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ELECTRONIC DEVICE INCLUDING ELASTIC MEMBER

Abstract

An electronic device is provided. The electronic device includes a first housing structure, a second housing structure, a hinge structure rotatably connecting the first housing structure and the second housing structure and including a first hinge plate and a second hinge plate, a hinge cover covering at least part of the hinge structure when the hinge structure is viewed from the outside, and a flexible printed circuit board crossing the hinge structure and extending from an inside of the first housing structure to an inside of the second housing structure and including a pair of fixing members to permit deformation of the flexible printed circuit board in the internal space of the hinge cover, wherein the hinge structure includes a first member attached to the first hinge plate, and a second member attached to the second hinge plate, and wherein the first member and the second member are disposed to face the flexible printed circuit board so as to prevent direct contact between the hinge structure and the printed circuit board during folding and/or unfolding of the electronic device.

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Background/Summary

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION(S) [0001] This application is a continuation application of prior application Ser. No. 18/541,956, filed on Dec. 15, 2023, which is a continuation application of prior application Ser. No. 17/503,896, filed on Oct. 18, 2021, which has issued as U.S. Pat. No. 11,889,008 on Jan. 30, 2024, which is a continuation application of prior application Ser. No. 16/838,487, filed on Apr. 2, 2020, which has issued as U.S. Pat. No. 11,153,421 on Oct. 19, 2021 and is based on and claims priority under 35 U.S.C § 119(a) of a Korean patent application number 10-2019-0052095, filed on May 3, 2019, in the Korean Intellectual Property Office, the disclosure of which is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

BACKGROUND

1. Field

[0002] The disclosure relates to an electronic device. More particularly, the disclosure relates to an electronic device with an elastic member.

2. Description of Related Art

[0003] Developing electronic information communication technology integrates various functionalities into a single electronic device. For example, smartphones pack the functionalities of a sound player, imaging device, and scheduler, as well as the communication functionality and, on top of that, may implement more various functions by having applications installed thereon.

[0004] The user of an electronic device may search, screen, and obtain more information by accessing a network, rather than simply using the functionalities or information (e.g., applications) of the electronic device. Direct access to the network (e.g., wired communication) may enable quick and stable communication establishment but its usability may be limited to a fixed location or space. Wireless network access is less limited in location or space, delivers a level of speed and stability approaching that of direct network access, and is expected to be able to establish communication faster and more stably than direct network access.

[0005] Personal/portable electronic devices such as smartphones spread, user demand for portability and use convenience is on the rise. For example, a touchscreen display may not only serve as an output device of visual information but also provide a virtual keyboard that replaces a

physical input device (e.g., a keypad). As such, electronic devices may be made compact while delivering further enhanced applicability (e.g., a larger screen). Flexible displays, e.g., foldable or rollable displays, will become commercially available and electronic devices are expected to deliver better portability and use convenience.

[0006] When an electronic device or display folds or rolls, or unfolds (hereinafter, “transforms”), a relative displacement may occur between adjacent structures or electronic components in the electronic device. In an embodiment, the electronic device may include a flexible printed circuit board electrically connecting the internal electronic components. The flexible printed circuit board may transform, corresponding to the transforming of the electronic device, and may contact or rub against another adjacent structure or electronic component. The contact or friction between the internal structures or electronic components while the electronic device transforms may cause a noise. In some embodiments, such contact or friction may wear the internal structures or electronic components. Such electronic components as the flexible printed circuit board may be worn and resultantly lose their functions.

[0007] The above information is presented as background information only to assist with an understanding of the disclosure. No determination has been made, and no assertion is made, as to whether any of the above might be applicable as prior art with regard to the disclosure.

SUMMARY

[0008] Aspects of the disclosure are to address at least the above-mentioned problems and/or disadvantages and to provide at least the advantages described below.

[0009] Accordingly, an aspect of the disclosure is to provide an electronic device capable of mitigating or preventing contact (or friction) between electronic components while transforming.

[0010] Another aspect of the disclosure is to provide an electronic device capable of suppressing wear or damage due to contact or friction between the structures or electronic components while transforming.

[0011] Additional aspects will be set forth in part in the description which follows and, in part, will be apparent from the description, or may be learned by practice of the presented embodiments.

[0012] In accordance with an aspect of the disclosure, an electronic device is provided. The electronic device includes a first housing structure, a second housing structure, a hinge structure rotatably connecting the first housing structure and the second housing structure and including a first hinge plate and a second hinge plate, a hinge cover covering at least part of the hinge structure when the hinge structure is viewed from the outside, and a flexible printed circuit board crossing the hinge structure and extending from an inside of the first housing structure to an inside of the second housing structure and including a pair of fixing members to permit deformation of the flexible printed circuit board in the internal space of the hinge cover, wherein the hinge structure includes a first member attached to the first hinge plate, and a second member attached to the second hinge plate, and wherein the first member and the second member are disposed to face the flexible printed circuit board so as to prevent direct contact between the hinge structure and the printed circuit board during folding and/or unfolding of the electronic device.

[0013] Other aspects, advantages, and salient features of the disclosure will become apparent to those skilled in the art from the following detailed description, which, taken in conjunction with the annexed drawings, discloses various embodiments of the disclosure.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] The above and other aspects, features, and advantages of certain embodiments of the disclosure will be more apparent from the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0015] FIG. 1 is a view illustrating an unfolded state of an electronic device according to an embodiment of the disclosure;

[0016] FIG. 2 is a view illustrating a folded state of an electronic device as shown in FIG. 1, according to an embodiment of the disclosure;

[0017] FIG. 3 is an exploded perspective view illustrating an electronic device according to an embodiment of the disclosure;

[0018] FIG. 4 is a plan view illustrating some components of an electronic device according to an embodiment of the disclosure;

[0019] FIGS. 5 and 6 are plan views illustrating a combined structure of the components of FIG. 4 according to various embodiments of the disclosure;

[0020] FIGS. 7 and 8 are enlarged views of area E of FIG. 4 according to various embodiments of the disclosure;

[0021] FIGS. 9, 10, and 11 are cross-sectional views illustrating various example elastic members, as taken by cutting a hinge plate(s) along line B-B' of FIG. 8, according to various embodiments of the disclosure;

[0022] FIGS. 12 and 13 are views illustrating an unfolded state of housing structures of an electronic device according to various embodiment of the disclosure;

[0023] FIGS. 14 and 15 are views illustrating a folded state of housing structures of an electronic device according to various embodiments of the disclosure;

[0024] FIGS. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 are views illustrating example operations of manufacturing an elastic member of an electronic device according to various embodiments of the disclosure; and

[0025] FIGS. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28 are views illustrating example operations of manufacturing an elastic member of an electronic device according to various embodiments of the disclosure.

[0026] Throughout the drawings, like reference numerals will be understood to refer to like parts, components, and structures.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0027] The following description with reference to the accompanying drawings is provided to assist in a comprehensive understanding of various embodiments of the disclosure as defined by the claims and their equivalents. It includes various specific details to assist in that understanding but these are to be regarded as merely exemplary. Accordingly, those of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that various changes and modifications of the various embodiments described herein can be made without departing from the scope and spirit of the disclosure. In addition, descriptions of well-known functions and constructions may be omitted for clarity and conciseness.

[0028] The terms and words used in the following description and claims are not limited to the bibliographical meanings, but, are merely used by the inventor to enable a clear and consistent understanding of the disclosure. Accordingly, it should be apparent to those skilled in the art that the following description of various embodiments of the disclosure is provided for illustration purpose only and not for the purpose of limiting the disclosure as defined by the appended claims and their equivalents.

[0029] It is to be understood that the singular forms “a,” “an,” and “the” include plural referents unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. Thus, for example, reference to “a component surface” includes reference to one or more of such surfaces.

[0030] It should be appreciated that various embodiments of the disclosure and the terms used therein are not intended to limit the technological features set forth herein to particular embodiments and include various changes, equivalents, or replacements for a corresponding embodiment. With regard to the description of the drawings, similar reference numerals may be used to refer to similar or related elements. It is to be understood that a singular form of a noun corresponding to an item may include one or more of the things, unless the relevant context clearly indicates otherwise. As used herein, each of such phrases as “A or B,” “at least one of A and B,” “at

least one of A or B,” “A, B, or C,” “at least one of A, B, and C,” and “at least one of A, B, or C,” may include all possible combinations of the items enumerated together in a corresponding one of the phrases. As used herein, such terms as “1st” and “2nd,” or “first” and “second” may be used to simply distinguish a corresponding component from another, and does not limit the components in other aspect (e.g., importance or order). It is to be understood that if an element (e.g., a first element) is referred to, with or without the term “operatively” or “communicatively”, as “coupled with,” “coupled to,” “connected with,” or “connected to” another element (e.g., a second element), it means that the element may be coupled with the other element directly (e.g., wiredly), wirelessly, or via a third element.

[0031] As used herein, the term “module” may include a unit implemented in hardware, software, or firmware, and may interchangeably be used with other terms, for example, “logic,” “logic block,” “part,” or “circuitry”. A module may be a single integral component, or a minimum unit or part thereof, adapted to perform one or more functions. For example, according to an embodiment, the module may be implemented in a form of an application-specific integrated circuit (ASIC).

[0032] Various embodiments as set forth herein may be implemented as software (e.g., the program) including one or more instructions that are stored in a storage medium (e.g., internal memory or external memory) that is readable by a machine (e.g., the electronic device). For example, a processor (e.g., the processor) of the machine (e.g., the electronic device) may invoke at least one of the one or more instructions stored in the storage medium, and execute it, with or without using one or more other components under the control of the processor. This allows the machine to be operated to perform at least one function according to the at least one instruction invoked. The one or more instructions may include a code generated by a compiler or a code executable by an interpreter. The machine-readable storage medium may be provided in the form of a non-transitory storage medium. Wherein, the term “non-transitory” simply means that the storage medium is a tangible device, and does not include a signal (e.g., an electromagnetic wave), but this term does not differentiate between where data is semi-permanently stored in the storage medium and where the data is temporarily stored in the storage medium.

[0033] According to an embodiment, a method according to various embodiments of the disclosure may be included and provided in a computer program product. The computer program products may be traded as commodities between sellers and buyers. The computer program product may be distributed in the form of a machine-readable storage medium (e.g., compact disc read only memory (CD-ROM)), or be distributed (e.g., downloaded or uploaded) online via an application store (e.g., Play Store™), or between two user devices (e.g., smart phones) directly. If distributed online, at least part of the computer program product may be temporarily generated or at least temporarily stored in the machine-readable storage medium, such as memory of the manufacturer's server, a server of the application store, or a relay server.

[0034] According to various embodiments, each component (e.g., a module or a program) of the above-described components may include a single entity or multiple entities. According to various embodiments, one or more of the above-described components may be omitted, or one or more other components may be added. Alternatively or additionally, a plurality of components (e.g., modules or programs) may be integrated into a single component. In such a case, according to various embodiments, the integrated component may still perform one or more functions of each of the plurality of components in the same or similar manner as they are performed by a corresponding one of the plurality of components before the integration. According to various embodiments, operations performed by the module, the program, or another component may be carried out sequentially, in parallel, repeatedly, or heuristically, or one or more of the operations may be executed in a different order or omitted, or one or more other operations may be added.

[0035] FIG. 1 is a view illustrating an unfolded state of an electronic device **100** according to an embodiment of the disclosure.

[0036] FIG. 2 is a view illustrating a folded state of the electronic device **100** of FIG. 1, according

to an embodiment of the disclosure.

[0037] In the following description, a pair of housing structures is rotatably coupled together via a hinge structure, for example. However, it should be noted that the electronic device according to various embodiments of the disclosure is not limited thereto. For example, according to various embodiments, the electronic device may include three or more housing structures. As used herein, a “pair of housing structures” may mean two rotatably-coupled housing structures among three or more housing structures.

[0038] Referring to FIG. 1, an electronic device **100** may include a pair of housing structures **110** and **120** coupled together via a hinge structure (e.g., the hinge structure **164** of FIG. 3) to be rotatable to fold to each other, a hinge cover **165** covering foldable portions of the pair of housing structures **110** and **120**, and a display **130** (e.g., a flexible display or foldable display) disposed in a space formed by the pair of housing structures **110** and **120**. According to an embodiment, the electronic device **100** may include a foldable housing rotatably coupled from the position in which the pair of housing structures **110** and **120** is folded together to the position in which the pair of housing structures **110** and **120** is unfolded flat. In the disclosure, the surface where the display **130** is in may be defined as a ‘front surface’ of the electronic device **100**, and its opposite surface may be defined as a ‘back surface’ of the electronic device **100**. The surface surrounding the space between the front and back surfaces may be defined as a ‘side surface’ of the electronic device **100**.

[0039] According to an embodiment, the pair of housing structures **110** and **120** may include a first housing structure **110**, a second housing structure **120**, a first back cover **140**, and a second back cover **150**. The pair of housing structures **110** and **120** of the electronic device **100** is not limited to the shape and coupling shown in FIGS. 1 and 2 but may rather be implemented in other shapes or via a combination and/or coupling of other components. For example, the first housing structure **110** and the first back cover **140** may be integrally formed with each other, and the second housing structure **120** and the second back cover **150** may be integrally formed with each other. According to an embodiment, the first housing structure **110** may include the first back cover **140**, and the second housing structure **120** may include the second back cover **150**.

[0040] According to an embodiment, the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120** may be positioned on opposite sides of a first axis, e.g., a folding axis A, and they may be overall symmetrical in shape with each other with respect to the folding axis A. According to an embodiment, the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120** may be rotated on the hinge structure **164** or hinge cover **165** with respect to different folding axes. For example, the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120** each may be rotatably coupled to the hinge structure **164** or the hinge cover **165**, and the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120** may be rotated on the folding axis A or different folding axes from the position where they are folded together to the position where they are inclined or unfolded side-by-side with respect to each other.

[0041] As used herein, when A and B are positioned or extend side-by-side, it may mean that A and B are positioned at least partially next to each other or at least partially in parallel with each other. According to an embodiment, when A and B are disposed (or arranged) side-by-side, it may mean that A and B are disposed (or arranged) to face in the same direction or directions parallel with each other. In the following description, although the example phrases “side-by-side” and “in parallel with each other” may be used to describe the corresponding structures, the shape or arrangement of the structures may easily be appreciated from the accompanying drawings.

[0042] According to an embodiment, the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120** may form different angles or distances depending on whether they are in an unfolded state (or, extended state, flat, state, or open state) or folded state (or folding state), or in a state therebetween. According to an embodiment, the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120** may be symmetrical in shape except that the first housing structure **110** further includes a sensor area **131d** where various sensors are arranged. Alternatively, the sensor area **131d**

may be disposed in the second housing structure **120**, not the first housing structure **110**, or another sensor area may be included in the second housing structure **120**.

[0043] According to an embodiment, in the unfolded state of the electronic device **100**, the first housing structure **110** may be connected to the hinge structure (e.g., the hinge structure **164** of FIG. **3**) and may include a first surface **111** disposed to face the front surface of the electronic device **100**, a second surface **112** facing away from the first surface **111**, and a first side surface member **113** surrounding at least a portion of the space between the first surface **111** and the second surface **112**. According to an embodiment, the first side surface member **113** may include a first side surface **113a** disposed in parallel with the folding axis A, a second side surface **113b** extending from one end of the first side surface **113a** in a direction perpendicular to the folding axis A, and a third side surface **113c** extending from the other end of the first side surface **113a** in a direction perpendicular to the folding axis A. As used herein, the term “perpendicular” or “parallel” may be interchangeably used with “partially perpendicular” or “partially parallel.” In some embodiments, “parallel” or “perpendicular” may also mean “inclined in an angle range within 10 degrees.”

[0044] According to an embodiment, the second housing structure **120** may be connected to the hinge structure (e.g., the hinge structure **164** of FIG. **3**) and, in the unfolded state of the electronic device **100**, the second housing structure **120** may include a third surface **121** disposed to face the front surface of the electronic device **100**, a fourth surface **122** facing away from the third surface **121**, and a second side surface member **123** surrounding at least a portion of the space between the third surface **121** and the fourth surface **122**. According to an embodiment, the second side surface member **123** may include a fourth side surface **123a** disposed in parallel with the folding axis A, a fifth side surface **123b** extending from one end of the fourth side surface **123a** in a direction perpendicular to the folding axis A, and a sixth side surface **123c** extending from the other end of the fourth side surface **123a** in a direction perpendicular to the folding axis A. According to an embodiment, the third surface **121**, in the folded state, may be disposed to face the first surface **111**. According to an embodiment, the second side surface member **123** may be formed in substantially the same shape or material as the first side surface member **113** although they may partially differ in their specific shapes.

[0045] According to an embodiment, the electronic device **100** may include a recess **101** to receive the display **130** via a structural shape combination of the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120**. The recess **101** may have substantially the same size as the display **130**. According to an embodiment, due to the sensor area **131d**, the recess **101** may have two or more different widths in the direction perpendicular to the folding axis A. For example, the recess **101** may have a first width W1 between a first portion **120a**, parallel with the folding axis A, of the second housing structure **120**, and a first portion **110a**, formed at an edge of the sensor area **131d**, of the first housing structure **110** and a second width W2 formed by a second portion **120b** of the second housing structure **120** and a second portion **110b**, which is parallel with the folding axis A and does not correspond to the sensor area **131d**, of the first housing structure **110**. In this case, the second width W2 may be larger than the first width W1. For example, the recess **101** may be formed with the first width W1 between the first portion **110a** of the first housing structure **110** and the first portion **120a** of the second housing structure **120**, which are asymmetrical in shape with each other, and the second width W1 between the second portion **110b** of the first housing structure **110** and the second portion **120b** of the second housing structure **120**, which are symmetrical in shape with each other. According to an embodiment, the first portion **110a** and second portion **110b** of the first housing structure **110** may be formed to have different distances from the folding axis A. The width of the recess **101** is not limited thereto. According to an embodiment, the recess **101** may have two or more different widths depending on the shape of the sensor area **131d** or the asymmetrical shape portions of the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120**.

[0046] According to an embodiment, the first housing structure **110** and the second housing

structure **120** may at least partially be formed of a metal or non-metallic material with a rigidity selected to support the display **130**. According to an embodiment, the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120** may at least partially include an electrically conductive material. When the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120** include an electrically conductive material, the electronic device **100** may transmit/receive radio waves via the electrically conductive portions of the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120**. For example, the processor or communication module of the electronic device may perform wireless communication using a portion of the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120**.

[0047] According to an embodiment, the sensor area **131d** may be formed adjacent to one corner of the first housing structure **110** and to have a predetermined area. However, the placement, shape, or size of the sensor area **131d** is not limited to that shown in the drawings. For example, according to an embodiment, the sensor area **131d** may be provided in a different corner of the first housing structure **110** or in any area between the top corner and the bottom corner. According to an embodiment, the sensor area **131d** may be disposed in at least an area of the second housing structure **120**. According to an embodiment, the sensor area **131d** may be disposed to extend to the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120**. According to an embodiment, the electronic device **100** may include components exposed from its front surface through the sensor area **131d** or one or more openings prepared in the sensor area **131d** and may perform various functions by way of the components. The components arranged in the sensor area **131d** may include at least one of, e.g., a front camera device, a proximity sensor, an illuminance sensor, an iris recognition sensor, an ultrasonic sensor, or an indicator.

[0048] According to an embodiment, the first back cover **140** may be disposed on the second surface **112** of the first housing structure **110** and may have a substantially rectangular periphery. According to an embodiment, the periphery of the first back cover **140** may be at least partially surrounded by the first housing structure **110**. Similarly, the second back cover **150** may be disposed on the fourth surface **122** of the second housing structure **120** and its periphery may be at least partially surrounded by the second housing structure **120**.

[0049] In the shown embodiment, the first back cover **140** and the second back cover **150** may be substantially symmetrical in shape with respect to the folding axis A. According to an embodiment, the first back cover **140** and the second back cover **150** may have other various different shapes. According to an embodiment, the first back cover **140** may be integrally formed with the first housing structure **110**, and the second back cover **150** may be integrally formed with the second housing structure **120**.

[0050] According to an embodiment, a combined structure of the first back cover **140**, the second back cover **150**, the first housing structure **110**, and the second housing structure **120** may provide a space where various components (e.g., a printed circuit board, antenna module, sensor module, or battery) of the electronic device **100** may be arranged. According to an embodiment, one or more components may be arranged or visually exposed on/through the back surface of the electronic device **100**. For example, one or more components or sensors may be visually exposed through a first back surface area **141** of the first back cover **140**. According to an embodiment, the sensor may include a proximity sensor, a rear camera device, and/or flash. According to an embodiment, a sub display **152** may be at least visually exposed through a second back surface area **151** of the second back cover **150**.

[0051] The display **130** may be disposed in a space formed by the pair of housing structures **110** and **120**. For example, the display **130** may be seated in a recess (e.g., the recess **101** of FIG. 1) formed by the pair of housing structures **110** and **120**, and the display **130** may be disposed to occupy substantially most of the front surface of the electronic device **100**. For example, the front surface of the electronic device **100** may include the display **130**, a partial area (e.g., an edge area) of the first housing structure **110**, which is adjacent to the display **130**, and a partial area (e.g., an

edge area) of the second housing structure **120**. According to an embodiment, the back surface of the electronic device **100** may include the first back cover **140**, a partial area (e.g., an edge area) of the first housing structure **110**, which is adjacent to the first back cover **140**, the second back cover **150**, and a partial area (e.g., an edge area) of the second housing structure **120**, which is adjacent to the second back cover **150**.

[0052] According to an embodiment, the display **130** may mean a display at least a portion of which may be transformed to be flat or curved. According to an embodiment, the display **130** may include a folding area **131c**, a first area **131a** disposed on one side of the folding portion **131c** (e.g., a right-hand area of the folding portion **131c**), and a second area **131b** disposed on the opposite side of the folding portion **131c** (e.g., a left-hand area of the folding portion **131c**). For example, the first area **131a** may be disposed on the first surface **111** of the first housing structure **110**, and the second area **131b** may be disposed on the third surface **121** of the second housing structure **120**. For example, the display **130** may extend from the first surface **111** through the hinge structure **164** of FIG. 3 to the third surface **121**, and its area (e.g., the folding area **131c**) corresponding to, at least, the hinge structure may be a flexible area that may transform from flat to curved.

[0053] According to an embodiment, the segmentation of the display **130** is merely an example, and the display **130** may be divided into a plurality of (e.g., four or more or two) areas depending on the structure or function of the display **130**. As an example, in the embodiment shown in FIG. 1, the folding area **131c** may extend in the vertical axis (e.g., the y axis of FIG. 3) parallel with the folding axis A, and the area of the display **130** may be divided by the folding area **131c** or the folding axis A. In another embodiment, the area of the display **130** may be divided by another folding portion (e.g., a folding area parallel with the horizontal axis (e.g., the x axis of FIG. 3) or another folding axis (e.g., a folding axis parallel with the x axis of FIG. 3)). The above-described area segmentation is merely physical segmentation by the pair of housing structures **110** and **120** and hinge structure (e.g., the hinge structure **164** of FIG. 3) and, substantially, the display **130** may display a single whole screen via the pair of housing structures **110** and **120** and the hinge structure (e.g., the hinge structure **164** of FIG. 3).

[0054] According to an embodiment, the first area **131a** and the second area **131b** may be overall symmetrical in shape with respect to the folding area **131c**. However, unlike the second area **131b**, the first area **131a** may include a notch area (e.g., the notch area **133** of FIG. 3) that provides the sensor area **131d** and, in the remaining area, be symmetrical in shape with the second area **131b**. For example, the first area **131a** and the second area **131b** may include symmetrical portions and asymmetrical portions.

[0055] Referring to FIG. 3, the hinge cover **165** may be disposed between the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120** to hide the internal components (e.g., the hinge structure **164** of FIG. 3). According to an embodiment, the hinge cover **165** may be hidden by a portion of the first housing structure **110** and second housing structure **120** or be exposed to the outside depending on the operation state (e.g., the unfolded state or folded state) of the electronic device **100**.

[0056] Described below are the operation of the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120** and each area of the display **130** depending on the operation state (e.g., the unfolded state and folded state) of the electronic device.

[0057] According to an embodiment, when the electronic device **100** is in the unfolded state (e.g., the state as shown in FIG. 1), the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120** are 180-degree angled therebetween, and the first area **131a** and second area **131b** of the display **130** may be placed to display screen in the same direction, e.g., in directions parallel with each other. The folding area **131c** may be flush with the first area **131a** and the second area **131b**.

[0058] Referring to FIG. 2, according to an embodiment, when the electronic device is in the folded state (e.g., the state as shown in FIG. 2), the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120** may face each other. For example, in the folded state (e.g., the state as shown

in FIG. 2) of the electronic device **100**, the first area **131a** and the second area **131b** of the display **130** may be rendered to face each other, angled at a small angle (e.g., from 0 degrees to 10 degrees) therebetween. In the folded state (e.g., the state as shown in FIG. 2) of the electronic device **100**, the folding area **131c** may at least partially form a curved surface with a predetermined curvature. [0059] According to an embodiment, when the electronic device **100** is in an intermediate state, the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120** may be angled therebetween at a predetermined angle, e.g., 90 degrees or 120 degrees. For example, in the intermediate state, the first area **131a** and second area **131b** of the display **130** may be angled therebetween at an angle larger than the angle when it is in the folded state and smaller than the angle when it is in the unfolded state. The folding area **131c** may at least partially have a curved surface with a predetermined curvature and, in this case, the curvature may be smaller than that when it is in the folded state.

[0060] FIG. 3 is an exploded perspective view illustrating an electronic device **100** according to an embodiment of the disclosure.

[0061] Referring to FIG. 3, according to an embodiment, an electronic device **100** may include a display **130**, a supporting member assembly **160**, at least one printed circuit board **170**, a first housing structure **110**, a second housing structure **120**, a first back cover **140**, and a second back cover **150**. In the disclosure, the display **130** may be interchangeably used with a display module or display assembly.

[0062] The display **130** may include a display panel **131** (e.g., a flexible display panel) and one or more plates **132** or layers seated on the display panel **131**. According to an embodiment, the plate **132** may be disposed between the display panel **131** and the supporting member assembly **160**. The display panel **131** may be disposed on at least a portion of one surface (e.g., the Z-axis facing surface of FIG. 3) of the plate **132**. The plate **132** may have a shape corresponding to the display panel **131**. For example, a portion of the plate **132** may have a shape corresponding to the shape of the notch area **133** of the display panel **131**.

[0063] The supporting member assembly **160** may include a first supporting member **161**, a second supporting member **162**, a hinge structure **164** disposed with the first supporting member **161** and the second supporting member **162**, a hinge cover **165** covering the hinge structure **164** when the hinge structure **164** is viewed from the outside, and a wiring member **163** (e.g., a flexible printed circuit board (FPCB)) crossing the first supporting member **161** and the second supporting member **162**.

[0064] According to an embodiment, the supporting member assembly **160** may be disposed with the plate **132** and at least one printed circuit board **170**. As an example, the first supporting member **161** may be disposed with the first area **131a** of the display **130** and a first printed circuit board **171**. The second supporting member **162** may be disposed with the second area **131b** of the display **130** and a second printed circuit board **172**.

[0065] According to an embodiment, the wiring member **163** and the hinge structure **164** may be at least partially disposed inside the supporting member assembly **160**. The wiring member **163** may be disposed in a direction (e.g., the x-axis direction) crossing the first supporting member **161** and the second supporting member **162**. The wiring member **163** may be disposed in a direction (e.g., the x-axis direction) perpendicular to the folding axis (e.g., the folding axis A of FIG. 1 or the y axis) of the folding area **131c**.

[0066] According to an embodiment, the hinge structure **164** may include a hinge module **164a**, a first hinge plate **164b**, and/or a second hinge plate **164c**. According to an embodiment, the first hinge plate **164b** may be mounted inside the first housing structure **110**, and the second hinge plate **164c** may be mounted inside the second housing structure **120**. According to an embodiment, the first hinge plate **164b** may be directly mounted on the first supporting member **161**, and the second hinge plate **164c** may be directly mounted on the second supporting member **162**. According to an embodiment, the first hinge plate **164b** (or second hinge plate **164c**) may be directly mounted in

other structure (e.g., a first rotation supporting surface **114** or second rotation supporting surface **124**) inside the first housing structure **110** (or the second housing structure **120**). For example, the structure in which the first hinge plate **164b** (or the second hinge plate **164c**) is mounted inside the first housing structure **110** (or the second housing structure **120**) may be varied according to embodiments. In another embodiment, the hinge module **164a** may be mounted on the first hinge plate **164b** and the second hinge plate **164c**, rotatably connecting the second hinge plate **164c** to the first hinge plate **164b**. For example, a folding axis (e.g., the folding axis A of FIG. 1) may be formed by the hinge module **164a**, and the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120** (or the first supporting member **161** and the second supporting member **162**) may be rotated on each other substantially with respect to the folding axis A.

[0067] As mentioned above, the at least one printed circuit board **170** may include the first printed circuit board **171** disposed on the first supporting member **161** and the second printed circuit board **172** disposed on the second supporting member **162**. The first printed circuit board **171** and the second printed circuit board **172** may be disposed inside a space formed by the supporting member assembly **160**, the first housing structure **110**, the second housing structure **120**, the first back cover **140**, and the second back cover **150**. Components for implementing various functions of the electronic device **100** may be mounted on the first printed circuit board **171** and the second printed circuit board **172**.

[0068] According to an embodiment, the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120** may be assembled together to be coupled to both sides of the supporting member assembly **160**, with the display **130** coupled to the supporting member assembly **160**. The first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120** may be slidably coupled to two opposite sides of the supporting member assembly **160**, e.g., the first supporting member **161** and the second supporting member **162**, respectively. The first supporting member **161** and the second supporting member **162** may substantially be received in the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120** and, according to an embodiment, may be interpreted as the respective portions of the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120**.

[0069] According to an embodiment, the first housing structure **110** may include a first rotation supporting surface **114**, and the second housing structure **120** may include a second rotation supporting surface **124** corresponding to the first rotation supporting surface **114**. The first rotation supporting surface **114** and the second rotation supporting surface **124** may include a curved surface corresponding to a curved surface included in the hinge cover **165**.

[0070] According to an embodiment, when the electronic device **100** is in the unfolded state (e.g., the state as shown in FIG. 1), the first rotation supporting surface **114** and the second rotation supporting surface **124** may cover the hinge cover **165**, allowing the hinge cover **165** to be not or minimally exposed to the back surface of the electronic device **100**. According to an embodiment, when the electronic device **100** is the folded state (e.g., the state as shown in FIG. 2), the first rotation supporting surface **114** and the second rotation supporting surface **124** may rotate along the curved surface of the hinge cover **165**, maximally exposing the hinge cover **165** to the back surface of the electronic device **100**.

[0071] In the above description, the ordinal numbers as in the first housing structure **110**, second housing structure **120**, first side surface member **113** and the second side surface member **123** have been used merely for distinguishing the components, and it should be noted that the scope of the disclosure is not limited by the use of ordinal numbers. For example, although the sensor area **131d** is formed in the first housing structure **110** in the above example, the sensor area **131d** may be formed in the second housing structure **120** or in each of the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120**. According to an embodiment, although the first back surface area **141** and the sub display **152** are disposed in the first back cover **140** and the second back cover **150**, respectively, the first back surface area **141** for placing, e.g., a sensor, and the sub display **152** for outputting screen, both, may be disposed in either the first back cover **140** or the second back

cover **150**.

[0072] The following description is made with reference to FIGS. **1** to **3** as necessary. In the following embodiments, the components identical to those in the above embodiments or easy to understand from the description of the above embodiments are denoted with or without the same reference numerals and their detailed description may be skipped. In the following description, the “state as shown in FIG. **1** in which the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120** are unfolded side-by-side” may be denoted a “first position,” and the “state in which the first housing structure **110** and the second housing structure **120** are folded to face each other” may be denoted a “second position.”

[0073] FIG. **4** is a plan view illustrating some components of an electronic device **200** (e.g., the electronic device **100** of FIGS. **1** to **3**) according to an embodiment of the disclosure.

[0074] FIGS. **5** and **6** are plan views illustrating a combined structure of the components of FIG. **4** according to various embodiments of the disclosure.

[0075] Referring to FIGS. **4**, **5**, and **6**, the electronic device **200** may include housing structures (e.g., the first housing structure **110** and second housing structure **120** of FIGS. **1** to **3**), supporting members (e.g., the first supporting member **161** and the second supporting member **162** of FIG. **3**), a flexible printed circuit board (e.g., the wiring structure or flexible printed circuit board **163** of FIG. **3**), a hinge module(s) (e.g., the hinge module **164a** of FIG. **3**), and/or hinge plates (e.g., the first hinge plate **164b** and second hinge plate **164c** of FIG. **3**).

[0076] According to an embodiment, the first supporting member **161** or the second supporting member **162** may be mounted inside the first housing structure **110** or the second housing structure **120**. For example, the first supporting member **161** may be disposed between the display (e.g., the display **130** of FIG. **3**) and a first printed circuit board (e.g., the first printed circuit board **171** of FIG. **3**), and the second supporting member **162** may be disposed between the display **130** and a second printed circuit board (e.g., the second printed circuit board **172** of FIG. **3**). According to an embodiment, the first hinge plate **164b** and the second hinge plate **164c** may be coupled to be rotatable on the hinge module **164a** with respect to each other. The first hinge plate **164b** may be mounted on the first supporting member **161**, and the second hinge plate **164c** may be mounted on the second supporting member **162**. For example, the first housing structure **110** (or the first supporting member **161**) may be rotatably coupled with the second housing structure **120** (or the second supporting member **162**) via the hinge structure **164** (e.g., the hinge module **164a**, the first hinge plate **164b**, and/or the second hinge plate **164c**)).

[0077] According to an embodiment, the first hinge plate **164b** or the second hinge plate **164c** may include at least one opening **261a**. The opening **261a** may be formed through the first hinge plate **164b** or the second hinge plate **164c** in a direction (e.g., the z direction of FIG. **3**) in which the display **130** faces. As described below with reference to FIG. **7**, the first hinge plate **164b** or the second hinge plate **164c** may further include a frame portion (e.g., the frame portion **361b** of FIG. **7**) surrounding at least a portion of the opening **261a**. For example, the frame portion **361b** may be a structure defining at least a portion of the opening **261a** and may form a portion of an edge of the first hinge plate **164b** or the second hinge plate **164c**.

[0078] According to an embodiment, the first hinge plate **164b** or second hinge plate **164c**, along with the first supporting member **161** or the second supporting member **162**, may support the display **130**. For example, a folding area (e.g., the folding area **131c** of FIG. **1** or **3**) of the display **130** may be at least partially supported by the first hinge plate **164b** or the second hinge plate **164c**. According to an embodiment, when there is the user's touch (e.g., a touch input), the display **130** may be deformed in the area corresponding to the opening **261a**. The frame portion **361b** may support at least a portion of the display **130** in the folding area **131c**, thereby preventing the display **130** from deforming due to an external environment (e.g., the user's touch).

[0079] According to an embodiment, there may be provided one or more flexible printed circuit boards **163** which may cross the hinge structure **164** (e.g., the first hinge plate **164b** or the second

hinge plate **164c**) and extend from the inside of the first housing structure **110** to the inside of the second housing structure **120**. For example, the flexible printed circuit board **163** may electrically connect an internal component (e.g., the first printed circuit board **171** of FIG. 3) of the first housing structure **110** and an internal component (e.g., the second printed circuit board **172** of FIG. 3) of the second housing structure **120**. According to an embodiment, the flexible printed circuit board **163** may be disposed across the opening **261a**. For example, when viewed from above a first surface (e.g., the first surface **111** of FIG. 1) or a third surface (e.g., the third surface **121** of FIG. 1) of the display **130**, a portion of the flexible printed circuit board **163** may be disposed to overlap the opening **261a**. According to an embodiment, some portion (e.g., the portion C of FIG. 4) of the flexible printed circuit board **163** may be disposed in the internal space of the hinge cover (e.g., the hinge cover **165** of FIG. 3) while remaining in a curved shape (e.g., the letter U shape). When the electronic device **200** transforms between a first position (e.g., the position or shape as shown in FIG. 1) in which the electronic device **200** unfolds and a second position (e.g., the position or shape as shown in FIG. 2), the flexible printed circuit board **163** (e.g., the portion C of FIG. 4) may be transformed corresponding to the transforming of the electronic device **200**.

[0080] According to an embodiment, the flexible printed circuit board **163** may be disposed curved inside the hinge cover **165** and, in that position, the flexible printed circuit board **163** may tend to turn back flat (e.g., accumulating elastic restorative force). The accumulated elastic restorative force may deform a portion of the flexible printed circuit board **163**. For example, by the elastic restorative force, the flexible printed circuit board **163** may contact or rub against other structures (or electronic components) inside the electronic device **200**. According to an embodiment, it may be hard to predict the deformation of the flexible printed circuit board **163** by the elastic restorative force when the electronic device **200** transforms. According to an embodiment, the electronic device **200** may further include a fixing member **263**, permitting deformation of the flexible printed circuit board **163** in the internal space of the hinge cover **165** and restricting the deformation of the flexible printed circuit board **163** in the area or space off the hinge cover **165**. For example, the fixing member **263** may set a portion that may be deformed in the flexible printed circuit board **163**.

[0081] According to an embodiment, the fixing member **263** may be mounted on the first hinge plate **164b** or the second hinge plate **164c**, and a portion of the flexible printed circuit board **163** may be mounted or fastened to the fixing member **263**. According to an embodiment, a pair of fixing members **263** may be mounted on the flexible printed circuit board **163**, and one of the fixing members **263** may be mounted on the first hinge plate **164b**, and the other may be mounted on the second hinge plate **164c**. According to an embodiment, a portion (hereinafter, a 'deforming portion C') of the flexible printed circuit board **163**, which is positioned between the pair of fixing members **263** may be disposed inside the hinge cover **165**. For example, in the deformation of the electronic device **200**, the deforming portion C of the flexible printed circuit board **163** may be deformed inside the hinge cover **165**. Thus, it may be predicted that when the electronic device **200** transforms, the deformation of the flexible printed circuit board **163** will occur at the deforming portion C, and a measure may easily be taken to prevent contact or friction of the flexible printed circuit board **163** to other structure(s).

[0082] According to an embodiment, the fixing member **263** may be disposed in the opening **261a**. For example, the fixing member **263** may be substantially received in the opening **261a**, and two opposite ends of the fixing member **263** may be fastened, at the edge of the opening **261a**, to the first hinge plate **164b** or the second hinge plate **164c**. According to an embodiment, allowing the fixing member **263** to be received in the opening **261a** may prevent or reduce an increase in thickness due to a structure (e.g., the fixing member) which is disposed to overlap the first hinge plate **164b** or the second hinge plate **164c**. For example, the fixing member **263** may provide an environment in which the deformation of the flexible printed circuit board **163** is predictable while suppressing an increase in the thickness of the electronic device **200** by being at least partially

received in the opening **261a**.

[0083] According to an embodiment, the electronic device **200** may include an elastic member (e.g., the elastic member **365** of FIGS. **7** to **9**), preventing wear or friction between the internal structures or electronic components of the electronic device **200**. The configuration of the elastic member **365** is described below in greater detail with reference to FIGS. **7** and **8**.

[0084] FIGS. **7** and **8** are enlarged views of area E of FIG. **4** according to various embodiments of the disclosure.

[0085] Referring to FIGS. **7** and **8**, the elastic member **365** may be disposed in the frame portion **361b**. As described below with reference to FIG. **9**, the elastic member **365** may be attached to the frame portion **361b** and be positioned to face the flexible printed circuit board **163**. For example, the elastic member **365** may be disposed, at least, between the flexible printed circuit board **163** and the frame portion **631b**. According to an embodiment, a portion adjacent to the deforming portion (e.g., the deforming portion C of FIG. **4**) of the flexible printed circuit board **163** may be formed of a synthetic resin. For example, at least, the frame portion **361b** or first hinge plate **164b** (or the second hinge plate **164c**) may be formed of a synthetic resin. According to an embodiment, as other structure, e.g., at least the frame portion **361b**, around the deforming portion C is formed of a synthetic resin, the flexible printed circuit board **163** may be prevented from wear or damage despite contact or friction.

[0086] According to an embodiment, a plurality of openings **261a** may be formed in each of the first hinge plate **164b** and the second hinge plate **164c** and may be disposed adjacent to each other in the position (e.g., the first position) of FIG. **1**. For example, the frame portion **361b** may be formed in each of the first hinge plate **164b** and the second hinge plate **164c** and, as shown in FIG. **7**, the frame portions **361b** may be disposed side-by-side in the first position as shown in FIG. **7**. The electronic device **200** may include a plurality of elastic members **365** disposed (or attached) in the frame portions **361b**. For example, the elastic member disposed on the first hinge plate **164b** and the elastic member disposed on the second hinge plate **164c** may be disposed side-by-side in the first position as shown in FIG. **8**.

[0087] According to an embodiment, the openings **261a** formed in the first hinge plate **164b** and the second hinge plate **164c** may be disposed to face each other in the position (e.g., the second position) of FIG. **2**, and the elastic members **365** may be disposed to face each other, with at least portions of (e.g., the frame portions **631b**) the first hinge plate **164b** and the second hinge plate **164c** disposed therebetween. According to an embodiment, the flexible printed circuit board **163** may be disposed to face one surface (e.g., the surface where the elastic member **365** is disposed) of each of the first hinge plate **164b** and the second hinge plate **164c** and, at least in the area corresponding to the frame portion **361b**, may be disposed to face the elastic member **365**.

[0088] According to an embodiment, the elastic member **365** may include a flexible or elastic material, such as sponge, silicone, or urethane. An attaching area **R1** may be formed on the surface facing the first hinge plate **164b** or the second hinge plate **164c** (e.g., the frame portion **631b**). For example, the elastic member **365** may be attached to the first hinge plate **164b** or the second hinge plate **164c**. According to an embodiment, as shown in FIG. **7**, when viewed from above the first surface or third surface (e.g., the first surface **111** or third surface **121** of FIG. **1**) of the electronic device **200**, a portion of the elastic member **365** may be disposed to overlap the opening **261a** or another portion may project from the edge of the first hinge plate **164b** or the second hinge plate **164c**. For example, on the surface where the attaching area **R1** is formed, the elastic member **365** may include an area which is not attached to the frame portion. According to an embodiment, the area which is not attached to the frame portion **361b** on one surface of the elastic member **365** may include an area with no adhesive (e.g., the non-attaching area **R2** of FIG. **9**). According to an embodiment, at least a portion of the non-attaching area **R2** may be disposed to directly face the frame portion **631b**. According to an embodiment, another portion of the non-attaching area **R2** may be disposed to project beyond the edge of the first hinge plate **164b** or the second hinge plate

164c.

[0089] FIGS. 9, 10, and 11 are cross-sectional views illustrating various example elastic members, as taken by cutting a hinge plate(s) along line B-B' of FIG. 8, according to various embodiments of the disclosure.

[0090] Referring to FIG. 9, the elastic member 365 may include an elastic material layer 365a shaped as a flat plate with a width larger than the frame portion 361b and, as including the adhesive material layer 365b, the elastic member 365 or the elastic material layer 365a may be attached to the frame portion 361b. According to an embodiment, the elastic material layer 365a may include sponge, silicone, or urethane. For example, the elastic material layer 365a has flexibility or elasticity, thereby preventing wear or damage due to contact or friction with another structure. In FIG. 9, the adhesive material layer 365b may be formed of an adhesive material or adhesive tape applied substantially on one surface of the elastic material layer 365a. For example, although FIG. 9 illustrates the elastic material layer 365a and the adhesive material layer 365b as separate layers, the thickness of the adhesive material layer 365b may be substantially too small to be recognized with the naked eye.

[0091] According to an embodiment, the area (e.g., the attaching area R1) where the adhesive material layer 365b is provided may be smaller than the width and length of the elastic member 365 (e.g., the elastic material layer 365a). For example, at least a portion, around the attaching area R1, of the surface facing the frame portion 361b may be the non-attaching area R2 where no adhesive material is provided. According to an embodiment, the non-attaching area R2 may be shaped substantially as a polygon or closed curve (or area) surrounding the attaching area R1, and at least a portion of the non-attaching area R2 may be disposed to directly face the frame portion 361b. For example, the attaching area R1 may be formed in a width and length smaller than the width and length of the frame portion 361b. Thus, the adhesive material between the frame portion 361b and the elastic material layer 365a may be positioned substantially in the area which the frame portion 361b or elastic material layer 365a provides.

[0092] Referring to FIG. 10, the elastic member 465 may be formed to substantially surround the frame portion 361b. For example, the elastic member 465 may be formed of silicone or urethane to surround the outer circumferential surface of the frame portion 361b. According to an embodiment, if the elastic member 465 is formed of silicone or urethane, the elastic member 465 may be formed in such a manner as to wrap around the frame portion 361b by insert molding or liquid silicone molding. According to an embodiment, if the elastic member 465 is formed by insert molding or liquid silicone molding, the elastic member 465 may be formed, attached or coupled to the frame portion 361b, although not including the adhesive material layer (e.g., the adhesive material layer 365b of FIG. 9).

[0093] Referring to FIG. 11, the elastic member 565 may be formed to surround one surface of the frame portion 361b while partially surrounding another surface of the frame portion 361b. The elastic member 565 shown in FIG. 11 may be attached to the frame portion 361b via an adhesive material (e.g., the adhesive material layer 365b of FIG. 9). Before attached to the frame portion 361b, the elastic member 565 may be deformed to various shapes within a predetermined range. According to an embodiment, if formed of silicone or urethane, the elastic member 565 may be attached to the frame portion 361b while being simultaneously formed by insert molding.

[0094] According to an embodiment, the above-described elastic member, e.g., the elastic member 365, 465, or 565 of FIGS. 7 to 11, may be disposed to at least partially surround the frame portion 361b, preventing the flexible printed circuit board 163 from directly contacting the frame portion 361b. For example, the elastic member 365, 465, or 565 may prevent wear or damage which may arise when the flexible printed circuit board 163 contacts another structure (e.g., the frame portion 631b).

[0095] FIGS. 12 and 13 are views illustrating an unfolded state of housing structures (e.g., the first housing structure 110 and second housing structure 120 of FIGS. 1 to 4) of an electronic device

600 (e.g., the electronic device **100** or **200** of FIGS. **1** to **4**) according to various embodiments of the disclosure.

[0096] Referring to FIGS. **12** and **13**, in a first position, e.g., the unfolded state of the first housing structure and second housing structure (e.g., the first housing structure **110** and second housing structure **120** of FIGS. **1** to **4**) of the electronic device **600**, the flexible printed circuit board (e.g., the flexible printed circuit board **163** of FIG. **4**) may be disposed substantially flat, and the deforming portion C (e.g., the deforming portion C of FIG. **4**) may be curved (e.g., in the shape of the letter “U”) inside the hinge cover **165**. According to an embodiment, in the first position, the deforming portion C may include a portion with a positive curvature radius (hereinafter, a “first curved area P”) and a portion with a negative curvature radius (hereinafter, a “second curved area N”).

[0097] According to an embodiment, the elastic member (e.g., the elastic member **365** of FIGS. **7** to **9**) may be attached to the first hinge plate **164b** or the second hinge plate **164c** (e.g., the frame portion(s) **361b** of FIG. **7** or **9**) and be disposed to face the flexible printed circuit board **163** (e.g., the first curved area P) in the first position. According to an embodiment, in the first position, the second curved area N may be positioned adjacent to the elastic member **365**. For example, the second curved area N may be formed in each of the area corresponding to the first hinge plate **164b** and the area corresponding to the second hinge plate **164c** on the flexible printed circuit board **163**. According to an embodiment, the first curved area P may be an area between the second curved areas N and may be disposed substantially in a shape with a positive curvature radius inside the hinge cover **165**.

[0098] FIGS. **14** and **15** are views illustrating a folded state of housing structures (e.g., the first housing structure **110** and second housing structure **120** of FIGS. **1** to **4**) of an electronic device **600** (e.g., the electronic device **100** or **200** of FIGS. **1** to **4**) according to various embodiments of the disclosure.

[0099] Referring to FIGS. **14** and **15**, the flexible printed circuit board **163** may be disposed substantially in the shape of the letter “U.” For example, the deforming portion (e.g., the deforming portion C of FIG. **4**) may be disposed to maintain the shape with the positive curvature, and the remaining portions of the flexible printed circuit board **163** may be disposed substantially in parallel with each other while facing each other. According to an embodiment, in the second position, a portion of the flexible printed circuit board **163** disposed inside the first housing structure **110** and another portion of the flexible printed circuit board **163** disposed inside the second housing structure **120** may be disposed to face each other and may be connected together via the deforming portion C. It should be noted here that the sentence “two different portions of the flexible printed circuit board **163** are disposed to face each other” describes a relative position shown in the cross-sectional view taken along line B-B’ of FIG. **8** as obtained by cutting the electronic device (e.g., the electronic device **100** or **200** of FIGS. **1** to **6**). According to an embodiment, if the electronic device **600** is projected along the z-axis direction of FIG. **3** in the folded state, two different portions of the flexible printed circuit board **163** may be disposed substantially in parallel with each other in positions offset from each other. For example, although the relative positions of the two different portions of the flexible printed circuit board **163** are mentioned in connection with the instant embodiment, it should be noted that embodiments of the disclosure are not limited thereto. According to an embodiment, another structure, e.g., a portion of the display **130**, may be disposed between the two mutually-facing portions of the flexible printed circuit board **163**.

[0100] According to an embodiment, when the electronic device **600** transforms between the first position and the second position, the shape or position of the flexible printed circuit board **163** may vary. For example, a look at the variations in curvature radius, based on comparison between FIGS. **13** and **15** reveals that the curvature radius of the second curved area N is substantially infinite in the second position and, in the first position, it is smaller than the curvature radius of the first

curved area P. Regarding the variations in position between FIGS. 13 and 15, in the first position, the second curved area N is positioned adjacent to the frame portion 361b or the elastic member 365 and, in the second position, the first curved area P is positioned adjacent to the frame portion 361b or the elastic member 365 while substantially facing the frame portion 361b or the elastic member 365. According to an embodiment, regardless of the first position or second position, the flexible printed circuit board 163 may be disposed to partially face the display (e.g., the display 130 of FIG. 3), a predetermined interval away from the display.

[0101] According to an embodiment, the deformation or relocation of the flexible printed circuit board 163 due to the transformation of the electronic device 600 may be a cause of contact or friction to another structure. For example, as mentioned above, in the first position, the second curved area N may be positioned adjacent to the frame portion 361b and, in the second position, the first curved area P may be positioned adjacent to the frame portion 361b. According to an embodiment, the deformation of the flexible printed circuit board 163 by the accumulated elastic restorative force may be substantially difficult to predict. For example, the shape of the flexible printed circuit board 163 according to the distribution of the elastic restorative force may differ from the state shown in FIG. 13 or 15. If the state of the flexible printed circuit board 163 differs from that shown in FIG. 13 or 15, the second curved area N, in the first position, may come in contact with the frame portion 361b and, in the second position, the first curved area P may come in contact with the frame portion 631b.

[0102] According to an embodiment, the elastic member 365 is disposed substantially between the frame portion 361b and the flexible printed circuit board 163, thus preventing the flexible printed circuit board 163 from directly contacting the frame portion 361b. For example, when the flexible printed circuit board 163 deforms or moves to contact another structure (e.g., the frame portion 631b), the elastic member 365 may contact the flexible printed circuit board earlier than other structures. According to an embodiment, the elastic member 365 is formed of a flexible or elastic material and is disposed to contact the flexible printed circuit board 163. Thus, the elastic member 365 may suppress wear or damage due to contact or friction of the flexible printed circuit board 163. According to an embodiment, as the flexible printed circuit board 163 is disposed to rub against the elastic member, the flexible printed circuit board 163 may be prevented from damage due to contact or friction.

[0103] According to an embodiment, if the adhesive material (e.g., the adhesive material layer 365b of FIG. 9) is exposed to the outside of the elastic member 365, it may stick to, or contaminate, the flexible printed circuit board 163. The sticking of the adhesive material layer 365b or contamination of the flexible printed circuit board 163 by the adhesive material layer 365b may cause a noise when the flexible printed circuit board 163 deforms. According to an embodiment, in the electronic device (e.g., the electronic device 100, 200, or 600 of FIGS. 1 to 4, FIG. 13, or FIG. 15), a non-attaching area (e.g., the non-attaching area R2 of FIG. 9) may be provided around the adhesive material layer. For example, as set forth above in connection with the embodiment of FIG. 9, although the elastic member 365 includes an adhesive material layer (e.g., the adhesive material layer 365b of FIG. 9), the width or length of the adhesive material layer 365b may be smaller than the elastic member 365 (e.g., the elastic material layer 365a of FIG. 9) or the frame portion 361b, and the non-attaching area R2 may be formed around the adhesive material layer 365b. For example, although the flexible printed circuit board 163 contacts the elastic member 365, the non-attaching area R2 may prevent the flexible printed circuit board 163 from contamination due to the adhesive material.

[0104] FIGS. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 are views illustrating example operations of manufacturing an elastic member (e.g., the elastic member 365 or 701 of FIG. 7 to 9 or 20) of an electronic device according to various embodiments of the disclosure.

[0105] According to an embodiment, a release sheet 711 having an adhesive material 713a applied thereto is cut and attached to an elastic material layer 715 (e.g., the elastic material layer 365a of

FIG. 9), forming an elastic member **701** (e.g., the elastic member **365** of FIGS. 7 to 9). FIGS. **16** and **17** are a plan view and cross-sectional view illustrating the release sheet **711** to which the adhesive material **713a** has been applied.

[0106] Referring to FIGS. **16** and **17**, the adhesive material **713a** may be attached or applied to the release sheet **711** and may include a double-side tape or adhesive. The release sheet **711** is cut in the area where the adhesive material **713a** is provided, forming the adhesive material layer **713b** (e.g., the adhesive material layer **365b** of FIG. 9) which is to be provided to the elastic member **701**.

[0107] FIGS. **18** and **19** illustrate the shape of the cut-off release sheet **711** (e.g., the shape in which the adhesive material layer **713b** has been formed). According to an embodiment, with the release sheet **711** cut off, the adhesive material layer **713b** may be attached to the elastic material layer **715** (e.g., the elastic material layer **365a** of FIG. 9).

[0108] Referring to FIGS. **20** and **21**, the adhesive material layer **713b** may be attached to the elastic material layer **715**, forming the elastic member **701**. According to an embodiment, the elastic member **701** (e.g., the elastic material layer **715** and/or the adhesive material layer **713b**) may be cut to a proper length depending on the size (e.g., length) or shape of the portion (e.g., the frame portion **361b** of FIG. 7 or 9) to which the elastic member **701** is to be attached. For example, adjacent non-attaching areas (e.g., the non-attaching area **R2** of FIG. 9) may be formed on both sides of the adhesive material layer **713b**, but no non-attaching area may be provided on the top and bottom of the elastic material layer **715** of FIG. 20. The formed elastic member **701**, or the elastic member **701** cut to a proper length, may be attached to the frame portion (e.g., the frame portion **361b** of FIG. 7 or 9). Before attached to the frame portion **631b**, the release sheet **711** may be removed, and the adhesive material layer **713b** may attach the elastic material layer **715** to the frame portion **631b**.

[0109] FIGS. **22**, **23**, **24**, **25**, **26**, **27**, and **28** are views illustrating example operations of manufacturing an elastic member (e.g., the elastic member **365** or **801** of FIG. 9 or 27) of an electronic device according to various embodiments of the disclosure.

[0110] Referring to FIGS. **22** and **23**, an elastic material layer (e.g., the elastic material layer **815b**) of an elastic member **801** may be formed by cutting a flat material **815a**. According to an embodiment, an adhesive material layer (e.g., the adhesive material layer **813** of FIG. 25) may be formed by applying an adhesive material, with a mask **811** put in place.

[0111] Referring to FIG. 24, the mask **811** may be placed and, with an area where the adhesive material layer **813** is to be formed exposed, the adhesive material may be sprayed or applied, forming the adhesive material layer **813** in some area of the material **815a**.

[0112] Referring to FIG. 25 or 26, it illustrates an example in which the adhesive material layer **813** has been formed. At least a portion, around the adhesive material layer **813**, of one surface of the material **815a** may include an area (e.g., the non-attaching area **R2** of FIG. 9) where the adhesive material is not applied.

[0113] According to an embodiment, an elastic member (e.g., the elastic member **365** of FIG. 9) may be formed by forming the adhesive material layer **813** on one surface of the material **815a**. For example, the elastic member itself of FIG. 25 or 26 may be attached to the frame portion **361b** of FIG. 9.

[0114] Referring to FIGS. 27 and 28, an elastic member (e.g., the elastic member **801** of FIGS. 27 and 28) which is to be applied to an actual product may be formed by partially removing the material **815a**. For example, given, e.g., dimensional tolerances, the material **815a** may be formed with a width or length larger than the elastic material layer (e.g., the elastic material layer **815b** of FIGS. 27 and 28) which is to be applied to an actual product. After the adhesive material layer **813** is formed, a portion (e.g., a portion of the area where the adhesive material layer **813** is not provided) of the material **815a** may be removed, forming the elastic material layer **815b**. According to an embodiment, the elastic member **801** (e.g., the elastic material layer **815b** and/or the adhesive

material layer **813**) may be cut to a proper length depending on the size (e.g., length) or shape of the portion (e.g., the frame portion **361b** of FIG. 7 or 9) to which the elastic member **801** is to be attached. For example, adjacent non-attaching areas (e.g., the non-attaching area R2 of FIG. 9) may be formed on both sides of the adhesive material layer **813**, but no non-attaching area may be provided on the top and bottom of the elastic material layer **815b** of FIG. 27. The formed elastic member **801**, or the elastic member **801** cut to a proper length, may be attached to the frame portion (e.g., the frame portion **361b** of FIG. 7 or 9). Before attached to the frame portion **361b**, a release sheet (e.g., the release sheet **711** of FIG. 21) may be provided to prevent the adhesive material layer **813** from contamination by, e.g., foreign bodies.

[0115] According to an embodiment, an electronic device (e.g., the electronic device **100**, **200**, or **600** of FIG. 1 to 4, 13, or 15) comprises a first housing structure (e.g., the first housing structure **110** of FIGS. 1 to 4) including a first surface (e.g., the first surface **111** of FIG. 1) facing in a first direction, a second surface (e.g., the second surface **112** of FIG. 1) facing in a second direction opposite to the first direction, and a first side surface member at least partially surrounding a space between the first surface and the side surface, a second housing structure (e.g., the second housing structure **120** of FIGS. 1 to 4) including a third surface (e.g., the third surface **121** of FIG. 1) facing in a third direction, a fourth surface (e.g., the fourth surface **122** of FIG. 1) facing in a fourth direction opposite to the third direction, and a second side surface member at least partially surrounding a space between the third surface and the fourth surface, a hinge structure (e.g., the hinge structure **164** of FIG. 3 or 4) rotatably connecting the first housing structure and the second housing structure, providing a folding axis (e.g., the folding axis A of FIG. 1) on which the first housing structure and the second housing structure rotate, and including a first hinge plate (e.g., the first hinge plate **164b** of FIG. 3 or 4) mounted inside the first housing structure and a second hinge plate (e.g., the second hinge plate **164c** of FIG. 3 or 4) mounted inside the second housing structure, at least one flexible printed circuit board (e.g., the flexible printed circuit board **163** of FIG. 3, 4, 13, or 15) crossing the first hinge plate and the second hinge plate and extending from an inside of the first housing structure to an inside of the second housing structure, and at least one elastic member (e.g., the elastic member **365** of FIG. 7, 9, 13, or 15) disposed on at least one of the first hinge plate and the second hinge plate in a position adjacent to the folding axis, wherein the elastic member is disposed between the first hinge plate and the flexible printed circuit board and/or between the second hinge plate and the flexible printed circuit board.

[0116] According to an embodiment, the elastic member may include an attaching area (e.g., the attaching area R1 of FIG. 9) formed on a surface facing the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate and a non-attaching area (e.g., the non-attaching area R2 of FIG. 9) formed in at least a portion of a circumference of the attaching area, on the surface facing the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate.

[0117] According to an embodiment, the non-attaching area may be shaped as a polygon or a closed curve surrounding the attaching area.

[0118] According to an embodiment, the elastic member may include sponge, silicone, or urethane.

[0119] According to an embodiment, the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate may include at least one opening (e.g., the opening **261a** of FIG. 4, 7, or 8) formed through in the first direction or the second direction and a frame portion (e.g., the frame portion **361b** of FIG. 7) formed to surround or define at least a portion of the opening. The elastic member may be attached to the frame portion.

[0120] According to an embodiment, the frame portion may form a portion of an edge of the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate.

[0121] According to an embodiment, when viewed from above the first surface or the third surface, a portion of the flexible printed circuit board may be disposed to overlap the opening.

[0122] According to an embodiment, the elastic member may include an attaching area formed on a surface facing the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate and a non-attaching area formed in at

least a portion of a circumference of the attaching area, on the surface facing the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate. The attaching area may be attached to at least a portion of the frame portion.

[0123] According to an embodiment, the non-attaching area may be shaped as a polygon or closed curve surrounding the attaching area. At least a portion of the non-attaching area may be disposed to directly face the frame portion.

[0124] According to an embodiment, when viewed from above the first surface or the third surface, a portion of the non-attaching area may be disposed to overlap the opening or another portion of the non-attaching area protrudes from an edge of the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate.

[0125] According to an embodiment, the electronic device may further comprise a fixing member (e.g., the fixing member **263** of FIG. **4**) disposed in the opening and including a first end and a second end fixed to the first hinge plate and the second hinge plate, respectively. A portion of the flexible printed circuit board may be mounted on the fixing member.

[0126] According to an embodiment, the first housing structure and the second housing structure may rotate on the hinge structure between a first position where the first surface and the third surface are unfolded side-by-side to a second position where the first surface and the third surface are folded to face each other.

[0127] According to an embodiment, the elastic member may include a first elastic member disposed on the first hinge plate and a second elastic member disposed on the second hinge plate. In the first position, the first elastic member and the second elastic member may be disposed adjacent to each other and side-by-side and, in the second position, the first elastic member and the second elastic member may be disposed to face each other, with the first hinge plate and the second hinge plate disposed therebetween.

[0128] According to an embodiment, the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate may include at least one opening formed through in the first direction or the second direction and a frame portion formed to surround or define at least a portion of the opening. The elastic member may be attached to the frame portion.

[0129] According to an embodiment, the elastic member may include an attaching area formed on a surface facing the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate and a non-attaching area formed in at least a portion of a circumference of the attaching area, on the surface facing the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate. The attaching area may be attached to at least a portion of the frame portion.

[0130] According to an embodiment, an electronic device (e.g., the electronic device **100**, **200**, or **600** of FIG. **1** to **4**, **13**, or **15**) comprises a first housing structure, a second housing structure, a hinge structure rotatably connecting the first housing structure and the second housing structure and including a first hinge plate mounted inside the first housing structure and a second hinge plate mounted inside the second housing structure, at least one flexible printed circuit board crossing the first hinge plate and the second hinge plate and extending from an inside of the first housing structure to an inside of the second housing structure, and elastic members individually disposed on the first hinge plate and the second hinge plate and at least partially facing the flexible printed circuit board, wherein the elastic members include an attaching area formed on a surface facing the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate and a non-attaching area formed to abut at least two opposite sides of the attaching area on the surface facing the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate.

[0131] According to an embodiment, the first housing structure and the second housing structure may rotate on the hinge structure between a first position where the first housing structure and the second housing structure are unfolded side-by-side to a second position where the first housing structure and the second housing structure are folded to face each other. In the first position, the elastic members may be disposed adjacent to each other and side-by-side and, in the second position, the elastic members are disposed to face each other, with the first hinge plate and the

second hinge plate disposed therebetween.

[0132] According to an embodiment, the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate may include at least one opening formed through in the first direction or the second direction and a frame portion formed to surround or define at least a portion of the opening, wherein the attaching area is attached to the frame portion. At least a portion of the non-attaching area may be disposed to directly face the frame portion.

[0133] According to an embodiment, the electronic device may further comprise a fixing member disposed in the opening and including a first end and a second end fixed to the first hinge plate and the second hinge plate, respectively. A portion of the flexible printed circuit board may be mounted on the fixing member and be disposed on the opening.

[0134] According to an embodiment, the frame portion may form a portion of an edge of the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate.

[0135] According to an embodiment, the at least one flexible printed circuit board includes a deformable portion.

[0136] According to an embodiment, the deformable portion comprises a synthetic resin.

[0137] According to an embodiment, the deformable portion includes a first portion with a positive curvature radius, and a second portion with a negative curvature radius.

[0138] As is apparent from the foregoing description, according to various embodiments, the elastic member may be placed between the structures or electronic components which contact or rub against each other while the electronic device transforms. For example, the elastic member may secure or maintain a predetermined gap between the adjacent structures or electronic components. According to an embodiment, if a contact or friction occurs while the electronic device transforms, the elastic member may prevent direct contact between the adjacent structures or electronic components, suppressing wear or damage to the structures. According to an embodiment, although the electronic device is repeatedly transformed, the elastic member may mitigate or prevent wear to the internal structures or electronic components due to contact or friction and enhance the durability of the electronic device (e.g., the internal structures or electronic components).

[0139] While the disclosure has been shown and described with reference to various embodiments thereof, it will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art that various changes in form and detail may be made thereto without departing from the spirit and scope of the disclosure as defined by the appended claims and their equivalents.

Claims

1. An electronic device, comprising: a first housing structure; a second housing structure; a hinge structure rotatably connecting the first housing structure and the second housing structure and including a first hinge plate and a second hinge plate; a hinge cover covering at least part of the hinge structure when the hinge structure is viewed from the outside; and a flexible printed circuit board crossing the hinge structure and extending from an inside of the first housing structure to an inside of the second housing structure and including a pair of fixing members to permit deformation of the flexible printed circuit board in the internal space of the hinge cover, wherein the hinge structure includes: a first member attached to the first hinge plate, and a second member attached to the second hinge plate, and wherein the first member and the second member are disposed to face the flexible printed circuit board so as to prevent direct contact between the hinge structure and the printed circuit board during folding and/or unfolding of the electronic device.
2. The electronic device of claim 1, wherein the first flexible member and the second flexible member include an adhesive material applied on a surface facing the hinge structure.
3. The electronic device of claim 1, wherein the pair of fixing members are at least partially disposed in the first opening or the second opening.
4. The electronic device of claim 1, wherein the first flexible member or the second flexible

member includes: an attaching area formed on a surface facing the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate; and a non-attaching area formed in at least a portion of a circumference of the attaching area, on the surface facing the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate.

5. The electronic device of claim 4, wherein the non-attaching area is shaped as at least one of a polygon or a closed curve surrounding the attaching area.

6. The electronic device of claim 1, wherein the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate includes a frame portion formed to surround or define at least a portion of the first opening and the second opening, and wherein the first flexible member or the second flexible member is attached to the frame portion.

7. The electronic device of claim 6, wherein the frame portion forms a portion of an edge of the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate.

8. The electronic device of claim 6, wherein the first flexible member or the second flexible member is formed to surround the frame portion.

9. The electronic device of claim 6, further comprising: fixing members disposed in respective one of the first opening or the second opening and including a first end and a second end fixed to the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate, respectively, wherein the fixed portions of the printed circuit board are mounted on one of the fixing members, respectively.

10. The electronic device of claim 1, wherein the first housing structure and the second housing structure rotate on the hinge structure between: a first position where the first housing structure and the second housing structure are unfolded side-by-side; and a second position where the first housing structure and the second housing structure are folded to face each other.

11. The electronic device of claim 10, wherein the first flexible member is disposed on the first hinge plate and the second flexible member is disposed on the second hinge plate, wherein in the first position, the first flexible member and the second flexible member are disposed adjacent to each other and side-by-side, and wherein in the second position, the first flexible member and the second flexible member are disposed to face each other, with the first hinge plate and the second hinge plate disposed therebetween.

12. The electronic device of claim 11, wherein the first flexible member or the second flexible member includes: an attaching area formed on a surface facing the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate, and a non-attaching area formed in at least a portion of a circumference of the attaching area, on the surface facing the first hinge plate or the second hinge plate, and wherein the attaching area is attached to at least a portion of the frame portion.
