ACCELERATING BANGLADESH

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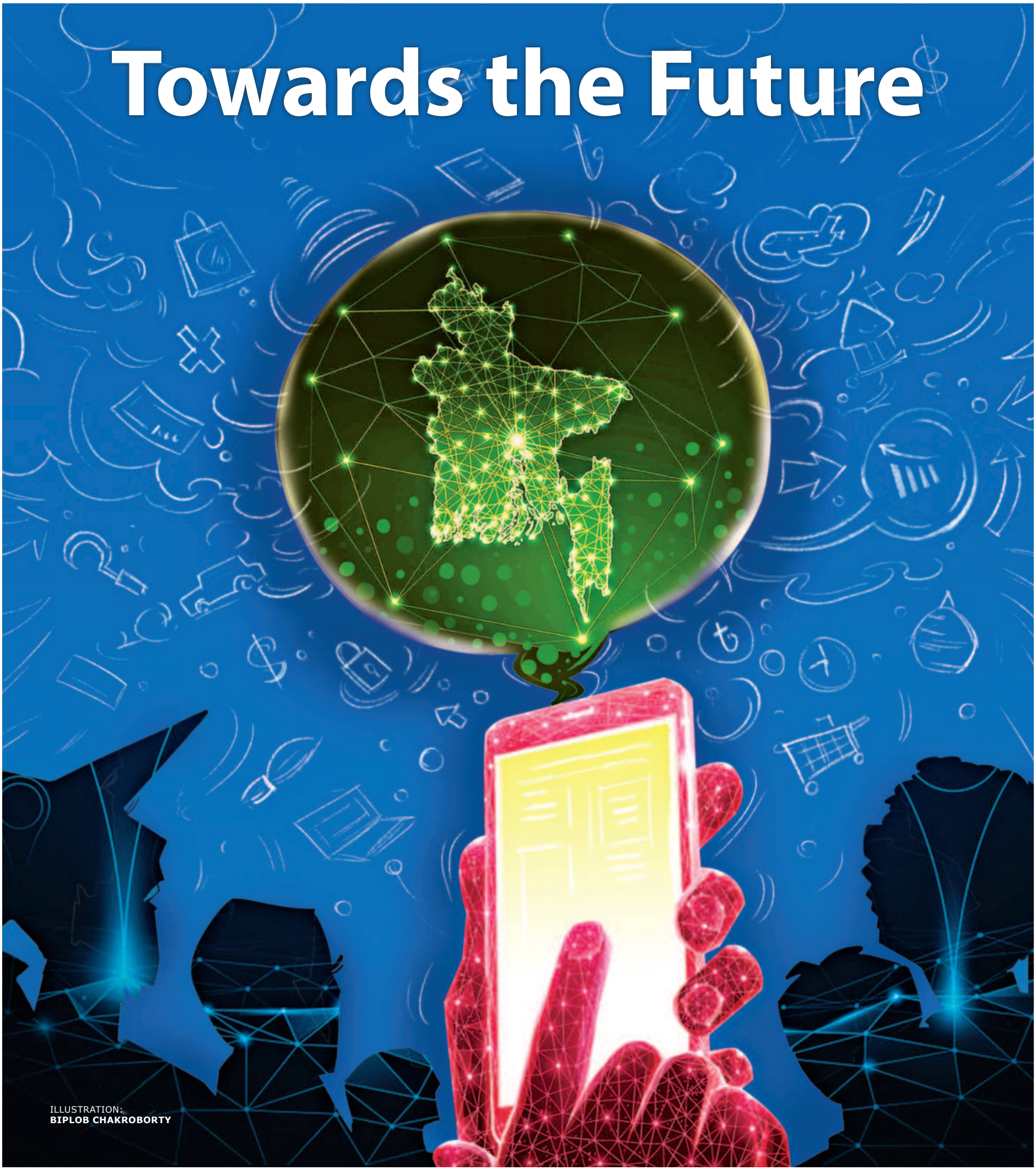
Towards the Future



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Pickaboo: Delivering convenience at your doorstep

TANZID SAMAD CHOUDHURY

There is rarely ever a need to leave the comfort of one's home in the post-pandemic era of online shopping to purchase any products. The old technique of shopping from traditional stores is gradually being replaced by home delivery as a result of the growth of regional e-commerce platforms. Pickaboo, a local e-commerce company that has established itself in Bangladesh as the one-stop shopping destination for all types of smartphones, consumer electronics, household appliances and much more, is one of these ground-breaking online shopping platforms.

Pickaboo started its journey back in 2016 as a platform focused fully on mobile phones and other technological gadgets. Currently, the online store has the largest selection of electronic goods in a wide range of categories, including consumer electronics, the latest smartphones, a wide range of cameras, computing accessories, and mobile accessories.

Pickaboo has established a reputation for itself in the local online retail market as a rapidly growing consumer platform serving millions of customers in the past few years. Pickaboo's success can be attributed to its humble beginnings. However, its user-friendly app and well-designed state-of-the-art website have also played an instrumental role in why it has established itself as a leading e-commerce platform. To date, Pickaboo has over 1 million mobile app installations and has delivered close to a million products.

Moving forward, Pickaboo wants to build a hub for mobile gadgets and electronic products while increasing its presence in both online and offline markets. Currently, Bangladesh has a mobile phone market with a valuation close to $1.8 billion while the electronics market size is roughly $7.5 billion, and Pickaboo wants to leverage its platform to provide the best quality products to its valuable customers.

Currently, Pickaboo has 21 stores across the country, mainly selling the latest mobile phones in the market. Going forward, Pickaboo wants to set up 700+ stores across the country in the next 5 years.

Bringing local and international investments into the country for business expansion is another area that Pickaboo is actively working on. It intends to contribute towards ensuring FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) inflow to keep the economy rolling. In December 2022, Pickaboo raised $1.5 million in a pre-series A round from local and international investors. To date, Pickaboo has raised over $6.5 million in different series of funding, according to Crunchbase, a global platform providing business information about startups.

There are 18,000 retailers across the country, with around 3500 retail stores controlled by different smartphone brands. Pickaboo works closely with over 500 major local and international brands in the country such as Samsung, Xiaomi, Realme, OPPO, Vivo and OnePlus.

We often see that people don't find it convenient to buy smartphones from multi-brand stores. The reason behind this is there are hardly any established multi-brand retail stores. This is where Pickaboo is making a difference. Pickaboo is playing an active role by providing the platform for the big smartphone brands to come together under one roof and thereby essentially serving as a multi-brand retail chain. It is worth noting that Pickaboo is building a controlled multi-branded franchise in the retail market.

Pickaboo is also working closely with SMEs, particularly 2nd generation shop owners so that it can work on the development of the retail ecosystem and have an impact on the skill development of the retailers and get them ready for the future. Pickaboo is also helping retailers by connecting them with financial organisations through its strong network and enabling them to generate funds to expand their business.

The online platform operates under the name Pickaboo, and one thing that it maintained from day one is that it ensured that genuine products are sold through its platform. Pickaboo now has same-day delivery. In Dhaka city, it is offering a 3-hour delivery service for selective products as well. It also ensures that customers all over the country can get their products delivered within 3 to 4 days, no matter which part of the country they reside in. It also provides door-to-door after-sales services for its valuable clients.

Pickaboo is also doing its part to promote cashless transactions. Users can select Cash on Delivery, digital financial services like bKash, Nagad, Online Payment (VISA/MASTER/AMEX) as well as EMI as their choice of payment method. Pickaboo has also introduced a Card on delivery facility inside Dhaka Metro City for hassle-free cashless transactions. To date, Pickaboo has a decent digital transaction rate and encourages its users to go cashless.

Pickaboo wants to make sure that customers can save time while buying convenience from the comfort of their homes. As such, Pickaboo is giving a hassle-free experience to users online and staying true to its priority of providing quality service.

Overall, Pickaboo stands out from the competition due to its quality of service, exciting offers and deals throughout the year, which are all combined into one dynamic, community-driven online shopping platform.

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Truck Lagbe: Redefining traditional trucking

SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

Trucks have always played a critical role in the economic and logistics development of Bangladesh. Not only are they a reliable method of transporting large quantities of goods across distant areas, but their versatility in construction, mining and manufacturing jobs also makes them an irreplaceable asset in the transport industry. However, despite the necessity of trucks, finding one for a transport job proves to be difficult without the right contacts, and usually requires a hefty amount of money even for short trips.

Launched in 2017, Truck Lagbe brought forward a unique solution: an online platform where you can hire trucks of different sizes to transport goods across all 64 districts in Bangladesh. The platform offers both short and long-haul freight trips and is currently the home to over 80,000 registered trucks - all accessible via a nifty app downloadable from Google Play Store. The platform connects truck owners with both businesses and individuals who are in need of transporting large-scale goods.

By introducing a modern solution to everyone's trucking needs, Truck Lagbe effectively redefined the trucking industry and reshaped the public availability of traditional trucks for everyday transport needs. It has helped streamline the transport industry in Bangladesh as well by reducing the cost of large-distance transport and eliminating many hassles and inefficiencies associated with traditional trucking methods. As such, both businesses and individuals can now avail of a cost-effective method to transport products all

across the country.

Local MSMEs, being small-scale businesses with not a lot of revenue to spare, are dependent on trucks to have their valuable products transported from manufacturers. Vehicles of any other kind won't do a good enough job: regular cars don't have sufficient cargo space and anything else is too small for efficient transport. However, the general unavailability of reliable trucking services combined with steep pricing - which can get steeper depending on the demand for the services - can be a big blow to MSMEs with a limited budget. Furthermore, the strong presence of third-party intermediaries and transport brokers in the traditional market increases the trip fare. This is where Truck Lagbe offers an invaluable helping hand - reducing costs by eliminating the intermediaries and connecting shippers with drivers directly.

The general cost of small shipments via trucks in Bangladesh can start from thousands in taka and can go as high as tens of thousands for bigger shipments. There are also various other costs involved, including moving big cargos and equipment, safely storing them, ensuring they are loaded and unloaded safely, and of course, checking the route to and from the destination for a successful delivery. By helping local truck drivers directly connect with customers, Truck Lagbe eliminates the need for any middlemen and increases the transparency and thus the reliability of transport services. MSMEs, with the help of the Truck Lagbe app, can save costs by being offered a fixed rate for deliveries within Dhaka, similar to how Uber and

Pathao function. Furthermore, the app's 24/7 customer service support combined with trained drivers makes it a lot more user-friendly than traditional trucking methods - where you would struggle to book a delivery or even get a quotation within reasonable timeframes. Truck Lagbe also has a dedicated enterprise service that caters to large corporations through dedicated key accounts manager.

Truck Lagbe's mobile app is a fundamental proponent of the company's contribution to redefining the local trucking industry. Registering in the app is super easy, and only requires a phone number, and after you set your pickup and drop points, the app will show you a range of fares for trucks ranging from small 7-feet, 1-tonne pickups to big 23-feet, 25-tonne trucks. The app also specifies what kind of materials you can expect the vehicle to carry, and it gives you a count of how much extra you might have to pay for bigger or heavier materials. The bigger trucks also have the option of carrying livestock, and you can also choose to employ more workers for the delivery if you have a large quantity of products that need to be loaded. While a fixed rate is shown in the app from the start for smaller pickups, you will have the option to 'bid' for the bigger trucks. Even in that instance, you can get a direct quotation from the assigned truck driver and set the fare according to your needs.

With the advent of Truck Lagbe, Bangladeshi MSMEs now have a reliable and cost-effective transportation solution: a process that was previously filled with high-paying intermediaries and unreliability in service. Not only has Truck Lagbe allowed individuals to quickly get trucking services for house shifting and other transportation necessities, but the platform has also enabled smaller businesses to avail their trucking needs at minimal cost, with ease of access and guarantee of satisfactory service. Truck Lagbe was the winner of Startup Bangladesh Challenge 2017 and received the Best Technology Innovation Award 2018 - recognitions which motivates the company to truck forward and leave behind a trail that has efficiently redefined traditional trucking.

iFarmer: The tech-enabled one-stop solution for smallholder farmers

SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

Bangladesh is home to about 16.5 million farmers, constituting about 28% of the country's 170 million population. Agriculture alone contributes to 40% of the national employment, and citizens of all classes are dependent on naturally grown rice, wheat, jute and vegetables for daily sustenance. Most local farmers are smallholders with less than 1 hectare of land which they can use to cultivate crops, but often lack the sufficient means to yield high-quality output or retain enough revenue to properly sustain their livelihoods. Furthermore, over 70% of local farmers do not have access to banking systems or own a personal bank account, which leads to them relying on microfinance firms or loan sharks to pay heavy rates of interest. The absence of proper training or financial assistance also means the farmers are dependent on intermediaries - a process that usually costs more than the farmers can afford to spare.

To aid smallholder farmers and give them a chance to compete in the ever-engaging marketplace, iFarmer offers them both the financial solutions to fill in existing gaps and the means to secure a high-quality production chain. The experts at iFarmer also teach the local farmers how to make more informed decisions regarding market demand and supply, production technique and the use of agricultural inputs such as seed, fertiliser and nutrients to achieve an optimum output while simultaneously improving their personal livelihoods. As agriculture is a major proponent of Bangladesh's GDP, by providing local farmers such invaluable support, iFarmer is making its mark in the development of this country's MSMEs.

Launched as a side project in 2018, iFarmer initially catered to rooftop farms in urban Dhaka and Chittagong. After a few months, the startup realised the infeasibility of such an approach - eventually shifting their focus to the current model: helping the local farmers with the finance, farming knowledge and advice, high-quality agricultural input, access to fair market and technology they require. Their first step was to source low-cost financing for the interested individuals who could choose which farms they want to support and could fund those farms, while being able to track the progress of the farms through the mobile app.

According to iFarmer, the biggest challenge they still face is the low adoption of smartphones and internet usage in rural Bangladeshi areas. While tech usage has certainly increased among people from all walks of life in the last few years, there are still remote communities that aren't as well-equipped with remote technology - which makes regular contact with them difficult. As such, iFarmer uses an assisted model where it has agents also known as field facilitators located in farming communities to keep a steady connection with the local farmers scattered all across the country. This helps smallholder farmers, even those lacking smartphones or mobile internet, stay connected with iFarmer at all times.

The success of iFarmer is in many ways thanks to its two signature apps: Sofol and their newest addition, KriShop. Launched in September 2020, the Sofol app connects verified farmers with the company's field facilitators. The app allows farmers to file financial requests, monitor and track farm updates, conduct farmer KYC and collect other data points which enables iFarmer to create a unique profile for every farmer. The app also helps generate a risk score for the farmers, which eventually helps them to source more financing even from financial institutions such as banks and insurance companies. Since a lot of the farm financing requests come from remote areas with little to no internet connectivity, the app even works offline.

Kri-Shop, the newest addition to iFarmer's app, is a digital platform for input retailers, offering them door-to-door delivery of high-quality materials necessary for their business. Using Kri-Shop, an input retailer can order items from a customised pricing list based on their geographical locations. They can also choose to pay by cash or by credit, and like other delivery apps, can track the delivery as it is on the way. The Kri-Shop app also has a helpline that assists these retailers in the last-minute customisation of orders. The iFarmer field facilitators connect the farmers with this retailer network so that farmers can access the best quality agriculture input.

iFarmer works by providing proper credit facilities to local farmers with the support of financial institutions, thus creating access to high-quality inputs and improving access to marketing as well as information and knowledge. iFarmer is also developing new agriculture insurance products, satellite and sensor-based advisory services and farm mechanisation services - all of which would make iFarmer a true one-stop solution for smallholder farmers.

By relying on iFarmer, the farming-based MSMEs can stop depending on middlemen and traders and thus save up on a lot of long-run costs - which can then be used to improve not only the quality of the yield but also the revenue of the farmers. iFarmer is currently managing a network of over 87,000 farmers and has thus far facilitated over $24 million in financing to local farmers. With 2023 being the company's 5th year in the local market, iFarmer continues to promise an improved livelihood for farmers and better agricultural yield for all Bangladeshis.

Zaynax Health: Health super app eliminating gap in Healthcare access

One night, Rokeya Afsari, a housewife from Gazipur, found her 6-month-old baby suffering from a severe breathing problem. Although she was nervous at first, she instantly remembered the app called Zaynax Health and connected with a doctor immediately through the app. And she knew that even if her baby needed to get admitted into a hospital the next day, she wouldn't have to worry much about money as she would get hospitalisation cashback afterwards, thanks to the package she bought from Zaynax Health.

Like Rokeya Afsari, more than 67,000 people are now taking the services of Zaynax Health, Bangladesh's first Health Super App that aims to provide all spectrums of healthcare under one single platform, thereby empowering the underprivileged communities to take charge of their health. Bangladesh has seen tremendous progress in recent years in terms of economic growth and development.

However, this progress has not been evenly distributed, with rural and underprivileged communities still struggling to access quality healthcare services. This is where Zaynax Health comes in, working towards removing health disparities and inequalities in Bangladesh.

Zaynax Health has revolutionised healthcare in Bangladesh through its telemedicine service, providing more than 30,000 doctor consultations thus far. With around 400 partners (hospitals and diagnostic centres), it also offers cashback up to Tk. 2,00,000/- to people for hospitalisation and lab tests. Moreover, people can also order for home sample collection and buy anything related to health from the portal. Additionally, the app also has online specialist doctors, instant doctor calls, discounted lab tests and many more under one roof – making it truly a super app that people can browse for anything relating to healthcare.

During its journey, Zaynax Health has created a positive impact on the targeted communities with around 67,000 registered users of which over 16,000 are RMG workers. The organisation has also come up with a customised packages model by partnering with corporates, NGOs and relevant associations such as BGMEA so that it can reach out to the targeted group effectively. Nevertheless, the company has been working closely with paramedics to communicate its services and arrange health camps, medical training, etc. to carry out the mission offline.

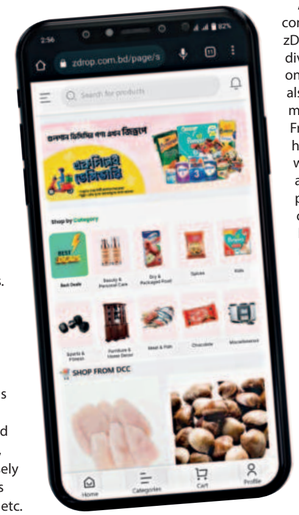
Overall, Zaynax Health has been making a significant contribution towards providing the underprivileged communities quality healthcare alongside achieving the sustainable development goals (SDG) in terms of inclusion and equality – helping Bangladesh to accelerate in healthcare.

zDrop: When trust and transparency are the way to go

With a population of over 170 million people, the growth of e-commerce business in Bangladesh has been phenomenal in recent years. However, trust among customers has been a major issue in the e-commerce industry in Bangladesh. But zDrop, a new e-commerce platform, is determined to change this by offering a trustworthy platform for both the customers and merchants.

zDrop has been designed with a customer-first mentality and has implemented various measures to ensure its accountability towards its customers. The platform offers cash on delivery on all products, ensuring that customers only pay for the products they receive and thus eliminating the risk of fraud from any party and giving customers peace of mind. Additionally, zDrop's prompt and responsible customer service is available 24/7 to assist customers with any issues they may encounter, further ensuring that the customers can rely on the platform for any issue.

Transparency is also a key factor in building trust among customers. zDrop is determined to remain transparent regarding its policies, delivery process, and the information provided by its merchants. The platform provides complete and accurate information about the products and their delivery, so customers know exactly what they are buying and when to expect their deliveries. This honesty and transparency help build trust and loyalty among customers.



Alongside maintaining transparent communication with the customers, zDrop also focuses on product diversity and quick service. zDrop not only offers a wide range of goods, but also some direct-to-home services making the platform one of a kind. From fashion and electronics or household items and groceries to wedding solution packages, zDrop is a one-stop shop for customers. The platform is constantly expanding its offerings, ensuring that customers have access to the products they need. This wide range of products, combined with its trustworthy policies, makes zDrop an ideal choice for customers in Bangladesh.

zDrop is also aware of the importance of following government rules and guidelines to ensure the safety and protection of its customers. The platform is fully compliant with all local and international laws, ensuring that customers and merchants are protected at all times.

In conclusion, zDrop is creating a revolution in the e-commerce business in Bangladesh, establishing itself as a leader in the e-commerce industry in Bangladesh in terms of trust and service. The platform strongly believes that honesty is the only way of doing business and further emphasises its commitment to building trust and loyalty among its customers. And in doing so, zDrop has been effectively revitalising the e-commerce business in the country.

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Bazar365: Reimagining grocery shopping with green technology

TANZID SAMAD CHOUDHURY

The pandemic acted as a catalyst for all e-commerce industries in Bangladesh. Therefore, it came as no surprise when it helped the grocery e-commerce business to grow ten folds in a matter of months.

Consumers are now looking beyond the key motivators of online grocery shopping during COVID-19 - convenience and safety, to aspects like the freedom to shop and receive deliveries whenever it is convenient for them, as well as the time and effort saved by not having to go to a store and deal with open hours of traffic. Moreover, they are also looking for ways to reduce their waste production while shopping online. This shift in consumer expectations across all socioeconomic demographics shows the importance of meeting their preferences and needs in all aspects of their lives, from recreational needs to the fulfilment of their most basic dietary necessities to providing environmentally-friendly options.

Planning and implementing sustainable consumption strategies using generally accepted technology while abiding by

consumers' financial capacity and social practices can be the most effective way to contribute to building food and nutrition security and reducing food and plastic waste in Bangladesh, where the challenges of supplying fresh produce, minimising plastic pollution, and guaranteeing a healthy environment are getting more difficult. This is where Bazar365 comes into the playing field.

Bazar365 is the first environmentally-friendly online grocery store in the country. It offers daily groceries and household goods to its customers, accepts plastics in exchange for discounts, and recycles plastics with its partners to decrease plastic pollution.

As Bangladesh's first online grocery store with a green technology focus, Bazar365 has gained a great deal of attention in the startup community. For the past one and a half years, the online grocery store has been successfully offering services to the greatest extent possible.

From grocery items like fresh fruits and vegetables to personal care items, Bazar365 provides its customers with their desired products with the push of a button. Currently, Bazar365 operates all over the capital of Bangladesh, Dhaka city. It aims to expand its services all over the country, with 8 divisional

headquarters that will serve as the regional hubs for the local citizens.

Moreover, Bazar365 has made ground-breaking strides to minimise the negative impact that plastic pollution has on the environment. To prevent plastic waste from being misused and dumped everywhere, Bazar365 has provided consumers with the incredible opportunity to return plastic waste in return for redeemable rewards points, which they can use to avail discounts.

To maintain sustainable practices, Bazar365 is improving its packaging as well. For grocery shopping, it offers three different sizes of paper bags. It is also using biodegradable polybags for the delivery of perishable goods. Moreover, Bazar365 is also working on making biodegradable delivery bags.

The online grocery store also started making plant pots out of the plastics that the customers had returned them. It is also developing additional goods with recycled plastic. Regarding the toxicity of plastic, Bazar365 is doing its part and constantly spreading the word about the harmful impacts of plastic pollution and raising awareness among the masses.

Since it started its operations around a year and a half ago, Bazar365 has received positive reviews from its customers for its impeccable product quality and engaging customer service. Bazar365 has catered to over 10 thousand customers so far and received roughly 330 pounds of plastic, which have been recycled within this period.

Time, so they say, is a healer. Does it heal everything though? Even if it did, relying just on time to clean up the pollution we have caused on the globe, particularly in a densely populated city like Dhaka, is not enough. The magic that Bazar365 is introducing to the people of the country will surely inspire new ideas in our minds about how we can better support mother nature while shopping sustainably.

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Augmedix: Building the builders of a Smart Bangladesh

Founded in 2012 by two Stanford graduates: Ian Kazi Shakil and Pelu Tran, Augmedix today is a cutting-edge healthcare technology company based in San Francisco, U.S., and with additional offices in Bangladesh, and India. By leveraging cutting-edge technology, Augmedix is able to automate or outsource routine tasks such as documenting patient encounters and updating electronic health records, freeing up time for healthcare providers to focus on the important aspects of patient care. While Augmedix caters uniquely to healthcare professionals in the US, the company is a major contributor to building and empowering local Bangladeshi talents through its back-end programs.

With its innovative approach to revolutionising healthcare, Augmedix is helping build a smarter Bangladesh by empowering local minds into building world-class tech solutions that aim to improve the quality of care provided to patients and reduce the burden on healthcare providers.

Augmedix is mostly known for its scribes program that utilises a network of trained medical scribes, known as medical documentation specialists, to assist doctors and other healthcare professionals with documentation and data entry during patient visits. The program integrates with electronic health records (EHRs) to streamline the documentation process, improve accuracy, and reduce the administrative burden on providers.

To help doctors in the US care better for their patients, Augmedix Bangladesh's scribes work alongside them and guarantee the accuracy and thoroughness of patient reports and records. The doctors view the scribes as indispensable members of the medical team. And since they continue to improve the medical industry with their precise documentation skills and free up doctors to concentrate on treating patients, the scribes of Augmedix Bangladesh are at the centre of the medical documentation operations in Bangladesh.

Initially, Augmedix launched its documentation services with the help of wearable technology such as Google Glass, and it now offers live streaming over smartphones as well. The company uses state-of-the-art technology to live-stream—aided with a real-time chat function—medical visits with patients in the U.S. to highly qualified and trained scribes in Bangladesh who then compile a summary of the care given.

But live streaming and human scribes are not the only options Augmedix rely on for the medical documentation products. The company offers data-driven services with the help of AI, aided by a Bangladeshi software engineering team. By harnessing the power of AI, the scribes are empowered to complete their tasks as the machine learning capabilities differentiate between medical and non-medical terms, thereby making it more straightforward for them to document the conversations.

Augmedix's products are powered by the AI-enabled proprietary Augmedix Ambient Automation Platform. The Ambient Automation Platform utilises machine learning in conjunction with medical datasets to produce structured, comprehensive medical notes that are transferred to the patient's electronic health record. It does this by using automated speech recognition (ASR) and natural language processing (NLP) to extract clinical data from the conversation between the US doctor and the patient.

With more machine learning added to the mix, Augmedix intends to keep improving its AI software and build the future of healthcare services. The software developers at Augmedix are working to create the technology that will radically alter the healthcare sector as the rest of the world catches up to AI. The company aims to build a unique AI solution that automates the process of scribing. Human scribes, will of course, always remain an integral part of the solution package.

Most of these outstanding tech products are built right here in Bangladesh, with a local talent pool working tirelessly to build a better tomorrow. Augmedix's Bangladeshi tech team is a group of highly skilled and innovative technology experts who are working tirelessly to create world-class products that are transforming the healthcare industry. This team is composed of experts from various backgrounds, including software engineering, data science, and design, who bring their unique perspectives and expertise to the table.

The team leverages the latest technologies and tools to develop products that are intuitive, user-friendly, and efficient. They work in close collaboration with healthcare providers and patients to understand the needs and challenges in the industry and use that knowledge to create solutions that meet those needs.

Being one of the top technology solutions provider companies of the world with unique roots in Bangladesh, one of Augmedix Bangladesh's primary goals remains to aid the journey of a smart Bangladesh by building the capacity of the country's tech-savvy youth population. By hiring and retaining local talents, the company is helping to build a talent pool of skilled software professionals in the country.

Augmedix has a culture of continuous learning and development, which is ideal for freshers looking to expand their knowledge and skills. A supportive and collaborative team creates a positive and inclusive work environment. This supportive environment is ideal for freshers who are looking for a supportive team to work with and learn from.

Being at the forefront of healthcare technology, Augmedix provides employees with the opportunity to work with the most advanced technologies and innovative solutions. This exposure to new technology can help freshers grow their careers and stay ahead of the curve, building their careers and exposing them to global skills and trends.

Innovators like Augmedix are setting the bar for technological advancements that revolutionise healthcare. With a local tech talent pool that grows each day, not just by numbers but also by capabilities, Augmedix is creating an outstanding team of Bangladeshi tech gurus who are set to build the Bangladesh of tomorrow—a smart Bangladesh.

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Pacing towards a SMARTER BANGLADESH

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, Bangladesh is striving to keep pace by rapidly advancing its technology and startup sector. With a rapidly growing startup ecosystem, a pool of tech-savvy young talent, and government initiatives aimed at boosting the country's digital infrastructure, Bangladesh is well on its way to becoming a 'Smart Bangladesh'.

The country's startup ecosystem has grown significantly over the past decade, attracting investments from both domestic and international sources. According to the Bangladesh Startup Ecosystem Report 2021, there are now more than 2,000 startups in the country, with Dhaka serving as the main hub for innovation and entrepreneurship. The report also indicates that the startup ecosystem in Bangladesh has the potential to create more than 1.5 million jobs by 2025, a significant boost to the country's economy.

Over the past decade, Bangladesh has emerged as a hotbed for tech startups, with the number of tech ventures in the country surging. The government has played a crucial role in this growth, launching several initiatives aimed at fostering innovation and entrepreneurship. The Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) has also been instrumental in promoting the growth of the tech industry in Bangladesh.

Despite the impressive growth of the tech industry in Bangladesh, there are still challenges that need to be addressed. One of the biggest challenges is access to funding, with many startups struggling to secure investment.

One of the most notable government initiatives is the 'Digital Bangladesh' campaign, launched in 2009 with the aim of transforming the country into a digital economy. The campaign includes a number of programs aimed at building digital infrastructure, increasing access to information and communication technologies (ICT), and promoting the development of a skilled workforce in the tech sector.

One of the key components of the Digital Bangladesh campaign is the 'One Stop Service (OSS)' project, which provides a range of services to entrepreneurs, including business registration, licenses and permits, and legal advice. This initiative has streamlined the process of starting a business in Bangladesh, making it easier for entrepreneurs to launch their ventures and contribute to the growth of the tech industry.

CREDIT: **ZARIF FAIAZ**

Another important government initiative is the 'Innovation Design and Entrepreneurship Academy (iDEA)', launched in 2016 with the aim of promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in the country. The academy offers training programs, mentorship, and funding to aspiring entrepreneurs, and has already helped launch several successful startups.

The government's efforts to support the tech industry in Bangladesh have not gone unnoticed by the international community. In 2021, Bangladesh was ranked as the world's third-fastest-growing startup ecosystem, according to a report by StartupBlink.

However, it is not just government initiatives that are driving the growth of the tech industry in Bangladesh. The country's young and tech-savvy population is also playing a crucial role in fueling the growth of the sector.

With a population of over 165 million people, Bangladesh is the eighth most populous country in the world. The country also has a large youth population, with over 60 per cent of the population under the age of 25. This young and dynamic demographic is driving the growth of the tech industry in Bangladesh, with many young people eager to develop innovative solutions to the country's problems.

The success of the country's local homegrown startups has inspired many young people in Bangladesh to pursue careers in the tech industry, and has helped to create a vibrant ecosystem of entrepreneurs and innovators.

Despite the impressive growth of the tech industry in Bangladesh, there are still challenges that need to be addressed. One of the biggest challenges is access to funding, with many startups struggling to secure investment. However, the government is working to address this issue, with several initiatives aimed at boosting funding for startups.

Another challenge is the lack of a robust legal and regulatory framework for the tech industry. While the government has taken steps to address this issue, there is still more work to be done to create a favourable environment for tech startups in Bangladesh.

Despite these challenges, the future looks bright for Bangladesh's tech industry. With a rapidly growing startup ecosystem, a young and talented workforce, and government initiatives aimed at promoting innovation and entrepreneurship, the country is well on its way to becoming a 'Smart Bangladesh'.

In addition to promoting the growth of the tech industry, the Digital Bangladesh campaign is also transforming other sectors of the economy. For example, the government has launched several initiatives aimed at increasing access to healthcare in rural areas through the use of telemedicine and other digital technologies.

The government has also prioritized the development of digital education, with the aim of ensuring that all children in Bangladesh have access to quality education. This includes initiatives like the 'Digital Education Program (DEP)', which provides online resources and training for teachers and students.

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of digital technologies in our daily lives, and Bangladesh is no exception. The government has launched several initiatives aimed at addressing the challenges posed by the pandemic, including the development of a contact tracing app and the implementation of e-commerce platforms to ensure the availability of essential goods and services.

The pandemic has also led to a surge in demand for digital services, which has further fueled the growth of the tech industry in Bangladesh. With more people working and studying from home, the demand for online education and remote work solutions has increased significantly.

Bangladesh is rapidly advancing towards becoming a 'Smart Bangladesh'. With a growing startup ecosystem, a pool of tech-savvy young talent, and government initiatives aimed at boosting the country's digital infrastructure, the future looks bright for the tech industry in Bangladesh.

The government's commitment to promoting innovation and entrepreneurship, combined with the energy and creativity of the country's young people, is driving the growth of the tech industry and transforming other sectors of the economy. While there are still challenges to be addressed, the potential for Bangladesh to become a leading player in the global tech industry is immense.