

# TOGGLE

WEEKEND LIVING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

A publication of The Daily Star

# TO BE THE VERY BEST



2024 ACURA INTEGRA TYPES I  
PAGE 4  
APPLE'S WWDC 2023: WHAT TO EXPECT!  
PAGE 6

COVER: SHAMUS BALSCHILD TOMKOV

**Digitally Enabled** | **গাড়ি** | **স্মার্ট এবার**

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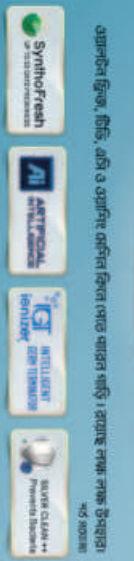
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# Adobe adds Midjourney-like generative AI tool in Photoshop

Adobe, the leading software company renowned for its Photoshop application, announced the integration of generative artificial intelligence (AI) into the Photoshop software. This development aims to make Photoshop more accessible to untrained users by allowing them to create images from simple text prompts, similar to AI image creation technologies like Midjourney and DALL-E.

Photoshop has been celebrated for its robust tools capable of both



photo editing and graphic design. However, mastering its intricate functionalities often required substantial skill and training. With the inclusion of generative AI,

Adobe is revolutionising the creative landscape by simplifying the image creation process.

During a demo presented to NBC News, Maria Yap, Adobe's Vice President of Digital Imaging, effortlessly placed a dog's portrait into an expansive background using a mere four-word prompt, "spring trees with sunshine." What previously entailed hours of editing was now accomplished within minutes, showcasing the time-saving potential of AI-assisted editing.

## Meta hit with a record fine of \$1.3 bln over data privacy breach

Meta, the parent company of Facebook, has been slapped with a staggering \$1.3 billion fine (€1.2 billion) by European Union (EU) data regulators, setting a new record in the realm of data privacy violations. The fine was accompanied by an order to cease the transfer of Facebook user data from EU citizens to the United States.

The ruling, made by Ireland's Data Protection Commission (DPC), underscores concerns that data transfers by Meta expose EU citizens to privacy infringements. In response to the fine, Meta denounced it as "unjustified and unnecessary" in a blog post authored by Meta's president for global affairs, Nick Clegg, and the company's chief legal



officer, Jennifer Newstead.

According to the DPC, the current legal framework for data transfers to the US fails to address the risks posed to the fundamental rights and freedoms of Facebook users in the EU, consequently violating the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This unprecedented fine surpasses the previous record of €746 million imposed on Amazon in 2021 for similar privacy transgressions.

## Netflix will now charge US \$7.99 monthly for sharing passwords

Netflix recently expanded its crackdown on users sharing passwords with people beyond their immediate family, as it seeks to bring more revenue to the leading streaming television service by charging US \$7.99 a month for password-sharing. "A Netflix account is for use by one household," the company said in a statement.

Netflix said early this year that more than 100 million households were sharing accounts at the service, thereby impacting its ability to



invest in great new TV and films. As growth at Netflix cooled last year, the Silicon Valley-based streaming giant set out to nudge people watching for free with shared passwords to begin paying for the service without alienating subscribers.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

### Like no one ever was

The colourful franchise known as Pokémon has been a huge part of my life growing up. Likewise, Bangladesh reaching the apex of competitive Pokémon battling was a long-held dream that came true recently - with the ultimate goal close within our grasp. In this week's Cover Story, we talk about the wild world of competitive Pokémon battling, and the local team that qualified for the 'World Cup of Pokémon'.

As for other pages, we give our impressions on the newly revealed 2024 Acura Integra Type S in Shift, a guide on emotional intelligence in modern workplaces in Next Step, and a list of safety apps you should keep on your phone in Tech Tips.

With that, another weekend rolls in, bringing in better promises for a brighter future.

Shams Rashid Tonmoy  
Sub-editor & Feature Writer

## boAt products now officially available in Bangladesh

boAt, a reputed audio and wearable brand from India, has signed a national distributor agreement with DX Group to distribute their products in Bangladesh. As such, their products are now officially available in Bangladesh.

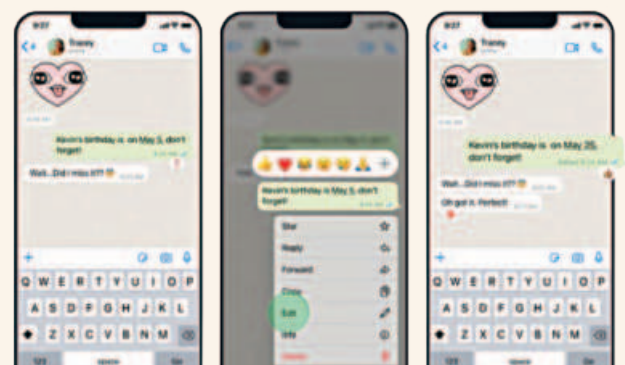
DX Group, a Bangladeshi conglomerate, will distribute boAt's range of products across all major markets, including Dhaka, Chattogram, Khulna, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Mymensingh, Sylhet and Barishal. The line-up will include TWS (true wireless) earbuds, smartwatches, neckbands, headphones, speakers, chargers, and more. DX Group will also assist boAt in onboarding local partners, customer acquisition, and expanding its footprint.

## You can now edit messages on WhatsApp

WhatsApp has recently released a new feature that will let users edit sent messages, with a time limit of fifteen minutes since the message was sent. To use this feature, simply long-press the sent message and click the 'Edit' option that pops up.

Any message edited this way will show a marked

'edited' label with it, so any recipients will know that the message has been edited. WhatsApp has also stated that this edit option, like the app's messages, calls and media, is protected by end-to-end encryption. The feature will roll out globally in the coming weeks.



## TOGGLE

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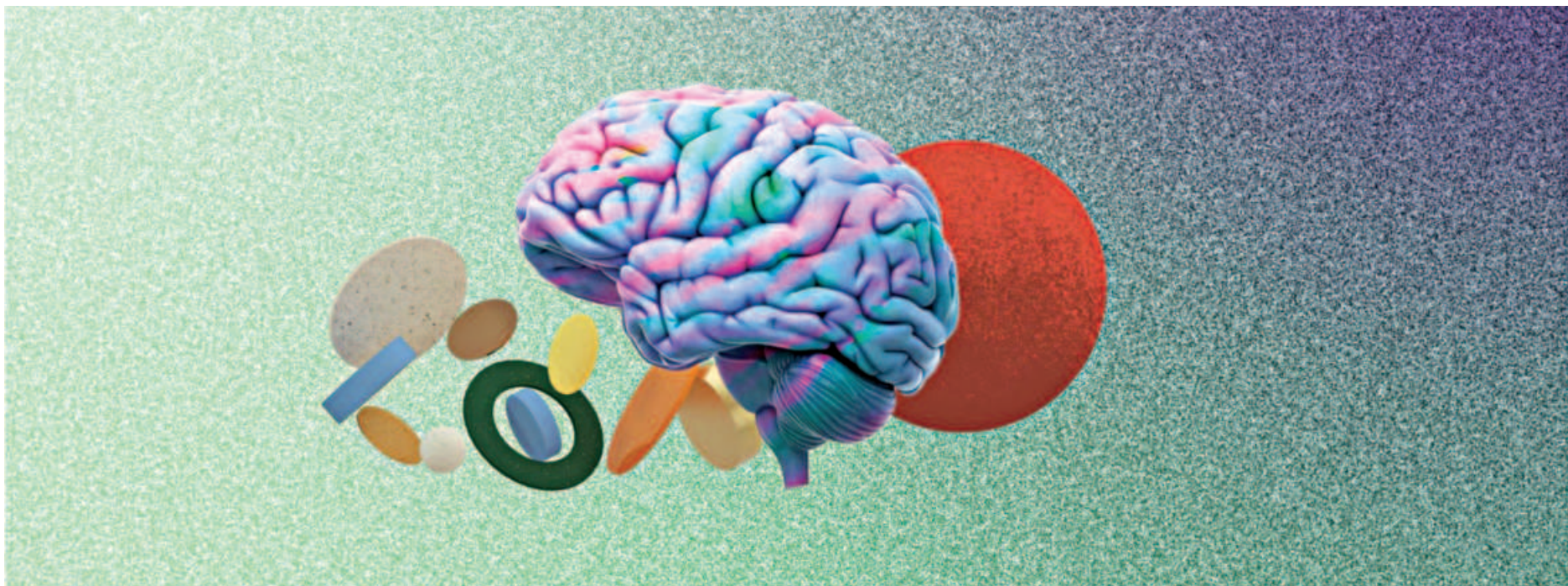


ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

# FOSTERING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

## The key to success in the modern workplace

In an era characterised by rapid technological advancements and evolving workplace dynamics, emotional intelligence has emerged as an essential skill for professionals to thrive. No longer confined to the realm of personal relationships, emotional intelligence has gained recognition as a critical factor in driving productivity, collaboration, and overall success in the modern workplace. As organisations strive to create a harmonious and inclusive environment, nurturing emotional intelligence has become a top priority.

Emotional intelligence, often referred to as EQ, encompasses a range of skills that enable individuals to recognise, understand, and manage their own emotions while empathising with others. Unlike technical abilities that can be easily measured and taught, EQ relies on a delicate balance of self-awareness, social awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and effective interpersonal skills. By cultivating these qualities, employees can navigate complex situations with finesse, build stronger relationships, and foster a supportive work culture.

One of the first steps in nurturing emotional intelligence within a workplace

is through self-awareness. Encouraging employees to reflect on their own emotions, strengths, and weaknesses can enhance their understanding of how their behaviours impact those around them. Self-awareness enables individuals to regulate their emotions more effectively, preventing impulsive reactions and promoting thoughtful decision-making. Organisations can support this process by providing opportunities for self-reflection, such as mentorship programmes, mindfulness workshops, or regular check-ins with managers.

However, emotional intelligence is not solely an individual endeavour. Developing empathy and social awareness is equally crucial. Recognising and understanding the emotions and perspectives of others can foster a sense of unity and cooperation within teams. By encouraging open communication and active listening, organisations can create an environment that values diverse opinions and encourages empathy. Team-building exercises, diversity training, and collaborative projects can also contribute to building a workplace culture that values emotional intelligence.

Furthermore, organisations can

promote emotional intelligence by recognising and rewarding behaviours that embody its principles. By acknowledging individuals who demonstrate empathy, effective communication, and conflict-resolution skills, companies can send a powerful message that emotional intelligence is not only valued but integral to professional success. In addition to formal recognition programmes, providing continuous feedback and coaching can help employees understand how their behaviours align with the organisation's goals and values.

To truly embed emotional intelligence into the fabric of a workplace, it must be woven into the very fabric of an organisation's leadership. Managers play a crucial role in setting the tone for emotional intelligence within their teams. By leading with empathy, transparency, and open-mindedness, managers can create an environment where emotional intelligence is not only expected but practised. Investing in leadership development programmes that emphasise emotional intelligence can yield significant benefits, as emotionally intelligent leaders inspire and motivate

their teams to reach their full potential.

The benefits of nurturing emotional intelligence in the workplace extend beyond individual growth. Research has shown that organisations with high levels of emotional intelligence experience increased employee engagement, improved teamwork, and higher levels of customer satisfaction. Additionally, employees who feel valued and understood are more likely to be resilient in the face of challenges, leading to increased productivity and reduced turnover rates. In an increasingly competitive business landscape, emotional intelligence can be a powerful differentiator for organisations that strive to attract and retain top talent.

As we navigate the ever-changing landscape of work, emotional intelligence stands as a cornerstone of success. By investing in programmes and initiatives that nurture emotional intelligence, organisations can create a positive and supportive work culture, foster stronger relationships, and achieve higher levels of productivity. By prioritising EQ alongside technical skills, organisations can empower their workforce to thrive in a world that demands both expertise and empathy.







# The 2024 Acura Integra Type S

The luxurious Civic Type R

ABRAR SHAREQUE KHAN

Acura, Honda's luxury division, has recently announced another Type S car. Under the nameplate of the Acura Integra Type S, the automotive world is abuzz with excitement as Acura brings back an iconic model. Previously, the Acura Integra had a Type R variant, which was one of the most iconic Type R models ever produced. Set to be released as a 2024 model, Acura rebooted the Integra last year.

The Acura Integra Type S marks the return of a beloved sports car that captured the hearts of enthusiasts during its initial run. This highly anticipated resurrection promises a fusion of classic design cues, cutting-edge technology, and exhilarating performance. Let's dive into what the Acura Integra Type S has in store for us.

## Design

Design-wise, the Acura Integra Type S 2024 stays true to its roots while embracing a modern and aggressive aesthetic. The sleek and aerodynamic body lines pay homage to the base Integra, with a contemporary twist of aggressiveness. The design is aerodynamically improved, with the centre vent cooling down the intercooler and the side vents cooling down the brakes.

The signature Acura grille takes centre stage, flanked by striking LED headlights that provide both excellent visibility and a distinctive visual presence. From the sculpted hood with vents for better cooling and downforce to the flowing wide side profile with massive fender flares, underneath which are 19-inch NSX-inspired wheels wrapped with wide Michelin Pilot Sport 4 tires. The sporty rear end features a diffuser with three exhaust outlets similar to the Civic Type R. Every angle of the Integra exudes a



sense of purpose and athleticism with a touch of luxury.

Performance Under the hood, the 2024 Acura Integra Type S promises a thrilling performance

that enthusiasts have come to expect from the nameplate. It is said to pack a punch with a 2-litre turbocharged four-cylinder engine. The engine is the same VTEC engine from the 10th or 11th-gen Civic Type R, but this one is tuned to produce 320 horsepower and 310 lb-ft of torque. Acura's commitment to performance ensures that this powertrain will deliver exhilarating acceleration.

Acura says that for the Type S, they took the chassis of the highest-grade Integra and underwent a complete overhaul just to improve the suspension setup. The 2-litre turbocharged VTEC engine is paired with a six-speed manual transmission that can perform rev-matching, a well-tuned dual-axis front suspension, and big four-piston Brembo brakes. The Integra Type S aims to

Type S is no exception. The centrepiece of the interior is a high-resolution 9-inch touchscreen display that serves as the command centre for the infotainment system. It also gives you access to select driving modes like the Integra; an additional sport+ option is added, which is exclusive to the Type S. You can also go to the individual mode and set engine performance, steering, and suspension feedback to your liking. It offers seamless integration with smartphones, providing access to navigation, entertainment, and communication features.

Additionally, the Type S will come with a 16-speaker sound system from ELS Studio for the ultimate premium audio experience. It will also come equipped with advanced driver-assistance systems, such as adaptive cruise control, lane-keeping assist, and automatic emergency braking, enhancing safety and convenience on the road.

## Overall impression

Overall, the Acura Integra Type S aims to deliver a well-rounded driving experience, balancing performance with practicality, depending on the mode you're driving in. With a focus on versatility, the Integra offers ample cargo space, allowing for the transportation of both passengers and their belongings. This flexibility aims to position the Type S as a viable option for both thrilling weekend track days and weekend getaways.

In addition to its exceptional performance and well-appointed interior, the Acura Integra Type S is expected to come with a host of customisation options. Acura is known for recognising the desire for personalisation among its enthusiasts, and various trim levels and optional packages will likely be available. These options will allow buyers to tailor their Type S to their preferences. Pre-orders have already started with a starting price of \$51,995. Compared to its half-sibling, the Civic Type R, it is a bit on the pricier end.

Acura is known for its commitment to technological innovation, and the Integra

IMAGES: ACURA OFFICIAL WEBSITE

# Team from Bangladesh qualifies for World Cup of Pokémon

SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

A team from Bangladesh has recently qualified for the World Cup of Pokémon, an international online tournament hosted by Smogon, the largest competitive Pokémon community in the world. This year's World Cup of Pokémon qualifiers featured over 200 players from 17 teams, each representing their countries/continents to claim the final three spots in the main knockout series. Each player faced two opponents each and the top 3 teams with the best overall score advanced to the main stage.



Team Bangladesh scored the highest in the qualifiers, with a score of 12-4 against nations such as the United Kingdom, China, Brazil, Argentina, Greece, and South Korea. Starting on June 4, Team Bangladesh will face 15 other teams from the US, Latin America, Oceania, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, India, and more in the main stages of the tournament.

## Remember Pokémon?

Pokémon is currently the highest-grossing media franchise in the world, reporting a total revenue of \$76.4 billion as of May 2021. Their latest Nintendo Switch games, Pokémon Scarlet and Violet, sold over 22 million copies since their release on November 18, 2022.

While most Bangladeshis' first introduction to this franchise of colourful creatures was the Pokémon anime that used to air on Cartoon Network in the mid-2000s, there are still a significant amount of fans both locally and worldwide - amassing a community of like-minded enthusiasts who dabble in everything this vast brand has to offer, including but not limited to the aforementioned anime, video games, trading cards, spinoffs, collaborations, merchandises, and of course, competitive Pokémon battling.

## Competitive Pokémon battling? That's a thing!

Competitive Pokémon battling, to those uninitiated with the concept, involves making teams of 6 Pokémon and battling versus your opponent, with the goal of knocking their Pokémon out before yours are knocked out. There are two versions of competitive Pokémon most popular among fans. The official version, known as VGC (Video Game Championships), is hosted by The Pokémon Company International and Nintendo. Such tournaments are held all over the world in regional events, with winners from each regional being invited to the grand stage - the VGC Championships.

These VGC tournaments are played using the official Nintendo console of the time (DS, 3DS, Switch) and players must raise their own Pokémon in the original Pokémon games (Sun/Moon, Sword/Shield, Scarlet/Violet, etc.). VGC games are played in a Doubles format - you bring a team of 6, but use only 4 per battle in a set of 3 games. In Doubles, two of each player's Pokémon are active in the field at the same time.

Unfortunately, despite the glamour and appeal of international VGC tournaments, such events are hosted internationally and are generally difficult for Bangladeshis to attend. So, what's the alternative?

The online competitive Pokémon community

Fortunately, fan-based online communities exist, that host tournaments from anywhere in the world using a browser-based simulator called Pokémon Showdown. Using Pokémon Showdown, anyone can make a team of 6 from scratch, without the hassle of raising the creatures on your own or even using the main games or the official consoles.

Smogon, the largest of such online communities for competitive Pokémon, promotes and hosts multiple large-scale competitive Pokémon tournaments every year, bringing about 18.5 million users to their website every month. Among their most popular tournaments is the World Cup of Pokémon, which, as mentioned earlier, allows teams to represent their home countries/continents in a battle for the ultimate prize of glory and honour.



The matches of Smogon tournaments are played on Pokémon Showdown, in various Singles, Doubles and fan-made formats, with the Singles format being the most popular and the format of choice in big tournaments such as the World Cup. Smogon's formats are based on tiers, ranking Pokémon on player-based usage and viability, thus expanding upon the more restricted official format and even allowing fan-based rulesets for specific custom formats. This makes Showdown a popular site for competitive battling among enthusiasts, with over 10 million matches played monthly, in over 100 active formats with sub-communities of their own.

## Behind the Bangladeshi team

This is the 5th year Bangladesh has attempted to pass the qualifying stage of the World Cup of Pokémon. The team members are part of a Facebook group called 'Bangladeshi Pokémon Battlers', which has been a hub for local Pokémon fans and competitive players since its inception in 2012.

Most of the players in Team Bangladesh have been playing competitive Pokémon for a long time, dabbling in tournaments hosted locally in the Bangladeshi Pokémon Battlers group and even competing with notable success in international tournaments in Smogon. The members of this year's Team Bangladesh are as follows: Soumav Biswas, Mir Muhib Hosain, Shadman Khalid Chowdhury, Shafakat Arifeen, Uzair Uddin Ahmed, Araf Kabbo Milky, Mohammad Kaif Sewak, Sadman Sakib Nipun, A K M Mushfiqur Rahman, Nadid Masrur Kabir, Fahim Shahriar, and Asim Abrar and Albab Maswood Haider as co-captains.

"The result of this year's World Cup achievement did not happen on a whim, but rather as a result of playing for years among our own community in

our Facebook group," says Asim Abrar, who is currently doing his Masters at the Department of Disaster Science and Climate Resilience at Dhaka University. "Most of us have known each other since 2015 and eventually became good friends. That's the beauty of Pokémon. It's not only an online game for us but rather a beloved community consisting of a diverse group of people from all across Bangladesh."

Albab Maswood Haider, a third-year student at BRAC University's Microbiology Department, is a relatively new player who got into Showdown during the pandemic. In that short time, he not only became a captain of the national team, but also a 'global voice' at Smogon - a role that is awarded to users who have done exceptional work for Showdown and the online community. "It was always

a constant struggle trying to explain to people that yes Bangladesh was a real country, and no, it's not a part of India," says Albab. He adds, "After so many attempts, we have finally managed to put Bangladesh's name on the main stage of the World Cup of Pokémon - an achievement that will put more positive recognition on our country's name among international players, while hopefully reaching out to local fans as most don't know about competitive Pokémon or Showdown."

## The wonder for all ages

Pokémon, despite being known as a children's franchise to many local fans who still recognise the name, is predominantly played competitively by an older audience. This year's Bangladeshi team consists of SSC graduates, university students to even graduates with full-time jobs. "Almost everyone has a childhood connection to this franchise be it the anime or the video game. We hope our success encourages more people to be involved in their hobbies no matter how silly they might be considered by others," adds Asim. He hopes that parents start becoming more encouraging to their children about playing video games to keep their minds fresh and healthy - though of course, moderation should always be exercised.

To the local players and fans alike, Pokémon knows no age. Playing this game - whether competitively or casually - can provide a welcome source of stress relief, something we all want in the usual chaos of our daily lives. Being involved in a friendly community full of like-minded individuals who just want to relive a fun part of their childhood is something that brings joy and positivity to everyone involved. Sometimes, it helps keep that childhood alive - a piece of happiness we all dearly treasure.





# Apple's upcoming WWDC event: what to expect

Apple has confirmed the date of its next WWDC (Worldwide Developers Conference) event, to be held from June 5 to 9, 2023. The much-anticipated event for international developers will be hosted live at Apple Park, Cupertino, California, and will be viewable online on Apple's official website and YouTube channel.

Like every year, this year's WWDC will kick off with a welcome speech from Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, alongside many rumoured announcements of new updates, apps and devices from the tech giant. Here is a quick rundown of what new announcements from Apple you should expect at WWDC 2023.

#### Apple's mixed-reality headset

Apple is planning to launch their first-ever mixed-reality headset soon, according to Apple analyst Mark Gruman from Bloomberg. Reportedly named Reality One, this mixed reality headset will run on a new operating system called xrOS, which Apple will supposedly reveal at this year's WWDC. Gruman predicts that WWDC 2023 will not only feature the new headset and its operating system but also its accompanying services and a software development kit, which will let developers write new types of apps.

Ming-Chi Kuo, an Apple analyst known for predicting previous Apple announcements, has recently stated that the mass production of Apple's upcoming mixed reality headset was pushed back to

late 2023 Q3, adding that he is uncertain if the headset will actually be announced on WWDC 2023. Despite conflicting rumours, fans worldwide are still looking forward to the supposed device being announced soon, which is said to have features such as gesture-based controls, cameras that can read body movements, and an iris-scanning authentication system.



#### New MacBook

Another rumour by Mark Gruman - Apple will reportedly announce a new 15-inch MacBook Air alongside updated versions of the 13-inch MacBook Air and Pro in this year's WWDC. 15-inch MacBook Air rumours have been around since 2021, but Gruman believes it is finally time for the anticipated laptop to be released. According to Mac Rumours, Apple has already begun production of 15-inch display panels for laptops.

Additionally, Gruman has stated that these new laptops will not contain Apple's newest M3 chip. Instead, these will still contain the M2 chip, which is already in existing 13-inch MacBook Air and Pro models.

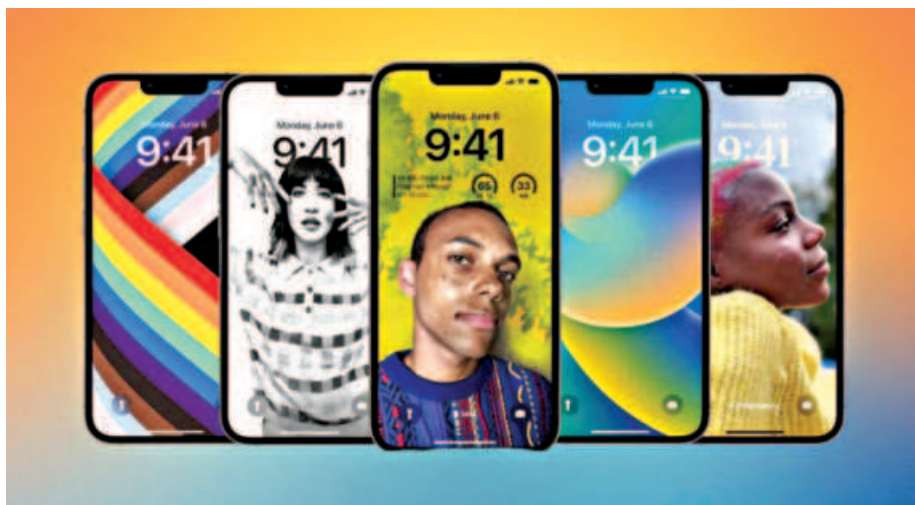
#### iOS 17

Reports from various sources suggest that Apple will reveal their newest operating system, iOS 17, in WWDC 2023. This new OS is said to come with various updates, with a new preview showing new accessibility features and a voice training app that lets users create synthetic voices.

However, sources such as Mac Rumours suggest that the new OS update won't be anything as significant as previous updates, mostly owing to EU-based regulatory changes that Apple has to undergo. Due to these new regulations, Apple is reportedly planning on significantly changing the App Store, specifically for EU-based iPhones and Apple devices.

There might also be some updates to iPadOS 17, macOS 14 and tvOS 17, though even the rumour mills aren't sure about those changes yet. Nonetheless, some fans are hoping for a major update to the latest Apple Watch OS, expecting a new widget-heavy interface.

In the previous WWDC, Apple officially unveiled iOS 16, iPadOS 16, tvOS 16 and watchOS 9, so fans are expecting a continuation of such announcements this year. There were also new MacBooks launched last year: MacBook Air with the M2 chip and the 13-inch MacBook Pro - which has led fans to expect updates to the Mac lineup this year as well. Nonetheless, Apple has yet to confirm any of these rumours, as we are all expecting the official announcements to take place soon at WWDC 2023.





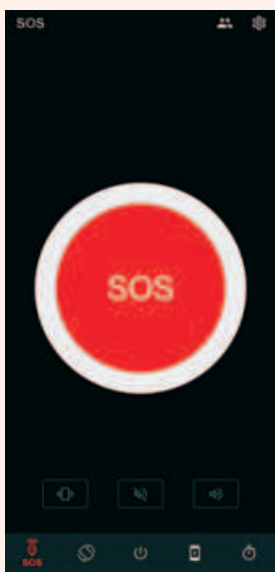
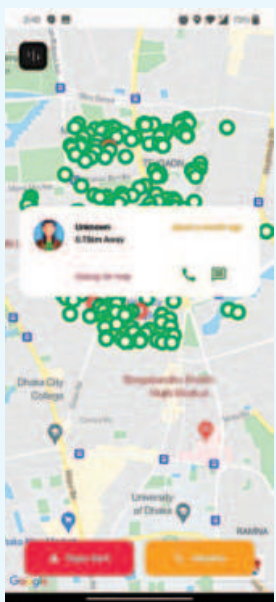
# 5 SAFETY APPS to keep on your phone

FAIJA TASFIA

In today's world of dependence on technology, keeping safety apps on your phone might seem like a no-brainer. There is always danger lurking in the corner, and even aside from the worst-case scenarios, it is always a good idea to keep yourself equipped with handy tools to enhance your personal safety while responding effectively to emergencies. As such, here are 5 helpful apps that will provide assistance to you in a pinch while helping you immediately reach out to your emergency contacts.

## Bachao

Bachao was created to prevent sexual abuse and rape in Bangladesh. They have divided the workplace into districts and sub-districts as they rely on their volunteer system. People can register in the app as volunteers; when they travel in their area, it alerts the volunteer. The volunteers can see the victim's location in live GPS. The 'Rape Alert' option will text your registered emergency contact. After issuing the alert, if the victim doesn't respond within 20 minutes, the police are alerted with the victim's location and contact number. If you ever feel uncomfortable, it is always better to issue an alert. If everything is fine, you can change it to the 'Safe now' option.

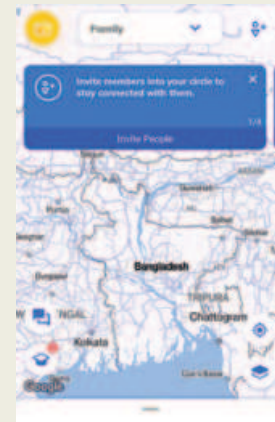


## Red Panic Button

As the name suggests, this app is basically a panic button. All you need to do is list your emergency contact, and, in case of emergencies, you click the big red button on the app. The app will then send a message to your emergency contact with your location. A smart way of using this app is to keep it on your desktop or pinned apps so you don't have to manually go through all of your apps to find it - a trick that will help for all of these apps in this list if you want to access them in a pinch. Red Panic Button can also be used for medical emergencies. It is also useful if you are travelling alone, which will alert your selected contact if you are stuck somewhere.

## Women Safety App

The Women Safety app will send a message to your registered number when you click the SOS emergency alert button containing your name, contact number, and address. There is also a WhatsApp alert that will send the same message to any of your selected contacts. They have the police helpline right below the left button and the address of nearby police stations. The app is free to use. You must input your emergency contact and your registered cell number.

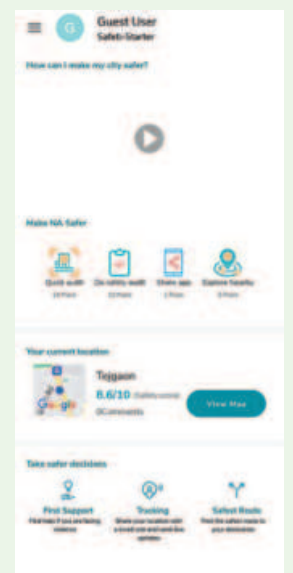


## Connected

Connected is a family locator app. To use it, you have to add your family members and friends in one 'circle'. You can then receive and send live updates and help alerts in emergencies to the contacts in the 'circle'. Apart from that, there are other features like travel history, which stores your circle's travel history of the last 30 days, drive reports to check how your circle members are treating their car, and notifications to know when they reach home or their desired destination. There is a premium version available for Tk. 220 per month, which opens your features to every member of the circle. The free version restricts this option to one or two members. Through this app, you can reach more people in case of emergencies. The circle is private, with only the members you add. It helps you stay in touch even when you are not around.

## My Safetipin

As one of the most popular safety apps, My Safetipin provides GPS trackers, directions to safe routes, and lets you add emergency contacts. If you find yourself stranded, just switch on the GPS location. Even if it doesn't show the exact location, the app will still help you find your way out. Moreover, the app will also let you alert emergency contacts in dire cases. One of its most helpful features is showing your safe locations based on transport available for women's density.



To note, these apps might not always show the exact location. There might be mistakes in pinpoint accuracy, but these apps will work soundly as precautionary steps - a tool protecting you and alerting people

about your whereabouts and situation. You should take them out whenever you feel danger might be following you. Moreover, something as simple as a safety app can potentially scare the attacker, knowing you

have a way to instantly alert people.

All of the apps mentioned above work with just a simple click. During emergencies, there might be situations where you don't get a chance to reach your phone out. Despite that,

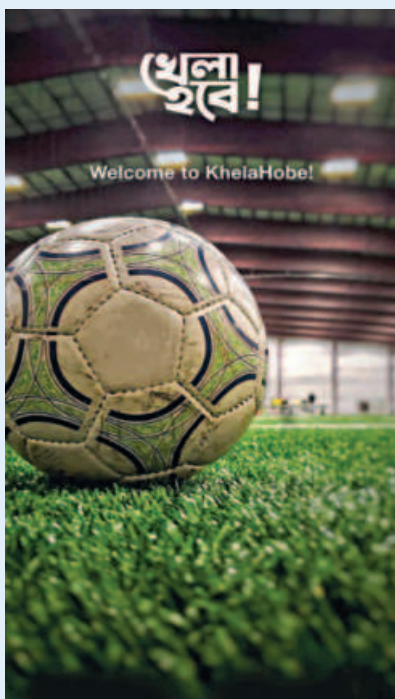
these apps can come in clutch. Additionally, consider keeping pepper sprays and a power bank in your bag at all times - it never hurts to be too safe. All these apps are available for free in the Google Play Store and Apple App Store.



# KHELAHOBE

## Bringing the sports community of Bangladesh under one roof

TANZID SAMAD CHOUDHURY



KhelaHobe is a sports-community platform that enables you to engage in sports activities throughout your daily life. KhelaHobe allows you to find new teammates, plan games, connect with rivals, share accomplishments, and learn about sporting venues and activities through its platform.

KhelaHobe started its journey in 2021. In October 2021, KhelaHobe was selected as an ICT portfolio startup from the iDEA project. The co-founders, Syed Manjurul Hasan and Syed Nurul Hasan, started KhelaHobe from their eternal love for sports and wanted to bring the sports community of the country under one roof through the platform.

Having playing experience in first-division cricket, Syed Manjurul Hasan, CEO of KhelaHobe, noticed that many players from middle-class families could not get any career opportunities after retiring from cricket. As a result, they struggled a lot after retirement. That's where the Co-founders of KhelaHobe thought that they could build a platform where professional cricketers from the first and second divisions could utilise their strength to become trainers and nurture new players for the future.

According to Manjurul, KhelaHobe mainly works with the youth of the nation who are interested in sports. They have recently launched the digital scoreboard feature, i.e. the leaderboards for cricket and football. From June, they will start introducing scoreboard features for other sports as well, including badminton and basketball.

Previously, the live scoring documentation was done



manually. But now, it can be digitally added through the platform. KhelaHobe users now can rank in the leaderboard through their performance. The leaderboard will be based on specific locations to allow a competitive environment for players from the same region to compete and play with each other.

Apart from the in-app activities, KhelaHobe also organises various sports events for its corporate partners. They also ensure club bookings as well as ground acquisition. For example, the Police Staff College is managed by KhelaHobe. We are also working towards establishing a panel for its Futsal Academy, which will allow trainers and panellists to have a stake in the sports ecosystem.

In essence, KhelaHobe is trying to encourage the growth of a budding sports community that caters to sports enthusiasts across the country.

Currently, KhelaHobe has over 10,000 users, including 4,000 repeat users who have availed its services. It also has 8 corporate partners and has organised sports tournaments for them. It regularly communicates information about various tournaments that take

place in the vicinity of the users and also organises



drop-in matches, where anyone can participate in football matches by paying a certain fee. Currently, KhelaHobe offers drop-in matches for football.

"While our operations are relatively Dhaka-centric, we are regularly talking to stakeholders from different regions in Chattogram, Sylhet, to build the sports ecosystem. Despite the high demand for the service, we need to tap further into the market to meet the needs of our users across the country. The sports market is still in its nascent stage in our country and we need to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to uphold the opportunity for the youth to come and play on the grounds," said Manjurul.

"Within the next few years, we are planning to create an atmosphere where everyone will be part of our sports community. Through our app, we want to create an engaged sports community where the players will be competing for their position in the leaderboards against their counterparts. When a thriving community is established, there will be a healthy environment for youngsters to engage with each other through sports. We want to build a platform that will enable local sports heroes to become professional athletes. That's the concept that we want to pull off in the coming future," he added.

