

The future of cooling

Innovation trends in Bangladesh AC market

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A friend once said “air conditioning is no longer a luxury, it is a necessity” and this statement cannot be truer than in the context of Bangladesh, where rising temperatures have made summer months near unbearable.

If previous years are anything to go by though, people will still rush to buy air conditioning units amid summer this year.

Air conditioner (AC) sales tripled year-on-year between April and May of 2021. These two months are generally considered the peak season for AC sales as nearly 90 percent of the units sold are bought during this period.

Besides, local assembly and manufacturing have made ACs more affordable while the country’s growing middle-class has also pushed up sales.

In addition, local importers and manufacturers have rolled out a host

of innovations in order to satisfy their customers’ cooling needs.

To address the issue of higher electricity prices, Electro Mart, the local distributor of Gree, recently introduced some new units with DC inverters, which allows for quick and effective cooling at affordable costs.

Aside from being extremely energy efficient, some of Gree AC’s also come with “Golden Fin” technology as the feature helps protect the unit’s condenser coils from external damage due to the accumulation of water, acids, and other atmospheric impurities.

“This means that AC’s with this feature can last longer thanks to their weather resistance, making them the perfect choice for people living in non-traditional weather conditions. For example, the sand and humidity in Cox’s Bazar will have little effect

on the unit,” said Nurul Afser, deputy managing director of Electro Mart.

Gree also introduced self-cleaning evaporator systems in order to further enhance their AC’s longevity.

Once activated, this feature allows frost to cover the evaporator through condensation before the unit defrosts itself to wash away any dust, he said.

The Chinese AC maker also considered its customers health concerns amid the COVID-19 pandemic as it unveiled a number of new features in this regard.

The company recently rolled out its Cold Plasma feature, which is effective for the sterilization of bacteria and removing odours by releasing oxygen ions through the cooling process.

VISION Electronics, a local manufacturer operated by PRAN-RFL Group, introduced a similar array of features, such as its 5D DC inverter system that saves up to 70 percent on electricity bills, said Mahadi Hasan, the company’s brand manager.

VISION ACs also boast a self-cleaning feature along with Wi-Fi control options.

Likewise, the company has units with bipolar ionic generators, which remove hidden dust, bacteria, and odors from inside the room but one key distinction is that certain models come with voice control options.

“There is no doubt that we are experiencing some groundbreaking technological innovations these days, particularly for enhancing performance and making easy-to-use air conditioning systems,” Salim Ullah Salim, marketing director of Jamuna Electronics, said in a statement.

Jamuna was one of the first companies in Bangladesh to bring offline voice control options, which means that internet connections are not required to operate units with this feature.

“We are also using eco-mode dual inverter, Golden Fin, efficient evaporator technologies to keep our customers healthy,” he said, adding that their units use anti-virus, cold catalyst and silver ion filters as well.

Md Shariful Islam, chief manager of product management at Samsung Bangladesh, said the company plans to roll out some new features next year.

This includes wind free technology, which uses 23,000 micro-airholes, twin tube mufflers and neodymium magnets to work quietly and efficiently.

Islam went on to say that the problem with traditional inverters is that the compressors tend to switch off after the AC achieves the desired room temperature.

“On the other hand, Samsung’s upcoming unit will try to maintain the room temperature as indicated on the remote so that people can stay comfortably cool without feeling cold,” he added.

Air conditioning units of Walton Hi-Tech Industries also have voice control capabilities; however, the company went a step ahead by implementing Bangla on the occasion of Mother Language Day this year. This means that units equipped with this feature can understand commands delivered in Bangla as well as English.

In addition, the one-tonne unit introduced in February was the country’s first to get a 5.5 star energy rating from testing labs such as the Bangladesh University of Engineering Technology and Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution.

“The AC costs just BDT 2.19 worth of electricity per hour when in eco-mode,” said Kholilur Rahman, brand manager (air conditioners) of Walton Hi-Tech Industries.

As such, the brand offers the most energy efficient AC units in the country.

In addition, Walton appliances can all be controlled through a universal application from anywhere in the world. This means that users can turn their Walton ACs, fridges, washing machines and other products, on or off using their smartphones.

Walton AC units also feature the frost clean feature to wash away dust and debris while their UV care technology accompanied by the “Air

Doctor” feature, which kills harmful bacteria by releasing plasma ions, makes these cooling systems highly efficient in safeguarding one’s health.

Besides, the company uses R32 refrigerant in its compressors in a bid to reduce global warming and depletion of the ozone layer.

When it comes to the new technologies to be unveiled, Walton is working on bringing solar powered ACs to the country by the end of this year.

It will also bring two more models with “3 in 1 technology”, which means the ACs can operate as one tonne, two tonne or three tonne units as per the user’s needs, he added.

Like its competitors, Walton is also looking out for its customers’ health as it rolled out the “Dr Air” system which uses negative and positive oxygen ions to kill airborne viruses.

Meanwhile, Japanese AC maker Daikin rolled out a host of inverter and non-inverter split air-conditioning units in Bangladesh in partnership with Transcom Electronics Ltd in February last year.

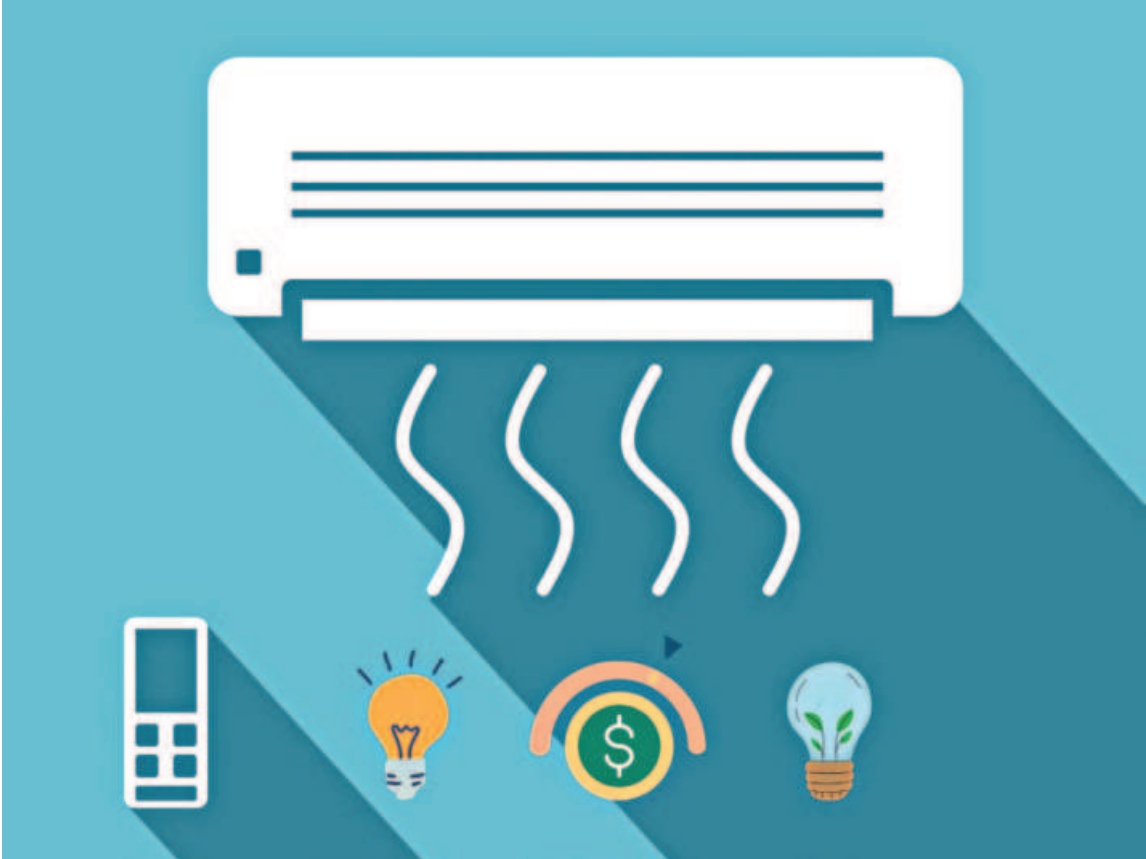
Daikin launched a total of nine models targeting each consumer segment as it looks to grow and serve the market. All nine models are locally assembled, according to a press release issued at the time.

Just last month, SINGER, a local consumer electronics and home appliance brand, launched a line of smart air conditioners complete with state-of-art inverter technology as well as Wi-Fi and voice-control.

The series of Green Inverter Plus Smart ACs can be operated from anywhere, according to a press release from the company.

SINGER used modern technology in building the compressor to ensure that the ACs can run under a wide range of voltages, going as low as even 135V.

And considering the implications of COVID-19, the company incorporated “HygieneMax” in this series. The feature can remove up to 91 percent of the airborne bacteria and viruses to provide clean and fresh air.



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