

TOGGLE

WEEKEND LIVING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

A publication of *The Daily Star*



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ.



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WALTON Campaign 2022
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Facebook parent Meta opening first physical store

Meta, Facebook's parent company, is opening its very first physical store in Burlingame, California, US. Officially announced by Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg on his Facebook page, the store is opening on May 9.

Aside from selling Meta-branded products, the store will be promoting Meta's virtual reality project, Quest 2.

Meta Quest 2 is the rebranded name of Oculus Quest 2, a series of virtual reality headsets developed by the VR hardware company Oculus. The rebranding took place after Meta bought Oculus for \$2 billion in 2014.

Meta Quest headsets can run virtual simulations and VR games, many of which were recently announced in the Meta Quest Gaming Showcase, hosted April 20. Among Us VR, Red Matter 2 and The Walking Dead: Saints & Sinners - Chapter 2: Retribution are some VR games slated to launch in the



Metaverse within the next year.

In the photos of the new store Zuckerberg shared on social media, he demonstrated how Meta Quest 2 can be used to project what the wearer is experiencing on a big wall.

According to Zuckerberg, the projection wall is "a great way to see how Meta products connect people today". He says that this store is a big first step towards building the Metaverse.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Streaming into the future

Like most 90s kids, I grew up with TV, movies and video games. I remember being filled with wonder the first time I saw a video game being streamed, like a movie on the TV screen. Nowadays, streaming is a popular art form that has made its way to Bangladesh as well. If you're an aspiring streamer, check out this week's Cover Story on essential know-how to kickstart your streaming career.

Tune in to Next Step for our recommendations on free online courses to hone professional skills. For Shift, we featured the legendary Bosozoku bike gang of Japan. As always, variety for everyone.

Stay safe everyone. Have a great weekend.

Shams Rashid Tonmoy
Sub-editor & Feature Writer

Samsung Galaxy A23 launched in Bangladesh



Samsung Bangladesh has recently launched the Galaxy A23, the latest addition to its A-Series.

Samsung Galaxy A23 features a Snapdragon 680 2.4GHz+1.9GHz Octa-core processor, Samsung One UI 4.1 powered by Android 12. The device boasts 128GB ROM storage alongside 6GB RAM.

Samsung Galaxy A23 also features Samsung Knox Security and a Sensor Side Fingerprint.

It has a 6.6-inch Infinity V-Cut display with a 90Hz refresh rate. The

Corning Gorilla Glass 5 ensures its durability. The Galaxy A23 also has a 5000mAh battery and supports 25W Super-fast charging.

The device has a quad-camera setup, consisting of a 50MP OIS primary camera, 5MP ultra-wide camera, 2MP depth camera and 2MP macro camera, as well as an 8MP front camera.

Samsung Galaxy A23 comes in three colours: blue, peach and black. It is currently available at Tk. 25,599/- in Samsung outlets.

TOGGLE

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Changes we can expect in Twitter after Musk's takeover

The virtual world has been buzzing since the news of tech billionaire Elon Musk's acquisition of Twitter for a staggering \$44 billion was officially disclosed.

The microblogging platform has been flooded with users expressing their overjoyed reactions as they believe that Musk's takeover of Twitter will bring back free speech on the platform. Exactly how Musk plans on changing Twitter remains to be seen, though we can make a few surmises based on his past activities.

Emphasis on free speech: Musk has

always been a big advocate of free speech on the platform, even before he bought shares or the company itself. In tweets made right after his takeover, Musk stated that free speech is the bedrock of democracy.

"I hope that even my worst critics remain on Twitter, because that is what free speech means," said Musk. Thus, we can expect Musk to make Twitter a more inclusive, open platform with more emphasis on free speech.

Edit button for tweets: Musk held a

public vote on Twitter's need for an edit button for tweets. The result was an astounding 'yes'. Since Musk has expressed interest in this feature before, chances are he might implement it in the coming days.

Removal/revision of shadow ban rules: Since Musk is an advocate of free speech, he might consider revising or removing 'shadow bans' altogether. Currently, Twitter can delete your posts without any notification and also block or 'shadow ban' you if you disobey the community

guidelines, effectively removing you from the platform.

Spam control: The Tesla CEO said on April 14 that one of his top priorities for Twitter would be to eliminate "spam and scam bots and the bot armies", including those connected to crypto scams.

All things considered, Musk's buyout of Twitter consolidates his remarkable business portfolio as the world's richest man adds another feather to his cap with the latest acquisition of the microblogging giant.

Free online courses for honing your professional skills

ESRAT SADIA

Every corporation looks for something more than the hard and fast set of skills in the professionals they are hiring. Hence, staying ahead of the pack by constantly learning and mastering new professional skills is necessary. Since we are living in the era of technological revolution, acquiring advanced skills for professional edge is crucial.

Having vast resources at disposal, finding the right source to acquire necessary skills is pivotal for shaping a better future. However, continued learning is time-consuming. Therefore, knowing the most efficient ways to master new skills is challenging. Here are our recommendations for free courses on various subjects, which you can use to brush up on your professional skills.



Harvard University

Harvard University has some free courses and special projects available online. The program offers paid courses as well - ranging from \$25 to more. The topics of the courses vary and are available for everyone. Most of the courses offered by the platform are self-paced that incorporate lectures from the professors at Harvard. They also provide additional study materials for enthusiastic learners. The audio and video content comes with a transcript for better accessibility and convenience. Most of the courses have registration deadlines which limit learners from taking all the courses together.

Currently, Harvard University offers several free courses on professional

skill development, including Resilient Leadership, Negotiating Salary, Exercising Leadership: Foundational Principles, Designing Organisational Structure, Pricing Strategy, Identifying Competitive Risk, Understanding Customer Needs, Investing in Private Equity, Remote Work revolution for Everyone, etc.

EdX

EdX is one of the best free online course providers. It is a platform that offers 2,500+ massive open online courses (MOOCs). It contains weekly subject sequences with courses from Harvard, MIT, Boston University and UC Berkeley. EdX is popular among learners since they can get access to a world-class education at a comfortable pace. It offers short videos, an online discussion forum and learning exercises. As a powerful and feature-rich platform, EdX offers MicroBachelors program, MicroMasters program, Global Freshman Academy and professional certificates. There are free and paid courses available online for learners who want to acquire new skills.

Currently, edX is offering several free courses on professional skill development, including Career Development, Communication Skills for Dialoguing Across Difference, Critical Thinking Skills, Agile Innovation and Problem-Solving Skills, Project Management, Unlocking Your Employability, Effective Decision Making, Dealing with Power and Dynamics, Professionalism, Grooming and Etiquette, Enhancing Your Career Competencies, etc.

Coursera

Coursera is one of the most popular learning platforms that offer free online courses. The site collaborates with 190+ universities and companies including the University of Pennsylvania, Stanford, Google and IBM, providing thousands of courses online. Learners can acquire professional skills through regular free online learning courses and earn certificates or full university degrees. Coursera offers both free and paid courses. The courses contain pre-recorded video lectures, which allow learners to explore several courses from different institutions at a time.

Presently, Coursera is offering several free courses on professional skill development, including Critical Thinking

Skills for the Professional, Foundations of Professional Identity, Teamwork and Creativity, Leadership, Organisational Concepts and Language, A Practical Guide to Navigating Professional Relationships, etc.

Udemy

Udemy is a free online platform that offers courses in various subjects. Learners acquire new skills and achieve their goals by learning from the platform, which offers an extensive library of various courses that are taught by expert instructors. Learners do not need any prequalification for taking any particular course. Even though the platform seems to price almost every course, there are some gem courses with a large number of good reviews.

At present, Udemy is offering several free courses on professional skill development, including Creative Leadership Skills that Drive Change, How to Use SMART Goals, Mini-Course on Time Management, Public Speaking Essentials, Working Remotely: Efficiently and Effectively, etc.

MIT Open CourseWare

MIT Open CourseWare is a free learning platform that offers various courses on different subjects online. The platform provides high-quality learning and teaching resources in a conveniently accessible format. The site offers courses in different formats including videos, exams, and lectures. The platform can be accessed with a login and it doesn't require any sort of registration process. At present, MIT Open CourseWare is offering several free courses on professional skill development, including Advanced Speaking and Critical Listening Skills, Communication Skills, Project Management, Project Evaluation, and many more.

While the quality difference between free online courses from digital platforms and offline courses from top universities is minimal, online courses are more convenient and cost-effective, which is why people are more inclined to acquire professional skills through online platforms, these days. Furthermore, when you can acquire multiple skills simultaneously from the comfort of your house, the popularity of these platforms is bound to boom.

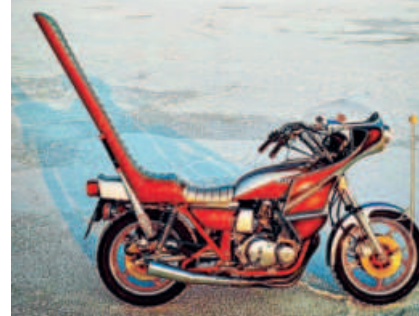
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A LOOK INTO THE INFAMOUS JAPANESE BIKE GANG 'BOSOZOKU'

ITMAM BASHAR



Who would've thought that there were retired Kamikaze pilots, the guys who were conditioned to fly their planes into ships as weapons, founded the most notoriously dangerous biker gang Japan have ever seen. The soldiers that survived World War 2 returned home looking for a spark of adrenaline and the disgruntled young bikers emerged and created what was first known as 'Kaminari-Zoku' or 'Thunder-Tribe'. The term 'Bosozoku' which translates to 'Violent Running Tribe' was created in the 1970s when riots broke out and biker culture became more criminal in nature. The gang mostly consisted of working-class teens.

The Bosozoku became infamous for violence, reckless driving and ridiculously loud modified exhaust systems. They drove while wielding wooden swords, baseball bats, steel pipes and the occasional molotov cocktail which was used against the civilians as well as the police. The gang had unique aesthetic clothing known as the 'Tokko-Fuku', which roughly translates to 'Special Attack Clothes'. It is a jumpsuit that is a modified working clothes version of the Kamikaze Pilots uniform embroidered with the specific Bosozoku gang name on the back, personalised slogans, Kanji and stitched on nationalist symbols like the Rising Sun flag. They had absurd hairstyles, wore military boots and avoided wearing protective gears for the extra thrill.

Their motorcycles were extreme with crazy tall seats, raised handlebars, custom frames, colourful paint jobs and most importantly Shugo (a multiple-tube header and a single collector pipe connected with a muffler) from which annoyingly loud and forceful sounds were made. Their cars were customised to have an appearance of a low rider that is

exaggerated to be as showy as possible. These were equipped with comical tail-fins, skirts, airfoils and flashing lights.

There is one thing that no one can ignore, the behemoth of a front splitter and the lunatic 7-10 foot long 'Takeyari' exhaust pipes that made a statement of standing out which are anything but mundane. The sheer number of flamboyant customisations, ironically, does not make their vehicles faster - just adding the illusionary appearance of



speed. The group's distinct auditory presence and unmistakable visual flair are known all over Japan as well as the world.

Compared to most delinquent gangs in Japan, they surprisingly had a high sense of morality followed by holding onto traditional Japanese values. These values were modelled according to the Bushido or 'Way of the Samurai' which was followed by warriors during feudal times in Japan. The code contained eight basic virtues: rectitude, courage, benevolence, politeness, sincerity, honour, loyalty and self-control. These virtues of honour and loyalty influenced the culture's mentality as members were incredibly dedicated to their gangs and were willing to do whatever it took to protect their dignity.

They rode recklessly and purposefully

clogged up streets. After a couple of massive groups run blocked traffic and incited riots in tranquil neighbourhoods they got into fierce disagreements with rivals, carried weapons and ended up in the Yakuza (Japan's Mafia). Rivalries between different groups were bloody and common; if they weren't careful enough, they would be kidnapped or jumped by rivals, beaten or killed, often having their Tokko-Fuku stolen. Members also got involved with organised crime by running drugs, guns and other such goods for the Yakuza. These businesses often led to a whole different level of danger if they didn't strictly stick to business.

The sub-culture obviously wasn't all about violence, as during peaceful times they were often found skipping school, playing cards, smoking or drinking and often hanging out in parking lots or restaurants. They would often talk about their bikes or cars during meets. They would also work on their bikes or cars around workshops to pass their free time.

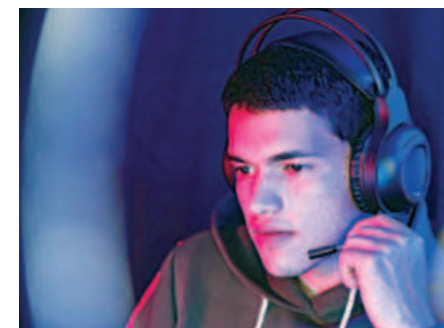
While they used to dominate the streets of Japan with their large massive groups of modified motorcycles and cars, Bosozoku has been fading in recent years. Police crackdowns have drastically reduced the number of real gang members since the peak of 42,510 known members in 1982, but the crazy modifications lived on. It is an art of its own now to look different and ridiculous in the streets.

With legal stakes heightened, many members decided that it isn't worth the risk anymore and ended up quitting the gang. Nowadays, the Bosozoku are an endangered species of vehicle enthusiasts that exist in people's memories rather than within reality itself. And soon memories might be all that remains of the gang Bosozoku.



How to build an audience online by streaming video games

SUBEH TAREK



With lockdowns keeping people stuck online and audiences shifting to digital platforms, there has been a surge in the supply and demand of video game streaming content both home and abroad. From mastering dexterous strategies to providing fun commentaries, gamers are now evolving their traditional gameplay with a sense of content creation.

If you're considering starting a career in video game streaming, we have listed

Why do people like watching other people play video games? While there can be many answers to that question, in recent times we have witnessed a rise in the mainstream popularity of video games, particularly in the form of gaming circuits and streaming online.



some starter tips for you to take note of.

Understand the market

Video game streaming is still a freshly accepted concept in modern-day media. With newer opportunities on sight and more resources to utilise, gamers are making their way to live streaming platforms. However, in a profession where viewership reflects success, is the journey from an amateur streamer to a professional one really that easy?

Unfortunately, the resources available to local streamers are quite inadequate, making it difficult for newer streamers to get a jumpstart. According to Bangladeshi online gaming creator Naruto Gaming, the game streaming scenario in Bangladesh is still growing. "There are some organisations and personalities who are helping local streamers grow. But still, local streamers are mostly lost when it comes to this line of work, and have no idea how to grow themselves," he says. Where gaming is embraced as a legitimate career choice abroad, establishing in the local streaming scenario is still quite challenging for aspiring streamers in this country.

Grasp the scenario

As the gaming industry in Bangladesh is still in its infancy, it differs largely from its international counterpart in terms of audience segments, monetary policy and content creation facilities. That's why being acquainted with the local streaming environment is a fundamental priority for any gamer planning to enter live streaming.

Most resources online represent an international perspective of gaming scenarios - something difficult for beginner streamers to grasp. One such confusion occurs while choosing a streaming platform. Talking to local professionals can be helpful in such cases. As gaming video maker AkibDiablo points out, "Worldwide, Twitch is the most renowned website for streaming. But in Bangladesh, it's easier to attract an audience on Facebook. Moreover, it requires a good internet connection to stream on Twitch. But on Facebook, you can stream with 4-5 MBPS speed, which is easily accessible here." Regarding YouTube as a potential platform for video gaming streaming, Akib adds, "Most Bangladeshi streamers don't use YouTube as you can't earn directly from there, as you can from Facebook."

Focus on your offering

To achieve target viewership while streaming, it is important to set goals and plan accordingly. Focusing on your channel's core offering should be the first task on your clock. A channel mainly creates value with its gameplay, interactivity and quality content creation skills. The basics of planning for content start with choosing the right video game. While selecting trendy and hyped games can help gain viewership momentarily, playing per the streamer's preference adds value to a channel's

image. Experienced streamers often advise beginners to focus only on one game.

Besides researching for trends and video ideas, streamers should focus on arranging cameras, microphones, lighting and screen recording software, as streaming quality often differentiates because of the overall gaming setup. Disruption in the setup can end up affecting views. When asked what gets one hooked to a gaming video, Tanzim Ahmed, a student consumer of gaming content said, "The first 15-20 seconds are the most crucial for a streamer to get the attention of a person who just started watching his stream. Then stream trending games and games you are good at."

Interact with the community

With newer trends arriving and older ones declining, keeping up with the community can be a difficult task for streamers, especially those with a minimal audience. As such, novice streamers often find it difficult to understand what their audience wants.

Interacting with the audience is the best solution to



this problem. Joining gaming communities and connecting with followers can give streamers new video and marketing ideas.

A good idea is to check up on the audience daily and ask them directly how they would like the stream to evolve. Try giving the audience quality

time by connecting with them more often. As Facebook and YouTube are the most common streaming platforms for Bangladeshi audiences, the live comment sections are great ways to keep connected with the fans. Some streamers may even choose to talk to their top fans individually to get a portrayal. Catching up through posts and live interaction is another smart method to increase appeal to the audience.

Think out of the box

Video game streaming is a profession built on practice, perseverance and creativity. Though the profession holds gameplay at its core, personal touches in the live commentary, reactions, setups, variation in content and streamer's entertainment methods add significant value to a channel's content. Though the audiences and streamers share a similar interest in gaming, inventive content is what secures a loyal audience base.

When asked what a streamer should follow to create a unique brand, Rimsha Iqbal, the face behind gaming video creator Uziboozie says, "Focus on both your individual and team play. Practice hard and try to understand what your audience wants. Be sure to entertain them with whatever your talent is. Don't follow others. Be your own example."

Lastly, be mindful that focusing on content is more important than gaining an audience quickly. So gear up your game and let the internet traffic follow your way.



HANDS-ON REVIEW

OPPO F21 PRO

The phone with the bling ring

REVIEWED BY: SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

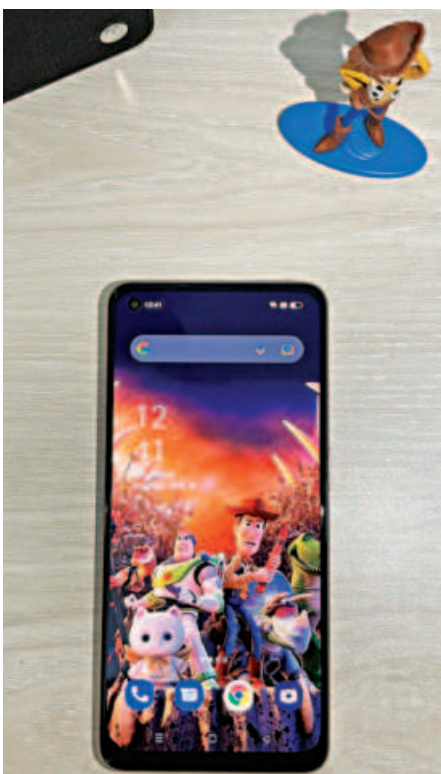


PHOTO CREDITS: SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

OPPO has been doing a great job with their devices in the last couple of years - putting innovation in the forefront, addressing customer pain-points and improving the tech in every iteration. The last phone we reviewed was OPPO Reno6 and we were fairly impressed with it. Now we have our hands on OPPO's latest device for Bangladesh: F21 Pro. F series has a long-standing history of focusing on aesthetics and camera. How does the latest iteration fare? Here's our take.

Firstly, our review unit came in the standard commercial box. Although the YouTube reviewers got a special box much more accessories, we had to remain gratified with our mundane box. Our review unit came with a transparent back cover and a 33W SuperVOOC charger brick.

Design: Our review unit also came in the much-hyped sunrise orange fibreglass leather. One of the positive parts of this fibreglass leather is that it is durable, and you can wash it to remove any smudges. The overall colour scheme and design of the phone are quite hip and good enough to turn a few heads in meetings when I

kept the phone on the table. The texture on the back felt good and provided a solid grip. The metal camera cut-out on the back was sturdy yet elegant. The chrome finish with complementing colours added a nice flair to the phone. The form factor is slim and quite light. Aesthetically, the phone is easily able to stand out in the crowd. Good job done by OPPO here.

Camera: Coming to the most prominent aspect of the phone - the camera is impressive, considering what you pay for. The usual gimmicks are there, but what we have new is the microscopic camera. Thanks to this camera, now you can take 15-30 times up-close photos of objects. Also, the camera has a bling ring - an orbital light which can double as a notification light. The orbital light's breath-in mode makes the phone even fancier.

Display: The display of the phone is what you expect these days - AMOLED display with 90Hz refresh rate. The full HD+ resolution of the phone offers better than many of the phones that the competition is offering. The colours were bright and vibrant, but with a slightly

cool tone. However, that colour tone can be adjusted according to the user's preference. The fingerprint was snappy and touch responsiveness as per current standard.

Performance: Performance-wise, the phone is not the best, but we do not have any complaints about that. This phone was not meant to be a performer, rather it is meant to be a looker. But that does not mean that your daily activities will not be able to fly like a gentle breeze through it. You will be more than happy with its multitasking capability. The hiccup in performance can only be noticed when you are trying to play graphic-intensive games. The battery life of the phone was decent and the SuperVOOC charger made life even simpler. ColorOS of OPPO has also come a long way from cartoonish UI to a close-enough stock Android experience.

All in all, the F21 Pro by OPPO is an impressive phone with aesthetics that will definitely add bling to your lifestyle. At this price point, out of the several brands, OPPO's F21 Pro is definitely worth considering.

Our picks for top 5 microwave ovens in the market right now

TAHSEEN NOWER PRACHI

A microwave oven is more likely to be your 'gadget' best friend at home. Whether your existing microwave oven has bitten the dust, or you're just looking for an upgrade fit for your kitchen and cooking needs, it's important to find the one that covers both your requirements and budget. Here are our top five picks for microwave ovens currently available in the local market. All of the mentioned microwave ovens are available in Bangladesh in their brand shop branches and electronic shops such as M.K. Electronics, Esquire Electronics and Best Electronics. Please keep in mind that price range and availability might differ across stores.

Sharp R-84A0(ST)V Microwave Oven

Built to last for a long time, this powerful but budget-friendly Sharp convection and grill microwave oven can give you reliable service for many years to come. With the trust of Sharp Electronics, this device comes with lots of interesting features. Its easy-to-use door with handle and compact body will easily fit in your

kitchen cabinet or counter. It has a powerful output of 900W for quick and efficient cooking. This 25 LTR convection and grill microwave oven comes with an LED display, as well as tact and dial control with 10 automated menus.

Price: Tk. 18,000/- to Tk. 19,500/-



Panasonic NN-CD684BFDG Microwave Oven

This beautiful stainless steel designed convection oven offers a 27 LTR capacity and anti-bacteria and dust filters. It also has an output of 900W. Its special features include preheating and defrosting options, timer and alarm, auto cook menus, steam cook options, dial and button control type etc. It also

provides air frying and food steaming options unlike many others of its kind. Its push-button system lasts longer than touchpads. Its sleek black mirror finish with easy bake options makes it Panasonic's top pick for budget buyers.

Price: Tk. 26,100/- to Tk. 29,000/-

Samsung MC-455THR Microwave Oven

This multi-tasker efficient professional 45 LTR oven offers you six different modes - microwave, grill, convection, microwave + grill, microwave + convection and grill + convection - helping you get dinner on the table faster without sacrificing flavour or texture. Its ceramic enamel serves up an easy-to-clean, hygienic and durable interior.

The ceramic enamel is also scratch-and rust-resistant and unlike plastic, doesn't discolour due to high-cooking temperatures or excessive cleaning. It has a power consumption level (microwave) of 1450W, though a bit on the pricey side when it comes to affordability.

Price: Tk. 53,350/-



Panasonic NN-CD671M Microwave Oven

This model from Panasonic is a convection microwave that is ideal for both amateur and expert cooks. The 27 LTR microwave allows fine temperature control to 240 degrees. The steel grey and black body make this oven a sleek addition to

your kitchen countertop. It comes with 131 auto menus to make your cooking easier and faster. Its button sensor options offer easy accessibility and smooth touch control.

Price: Tk. 24,500/- to Tk. 26,500/-

Whirlpool Jet Crisp GT 288BL Convection Microwave Oven

This beautifully designed 25 LTR capacity microwave oven comes with steam and 3D crisp technology. This oven has optimum capacity for a family size of four to five people, and along with quick heating and steaming technology, the 3D crisp technology results in the best top and bottom crisping and browning. With just one touch, you can quickly reheat

food with high water content such as clear soups, coffee or tea using the jet start mode. This mode automatically starts with the maximum power level and the cooking time is set to 30 seconds. This might be your best pick if you are looking for a budget microwave oven for everyday use.

Price: Tk. 20,800/-





Generating electricity from airport runways: Bangladeshi paper sees prospect

At the 5th IEEE Systems Modelling Conference held at the University of New South Wales, Australia, a team of three Bangladeshi engineering graduates received recognition for a paper on alternative power generation for Bangladeshi airports. The paper titled 'Sustainable Electricity Generation from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Dhaka: A Milestone for Green Energy in Aviation' proposes the idea of using conveyor belts on airport runways to produce electricity.

The research team consisted of Md Asifuzzaman Khan, School of Aerospace Engineering, Shenyang Aerospace University, China; Sk Kafi Ahmed, Industrial Systems Engineering, University of Regina, Canada and Shahrulkh Khan, School of Mechanical Manufacturing and Automation Engineering, Beihang University, China. They

According to the paper, the proposed road power generation (RPG) project will consist of four cylindrical rollers placed under the airport runway. Each roller

would contain two bearings and two sprockets on each side, with a rotor shaft under the middle with its own separate set of sprockets and bearing. This rotor shaft would be connected to a generator, which can generate power whenever electricity is trapped on the roads from moving vehicles.

Since this setup is independent of environmental factors such as sunlight and wind, the research team claims this will be a major proponent of green and renewable energy for Bangladesh.

According to their findings, by 2035, their proposed road power generation project will be able to produce 142.5 MW of electricity every year and save up to Tk. 19 lakh for Bangladeshi airports.

The project is currently in the conceptual stage, with a prototype to be released soon. The research team believes that the implementation of this project will improve the aviation infrastructure of Bangladesh and provide better sustainability in energy generation in airports.

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