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ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

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Amazon to lay off 9,000 more employees

Amazon CEO Andy Jassy recently mentioned that he was cutting 9,000 more jobs from the online retail giant's workforce, following the 18,000 that were axed in January. "Given the uncertain economy and the uncertainty that exists in the near future, we have chosen to be more streamlined in our

costs and headcount," Jassy said in a memo to staff.

The layoffs account for a smaller percentage of Amazon's total workforce, which ran up to 1.5 million people in December 2022, than the cuts seen at some other tech giants. Amazon's Jassy told his workers that the extra

layoffs were necessary after more feedback came from departments as the company seeks a way to downsize after years of sustained hiring. The cuts would mainly impact Amazon's cloud computing, human resources, advertising and Twitch video game streaming businesses, Jassy told staff.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The other side of the lens

Photography is a tough career. Add on top of the existing difficulties of being a working woman anywhere in the world - especially Bangladesh - and you will find that it requires a special amount of dedication and passion to find success as a female photographer in this country. In this week's Cover Story, we talked with some local female photographers to find more out about their everyday struggles and challenges.

As for other pages, check out our two-page review of the brand new Kia Carens in Shift and some handy tips to earn money online in Next Step. As always, variety for everyone.

With that, another weekend comes around and another month ends. Stay safe and have a pleasant Ramadan.

Shams Rashid Tonmoy
Sub-editor & Feature Writer



LinkedIn offering 100+ free AI courses

Professional social networking platform LinkedIn is offering more than 100 free AI courses in order to allow users to build AI-related skills and navigate their careers. The offered courses include high-demand topics such as Generative AI, AI and Machine Learning Foundations, Responsible AI, Advanced AI and Applied AI.

Additionally, LinkedIn will be rolling out more than 20 new Generative AI courses and a series taught by LinkedIn's artificial intelligence and engineering leaders. LinkedIn will offer free courses across 7 languages, including English, Chinese, French, Spanish, German, Brazilian Portuguese, and Japanese. Moreover, the free AI courses will be available on the LinkedIn Learning platform till 15th June 2023.

Govt launches ProGRESS Project for inclusive skill development

A new project called ProGRESS has been launched by The Ministry of Education of the Government of Bangladesh and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Bangladesh. This initiative aims to strengthen the TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) and enterprise development systems in Bangladesh. The ProGRESS project also plans on making skill development training more inclusive and accessible for women working on policies, systems and operational levels.

As per an official press release, ProGRESS stands for 'Promoting Gender Responsive Enterprise Development and TVET Systems'. The project will be implemented by the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), Technical and

Madrasah Education Division (TMED) and the Ministry of Education with technical assistance from ILO. The Government of Canada is the funding partner of the project.

The ProGRESS project is designed to positively address the issues linked to low labour force participation of female workers in both wage and employment markets. It will also bring up issues regarding the limited access to business development services required for initiating self-employment. Additionally, the initiative will support the promotion of employability of the female workforce of Bangladesh to improve their economic well-being and maximise their contribution to the national economic growth.

TECNO launches SPARK 10 Pro in Bangladesh

TECNO has recently launched the new SPARK 10 Pro smartphone in Bangladesh. The SPARK 10 Pro contains a MediaTek Helio G88 processor, which features two Arm Cortex-A75 CPUs that can operate up to 2GHz.

SPARK 10 Pro is equipped with a 50MP AI rear camera and adjustable dual soft lights on its 32 MP front camera. The device also features a hard-wearing starry glass back panel and a

6.8-inch 90 Hz FHD+ display. The smartphone is also supported by a 5,000mAh battery and has an 18W fast-charging capacity.

TECNO SPARK 10 Pro will be available in Starry Black and Pearl White colours. It is available in two versions: 128GB+16GB (8GB Extended RAM) priced at Tk. 17,990/- and 128GB+8GB (4GB Extended RAM) priced at Tk. 15,690/-.



Shikho raises funding worth US \$900,000

Edtech startup Shikho has recently received US \$900,000 from three new and one existing investor as part of a strategic funding round. The firm has raised US \$900,000 in a round with 4 investors, including 3 foreign venture capital funds: Goodwater, Sturgeon Capital, Black Kite Capital. Sajida Foundation, a charitable organisation, is also a part of the fundraising endeavour as Shikho

looks to strengthen its focus on creating social impact through online education. Shikho has raised US \$6.5 million to date, the most by any edtech startup in the country, according to a press release. Shikho already has some well-known global names backing it, like Learn Capital from Silicon Valley and Wavemaker Partners from Singapore.



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10 easy ways to earn money online

In today's world, it's easier than ever to make money from the comfort of your own home. Whether you're a stay-at-home parent, a student looking to earn some extra cash, or just someone who wants to make some money on the side, there are plenty of ways to earn money online. Read on for 10 legitimate ways to earn money online.

Freelancing

Freelancing is a great way to earn money online if you have a particular skill or talent. There are plenty of freelance platforms that allow you to find work in your area of expertise, such as writing, graphic design, programming, or social media management. You can set your own rates and work with clients from around the world.

Online surveys

Online surveys are a quick and easy way to earn a few extra dollars. There are plenty of survey websites that pay

you to take surveys on a variety of topics. Although the pay is relatively low, you can complete surveys in your spare time and earn some extra cash.

Online tutoring

If you have expertise in a particular subject, you can earn money online by tutoring students. There are plenty of online tutoring platforms that allow you to connect with students from around the world. You can set your own rates and work with students on a schedule that works for you.

Sell products on Facebook

If you have a particular talent, such as crafting or jewelry-making, you can create products and sell them on the Facebook marketplace. You can set your own prices and work on your own schedule.

Virtual assistant

A virtual assistant is someone who provides administrative or technical

support to clients remotely. If you have strong organizational or technical skills, you can work as a virtual assistant for clients from around the world. You can set your own rates and work on your own schedule.

Affiliate marketing

Affiliate marketing is a way to earn money by promoting products or services from other companies. You can earn a commission for every sale that you generate through your affiliate link. There are plenty of affiliate programs available for a wide range of products and services.

Write and sell an e-book

If you have a particular area of expertise, you can write and sell an e-book on Amazon or other platforms. You can earn money every time someone purchases your book. This can be a great way to earn passive income over time.

Create and sell an online course

If you have expertise in a particular area, you can create and sell an online course. There are plenty of platforms that allow you to create and sell courses on a variety of topics. You can earn money every time someone enrolls in your course.

Online transcription

Online transcription involves transcribing audio or video content into text format. If you have strong typing skills and can listen to audio or video content accurately, you can work as an online transcriptionist. You can set your own rates and work on your own schedule.

Sell stock photos

If you have a talent for photography, you can earn money by selling your photos on stock photography websites. You can upload your photos to these websites and earn money every time someone purchases one of your photos.



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Sabina Yesmin

CAPTURING THE GLASS CEILING

What it takes to be a female photographer

FAIJA TASFIA



PHOTO: NAILA NOOR

Photography is at the core of our modern lives. It is well embedded in our daily activities through news, memories and content. However, the gender gap in this accelerating profession is truly staggering. Women are often sought on the opposite side of the camera. How is it that in a country outnumbered by women (according to the census 2022), we consume content largely from a male perspective? While many may argue there is a lesser percentage of women in the sector due to the profession's demanding nature, there are also other aspects that restrict a woman's participation and contribution in the world of professional photography.

Before everything else - photography is a very hard profession. "Being in the field, waking up in different locations is a different experience for any woman photographer," says photojournalist, filmmaker and documentary photographer Fabeha Monir. Even though both men and women photographers



PHOTO: FABEHA MONIR

have trouble navigating these struggles, women have an extra burden of societal and familial expectations. It is not easy for young female photographers to negotiate these issues of time and travelling with their families.

"My family members and friends often try to dissuade me from going to certain places for my shoots due to safety reasons," says freelance photographer Naila Noor. Even though these concerns are legitimate, when you see it from their perspective, it is a setback in terms of

productivity and work. While going to shoots in different outdoor locations, women photographers have to plan their attire and equipment accordingly. Naila laments that a male photographer doesn't have to go through this extra hassle. While it may seem like these are small adjustments to be made, it can take a toll on the person facing it constantly.

In terms of work assignments, women are often singled out with assignments that don't require much 'trouble' for the employer. When Sabina Yesmin started her work as a photojournalist in Prothom Alo, she was often given only cultural assignments or women-children-related issues. But, with time, as she proved herself, she started covering leads. In a career spanning over 12 years, Sabina Yesmin covered many important issues including natural disasters and protests in our country. Her photographs are widely distributed and recognised, even in a world where men are currently dominating.



Naila Noor

Women are often sought on the opposite side of the camera. How is it that in a country outnumbered by women (according to the census 2022), we consume content largely from a male perspective?

While many may argue there is a lesser percentage of women in the sector due to the profession's demanding nature, there are also other aspects that restrict a woman's participation and contribution in the world of professional photography.

"It is difficult for a woman to separate her personal and professional life. Whenever a woman comes to work in this field, they fight and challenge the familial and societal expectations set upon them," says Sabina. According to her, photography, particularly photojournalism, is still not seen as a viable career for women. On top, the constant discriminatory and sexist behaviour at work often affects their mental health. Sabina adds that women often quit this field on their own, unable to deal with these constant challenges along with the societal and familial pressures.

The topic of salary or remuneration continues to be one of the biggest issues for female photographers. As they are given low-priority assignments, they tend to get paid less. Even in case of freelance or independent work, female photographers are paid less. Many clients even (only) go with a female photographer when their budget is low. Moreover, there is a lack of precedent as the number of female photographers is less. Many leading media houses and newspapers in our country still don't have female photographers or photojournalists.

The matter of security and surroundings transcends the work of a

female photographer in every possible scenario. Men can go into the unknown and click their stories without having to worry about safety. However, women aren't so lucky in that regard. Moreover, people in our country don't normally respond well to a female photographer taking pictures. "During my outdoor shoots, I have been subjected to rude comments and stares by a passerby," says Fouzia Jahan, owner of the local cinematography and visual styling brand Bowner Dighi. Moreover, there are certain stereotypes about women not being adept at technical details or messing up big responsibilities that overshadow a female photographer – adds Fouzia.

When Naila Noor started her product photography brand, Aalo Productions, she saw the labels of a female photographer automatically attached to her brand. "Potential clients often doubt if I am capable of giving them what they want based on my gender," adds Naila. This constant discrimination and sexist behaviour often demoralise female photographers. There is nothing more heartbreaking than getting dismissed without having a chance in the first place.

If you're a female photographer, one of the major realisations that hit you is the underrepresentation of female photographers in the industry. Even though active female photographers are winning international recognition, they often don't find their due place in the digital space. A recent article covered in a major newspaper about the current

country. Even though discriminations and behaviours keep happening, Fabeha believes we need to focus on the art and the passion that brought us here. In the end, we have to let our work speak for ourselves.

She further adds that photographers need to look at things like art, literature, printmaking, design and illustration.

"This way, they can broaden their perspective in regard to what is being done in the greater creative world," she comments. All the photographers mentioned above believe young budding photographers should invest in courses and degrees related to their field of choice. There are schools and universities in our country offering great photography courses. Fabeha suggests photographers work under a mentor. This gives them perspective and experience of

working as a photographer.

There are some glimmers of sunshine amidst all this darkness. Many clients prefer female photographers to suit their work. Fouzia believes women are more adept at concept development. This gives them an edge over their colleagues. Even though these instances are few, they are still there. The goal is to add more diversity to mainstream photography.

Sabina adds, "Photographs don't see gender; we, the people, separate the art through these." Female photographers are actively doing great work. The number has risen significantly in the past decade. Even though the discrimination, the setbacks are still there, female photographers need to



PHOTO: FOUZIA JAHAN



PHOTO: SABINA YESMIN

booming state of the photography industry of Bangladesh failed to include even one female photographer in the list. Makes you wonder!

However, rising above, female photographers are taking their moments of glory. Fouzia credits the rise of female entrepreneurship as a turning point for female photographers in our

work towards their passion and work it to their advantage. Sabina adds female photographers need to be patient and fearless to persist in this career.

With that, I am ending the article manifesting a future where women photographers take their wins and capture their ceiling without any barriers and bias.



KIA CARENS

The Captain's Chairs are the new first class

RAHBAR AL HAQ

As the demand for SUVs slowly engulfs the entire car market like a beast, more and more cars are catching the crossover mutation. Take the Suzuki Vitara Brezza for example, a Swift hatchback pumped full of helium to crossover size, or the DFSK Glory, a seven-seater MPV that fakes the look and luxury of a full-blown body-on-frame SUV.



PHOTOS: SAIKAT ROY

The Kia Carens is the latest recipient of that treatment, with the latest model ditching its proper minivan roots and embracing a more crossover-ish design. It's based on the stretched Seltos/Hyundai Creta platform and aimed primarily at India and other emerging markets.

And no, the 'Carens' nameplate isn't a tribute to your aunt Karen. According to Kia, the name is a blend of 'car' and 'Renaissance', as they believe this car will usher in a new age of family motoring. And honestly, with all the features packed into this Indian-made ride, it's hard to disagree. The Carens offers a lot for its price, defying expectations for a budget option.

Hot and futuristic

From a company that only made bland cars that nobody wanted to look at just ten years ago, the design of the new Carens is certainly stunning. Our press car, shimmering in Kia's aptly named 'Intense Red'. That hue was hotter than a stolen tamale under the blazing sun, and boy did it accentuate the curves of the fresh design. The front fascia was so futuristic that we half-expected KITT to speak out and ask us to take it for a spin. The sleek new Kia badge was flanked by some sleek LED daytime running lights (DRLs) and a black trim piece with a diamond texture acting as the front grille. Tucked away under the DRLs are the actual headlights' a massive meshed opening at the bottom of the front fascia.

From the side, the Carens had all the bells and whistles of a traditional SUV.



Black wheel arches and curbside cladding? Check. Raised triangular window for the third row? Check. Sixteen-inch alloy wheels that lifted the car 195mm off the ground? Check, check, and check. And in case you missed it, the rear bottom also sported a functional red light, plus a spare wheel bolted to the floor pan. Convenient, but be prepared to get dirty in case of a flat.

Prepare yourself for a cabin surprise!

We all know in cars like these that the real magic happens on the inside, and Caren's interior doesn't disappoint. The cabin is awash in a creamy two-tone finish, with seats upholstered in perforated pleather. If you're sitting in one of the rear rows, you'll be pleased to know that you've got your

own air vents on the roof, plus LED cabin lights for all three rows. And for those who like to set the mood, the Carens comes equipped with ambient lighting that offers eight different colours. Safety-wise, the car's got six airbags placed strategically throughout the interior, so you'll feel like you're getting a hug from a friendly octopus if the event of a traffic misfortune.

Like many cars in this category, I expected the front row of the Kia Carens to be lacklustre, but I was pleasantly proven wrong. The driver's seat has a fancy leather-wrapped adjustable multifunction steering wheel and a fully digital 4.2-inch TFT gauge screen. To the right of the wheel is a hidden tray for the key fob or spare change.



PHOTOS: SAIKAT ROY

If you're feeling parched, don't worry, the passenger has its own tray that doubles as a cup holder, plus an under-seat storage tray. There are two more cup holders in the centre console that can either heat or cool your beverage - depending on your mood.

But wait, there's more! The gear lever is in front of the cup holders, with an induction charge pad, two USB ports, and a 12-volt socket nearby. The dashboard's centrepiece is a 10.25-inch infotainment screen with wireless Android Auto and Apple CarPlay. You can even listen to

Kia has plenty of leg and headroom, even for tall folks. And if you need to haul some cargo, just fold down the seats and you're good to go.

Behind the wheel

The Carens is no speed demon, but it gets up to speed with all the grace of a sloth on a Sunday morning. The sweet spot for acceleration is somewhere between a leisurely stroll and a brisk walk, but if you're feeling frisky, you can hit triple-digit speeds in a relatively brisk 10-15 seconds. Just don't take those corners like



ambient nature sounds through the car's BOSE sound system. Finally, the front row has its very own sunroof and switches to control all the cabin lights. All finished in a piano black that, let's be real, is unfortunately a fingerprint magnet.

The second-row experience is more 'captain' than 'cattle', with plush, separate seats and foldable tables. It's like having your own private jet on wheels, with room for your drinks and iPad thanks to the cupholders and cutouts. At the centre, there's an A/C fan control knob and bottle holder with a closable air vent, perfect for keeping your drinks at the optimal temperature. And when you're stuck in traffic, the built-in privacy curtains are a lifesaver for avoiding unwanted interactions. Being of minivan DNA the

a racecar driver, because the Carens is still tall and prone to body roll. On the bright side, the suspension does a decent job of keeping things level at higher speeds, and the cabin remains hushed even at Autobahn-worthy velocities.

With the steering wheel's quarter dead zone, you can enjoy one-handed rotation while still feeling in control. It's a family car that's all about relaxation, except when you need to pass someone on the highway.

When it comes to stopping, the brakes do their job just fine, with a pedal that responds predictably to pressure. The chassis balance and ABS are both top-notch, allowing for a graceful slowdown that won't jostle the poor souls in the third row into the second.

Verdict

Are you in the market for a spacious SUV without breaking the bank on an All-Wheel-Drive? The Kia Carens rocks a modern style, a well-stocked and tech-filled interior, and comfort features that would make luxury cars green with envy. Plus, it's built by Kia, a seasoned pro in the auto industry game. If you don't have the dough for Japanese brands or don't want to roll the dice on a Chinese option, this Indian-made Korean ride might be the one for you.

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine: 1.5 litre Smart Stream CVT DOHC
Transmission: 6-speed automatic
Power: 113 Hp @ 6,300 RPM
Max Torque: 144 Nm @ 4,500 RPM
Drivetrain: Front Wheel Drive
Price: Tk 50,00,000
For details, contact Meghna Automobiles Ltd.

FEATURES

Sunroof
Ambient lighting
Induction charger
2nd-row climate control
BOSE Audio System
Dual-zone Climate control
10.25-inch infotainment system with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay

SAFETY

6 SRS Airbags
ABS with EBD
Tire Pressure Monitoring System
Active Stability Control
Parking camera with sensors
All-around LED lights

6 WAYS

to protect your eyes while using smartphones



Handheld devices have become an essential part of our daily lives. While we often spend hours on our smartphones for professional or entertainment purposes, it takes a toll on our eyes.

Here are 6 ways to reduce pressure on your eyes while using smartphones:

Blink your eyes frequently

Your eyes stay moist and are less likely to get dry or irritated when blinking frequently over time. As we gaze adoringly at our precious smartphone screens, we tend to blink around a third less than we normally would, depriving our eyes of necessary fluids for protection. You should be fine if you keep your eyes moist by blinking approximately ten times every 20 minutes.

Frequent blinking can also help to reduce eye strain and fatigue that can be caused by prolonged screen time. If you're using a smartphone or other digital device for an extended period, try to take regular breaks and blink more often to help prevent dryness and strain. Additionally, it's a good idea to adjust the brightness and contrast of your device to reduce glare and make it easier on your eyes.

Use Dark Mode

The latest smartphones come with Night Mode capabilities that make it simple to automatically lessen eye strain at night. When the Night Mode is enabled, your phone will automatically change the screen settings to reflect the time of day.

Blue light is a type of light emitted by digital screens, which can interfere with your sleep cycle and cause eye strain. Dark mode reduces the amount of blue light emitted by your screen, which can help to reduce eye strain and promote better sleep. In dark mode, the text and other content on your screen appear white or light-colored against a dark background. This creates a higher contrast ratio than the traditional white background, which can make it easier to read and reduce eye strain.

Follow the 20-20-20 Rule

You've probably heard of the 20-20-20 rule. The idea is to stare at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds every 20 minutes to break up your screen time. Your eye muscles will relax as a result, giving you more time to think about what you'll have

for dinner later in the day.

The 20-20-20 rule helps to reduce the strain on the ciliary muscle in your eyes, which is responsible for focusing on near objects. When you stare at a digital screen for extended periods, this muscle can become fatigued, leading to eye strain and discomfort.

Adjust the brightness

Your eyes can strain from looking at a screen that is too bright or too dark, which can make it difficult to stay focused. To avoid this, simply go to your smartphone's settings and change the screen brightness, so that it is roughly equal to the light intensity in your surroundings.

When the brightness on your smartphone is set too high, it can cause glare and reflections on the screen, leading to eye strain and fatigue. By adjusting the brightness to a comfortable level, you can reduce glare and make it easier on your eyes. By reducing the brightness, you can help to extend the battery life of your device and reduce the need for frequent charging.

Reduce font size and contrast

Changing the text's contrast and size on your smartphone brings about some much-needed respite on a hectic day. It makes reading web content, emails, calendar entries, and everything else on your smartphone much simpler.

It's important to note that reducing the font size too much can also cause eye strain and fatigue, as the text may become too small and difficult to read. It's important to find a font size that is comfortable for you and adjust it as needed to reduce eye strain and fatigue while still being able to read comfortably.

Set time limits

When using a smartphone, it's easy to lose track of time, but you may set time limitations for yourself as a reminder to put your phone down. Integrated or third-party apps can be used to set alarms or timers on your smartphone to keep you on track.

When you set a time limit, you are more likely to be aware of how much time you are spending on your smartphone and to limit your usage accordingly. This can help to reduce overall screen time and prevent the negative effects of excessive screen time, such as eye strain, neck and back pain, and sleep disturbances.

Following these simple habits can go a long way to maintaining your eyesight for the years to come.