

TOGGLE

WEEKEND LIVING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

A publication of *The Daily Star*



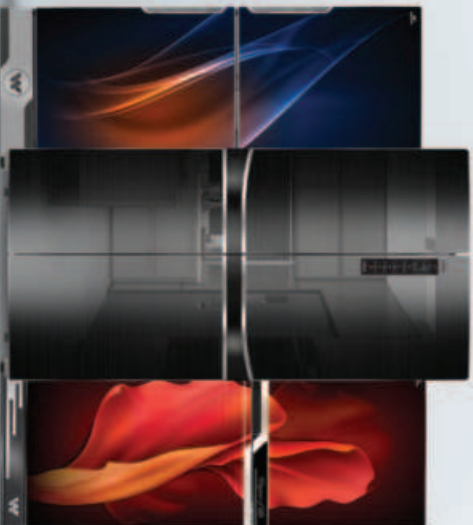
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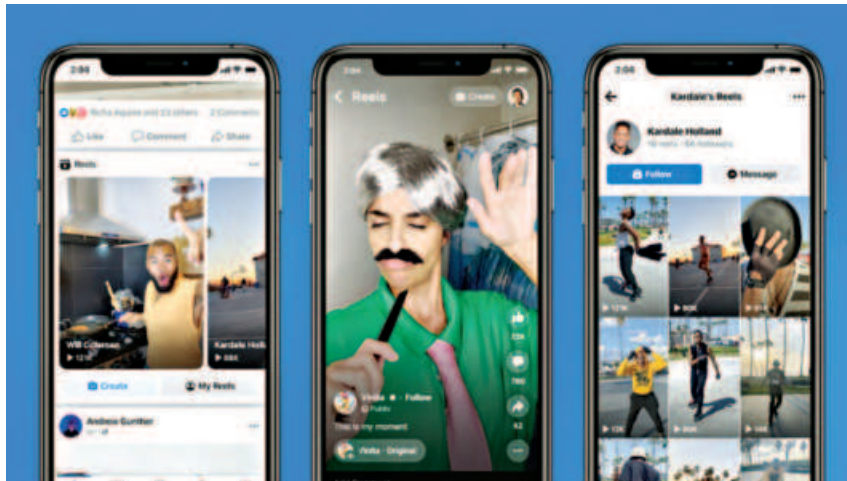
Meta launches Reels for Facebook

Facebook parent Meta has globally launched its short-form video sharing feature, Reels. Initially launched in September 2021 only in the US, the feature is now rolling out in over 150 countries.

Functioning similar to TikTok, YouTube Shorts and Meta's Instagram Reels, Facebook Reels will cater towards making instant short clips. Soon-to-be-added features will allow Reels to be made from existing Facebook Stories.

According to an announcement made by Facebook and Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, there will be new monetisation tools to be launched on Facebook, including banner and sticker ads to create better ad revenue for content creators. Full-screen ads in Reels are expected to be launched soon as well.

Online influencers can share their Instagram Reels as recommended



content on Facebook. There are also plans on launching Facebook Reels in Facebook Watch and the option for users to share public Reels in their own Facebook Stories.

To access Facebook Reels, simply

check the News Feed. To watch a Reel, click on it. To access the next one, swipe right. Facebook Reels works quite similar to other short-video social media platforms like Instagram Reels and TikTok.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Inevitable changes

As we steadily move back to physical workplaces, many of us feel inclined to keep working from home, while others feel we should go back to the old norm. What does it truly mean to find the right balance? Check out our Cover Story on whether the local job market is ready to permanently shift to a professional hybrid setting.

On the occasion of the upcoming International Women's Day, tune into Bytes for a list of femtech apps that everyone should be aware of. We also take a look at user-friendly graphic designing programs in Tech Tips.

With life comes change. Best of luck to everyone trying to adjust to new changes. Until then.

Shams Rashid Tonmoy
Sub-editor & Feature Writer

Nvidia confirms investigation on possible cyberattack



US graphics card maker Nvidia confirmed that it is investigating a potential cyberattack, following a news report that said the attack may have taken parts of its business offline for two days.

A malicious network intrusion caused outages in Nvidia's email systems and developer tools over the last two days, The Telegraph reported earlier on Friday, but said it was unclear if any data was stolen or deleted.

"We are investigating an incident. Our business and commercial activities continue uninterrupted. We are still working to evaluate the nature and scope of the event and don't have any additional information to share at this time," Nvidia said in a statement.

At a market cap of nearly US\$600 billion, Nvidia is the most valuable chipmaker in the United States. It is known for its graphics processing units (GPU) that enhance video gaming experiences and advanced computer simulations.

TOGGLE

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Facebook, YouTube and Twitter restricts ads in Russia

Nathaniel Gleicher, head of security policy at Meta, announced on Twitter that monetisation on Facebook will be prohibited in Russia starting 26 February.

He stated that the Russian state media can no longer run ads or monetised content on the platform, with labels being put on any sort of Russian state media for further restriction across the globe. Additionally, he announced that Facebook profiles based on Ukraine can no longer be found via the Search Friends option, as a measure to protect Ukrainians from being targeted by the Russian military.

As reported by Reuters, YouTube

is also restricting its accessibility in Russia, specifically blocking Russian media outlets to run advertisements or monetised videos. YouTube will also be recommending videos from Russian news sources on a reduced scale, with the platform specifically labelling Russian media outlets.

On a similar note, Twitter announced on their official page that advertisements in both Ukraine and Russia will be temporarily paused on the platform. According to Twitter, this is to ensure that important news regarding public safety is not covered by ads.



HEAT OF WAR

Automakers idle production following Russian invasion

Several companies, including automakers Volkswagen and Renault and tire maker Nokian Tyres, on Friday, outlined plans to shut or shift manufacturing operations following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

After invading earlier this week, Russian forces pressed their advance on Friday as missiles pounded Kyiv and authorities said they were girding for an assault aimed at overthrowing the government.

The United States announced sweeping export restrictions against Russia on Thursday, hammering its access to global exports of goods ranging from commercial electronics and computers to semiconductors and aircraft parts. That could lead companies to alter manufacturing plans or seek alternative supply lines.

The invasion was a factor in consulting firms J.D. Power and LMC Automotive slashing their 2022 global new-car sales outlook by 400,000 vehicles to 85.8 million units. The auto industry had already been dealing with a tight supply of vehicles due to the global semiconductor shortage.

"An already-tight supply of vehicles and high prices across the globe will be under added pressure based on the severity and duration of the conflict in Ukraine," said Jeff Schuster, president of global vehicle forecasts at LMC.

"Rising oil and aluminium prices will likely affect consumers' willingness and ability to purchase vehicles, even if inventory improves," he added. "We have made significant downgrades to the Ukraine and Russia forecasts due to the escalating conflict between the two and the repercussions associated with sanctions against Russia." The conflict could boost oil prices above \$100 a barrel, which would add inflationary pressure on European and American consumers, Wells Fargo analyst Colin Langan said in a research note. While consumers have been willing to pay above sticker price to get new vehicles, sustained higher gas prices could impact long-term recovery, he said.

Germany's Volkswagen said it would halt production for a few days at two German factories after a delay in getting parts made in Ukraine.

France's Renault said it would suspend

some operations at its car assembly plants in Russia next week due to logistics bottlenecks caused by parts shortages. It did not specify whether its supply chain had been hit by the conflict, but a spokeswoman said the action was a consequence of reinforced borders between Russia and neighbouring countries through which parts are carried by truck.

The carmaker is among Western companies most exposed to Russia, where it makes 8% of its core earnings according to Citibank.

"Interruptions are primarily caused by tighter border controls in transit countries and the forced need to change



a number of established logistics routes," the company's Russian unit said, without naming any countries.

Russian carmaker Avtovaz, controlled by Renault, also said it might suspend some assembly lines at a plant in central Russia for one day, on Monday, due to a persistent global shortage of electronic components. Avtovaz also did not mention the invasion in its statement.

Finnish tire maker Nokian said it was shifting production of some key product lines from Russia to Finland and the United States to prepare for possible further sanctions following the invasion.

Aptiv Chief Executive Kevin Clark said on Thursday that over the last couple of months the American auto parts maker had swapped high-volume parts work out of Ukraine in favour of lower-volume products "so we were better-positioned to manage disruption."

Japanese auto supplier Sumitomo Electric Industries, which employs some 6,000 people in Ukraine to make wire harnesses, said it suspended operations at its factories there and was talking to clients about potentially substituting supplies from other places.

Ford Motor Co has a 50% joint venture in Ford Sollers, which has three assembly plants in Russia according to the Ford website. Ford said in a statement it was "deeply concerned" about the situation and would "manage any effects" on its business in real-time.

The U.S. automaker also said it would follow any laws on trade sanctions, but declined to discuss whether the Sollers

of the metal in London. There is a six-month journey before palladium finds its way into a car, he said.

Aluminum prices had been rising before the Ukraine conflict, Wakefield said. A cutoff of Russian aluminium supplies would add to the cost pressures on automakers.

Japan's biggest steelmaker, Nippon Steel Corp, said on Friday it would secure alternatives for a raw material it buys from Russia and Ukraine in the event of any supply disruptions.

Nippon Steel buys 14% of its iron ore pellets, small balls of iron ore powder used in steel production, from those countries. Officials said it switched sourcing to Brazil and Australia and the impact should be minimal.

Agricultural equipment maker Deere & Co said on Friday it had closed its Ukraine office in recent weeks as a precautionary measure. It employs about 40 people in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Russia said it was partially limiting access to Meta Platforms Inc's Facebook, accusing it of "censoring" Russian media.

Delta Air Lines Inc, which does not operate services to Ukraine or Russia, said on Friday it had suspended its codesharing service with Russian airline Aeroflot.

Amazon.com Inc's home security subsidiary, Ring, said it was coordinating closely with its partners at Squad in Ukraine to support the safety and well-being of the team and their families. According to LinkedIn data, Squad employs more than 700 people, some of whom worked for the research arm Ring Ukraine until about a year ago.

Amazon had no additional comment about its footprint in Ukraine or Russia, or on how U.S. trade actions would impact its business, if at all.

Toronto-based Kinross Gold Corp said its underground Kupol gold mine in Russia's far northeast corner is operating normally. Nearly all of the company's employees in the country are Russian, and Kupol has stored a full year's worth of supplies on-site, given that it operates in a cold region, the company said.

Kinross added it was reviewing the latest sanctions against Russia to see how they could affect operations.

CRAFTING THE FUTURE

In conversation with Sheikh Shabab Ahmed of BAT Bangladesh

Our world is getting increasingly competitive by the day. To excel in this ever-shifting competitive world, the next generation of young leaders need to be on top of their game. We talk to Sheikh Shabab Ahmed, Head of External Affairs of BAT Bangladesh about how to build a future-fit next-generation and how his own experiences shaped him to be a successful leader.

Can you share the childhood experiences that shaped you up as a leader and individual?

In this modern age, transformation is happening at a lightning rate and we need to gear up to welcome this change to ensure the upcoming generation is future-fit. There are two ways to achieve that, firstly we must ensure a good education system and secondly, we have to provide effective interventions that will inspire and transform young aspirants into thoughtful leaders.

If I reflect on my life experiences and divide my life into two halves, my first 20 years were spent building myself as an individual through a structured educational process and in the second half, I gradually built my career path step by step.

At school, I was very fortunate to be a part of a curriculum where extracurricular activities were given equal priority as textbook education. I have been a part of clubs that involved sports, debate, science and more, all of which boosted my critical thinking capabilities along with developing my problem-solving skills and tried me in leadership role in a small scale. This balance is a vital part of growing up and should be one of the key focus areas for youth development.

Leadership skills need to be embedded in schools; we need to start from the basics and make sure that extracurricular activities become an essential part of our education system. To my view, 'extracurricular' should be termed as 'co-curricular activities'. We need to create opportunities and be a part of the solution, so the next generation leaders can thrive from within.

What are the key qualities one needs to develop to be a successful leader?

Nurturing your passion and practicing discipline are the key aspects to becoming a successful leader in my opinion. While you are in that path, consistency should be the focal point.

From an early age, I have been passionate about cricket and other co-curricular activities which have taught me to face various practical situations in life, develop my leadership skills and it has also implanted the "go-getter" trait in me.

Over the years I have realised that when you do what you love, everything else falls into place in life. I always aim high and thus always reach somewhere that is far above from the average. One of my favourite quotes is 'if you shoot for the moon, you will reach among the stars'. I believe I am a successful and a content individual today, closer to my goals because I always built on my passions and did not let them slide, while also chasing stretching dreams.

As I am a parent now, I would like to request all the parents to support their children if they are into sports, performing arts, or any other co-curricular activities they are passionate about. They are the future of our country and we must encourage them to follow their passions and dreams along with structured education so that they build their confidence and create growth in society. **You have just completed your 16th year in this industry. What were the key factors and experiences that helped to map out your career path?**

My journey at BAT Bangladesh began in 2006 as a territory officer in marketing department and as I completed my 16th year, I now stand as the Head of External Affairs, looking after Government related affairs and corporate affairs along with ensuring sustainability of the business. It has truly been an honour to have worked for such a prestigious organisation



that has been the grooming ground for industry leading talents for over 111 years now. If I must reflect back, three factors helped me to map out my road to success.

Choosing the right organisation matters

The transition from a university student to the corporate world is a tricky one and often young people get attracted to the salary being offered rather than the bigger picture. It is important to understand your choices and go for the organisation that will add value to your career path and will also help you to start with a stronger foothold.

Your mentor is your biggest support system

Choosing the right people for growth is equally important. When you join a high-performing organisation, you might not have the liberty to choose your boss, but you can always choose your mentor.

Mentors guide you through situations and develop your soft skills. They say a good boss is essential for a good career; I would say a good mentor is much more

important in this journey because they will be your support system, sounding board for your thoughts and would bring out your best version in all situations without prejudice.

Understanding the bigger picture

Constant learning and upskilling are essential if you want to be successful in the fast-evolving corporate world. The job you are doing today might be gone or evolved tomorrow so it's important to stay grounded and be adaptable. A good skillset, unparalleled experiences and a humble attitude will take you places in your career.

Over the past 16 years, I have pushed my limits and served various managerial roles within marketing and eventually secured my place in the ever-challenging External Affairs function. I took a leap of faith because I could relate to my personal goals in this current function. I believe, I was true to my dreams and thus made the

choices which created avenues for me to grow not only within, but also beyond the organisation.

This decision also gave me the opportunity to serve on a global platform when I was appointed as the Global Regulatory Engagement Manager at BAT's Global Headquarters in London, UK. That was the game-changer for me, it gave me the confidence boost that was required at that point of time in my career to stretch my capabilities in a foreign environment and testing myself at the world stage.

You have been part of a demanding industry; how do you manage your work-life balance?

Now, in the post-Covid world, work has extended beyond work hours due to the virtual way of work. My wife, along with two sons and my parents are my true inspirations and driving forces. It is truly a demanding industry and it is always difficult to strike a balance, but if you have your family's support, then nothing

can stop you from reaching the peak.

It's the small things that create life and no matter how intense my work can get at the end of the day, when I go back home and see my family smiling and waiting for me, it makes my day complete and worth it.

As one of the youngest corporate leaders, how would you like to contribute and ensure future-fit young leaders?

We need to capitalise on our youth population and prepare them for a transformational journey that's sweeping through Bangladesh. Considering the population dividend, we have, we need to drive them in the right path now.

Our current generation leaders are all leading most multi-national corporations now. We see more Bangladeshi CEOs than ever before. It is time we make this a norm, prepare and inspire the next generation trailblazers to carry the torch forward.

Our youth needs to be inquisitive about their future and build on their skill sets so that when their time arrives, they are ready to take on the responsibility.

For example, startups are exciting. But these days, there is a tendency among the younger generation to jump to start-up businesses right after graduation, without any structured work experience.

In my opinion, right after graduation, you lack the experience to run an organisation that can only be gained by working in the structured system where you are mentored by others and supported by proven structured system.

On-the-job learning will shape up your business sense and will support you to make informed decisions. So, in my opinion, it's important to get a job, get some first-hand experiences and then go for startups. Only this can lead to a sustainable business model.

I have completed 16 years of my journey and I have another 20 years till my retirement, if all goes well. In this tenure, I want to contribute by creating mentorship programs and advocate for agile working culture that will inspire and motivate young minds to express their thoughts and ideas. I will invest my personal time to design and implement purpose-driven leadership programs applicable for Bangladeshi environment that will prepare them to own up to challenging roles and drive innovation and take this country towards the dream of becoming a developed country by 2041.

"The time is always right to do what is right," said Martin Luther King Jr. Keeping that analogy in mind, I believe the time is right to create the future for Bangladesh now.

Hybrid workplaces are the future

ARE WE READY?

ZAKIA SAMEEN NOOR

Almost two years into the pandemic, the world is rethinking a lot of concepts that it took for granted in the pre-pandemic era. Perhaps the most divisive of it all is the future of work. While global trends indicate that Gen Zs and Millennials are less likely to give up the incredible benefits of remote working, it's true that from an employer's perspective, there are certain things that require hands-on interaction.

And so, where do we draw the line? Can hybrid workplaces—meaning a combination of physical and remote working systems—can be the solution? And most importantly, is Bangladesh ready to make this shift?

We try to find out.

What challenges can an organisation face in a hybrid environment?

According to Mohammad Aiyaz, Operations Manager of a digital customer service startup, challenges depend on the type of the organisation and industry. "Not every company can go into a hybrid nature. For example, a tech-based company will find it more convenient than a traditional bank to go into online collaborative work. Engineers and business-people can easily shift between online and offline work."

It is difficult to enforce honest communication which leads to sudden drops in work performance. "Issues which can be easily resolved off-line now require much more time in cooperation when tackling on-line. At the same time, coffee breaks - a good time to bond with colleagues - are not possible in a virtual environment. Brainstorming is much smoother in an office setting," says Tasfia Tasbin, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a digital marketing startup.

In the case of solutions, Ashrafur Shabab, a Management Trainee (MT) at the Human Resources (HR) department of a reputed global Multinational Corporation (MNC), says, "The first part is accessibility and safety. Not everyone has the same homogeneity of an office work environment at home. Hence, providing people with the right tools, ergonomic chairs and tips for ensuring minimal burnout was the first challenge that the organisation faced. In our MNC structure, partnering with our global counterparts and moulding proper strategies on a holistic level allowed all countries to crack hybrids together."

How to evaluate employee performance in a hybrid work culture?

From Ashrafur's perspective on HR, performance on a general scale does not get affected much based on the overall working modality. He said that irrespective of the modality, everyone has to overcome certain challenges, show their grit and get the real results. He also emphasised on the importance of proper company evaluation: "The ones who can be deemed as proper performers and the ones who don't are provided avenues to be groomed and moulded properly."

Companies need to introduce different metrics, assign tasks properly, and monitor whether employees are meeting their targets or not. For example, Tasfia maintains a board system where there is weekly task distribution. The manager should care whether the deliverables are executed properly on time and done well - by each employee. Setting accountability is important otherwise tracking becomes difficult.

However, the point to be noted is that this method of evaluation is relatively easier for job roles like engineering. Such metrics may fail to properly evaluate secondary help i.e. employees who are pivotal to the work environment, but who may not meet their own deadlines.

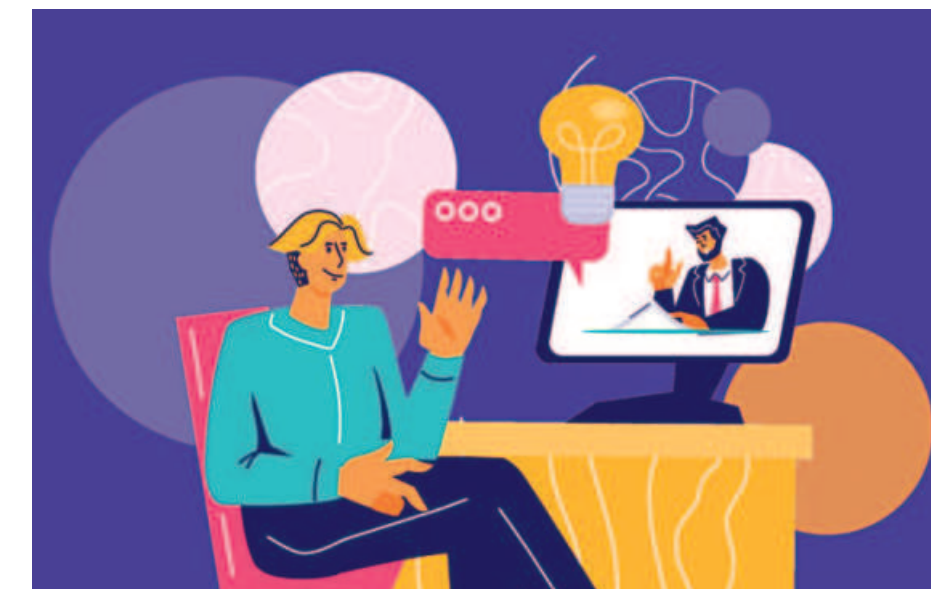


ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

Is a hybrid work culture more effective than an office-only work culture?

It depends on the role and the company itself.

"For some roles like Supply Chain and Customer Development (Sales), a touchpoint at the factory or the markets is simply necessary - to have a proper connection with our customers and consumers," says Ashrafur. "However, for roles which are more strategic and data-driven, a hybrid position has proved to be extremely effective as employees have the option of coming to the office for collaborative projects and staying at home to concentrate on work that needs to be done alone."

Younger people are more responsive to hybrid workplaces since they have

understood the advantages of autonomy here and are more habituated to text-based communication. Older generations and conglomerates who are used to a pre-pandemic mode of work may find it difficult to adapt.

What kind of benefits have institutions found from implementing a hybrid office?

In his organisation, Ashrafur has found a boost in performance and overall employee wellbeing since a hybrid workplace provides employees with the ability to control the balance between their professional and personal hours. This ownership allows a much more satisfying employee experience.

Tasfia has praised how time is saved in attending meetings online, otherwise lost to the incessant traffic jams. "This has also meant that our expenses are reduced in-office maintenance. Plus, the increased time means we get to spend more time with our loved ones and have space, which is very important. As the pandemic has shown, work is not the only important thing in life."

The winners in a hybrid setting will be the winners who can navigate both on-site and virtual worlds well. They are agile in communication, have strong personal relationships with co-workers and managers, have flexibility and

control.

In such cases, if the organisation provides counselling services and a peer community to their employees, it can help ease the mind of their employees who can find a better headspace to focus on both work and wellbeing.

What to keep in mind before implementing a hybrid office?

A company is built by its people. Therefore, it is integral to ask their opinion if they're ready to embrace this change. Much weight has to be given to HR too. Surveys, polls, and honest communication are necessary before implementing any strategy.

A lot of employee experience digitisation needs to be present for a complete hybrid experience. Including proper accessibility and safety metrics. Also, making way for more hybrid collaboration is key. Not a lot of employees might even need to come to the office; thus, specific seats for each employee may not be necessary."

It is also imperative to find the sweet spot of online and offline work for each role before the hybrid work mode rollout.

Moreover, based on key employee insights on experience and regular performance appraisal in the new modality, the tweaks need to be done for the system to be perfect for all.

As Ashrafur says, "The key thing to remember is that this modality needs to be beneficial for the people. So keeping them at the centre and working around it will always provide the best result."

Another critical thing to learn is to appreciate the value of time. Tasfia observed that in online meetings, some people tend not to value the time of the other party. If a meeting is supposed to be for 30 minutes, it should end exactly in 30 minutes.

What is the future of the hybrid workplace in Bangladesh?

Despite the ongoing popularity, a hybrid workplace is not a "one-size-fits-all" approach to solving the pandemic work crisis. Reality shows that not all industries and office cultures are suited to it.

But, that does not mean the hybrid workplace is going away any time soon.

Students, part-timers, and freelancers have been greatly benefited. Traffic jams, distances, and time constraints are no longer obstacles to finding work and enhancing their skill sets, which is what companies desire. Even in her organisation, Tasfia has found a considerable amount of talent outside Dhaka who operates completely online.

Also, given the fact that management will be filled by the younger generation who have adapted to the pandemic, perhaps one-day traditional industries too may see themselves adopting a hybrid approach.

The hybrid workplace model is here to stay. When Bangladesh may adapt it, remains the biggest question.

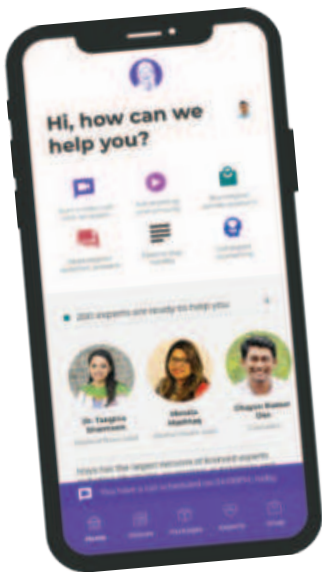
Women's Day special

5 FEMTECH APPS YOU SHOULD CHECK OUT TODAY

FAIJA TASFIA

I still remember the first time my mother handed me a small notepad to keep track of my cycles. From then on, for the first few months, I kept a proper track. However, after a while, I lost track until the first time I was caught off-guard. A lot of us share similar stories like this. Tracking apps are a lifesaver for so many of us. Starting from tracking your cycles to planning a healthy diet according to your cycle, these apps do it all. They are the best partners for your gynaecologist visits.

Many people in our country are still reluctant to openly speak about women's health. But I believe that needs to change. Menstruation, ovulation and contraception are discussion topics integral to women's health. Such matters need to be properly discussed, not shunned. For this upcoming International Women's Day, we have prepared a list of essential femtech apps everyone should keep on their phones.



MAYA

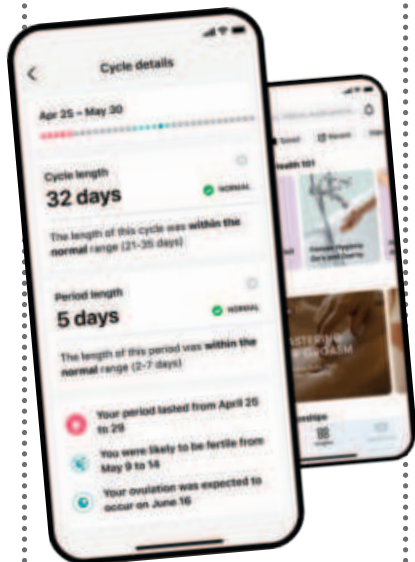
Maya is a one-stop solution for women in Bangladesh with its array of services. Maya's digital assistant will track your period, ovulation and pregnancy cycle while answering health-related queries. If needed, one can consult with Maya's dedicated row of experts. They provide complete anonymity to their clients. The highlight is that its services are affordable and focused on women who can't often access proper healthcare. The app also has a vaccine reminder feature.

Maya also runs a delivery service called Maya Shop which provides feminine and personal products to women. No need for those awkward and creepy interactions at your local drug store.

FLO

Flo is one of the most popular femtech app games. The app works as a period, ovulation and pregnancy tracker. It provides information on how to manage heavy menstrual bleeding and menstrual pain. It will not only track your cycle but also monitor menstrual flow, symptoms, moods and other related factors. You can sync it with your other fitness apps and it can track symptoms and lifestyle habits to improve cycle predictions. It also works as a pregnancy calculator.

There is a free version and a premium version which costs \$54.99 annually. You can opt for the premium one to access additional features.



CLUE

Clue was launched in 2012 with its menstrual tracker. Clue can be termed as a pioneer in the femtech app game. Its founder, Ida Tin, first coined the term 'Femtech'. Today, the app stands among the leading ones with over 12 million users worldwide.

Clue has an encyclopaedic feature that covers a wide arena of women's health issues, mental health, and other related issues. They have a Calendar and Analysis section where all your entered data are backed up. You can get an update about your health with other tracking options. You can track sleep patterns, hair growth and many others from its 30 other tracking options. The app will soon launch its contraceptive medical device - Clue Birth Control, with which women can monitor their fertility to prevent pregnancy. The premium version Clue Plus costs US\$30 annually.



OKY

Oky is a period tracker app designed for adolescent girls starting their menstruation journey. Menstruation is still taboo, and most girls don't know how to deal with their questions and curiosity about this, especially in stereotypical countries like ours. They are already new to this, and they are scared. Oky caters to their questions in a fun and body-positive way. It is available on phones, tabs, online and offline. They don't need high-speed internet; they can connect with low connectivity.

Girls can have personalised avatars. The app provides individual trackers and insights and tips for a healthy cycle rotation. There is a calendar feature, and they have a separate part dedicated to answering various menstrual-related questions along with quizzes. The best thing about this app is it is culturally and age-appropriate. It is available in local languages and is free to use. All you need is a decent internet connection and a phone, and you are set.

FITBIT FEMALE HEALTH TRACKING

We all know about the Fitbit activity trackers. In 2018, Fitbit added a new health feature that allows women to track their menstrual cycle and ovulation cycle. You can use the Fitbit tracker on your smartphone or sync it with your Fitbit wearables. The recent Fitbit wearables support the tracking system. You can log your symptoms and get predictions for your next cycle.

The current state of the Fitbit female tracker is limited in its options compared to other femtech apps. However, they are working on adding more horizons. Till then, it works great as a tracker and alarm for your next cycle because there is nothing more annoying than getting caught off guard.



6 must-have software for graphic designers

TAHSEEN NOWER PRACHI

For graphic designers, their favourite software might just be the second language that works as an extension of their artistic abilities. A charismatic designer can make a visual treat out of Microsoft Paint as well, but the right software with intuitive control and flexibility can make all the difference. Updated versions of powerful fully-featured programs are a must for professional graphic designers. On the other hand, premium software can be quite costly and some may not want to invest so much. Thus, balancing budget-friendly options with premium-level features is the key. Here are our top picks for budget-friendly graphic design software you can choose from.



ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR

If you are searching for the best graphic design software for vector drawing and editing, you might not need to look further than Adobe Illustrator. It is compatible with PC, Mac and even iPads. Illustrator is part of Adobe Creative Cloud. This software needs a subscription, either for Illustrator alone or Adobe's full

suite of creative apps including Photoshop and InDesign.

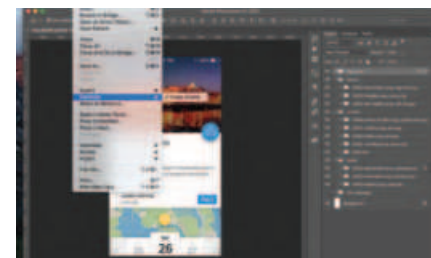
Adobe Illustrator stands as that industry-level software that still offers time-saving AI features and the most powerful range of tools for vector editing. It lets you create anything from illustrations to logos, with a stash of features and shortcuts to help speed up your workflow.

ADOBE PHOTOSHOP

Photoshop is easily the most known graphic design program for basic to advanced level editing. From basic cropping of images to more complex raster designs, when it comes to image manipulation Photoshop can do it all. Photoshop is well known for the classic features like the pen tool, masks and layers and the recent addition of cool trick tools

such as the frame tool for easy masking and a new content-aware fill workspace.

Photoshop has a rich set of drawing and typography tools with a slick interface with a lot of help. But the premium assets for Photoshop aren't cheap and the interface can be overwhelming at times. Still, this is a decent option for any kind of professional graphic design.



VISME

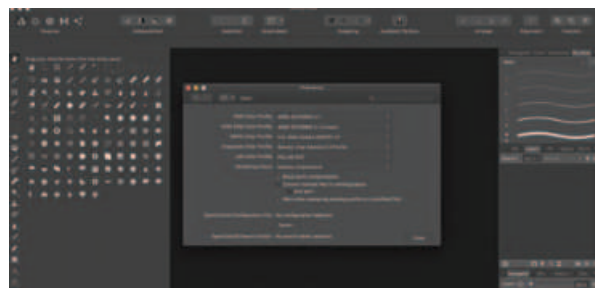
Visme is an online design tool going above and beyond basic design capabilities, without you taking the hardship of learning yet another complex software. There are hundreds of templates to pick from 40+ categories - from infographics and presentations to press releases and reports. Its easy drag-and-drop editor lets both businesses and individuals create interactive and quality visual content. Visme can bring the content to life with advanced animation and interactivity features.

CANVA

Canva can be a starting point for anyone with no prior design knowledge at all, looking to create something as a non-designer. It offers a wide selection of templates, images and fonts, some free or purchasable. A lot of non-designers are using Canva because it offers uploaded work of designers to non-designers for a fast

and brief project with very little wastage of time or work.

Designers need not be bothered by small scale works, as non-designers can create something they require in a short time by following the step-by-step tutorial. It won't offer the customization potential of Adobe Illustrator or Photoshop, but it's a great alternative for beginners.



AFFINITY DESIGNER

Affinity Designer is a pro-level competitor of Adobe Illustrator - with zero subscription required. It is fully featured with a familiar and intelligent UI, containing extremely responsive tool interactions. Affinity Designer is easy to use and quite similar to Adobe Illustrator, but it can't

match Illustrator's ease of use. Still, its zero-cost perk has made it a top favourite for free users. This software is especially suitable for those in the early stage of their design career. Affinity Designer provides a graphic designer app for iPads with the same features as the desktop version.

VECTR

Vectr is a free graphic software that can be used for vector graphics. It is available both online and for desktops. It comes with an easy to use platform that can be used to create any 2D graphics. It can be used for business cards, logos, brochures, posters and many more.

It comes with a detailed guide that assists on how to use the program and is suitable for basically desktop platforms, including Windows, web browsers, Linux, Mac and Chrome OS. Due to being free and very easy to use, it is a go-to software for newer graphic designers.



AI-driven data analysis - The future of strategic marketing

Obidur Rahman is a Bangladeshi data scientist who has innovated solutions catering to both local and international clients by developing AI-integrated marketing tools. In a candid interview, the current Group Business Director of X



Solutions Limited & Founding CEO of iGroott, the tech hub of the marketing automation tools, shared with us his journey as a data scientist and details regarding his two biggest AI-integrated marketing tools: Dotkom and Zerocium.

Q: How did your journey into data analysis begin?

After getting an opportunity to work at Maverick Studios, which was doing a data-driven innovation drive for Robi, I left my established job at a Grameenphone call centre and joined Robi as a data analyst. After the official Facebook page for Robi was created, I created a program called Smashboard to track social interaction with customers. It calculated metrics such as average interaction time, common points of interest and specific issues Robi could be struggling with.

With Smashboard, I had created an automatic business model. But just gathering data from Robi wasn't enough, as I needed to match the competitors as well. Thus, I formed the Robi Listening Centre, the first formal data analysis platform in Bangladesh. From there, I made a social listening tool called Social Troops, which kept track of other local telecom domain customers, monthly users, negative experiences shared with Robi and any other data that was available from the Robi Listening Centre. Social Troops used all this data as outbound and enabled me to create what I would say is our signature product: Dotkom.

Q. What is Dotkom? How does it work?

Dotkom, an AI-centric social listening tool, is our flagship product. Launched in October 2021, this tool is able to scale the digital lifestyle of a customer by profiling their interactions with a brand's social media page. Unlike other language-processing AI, Dotkom is programmed to specifically pinpoint sentiments in the Bangla language, which can range from positive, negative or neutral comments left by customers in a brand's Facebook post. Its language-processing capabilities enable it to find relevant and core problems being discussed by the customers, thus setting priority management for managing public complaints better.

Q. How does Dotkom perform market-based predictions?

Using data derived from customer comments, the AI creates profiles for each user and determines what socio-economic class they might belong to based on the regular pricing options of their availed services. Since there might be a noticeable difference in preference between, for example, 1 GB package buyers as opposed to regular 5 GB package buyers, the AI charts what needs are being addressed by the customers and how to provide better product management to specific classes of customers. Dotkom is also able to delegate and design new campaigns while measuring customer expectations. Using sentiment-driven data, the AI can offer more in-depth suggestions on how an upcoming offer can be advertised better.

Q. Regarding your other product, Zerocium, what is it and how does it function?

Launched in January 2021, Zerocium is an omnichannel catered towards making customer care service more efficient. Whenever a query pops up in Zerocium's shared network, the notification is seen by all the customer care agents of a company. A human agent from one branch can then cater to a customer who might be calling an understaffed branch. As a global joint venture, Zerocium was developed by local and global resources to serve the needs of different brands around the world.

Q. How efficient is Zerocium?

Zerocium has reduced the average customer response rate to 1.5 minutes, where the global benchmark is 18 minutes. It always maintains zero pending customer requests and because of the AI-integrated query system, nearly 100% of the customers are served within the first 5 minutes of the call. Keeping track of the customer replies, the AI sends a detailed analysis to the respective company regarding resource allocation, customer engagement index and employee work rate.

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ঠিক যেমন রূপচর্চায় আভিজাত্য মানেই

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