

TOGGLE

WEEKEND LIVING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

A publication of The Daily Star



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Accord Technologies Ltd. launches HR payroll software

Accord Technologies Limited, a subsidiary of ACE Advisory, launched ATL HR - a comprehensive cloud-based software able to automate the HR payroll processes for Bangladeshi companies.

Being cloud-based, the ATL HR app is available to anyone at any time, offering features such as records management, running payroll, tracking leave and attendance, as well as managing benefits like provident and gratuity funds. ATL HR adopts a simple interface with easy-to-use modules to help businesses and their employees seamlessly shift from manual to automated processes.

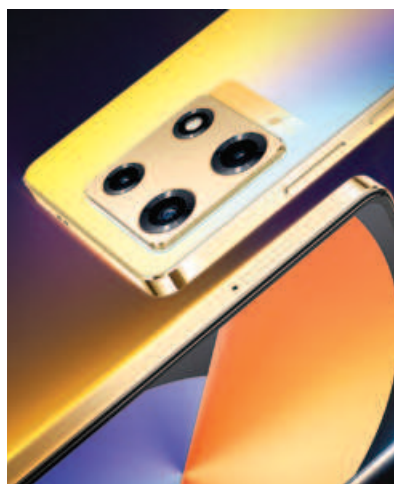
ChatGPT sees user decline for the first time since launch: reports

Mobile and desktop users visiting ChatGPT fell 9.7% last month, states a recent report by The Washington Post. According to the report, downloads of ChatGPT's iOS app are also showing a steady drop.

Since its launch in November last year, ChatGPT has become a favourite tool in many workplaces, quickly being able to generate and compile text on any given subject. Jobs such as copywriting and coding have

become easier to conduct thanks to the promptness of this handy AI.

However, despite the usefulness of ChatGPT, The Washington Post report estimates that the chatbot's ability to make up false information and convincingly pass it off as true might be the key reason behind the user decline. Complaints regarding ChatGPT's answers being worse over time have also been increasing a lot more recently.



Infinix introduces Note 30 and Note 30 Pro in Bangladesh

Infinix has launched its latest addition to its Note series, the Note 30 Pro in Bangladesh.

The Note 30 Pro boasts a 10-bit AMOLED display with a 120Hz refresh rate. It is powered by a MediaTek Helio G99 processor and features Vapor-Chamber Liquid Cooling technology.

The Note 30 Pro also offers 8GB+256GB of memory, an Extended RAM technology upgrade, and runs on XOS 13, built on Android 13.

Infinix Note 30 Pro comes with a 68W wired charging and can charge its 5,000mAh battery from 1% to 80% in 30 minutes.

The Note 30 Pro has a triple camera system with a 108 MP

primary camera and a 32 MP selfie camera.

Infinix Note 30 Pro costs BDT 27,999/-. If the wireless charger is added, the price will go up by BDT 2,000/-.

Additionally, Infinix also launched the Note 30. The smartphone supports 45W fast charge and comes with a 64 MP primary camera and a 16 MP selfie camera.

The two versions of the Note 30, 8GB+128GB and 8GB+256GB, are available for BDT 18,999/- and BDT 23,999/-, respectively.

This model comes without wireless charging capability, while other features are the same as on the Note 30 Pro.

TECNO launches CAMON 20 series in Bangladesh

TECNO recently launched a new lineup of smartphones with two models: CAMON 20 and CAMON 20 Pro. Both phones feature the CAMON PUZZLE deconstructionist design, alongside a 6.67-inch AMOLED display, and in-display fingerprint sensor. CAMON 20 Pro comes with a 120 Hz refresh rate. For camera features, both phones offer a 64 MP RGBW

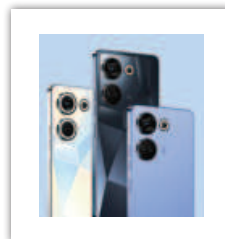
night portrait rear camera. They also have a 32 MP front selfie camera.

CAMON 20 runs on a 6nm Helio G99 SoC processor, while the Pro version runs on the Helio G85 processor.

Both devices come with Android 13 OS, 8 GB RAM, 256 GB storage, IP53 rating and a 5,000 mAh battery with 33 W fast charging.

CAMON 20 is available in three colours: predawn black, serenity blue (magic skin), and glacier glow. It is priced at BDT 19,990 + VAT.

CAMON 20 Pro is available in two colours: predawn black and serenity blue (magic skin). It is priced at BDT 24,990 + VAT.



EDITOR'S NOTE

A 'better' pill to swallow

While many foreign countries have access to instant, insured healthcare at the tip of their fingers, the digital healthcare platform in Bangladesh has seen its fair share of struggles. This week, we take a closer look at the challenges of the local digital health sector and what kind of challenges need to be overcome to improve it.

As for other pages, we talk about Twitter and its brand new alternative: Threads. In Bytes, learn how you can sign up for this new app, and in Tech Tips, some other Twitter alternatives you could consider. On Next Step, we detail some easy ways on starting your freelancing career.

With that, another weekend rolls around. Until next time.

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Twitter threatens Meta with lawsuit over hiring former employees

Twitter, the popular microblogging platform, threatened Meta, the parent company of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, with a lawsuit a few hours after the launch of Threads - an app many believe to be Meta's replacement for Twitter.

As per a report by Reuters, a letter

was sent to Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Meta, by Twitter's lawyer Alex Spiro, in which Spiro accused Meta of hiring former Twitter employees who might be sharing highly confidential information regarding Twitter to Meta.

In the letter, Spiro detailed that Twitter "intends to strictly enforce

its intellectual property rights", and demands Meta to take immediate steps to stop using any Twitter trade secrets. As a response, in a Threads post, Meta spokesperson Andy Stone said that no one in the Threads engineering team is a former Twitter employee.



How to get started as a FREELANCER

A first-hand 101 guide for aspiring freelancers

In an era of flexible work arrangements, freelancing has emerged as a viable and popular option for individuals seeking greater autonomy and control over their careers.

Breaking away from the traditional nine-to-five model, freelancers enjoy the freedom to choose their projects, set their rates, and work from anywhere. If you're considering venturing into the world of freelancing, this comprehensive guide will equip you with the knowledge and tools needed to get started on the right foot.

Defining your freelancing niche

One of the first steps to embark on a successful freelancing career is to identify your niche. Determine your areas of expertise, skills, and passions. Narrowing down your focus will help you market yourself effectively and stand out in a competitive landscape. Whether you're a writer, designer, developer, marketer, or consultant, honing your skills and finding a unique selling proposition will give you an edge.

Building your portfolio

As a freelancer, your portfolio is your calling card. Create an online portfolio showcasing your best work, highlighting the range of projects you've completed, and demonstrating your abilities. Invest time in curating a visually appealing and user-friendly portfolio website, ensuring that it reflects your professionalism and expertise.

Establishing your online presence

To thrive as a freelancer, establishing a strong online presence is crucial. Leverage social media platforms, such as LinkedIn,

Twitter, and Instagram, to network, share your work, and engage with potential clients. Interact with industry influencers, join relevant professional groups, and participate in discussions to expand your network and gain exposure.

Selecting the right freelancing platforms

Freelancing platforms act as intermediaries, connecting freelancers with clients. When choosing a platform, consider factors like the size of the user base, the availability of projects in your niche, the platform's reputation, and its fee structure. Popular platforms such as Upwork, Freelancer, and Fiverr provide a wide range of opportunities, but niche-specific platforms may offer more targeted projects.

Developing a pricing strategy

Setting your rates as a freelancer can be challenging. Research industry standards, evaluate your skills and experience, and consider the value you provide to clients. Determine whether you'll charge hourly rates or project-based fees. Be cautious not to undervalue your work; charging too little can undermine your credibility.

As you gain experience and build your reputation, gradually adjust your rates to reflect your expertise.

Learning and upskilling

Continual learning is essential for freelancers to stay competitive and relevant. Stay updated on industry trends, emerging technologies, and best practices by reading blogs, attending webinars, and participating in online courses. Develop new skills that complement your existing expertise to broaden your service offerings and attract a diverse range of clients.

Communication and collaboration

Effective communication is key to successful freelancing relationships. Clearly define project scopes, deadlines, and expectations with clients. Regularly update clients on your progress and be proactive in seeking clarification when needed. Utilize project management tools, such as Trello or Asana, to streamline communication and maintain efficient workflows.

Managing finances and taxes

As a freelancer, it's crucial to manage your finances wisely. Set aside a portion of your earnings for taxes and track your expenses meticulously. Consider using accounting software or hiring a professional accountant to ensure accuracy and compliance. Stay informed about tax laws and regulations that pertain to freelancers in your jurisdiction.

Cultivating client relationships

Building strong client relationships is essential for repeat business and positive referrals. Exceed client expectations by delivering high-quality work on time and providing exceptional customer service. Actively seek feedback and use it to improve your skills and services. Maintaining a professional and reliable reputation will enhance your chances of securing future projects.

Embarking on a freelancing career offers unparalleled freedom and flexibility, but it requires careful planning and strategic decision-making. By defining your niche, building a stellar portfolio, leveraging online platforms, honing your skills, and prioritizing effective communication, you can lay a strong foundation for your success as a freelancer. Embrace the challenges, continuously learn and adapt, and remember that perseverance and professionalism are the keys to thriving in the freelancing world.



Essential tips for driving through waterlogged roads in Dhaka



As the monsoon season casts its relentless downpour upon the city, residents of Dhaka find themselves battling against waterlogged roads that pose numerous challenges, particularly to motorists. The increased risk of accidents and damage to vehicles demands extra caution and preventive measures. With knee-deep waters becoming an all-too-common scene, we present some comprehensive car maintenance and driving tips to help drivers navigate through the inundated roads of Dhaka safely.

Stay informed and prepared
Staying informed about the weather conditions and road situations is crucial. Tune in to local news channels, radio stations, or reliable weather apps for up-to-date information on flood-prone areas and traffic diversions. Plan your route accordingly to avoid heavily waterlogged roads whenever possible.

Avoid waterlogged roads
While it may seem tempting to drive through waterlogged roads, it is strongly advised against doing so. Even knee-deep water can pose serious risks to your vehicle's engine and electrical systems. Attempting to drive through flooded areas can cause hydro locking, which may result in severe engine damage. Additionally, flooded roads may conceal hazardous debris or open manholes, further jeopardising your safety.

Driving through water
If you must drive through waterlogged roads due to unavoidable circumstances, follow these essential tips:

Assess the water depth: Before driving through water, gauge its depth by observing other vehicles or pedestrians crossing the area. If the water level exceeds the middle of your wheels, it is safer to find an alternate route.

Slow and steady: Drive at a slow,

consistent speed to avoid creating a bow wave. Maintain a steady pace to prevent water from entering the engine bay and exhaust system.

Use low gears: Engage a low gear (such as "L" or "2") to maintain engine revs and improve control over your vehicle. This will also help prevent water from entering the exhaust pipe.

Maintain distance: Keep a safe distance from other vehicles to allow sufficient reaction time. Sudden braking or manoeuvres may lead to loss of control on wet surfaces.

After crossing the water: Gently apply the brakes a few times to dry them off and restore their effectiveness. Be cautious as wet brakes may require slightly longer stopping distances.

Maintain proper tyre pressure
Before setting off, ensure your tyres are properly inflated according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Adequate tyre pressure improves traction and reduces the risk of hydroplaning, a situation where your vehicle loses contact with the road due to excessive water on the surface. Keep a tyre pressure gauge handy and check regularly to maintain optimal tyre performance.

Check the battery
Regularly inspect your car's battery,

especially during the monsoon season. Heavy rains and waterlogged roads can lead to moisture infiltration, potentially causing corrosion and electrical issues. Periodically examine the battery terminals and ensure they are clean and dry. If necessary, apply a thin coat of petroleum jelly to prevent corrosion.

Maintain visibility
Proper visibility is vital while driving through rain-soaked roads. Ensure your windscreen wipers are in good working condition and replace them if necessary. Additionally, use your headlights, even during the daytime, to enhance your visibility and alert other drivers to your presence. In case of heavy rain, consider applying a hydrophobic windscreen treatment to repel water and enhance clarity.

Post-drive maintenance
After navigating waterlogged roads, conduct thorough post-drive maintenance. Clean your vehicle, paying extra attention to the undercarriage, tyres, and brakes. Water and debris can accumulate in these areas, leading to rust and decreased performance. Consider applying a protective coating to the undercarriage to safeguard against corrosion caused by prolonged exposure to water.



Regular servicing
During the monsoon season, it is crucial to schedule regular servicing for your vehicle. Timely maintenance checks, including engine oil and filter changes, brake inspections, and electrical system assessments, can help identify and rectify any issues before they worsen. Consult a trusted mechanic or visit authorised service centres for comprehensive vehicle care.

As Dhaka grapples with waterlogging challenges, it is essential for motorists to prioritise safety and protect their vehicles from potential damage. By following these comprehensive car maintenance and driving tips, readers can mitigate risks, ensure road safety, and extend the longevity of their vehicles in the face of Dhaka's waterlogged roads.

Unravelling the challenges behind bridging the digital healthcare gap

MEHNAZ IRTIKA

harmoniously integrates telemedicine with online pharmaceutical services.

Essentially, the lack of a one-stop shop for digital health services also appears to be a key deterrent. Yet, it's not all a bleak forecast for digital health. Despite these challenges, Mashroor acknowledged the immense untapped potential in this sector, not just within national boundaries but also internationally. "There is a huge untapped potential in digital healthcare in our nation. There are also opportunities

help build trust amid the population." Accreditation programs, certifications, and rigorous quality control processes can instil confidence in patients, assuring them that the platform adheres to the highest standards of medical practice with transparency to minimise digital health safety concerns.

Pharm-evolution: Exploring the digital pharmacy frontier

The ease of ordering medications from the comfort of one's home, assurance of



to go beyond the national level and incorporate foreign doctors in the system so international healthcare can be easily accessible to all of us," he stated.

These insights paint a promising picture of tremendous potential, suggesting the presence of not disinterest but rather a challenge to inspire trust, bring reputed healthcare professionals aboard, and deliver a comprehensive solution that unites various elements of healthcare into a singular, accessible digital platform.

Establishing trust: The lighthouse in digital health fog

As digital health ecosystems evolve, the trust question emerges from the fog like a lighthouse for users - can they entrust their health to virtual platforms?

Addressing this concern, digital health providers must build their fort on a bedrock of credibility. According to a recent study by IBM, the healthcare industry experiences the highest average cost of data breaches compared to any other sector, at a staggering \$10.10 million in 2022, raising protection issues.

To eliminate the safety concerns, Rosina Mazumder, The CEO and Co-Founder of Arogga, notes, "Implementing robust verification processes, ensuring the authenticity of medications, and maintaining secure transactions can

authenticity, and cost-effective solutions supplement the growth of telemedicine services and reposition pharmacies within the digital healthcare ecosystem.

"With online pharmacy at Arogga, we have seen an increased acceptance and a change in customer behaviours when ordering medicines online due to the convenience of medicines being delivered to your door, ensuring genuine medicine and an affordable price," shares Rosina Mazumder. Her insight illuminates the myriad advantages online pharmacies offer, steadily gaining traction among consumers.

The digital health revolution, therefore, is not just about telemedicine or online pharmacies alone; it is about an integrated digital health ecosystem that caters to the diverse needs of Bangladesh's population.

Forging ahead: Innovative solutions and new initiatives

Challenges notwithstanding, the future of telemedicine in Bangladesh is anything but gloomy. Adopting agile regulations that encourage striking a balance between privacy and progress and providing clear guidelines will enable entrepreneurs to develop groundbreaking solutions without compromising patient safety and data protection.

The journey ahead is challenging, but the potential for transformative change

is palpable with initiatives to enhance digital literacy in rural areas, bolstered by the right partnerships between NGOs, technology companies, and government bodies.

With a focus on proper guidelines and clarity, our nation can navigate the digital health revolution with resilience and determination, paving the way for a future where technology breaks down barriers and transforms healthcare for all.

Weaving the healthtech matrix: Framing an ecosystem

In the spectrum of tomorrow's healthcare, a connected digital ecosystem pulsates with potential, with telemedicine poised to be its beating heart. The trinity of startups, governmental bodies, and NGOs is at the helm, each playing a unique, indispensable role in nurturing an ecosystem conducive to the exponential growth of telemedicine.

Kazi Ashikur Rasul articulates telemedicine's heightened relevance and indispensability in our post-pandemic world. "Covid-19 has already shown us the importance of remote healthcare services, and this importance will only grow in the future," he observes. His insight points to a future where physical distance is no longer a barrier to accessing quality healthcare.

Envisioning an integrated, synergistic digital health platform that blends online pharmacies with telemedicine could be the panacea for many healthcare challenges Bangladesh faces today. This seamless virtual hub of health services would address present needs and build resilience against future health crises, shaping a more accessible, inclusive healthcare landscape for all.

Pioneering health equity: The trail towards inclusivity

As we voyage through the transformative seas of healthcare delivery, digital health looms as a beacon of promise. This technological tide is revolutionising patient access to medical care, washing over urban skyscrapers and remote rural locales with equal fervour.

Yet, like any great exploration, this journey toward universal digital healthcare is not without its share of challenges and choppy waters. It is a voyage marked by gradual progress, studded with obstacles to overcome. But the destination—a connected, inclusive, and effective healthcare ecosystem in Bangladesh—is not merely a distant dream but a tangible reality waiting on the horizon.

The relentless spirit of Bangladesh surges forth, propelling its digital health sector with unwavering momentum, proving that technology is the enigmatic key to a healthier nation. This vibrant energy resonates with an underlying conviction; a world where healthcare is not a privilege but a universal right, attainable by all, irrespective of location or circumstances. It's the dawn of a new era in healthcare, a future gleaming with promise and worth striving for.



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

6 Twitter alternatives you can check out today

In the midst of uncertainty surrounding Twitter under the leadership of Elon Musk, users are increasingly seeking alternative platforms that offer a different social media experience. As the search for a suitable Twitter replacement gains momentum, we present six potential alternatives that have captured the attention of those contemplating a departure from the Twitterverse. Bluesky

Unlocking a New Era of Social Media Innovation Founded by Jack Dorsey, Twitter's former co-creator and CEO, Bluesky has emerged as an exclusive platform with immense potential. Operating on an invite-only basis, it currently boasts a staggering waitlist of 1.9 million people. Utilising the AT Protocol, Bluesky aims to revolutionise social media by empowering researchers and developers to tackle existing challenges and explore new forms of interaction, fostering innovation in the digital realm.

Spill Empowering Culture Drivers and Influential Voices Spill, founded by former Twitter employees Alphonzo "Phonz" Terrell and DeVaris Brown, offers a unique space for culture drivers who often go unnoticed and under-compensated. With a focus on amplifying Black creators, queer voices, and influential figures from around the world, Spill has attracted significant attention. Its launch in January garnered nearly 20,000 users on its pre-launch waitlist, signalling a growing demand for platforms that prioritise inclusivity.

Mastodon

Decentralised Social Networking for a Diverse Experience Established in 2016 by German programmer Eugen Rochko, Mastodon provides a decentralised alternative to Twitter's centralised structure. With over 10 million registered users, Mastodon operates through numerous independent servers, enabling users to join communities centred around specific topics of interest. This unique approach promotes diversity, customization, and user control over their social media experience.

Threads

Meta's Text-Centred Rival to Twitter Meta, the parent company of Instagram, is set to launch Threads, a text-centred application aimed at challenging Twitter's dominance. With a focus on providing a well-managed and sane environment for social interactions, Threads aligns with Meta's strategy of entering competitive social media spaces with fresh perspectives. While details about Threads remain undisclosed, its appearance in the Apple app store and integration with Instagram's user base generates anticipation.

Post.News

A Platform for Civil Conversations and Reliable Journalism Noam Bardin's Post.News positions itself as a social platform that promotes real people, real news, and civil conversations. Offering access to premium journalism without subscriptions or ads, Post.News garnered significant interest with 440,000 waitlisted users and 206,000 active accounts within a month of its November 2022 launch. Bardin's intention to create an inclusive environment that respects diverse opinions reflects the platform's commitment to fostering constructive dialogue.

T2 Social

Authentic Conversations in a Character-Limited Space Launched by Gabor Cselle, Sarah Oh, and Michael Greer, T2 Social aims to facilitate genuine and meaningful conversations within its community. With a character limit of 280, reminiscent of Twitter's original constraint, T2 Social has transitioned from a small-scale venture to an invite-only platform hosting approximately 20,000 users. Drawing on the founders' experience at Twitter, T2 Social endeavours to provide a space where authenticity and dialogue take centre stage.

How to sign up for Threads, Meta's Twitter competitor



In a bid to expand its social media dominance, Meta, the parent company of Instagram and Facebook, is set to release Threads, a text-based Twitter competitor. As Twitter temporarily limits the number of tweets users can read, Meta's move aims to tap into the growing demand for alternative platforms. While Meta's new app is scheduled to launch in the United States on Thursday, European users will reportedly have to wait for its availability.

Threads, unlike its invite-only beta phase competitor Bluesky, seems to have no restrictions on user access, apart from

requiring an Instagram account. This approach has fueled anticipation among users eager to get ahead of the official launch.

To gain early access to Threads, users can follow these steps:

Open the Instagram app and navigate to the Explore page by clicking the magnifying glass icon in the bottom left corner.

Enter the term "Threads" in the search bar, which should prompt a small ticket emoji to appear on the far right.

Tap the "Admit One" ticket in the search bar to access your Threads

invitation. The invitation will display your username, the Threads launch date and time, a QR code, a numeric code, and a "Get Threads" button at the bottom of the screen, leading you to the App Store.

It's important to note that although Threads is listed in the App Store, it is not yet available for download.

Alternatively, users can access their invitation by following these steps:

Open your Instagram profile and tap the three lines located at the top right corner.

In the drop-down menu, a "Threads" option will be available near the top.

Clicking on it will display your invitation.

As of now, Threads usernames mirror Instagram usernames, leaving uncertainty as to whether they can be changed. Users are eagerly awaiting the app's official launch on Thursday for more information.

Meta's introduction of Threads comes at a time when users are seeking alternative social media platforms due to Twitter's rate limits on tweet reading. The recent move led many users to explore competing apps like Bluesky, which experienced a surge in traffic over the weekend.

Meet Rousseau Kazi, the Bangladeshi-born CEO and Co-Founder of the other 'Threads'

Shortly after the launch of Threads, it became apparent that Mark Zuckerberg's new Twitter competitor had opted for a .net domain instead of the customary .com. The reason behind this choice lies in the fact that the .com domain had already been claimed by another platform, also called Threads, led by one Rousseau Kazi, serving as its Co-Founder and CEO.

Kazi, a former Facebook employee, has been making waves in the tech industry with his innovative platform, designed to facilitate thoughtful discussions and streamline decision-making processes. Unlike its Meta counterpart, Threads focuses on connecting individuals and companies through online 'threads,' providing a modern and efficient alternative to existing collaboration tools.

Since its launch, Threads

has garnered attention for its unconventional choice of a .net domain instead of the expected .com. This decision was prompted by the existence of another Threads, helmed by Kazi's namesake and former Facebook colleague, who had already claimed the .com domain. Kazi's response to this situation was met with humour and grace, as reflected in the company's Twitter profile, which now reads, "Threads is a Slack replacement designed for makers. Also, we have no affiliation with Meta. But you're welcome to stick around!"

Acknowledging the irony of the situation, Threads posted the popular

multiple Spider-Man memes on Wednesday, signalling a lighthearted recognition of their shared name with Meta's offering. Kazi, in a statement to Fast Company, explained, "Threads is a powerful word and an internet native term. Using threads—on various platforms—is the best way to stay connected with your [.net]work or [.com]pany. Given this, it comes as no surprise that Meta chose a powerful label to represent their take on building the town square."

Kazi's journey to becoming a tech entrepreneur started at an early age. With a background rooted in his Bangladeshi immigrant parents, he demonstrated exceptional talent and ambition throughout his education and professional career. After

graduating early from UC Berkeley, Kazi joined Facebook as an intern, rapidly ascending to become a consultant and eventually a full-time employee at the young age of 21.

During his tenure at Facebook, Kazi played a crucial role in various teams, contributing to core mobile infrastructure, search, and Pages. It was while working on Workplace, Facebook's internal social network, that Kazi began envisioning his own features and tools. This desire to innovate led him to establish Threads, a direct competitor to Slack and, inadvertently, to Meta's Threads.

Threads has already attracted significant investor interest, raising a total of nearly \$11.5 million in funding. The A round was led by Sequoia Capital, with an impressive \$10.5 million contribution.

