TOGGLE
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WEEKEND LIVING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

OUR VERY OWN

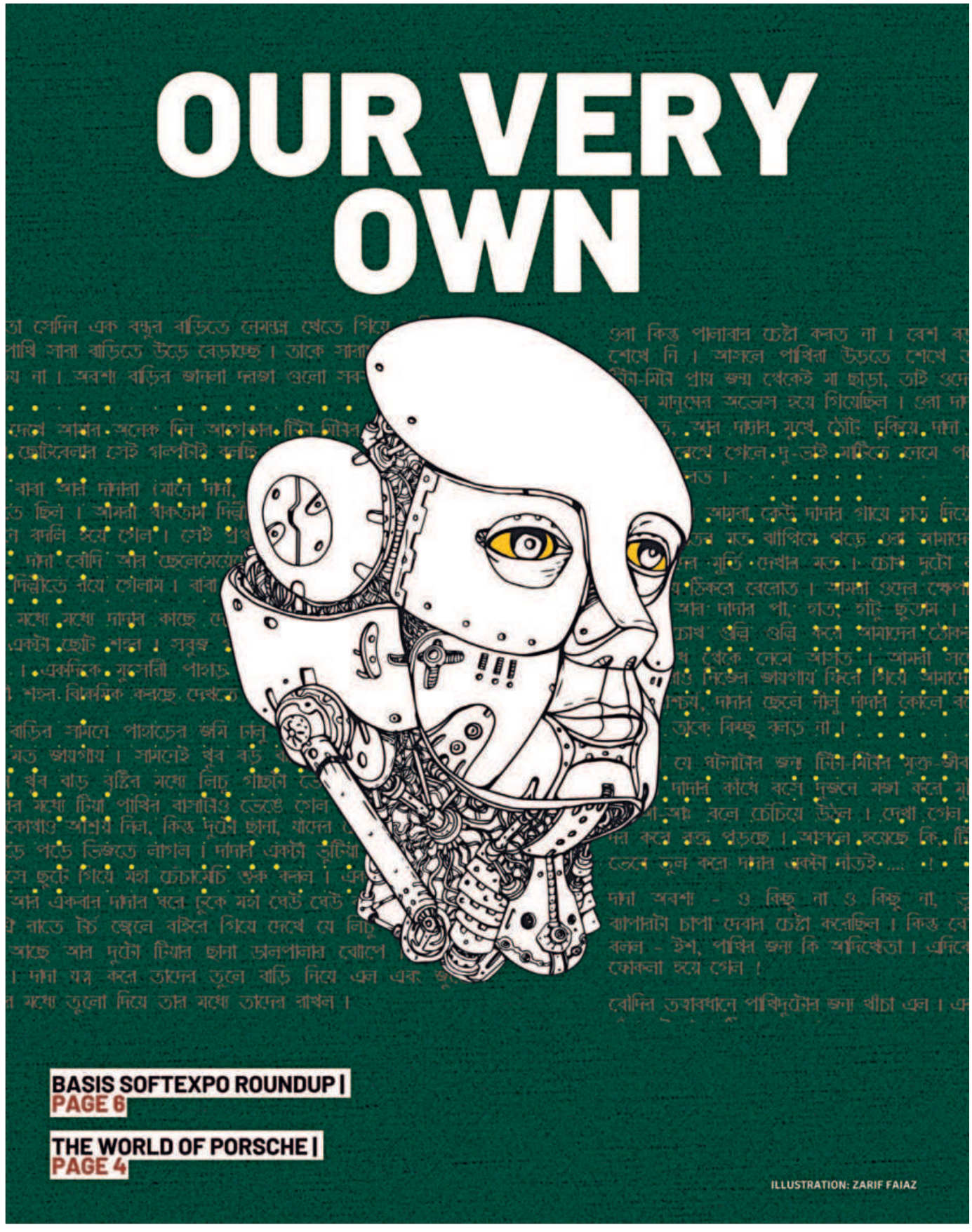

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ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

Apple Watch band to change colours soon

Apple has recently received a patent for an app-controlled, colour-changing Apple Watch band. According to the patent, the band 'includes electrochromic features that provide adjustable colour control based on an applied voltage to offer a variety of colours and colour combinations to be displayed by a single band.'

The colour of the Apple Watch band can soon be adjusted depending on the style of clothing that the user is wearing. The band, composed of electrochromic filament fabric, will change colours when a switch is pressed.

Mercedes joins Google to offer cars with 'supercomputer-like performance'

German Carmaker Mercedes-Benz recently unveiled that it has teamed up with Google on navigation and will offer 'supercomputer-like performance' in every car with automated driving sensors as it seeks to compete with Elon Musk's Tesla. Automakers new and old are racing to match software-powered features pioneered by Tesla, which allow for vehicle performance, battery range and self-driving capabilities to be updated from a distance.

The German carmaker agreed to share revenue with semiconductor maker Nvidia, its partner on automated driving software since 2020, to bring down the upfront cost of buying expensive high-powered semiconductors, according to Mercedes' Chief Executive Ola Kaellenius. Mercedes said the collaboration with Google would allow it to offer traffic information and automatic rerouting in its cars.

Drivers will also be able to watch YouTube on the cars' entertainment system when the car is parked or in Level 3 autonomous driving mode, which allows a driver to take their eyes off the wheel on certain roads as long as they can resume control if needed.

Other carmakers like General Motors, Renault, Nissan and Ford have embedded an entire package of Google services into their vehicles, offering features like Google Maps, Google Assistant and other applications. All vehicles on Mercedes' upcoming modular architecture platform will also have so-called hyperscreens extending across the cockpit of the car, the company said.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Your friendly neighbourhood chatbot

In less than 3 months since its launch, ChatGPT has taken the world by storm - redefining what we know as chatbots and AI. But, what if we told you there is a Bangla chatbot that talks and acts just like ChatGPT? Turn to this week's Cover Story to learn about AlapChari, the chatbot that receives questions and answers them in our glorious mother tongue.

As for other pages, check out some handy tips on monetising your YouTube channel in Next Step, and our list of recommended smartphones under Tk. 50k in Tech Tips. We also have a photo feature of some international Porsche cars in Shift. As always, variety for everyone.

With that, another weekend rolls out. Stay safe everyone. Until then.

Shams Rashid Tonmoy
Sub-editor & Feature Writer

Meta could generate $1.7 billion in revenue in 2024: Bank of America

Meta's verified subscription service can lead to up to $1.7 billion in high-margin revenue for Meta in 2024, states recent research by Bank of America. According to the multinational financing company, Meta's approach to the new verification system will become very popular with social media celebrities and influencers, as well as become a must-have advertising platform for businesses.

Bank of America further stated in their research that Facebook and Instagram's verified subscription methods could land Meta nearly 12 million subscribers by 2024. At the time of writing, the subscription for these Meta platforms will cost US$11.99 on the web and US$14.99 on the iOS and Android mobile platforms. The service will be launched in Australia and New Zealand before globally releasing in other countries.

As per the analysts from Bank of America, Meta's subscription service will largely cater to influencers and content creators instead of regular consumers, with the reason being that influencers can "increase visibility and reach" using the badge of verification offered by the new subscription service. The Bank of America analysis also adds that the verified badge will allow "potentially higher positioning in search and content results".

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mKiddo introducing Bangla alphabets to children digitally

Bangladesh's first preschool learning app, mKiddo, is working to drive children's interest towards learning the Bangla language through its app.

Children of ages 2 to 6 can use the mKiddo educational app to read and write Bangla by moving their fingers on the smartphone screens and listening to Bengali folk tales and stories.

Realme introduces two new Dizo lifestyle products

Dizo, a product of realme's tech-lifestyle ecosystem, has introduced a new smartwatch called the Dizo Watch R Talk Go and a new neckband headphone called the Dizo Wireless Active model neckband in the Bangladesh market.

The Dizo Watch R talk Go smartwatch features a 1.39 inches display and has a dual health sensor. It is equipped with 110 indoor and outdoor sports modes and has a battery life support of up to 10 hours. It is available in Black and Blue colours.

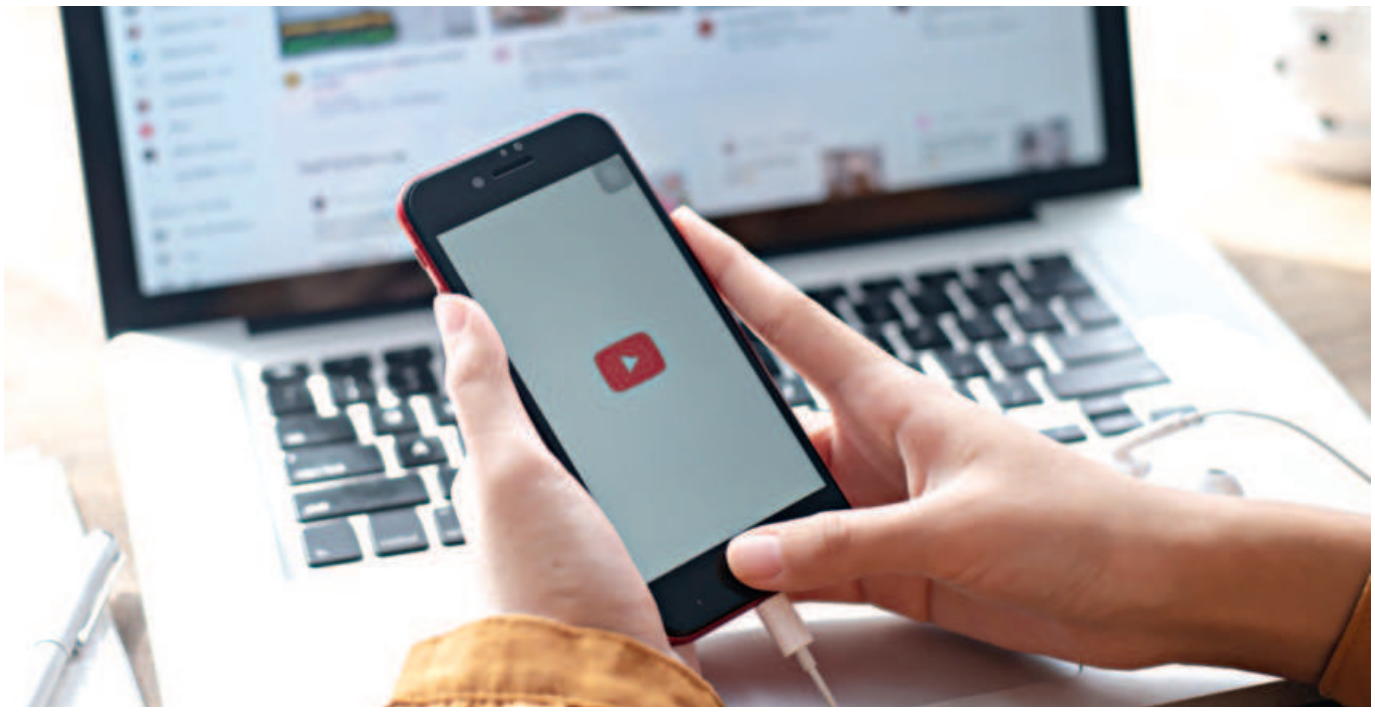
The Dizo Wireless Active model neckband has an 11.2 mm Bass Boosted driver. It also features a magnetic instant connection, noise cancellation at calling, and swat & spill protection. It can provide 3 hours of backup with 10 minutes of charging, and a full charge can give up to 23 hours of backup. The neckband is available in Black, Grey and Blue colours.

How to properly monetise your YouTube channel

If you've been putting in hours of effort into creating quality content for your YouTube channel, it's only fair that you get paid for your work. But how do you monetize your YouTube channel? Here are some tips and tricks to get you started:

Enable monetisation
The first step to monetising your YouTube channel is to enable monetization in your account settings. This will allow YouTube to display ads on your videos and pay you a share of the revenue generated from those ads.

Join the YouTube Partner Program
To become eligible for monetisation, you need to join the YouTube Partner Program. This requires you to have at least 1,000 subscribers and 4,000 watch hours in the past 12 months. Once you're approved, you'll have access to a range of monetisation features, such as advertising revenue, channel memberships, and merchandise sales.



Create engaging content
To attract viewers and advertisers to your channel, you need to create engaging and relevant content. This could be anything from how-to videos to vlogs to comedy skits. Make sure your videos are high-quality, well-produced, and offer value to your viewers.

Optimise your videos
To increase your chances of being discovered on YouTube, you need to optimize your videos for search. Use relevant keywords in your video titles, descriptions, and tags. This will help your videos rank higher in search results and attract more views.

Use social media to promote your channel
To build your audience and increase your views, you need to promote your channel on social media. Share your videos on platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. Engage with your followers and encourage them to share your content with their own networks.

Collaborate with other YouTubers
Collaborating with other YouTubers can help you reach new audiences and gain more subscribers. Find other creators in your niche and reach out to them to see if they're interested in collaborating on a video. This could be a joint Q&A, a challenge, or a product review.

Offer channel memberships
Once you have 30,000 subscribers, you can offer channel memberships to your audience. This allows viewers to pay a monthly fee in exchange for perks like exclusive content, early access to videos, and merchandise discounts.

Sell merchandise
Selling merchandise like t-shirts, hats, and mugs can be a lucrative way to monetize your YouTube channel. You can create your own designs or use a third-party platform like Teespring or Redbubble to handle the printing and shipping.

Use affiliate marketing
Affiliate marketing is when you promote a product or service and earn a commission for any sales made through your unique link. You can use affiliate marketing to monetize your YouTube channel by promoting products relevant to your niche in your video descriptions.

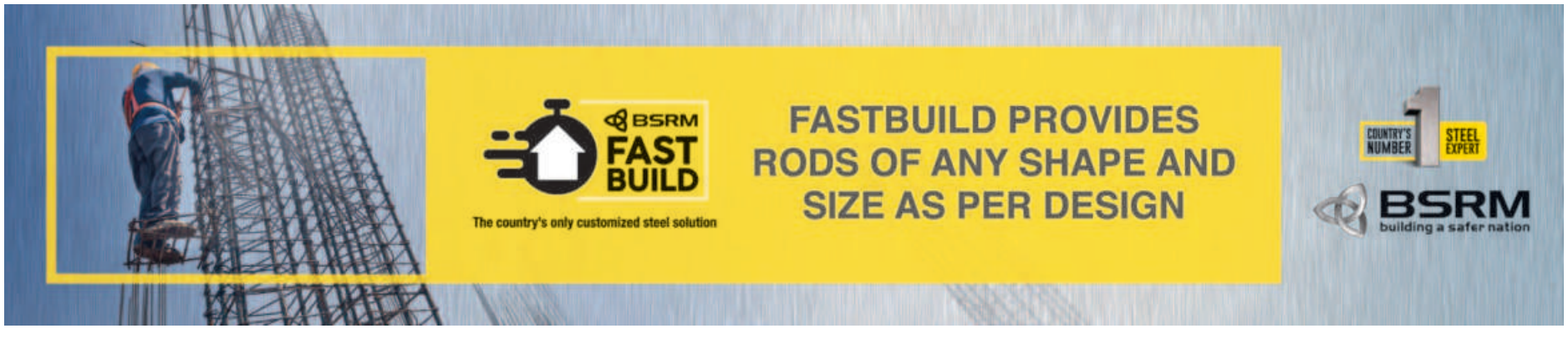
Consider sponsorships
As your channel grows, you may be approached by brands or companies looking to sponsor your content. This could involve creating a sponsored video or promoting a product in your video description. Make sure any sponsored content aligns with your brand and values.

Utilise YouTube's Super Chat and Super Stickers
Another way to monetise your channel is through YouTube's Super Chat and Super Stickers features. Super Chat allows viewers to pay to have their messages highlighted in your live chat, while Super Stickers are animated images that viewers can purchase and send during a live stream. You earn a percentage of the revenue generated from both of these features.

Attend events and conventions
Attending events and conventions related to your niche can be a great way to network with other creators and brands. You can make connections that could lead to sponsorships or collaborations. You could also sell merchandise or offer channel memberships at these events to monetise your channel.

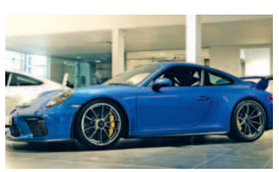
Host live streams
Hosting live streams on your channel can also be a lucrative way to monetize your content. You can use Super Chat and Super Stickers during live streams, and you can also offer special perks to viewers who donate during the stream. Live streams also allow you to engage with your audience in real-time, which can help build a loyal following.

Invest in equipment and software
Investing in high-quality equipment and software can help improve the production value of your videos, which can attract more viewers and advertisers. Consider investing in a good camera, microphone, lighting, and video editing software.



The land of the PORSCHE

PHOTOS: **AYAN RAHMAN KHAN**



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AlapChari

Meet the Bangla ChatGPT - ALAPCHARI

SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

Unless you have been living under a rock, 'ChatGPT' should be a familiar name to you. Officially released to the public on November 30 last year, the popular AI revolutionised what we used to know as chatbots. Gone are the days when chatbots would only generate automated responses based on specific queries - now you can use chatbots to make complex requests such as writing essays, preparing letters and generating prompts for any topic under the sun. ChatGPT has been such a success that tech juggernauts like Microsoft and Google have attempted to create their own versions of AI-based chatbots - to varying degrees of success.

While it's good and all that we can still use ChatGPT to help us out during our writing blocks, the fact remains that such chatbots are only in one language - English. Despite being the most widely used language in the world, one could argue that a local Bangladeshi user would certainly feel a lot more comfort and ease using a Bangla version of a similar AI-run

chatbot. If only?

Introducing AlapChari, the AI-assisted chatbot that provides coherent responses to users' questions - just like ChatGPT - but in Bangla. Launched as a preview version on February 20, AlapChari runs on the Chatrik engine, which functions as a layer on top of large language models like GPT-3 - the same language model used by ChatGPT. However, unlike ChatGPT, the infant Bangla chatbot does not currently store contextual information from previous conversations, as such, each new query is treated and evaluated as an independent request, unaffected by anything you may have asked it before. Nonetheless, being based on language models that can automatically translate while contextual learning from existing databases, anyone can use the chatbot to generate responses to questions. The catch? It only accepts questions written in Bangla Unicode, and in return, churns out creative, 'thought'ful answers only in our mother tongue.

According to Fahmidul Hasan, the creator of AlapChari, the chatbot began as a proof-of-concept for the aforementioned Chatrik engine, which was being used to test contextual learning and translation functions in language models such as GPT-3 and BERT. Because the current state of the Bangla AI is a 'proof-of-context', the responses can be unpredictable and unreliable at times. "For example, you may ask who is 'X' and the AI will confidently make up an answer that seems legitimate, but may not be," states Fahmidul. According to him, these issues happen because of a phenomenon of large language models called hallucinations - a concept that can be best described as the artificial imagination of something that doesn't exist in reality. These problems have been known to occur in ChatGPT as well, and Fahmidul says he will be focusing on mitigating this issue in AlapChari and ensuring responses are factually accurate.

Fahmidul Hasan, currently a first-year student of CSE at United International University, has been working on programming projects for a long time, and is particularly interested in the areas of web development and machine learning. His professional experience in graphic design and passion for programming led to the birth of this unique Bangla chatbot. "I am always open to exploring different areas of art and technology that interest me," says Fahmidul. "I am humbly seeking ways to further develop my skills and connect with other professionals in the industry."

With AlapChari, Fahmidul hopes to empower people across Bangladesh with the ability to access information and services more easily. He believes that a Bangla AI chatbot like AlapChari can help break down a lot of language barriers and thus become an indispensable tool for navigating complex institutions and processes. "Imagine a world where you can simply ask a question in Bangla and get an immediate answer - whether it's obtaining a NID card or getting a loan for your farm. That's the world we envision with AlapChari," states Fahmidul. He plans on making the chatbot more accessible so general users can train it with their own datasets. "By doing so," adds Fahmidul, "we hope to make navigating everyday life in Bangladesh simpler and more efficient for everyone".

If you want to try out the brand-new Bangla ChatGPT, check it out at: http://chatrik.org/alapchari

BASIS SoftExpo 2023
Bringing on the SmartVerse

BASIS SoftExpo 2023, one of the largest IT events in Bangladesh, kicked off on February 23 with a wide range of activities and events that spanned four days. The event brought together IT enthusiasts, industry experts, government officials, and entrepreneurs to discuss and showcase the latest trends and developments in the IT industry.

The first day of the event started with the inauguration ceremony, followed by a series of seminars that covered various topics such as game publishing, the inclusion of women in the national IT sector, and policy dialogue on how the ICT sector can save foreign currencies and support new entrepreneurs in building investments and businesses in IT.

One of the highlights of the first day was the Freelancers Conference, which had three distinct sessions. The conference focused on global skill demand trends for freelancers, discovering new markets as well as expansion of innovations and strategies, as well as a discussion on how to build million-dollar freelancing agencies. Additionally, there was a roundtable on software testing and outsourcing and a seminar on the development targets to be achieved by 2023 under the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Esports Championship 2023 was arguably the biggest attraction on the first day, attracting younger audiences and gaming enthusiasts. After a three-day long competition, Team Celestials became the champion of the first-ever women-only Esports Championship in Bangladesh, while Team Red Viperz won the CS:GO championship and Team Exceeli Esports became the winners in Valorant.

Day 2 featured the Startup Conference, which included founders from prominent startups and industry experts. The startup founders took part in lively debates and discussions and spoke about how to raise funds in global and local settings. The highlight of the conference was BharatPe founder Ashneer Grover, who participated in a fireside chat with 10 Minute School's Ayman Sadiq for an exciting conversation.

Other events on Day 2 included the Prospects of Data Science, Maritime Education: Towards SMART Bangladesh, a roundtable on Finding your purpose in Work and Life, the ICT sector at the post-LDC time: The Way Forward, Ministerial Conference and the Cybersecurity posture and policy guidelines in Bangladesh.

Day 3 was dedicated to the Developers Conference, which featured topics such as the Use of ICT and Inclusive Growth, Prospects and Opportunities with Japan, 5G and IoT - Opportunities for Bangladesh Telecom and Software Industry. The day also included the BASIS Esports Championship 2023-Day 3, the Grand Final (BO3) Man I Love Fishing VS Red Viperz, the Ambassadors' Night, and a seminar on Can Bangladesh become the next Game Asset Creation Hub?

Day 4 of the BASIS SoftExpo 2023 saw a variety of events, including the roundtable on Artificial Intelligence in healthcare, telemedicine, and smart healthcare, which discussed how AI can revolutionize the healthcare industry in Bangladesh. The event also featured a session on reaching $5 billion in ICT export earnings by 2025, which highlighted the need for increased investment in the sector to achieve this goal.

The day also saw the Business Leaders' Meet, which brought together some of the most influential business leaders in Bangladesh to discuss the future of the country's ICT sector. The event provided a platform for entrepreneurs and investors to network and explore potential opportunities for collaboration.

The four-day event concluded with the Closing Ceremony of BASIS SoftExpo 2023, which celebrated the success of the event and highlighted the achievements of the ICT sector in Bangladesh. The event provided a platform for industry leaders, policymakers, entrepreneurs, and investors to come together and explore potential opportunities for growth and development in the sector.

Overall, the BASIS SoftExpo 2023 was a resounding success, with a wide range of events and activities that catered to different interests and audiences. The event provided a platform for the ICT sector in Bangladesh to showcase its potential and highlight the opportunities for growth and development in the industry.

The event also highlighted the importance of collaboration and partnerships in driving innovation and growth in the sector. As Bangladesh seeks to position itself as a hub for technology and innovation, events like the BASIS SoftExpo are crucial in bringing together industry players, policymakers, and investors to explore potential opportunities for collaboration and investment in the sector.

Our picks for smartphones under Tk. 50,000/-

AHMAD TOUSIF JAMI

Smartphones are for more than just calls and text messages in modern days. Different price ranges offer different values for particular needs beyond the ordinary. Each device has unique features and specs, making it suitable for different needs and budgets. Here are our picks for smartphones under Tk. 50,000/- that offer an excellent balance of performance, features and design.

Samsung Galaxy M33 5G

Price: Tk. 36,999/- [128 GB]

This device comes with a 6000 mAh battery and supports both 25W fast charging and reverse charging. It also has a heat management technology, labelled 'power cool technology', to keep the device from heating up. The Quad-camera system comes with a 50-megapixel primary camera. The device is powered by Exynos 1280 (5 nm) chipset. This device intelligently reads usage patterns for multitasking to provide up to 16 GB of virtual RAM.

Price: Tk. 36,999/- [128 GB]

Available in two different colours - electric graphite and cyber teal, this device comes with ThinkShield for business-grade security. This device has a battery capacity of 5000 mAh and works with a 30 W turbo power charger. The smartphone also comes with a triple-setup camera in the back, with the primary camera being 108-megapixel. The display is a 90 Hz AMOLED display and a Mediatek Dimensity 800 U chip powers the device. The software experience is 'near-stock Android' and will be up to date till Android 13.

Pixel 6A

Price: Tk. 39,999/- [128 GB]

This is one of the best available deals in this price range. The Pixel 6A has one of the best cameras on any smartphone. The Google Tensor chip (5 nm) also ensures the phone flies in performance. With its fantastic stock software user interface and built-in features such as accurate live transcription, the Pixel 6A is a great device. The 6.1-inch OLED display runs on 60 Hz but the device feels smooth with Google's software work. The device comes with at least five years of software support for longevity.

Nothing Phone 1

Price: Tk. 45,000/- [256 GB]

The Nothing Phone 1 is the first smartphone from Nothing, a British startup offering a unique name and design. This peculiar smartphone comes with white LED strips dispersed across a back panel that is made of transparent glass. This helps it produce patterns of light that Nothing refers to as 'glyphs', which can be customised to indicate various alerts. The camera has two 50-megapixel cameras – one regular and one ultrawide. The device is powered by the Qualcomm Snapdragon 778G Plus chipset and comes with a 6.55 inches display with a 120 Hz refresh rate.

OnePlus 9 Pro

Price: Tk. 49,000/- [256 GB]

The OnePlus 9 Pro is a premium smartphone of the brand. It has a large 6.7 inches AMOLED display and is powered by the Qualcomm Snapdragon 888 (5 nm) processor. The device has a quad camera setup at the back and a 32-megapixel front camera for great photos. It also has a large 4,500 mAh battery that offers excellent battery life. The device is IP68 dust/water resistant as well, so you can expect to get some rough use out of it.