

**TECH TALK**

# Acer switches things up

## Our verdict on the Aspire R14

Convertible laptops and tablets are increasing in popularity due to their dual purpose and easiness to carry. Acer has got in on the act with its Aspire R14.

This 14-inch convertible has a 360-degree display, an elegant design and decent system performance.

The fact that the laptop folds to become a tablet is a definite plus and the way it can be propped on a table like a tent makes it stand out from other laptops in the market.

Another plus is how smooth the transition between laptop to tablet happens. There are no lags, with a straight 180-degree flip before you even complete folding the screen.

The Aspire R14 uses Intel's Core i5 processor, which is very efficient. The working memory or RAM of 4GB also makes the speed of the laptop quite decent.

The full HD touch screen is a desirable feature while the touch is quick to be recognised. The screen resolution of 1366x768 pixels makes it great to watch movies or videos or read too.

Meanwhile, the sleek design of the machine makes it a good-looking device.

However, one down side is that - weighing about 2.2kg - the hybrid model is heavy and big.

The Acer Aspire R14 is priced at Dhs2,699.

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HEAVY: The Acer Aspire R14

# Business class going economy

## Huge expense accounts are history, a top exec tells *Veathika Jain*

Business travel in the 1990s and early Noughties was all about business class flights, company credit cards and entertaining clients.

Today, though, things have changed and executives are booking in to budget hotels and being asked to keep costs down.

That's the view of Dr Siddeek Ahmed, Chairman and MD of travel firm ITL World and business conglomerate Eram Group.

Named 16th on the Forbes Middle East rich list, Ahmed knows a thing or two about business travel.

And he shared his thoughts at the Arabian Travel Market.

"Due to big revenues in the 1990s, per diems, client entertainment and hotel limits were very loose -

meaning that corporate travellers could live lavishly and expense a lot to their company credit



TRAVEL GURU: Dr Siddeek Ahmed

cards," Ahmed said. "However, now organisations have adopted strict travel codes, with monetary limitations on food, hotels and airfare."

They might have reduced budgets and smaller allowances, but business travellers today still have high expectations.

Ahmed said: "They want the ability to catch last-minute deals, check in to hotels early and have free internet at all times."

"While price is always one factor, business travellers are increasingly searching for the best-quality seat and wider customer experi-

ence and airlines are taking this kind of feedback to help improve their travel experience.

"Every traveller is different and each one wants his requests to be catered to on an individual platform - cookie-cutter travel plans are no longer welcome or even accepted."

And staying connected at all times is a necessity, both for the traveller and for airlines and hotels.

Ahmed said: "Social media also enables travel firms and airlines to send real-time updates to customers, whether they are in need of infor-

mation concerning a delayed flight or have requested pricing for a specific trip."

So where is the travel industry headed?

Ahmed added: "We see the traveller of tomorrow operating in an ever-more fluid space, a world of blurred boundaries. They expect to move seamlessly from device-to-device, from online to offline and back again, from business to leisure and vice versa."

Despite that shift, and the rise of video conferencing, Ahmed, who started out in business in the late 1980s, said he was relieved to see 'Millennials' want to do business face to face.

He said: "That it is extremely encouraging to note that a majority of the millennials believe that

technology can never replace face-to-face meetings to get business done".

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**Every traveller is different and wants his requests to be catered to**

- Dr Siddeek Ahmed

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