacturing.

The behaviour of shoppers is going to evolve rapidly worldwide in future. Retailers must rethink and reconfigure their business and operational strategy to address this requirement with speed and agility.

The writer is a partner at PwC. Views are personal.