Tech / News

Out there with more options

Launching of the Department of Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering at DIU

SAAD BIN FAZLE HAMMADI

TO make the nation competitive, information and communication technology (ICT) is one major sector that Bangladesh needs to ameliorate. Daffodil International University (DIU) has taken yet another initiative to rev up the ICT sector by launching the Department of Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering on May 22.

The curriculum consists of two fields, electronics and telecommunication. The total duration for each field is 142 credit hours. Courses till the third year are same for all students of the department. It is only during the fourth year that they can specialise in any field of choice.

The launching ceremony of the new department was inaugurated by Post and Telecommunication Minister Aminul Houqe.

The minister encouraged students to study electronics & telecommunication engineering and said they would be able to prove themselves, as it is yet an uncontested field in Bangladesh.

"We have to wipe out the digital divide," said Syed Marghub Murshed, chairman, Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), present as special guest.
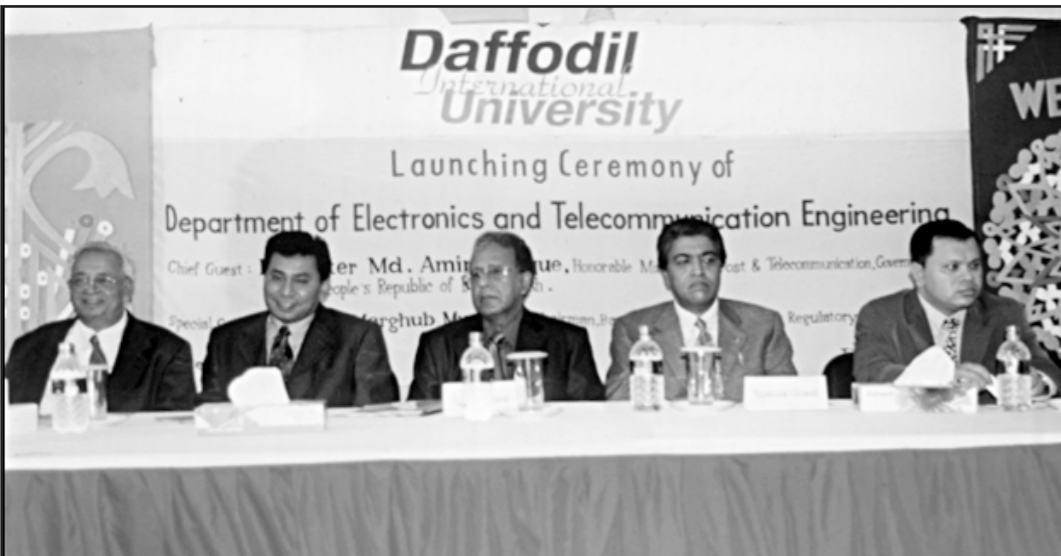
"Education and economy have become interrelated since an economy is based on the efficiency of the country which in turn requires educational qualification.", said Vice-chancellor of DIU Prof. Aminul Islam.

Md. Sabur Khan, chairman, board of governors DIU, Iqbal Mahmud, divisional engineer, Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB), Md. Shahrin Islam, member, board of governors DIU, and Prof. M. Shahjahan Mina, pro vice-chancellor DIU were also present at the inaugural ceremony.

DIU hopes that students graduating from their university would be able to provide their service in both local market and world market. The insertion of a new department has opened wider opportunities for students.

ICT can give impetus to the demand for our service but we need to develop skills in the international standard so that we are able to sell our service in the world market and make the name of our nation.

Panel of guests at the inaugural ceremony of the Department of Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering at DIU.

Tech / Analysis

Prospects of high-tech manufacturing in Bangladesh - II

A Case Study

MIR NADIA NIVIN

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS WEEK

NOW, having considered that the Telephone Shilpa Shangstha (TSS) can be used as a vital launching pad for locally manufacturing mobile telephone sets, we delve a little deeper for some facts and further analysis.

TSS is currently a body under the supervision of the Ministry of Post and Telecommunication (MOPT). It is situated at Tongi and stands in a wide spacious area of 7.67 Acres (23 bighas). Excluding the external grounds, which definitely has the potential to be utilised should more working space be needed, it has a total effective work space of about 10,000 sft. TSS is allocated an annual budget of some 100 crore taka. Interestingly, 8% of its shares is owned by Siemens. The TSS basically works as a subsidiary of the BTTB.

Presently the TSS employs about 800 employees . There are engineers, technicians , IT professionals and a combination of workers of various skill levels. The relative skill level of these employees comprise of being able to handle automated and semi automated machineries. Current machineries include an assortment of semi automated assembly line equipments, circuit embedding devices and other paraphernalia.

The job of TSS until recently was to manufacture the local telephone sets that BTTB issues to the each subscriber. The TSS supplies the government with a fixed number of telephone sets per year. On demand it may also be required to supply more sets. On top of that it also supplies specific, requisite telecommunication essentials like the above mentioned PABX, telephone exchanges etc.

The raw materials were primarily imported from China and some like plastic, nuts and bolts etc were locally produced. But recently, on performing some cost analysis, it was found that if TSS imported the telephone sets directly from China as opposed to manufacturing them here with local and imported raw materials, the cost per set reduced. So their current policy is based on importing these sets that they once used to manufacture here. Apart from this TSS imports other telecommunication equipments like Card phones, PABX , telephone switches and exchanges etc. Majority of these equipments comes form Japan and some from China.

So, in the current scenario, considering all the resources at hand, the TSS is not being utilized to even a fraction of the huge potential it has. Thus, if government manufactures mobile phone sets at the TSS then it has the following advantages:

A large labor force with the basic skill of handling machineries associated with producing telephone sets and an existing infrastructure with a basic administrative, business and technological frame work.

Initially, the government can go for a join venture with any of the big names in the telecomm industry. A feasibility study is performed together with an initial market study regarding customer requirements and preferences.

An initial government loan is required by the TSS to purchase necessary machineries and for other expenditures in the process of restructuring itself. A short training to the work force is also provided.

The next step is to import the various parts of the mobile telephone sets. An extensive cost analysis is also performed in the meantime to see how the local assembling favours the price market of the mobile sets.

The sets are then assembled with strict adherence to quality and specifications. Initially, quality check will be performed by foreign experts but as TSS gains competence, Quality control will also be done by locals.

Once the products are finished, they would be in for final assembling and testing by the foreign counterparts or by the TSS depending on what expertise has been gained.

Once the product reaches the market, a market survey team constantly monitors the customer requirements, demands and measures how the new product competes with the existing ones in the market.

If we continue to improve our skills gradually to the point of performing *Final Assembling and Testing (FAT)* locally and then eventually to *Circuit Pack Assembling* as well, then the price of the sets for local consumption will come down significantly.

It can be readily perceived that in the long run, when all the 'tricks of the trade', as is said, has been mastered the TSS will be self sufficient in producing mobile telephone sets without any aid from the foreign counterparts. This is the basic idea behind technology transfer- first learn all and then be self sufficient.

However, some very important changes should be brought about to the TSS before all these high-tech manufacturing business is undertaken. Some of these include trimming the organizational structure to be leaner and flatter, arranging frequent and effective training programs, keeping an active link between customer feedbacks and manufacturing, strict quality control, and most importantly, improving and increasing personal ethics, drive and motivation of employees.

Tech / Snaps

BASE in Chittagong

BASE (Bangladesh Advanced Software Education) Limited, the first and only authorised Oracle Education Partner in Bangladesh inaugurated their Chittagong Centre on May 25, 2003, says a press release.

A.B.M. Mohiuddin Chowdhury, Mayor, Chittagong City Corporation inaugurated the centre as the Chief Guest. The ceremony was presided over by Mahboob-ur Rahman, Managing Director of BASE Limited.

"BASE Limited will play an important role to established advanced IT education in Chittagong city," said the chief guest while speaking at the ceremony. He appraised the international standard of IT education that BASE provides.

Mahboob Rahman said that BASE provides premier information and communication technology services company providing quality IT education, solutions and consulting. BASE offers classes in conjunction with the Oracle University, an educational arm of the California software developer.

Photo / Tech

PHOTO: AFP

This Mars Global Surveyor (MGS) Mars Orbiter Camera (MOC) image shows mudflow near the Russell Crater in southern hemisphere. Scientists believe, this is the best place to look for life on the Red Planet

Dr. / Tech

Dear Dr. Tech,
I have almost a dozen programs in my system tray. I think it makes the booting very slow. How can I get rid of them? Please help me.
Shamim.

Dear Shamim,
I once had a similar letter like your's. Well here it goes. Program running in your system tray can cause any (or all) of the following problems:
- Sluggish system speed
- Frequent lockups / illegal operations
- Software install problems
- Difficulty in running some programs
The more of these programs you have running, the more likely it is that you're going to see one or more of the problems mentioned above. Granted, System Tray programs are not the only cause for the conditions mentioned above, but they are the first place to look.
So, how do you keep all these unwanted programs at bay?
1. Click the **Start button** and select **Run...**
2. Next, type in: **msconfig**
Then hit **OK.**

3. The System Configuration Utility should run (please note that not all computers have it installed -see note below).
4. Click the **Startup tab.**
5. You'll see a listing of all the stuff that starts itself when your computer does. Just uncheck the programs you don't want to load and leave the rest alone. Once you get msconfig running, you'll probably see more stuff than you bargained for. I would advise exercising caution while unchecking. If you're not sure which program is being referred to, look at the path. Sometimes the folder just before the ".exe" file can give you a clue as to what program you're dealing with. For example, if I see something like: "C:\program files\real\realplayer.exe" I can guess the program in question is the ever annoying Real Player. These are more likely to be important system files and programs. You may find that your computer won't run without them and you'll have to go into Safe mode to get things working again.

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Tech / Toon

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GLASBERGEN

Game / Tech

Matrix game sells a million

BBC ONLINE

THE video game of The Matrix Reloaded has echoed the success of the blockbuster movie, selling more than a million copies in a week.

Enter the Matrix has shot to the top of the games charts across North America and Europe, said Europe's largest video game maker Atari.

The success of the game has buoyed Atari, previously known as Infogrames, as the firm is banking on an international blockbuster to help it tackle its huge debt burden.

But analysts say the game must sell at least another three million copies for Atari to break even on the title.

Game gamble

Enter the Matrix is one of the most expensive video games ever made. Atari has pumped $20m into developing and marketing the title, on top of the $47m it used to buy the game's developer, Shiny Entertainment.

The game was written and directed by the Wachowski brothers, the masterminds behind the Matrix universe, and the plot is closely tied in to the film.

The company is gambling on a big hit, shipping about four million copies of the game which runs on PCs and most game consoles and features martial arts action and slow-motion special effects just like the film.

The game hit the shops on 15 May, to tie in with the release of the Matrix sequel in the US. In its first week, it sold a million copies, at an average price of $50, despite some negative reviews.

But analysts said the figures were expected as games tend to sell well on launch. The key test will be whether it continues to sell off the shelves in forthcoming weeks.

By comparison, the gangster title Grand Theft Auto: Vice City, sold more than eight million copies worldwide in the first four months of its release.

Name change

Enter the Matrix is the key to the future of Atari, which had until recently been known as Infogrames.

It changed its name to Atari to reflect its global image as the world's third largest independent games maker.

The US side of the business has already adopted the new name and its parent company in France will follow suit in September.

The company faces a looming debt crisis, so earnings from high-profile titles like the Matrix and the forthcoming tie-in to the Terminator 3 movie are crucial to its future.

The game is closely tied into the film

The Wachowski brothers wrote the script for the game

Woof Woof / Tech

PHOTO: AFP

This photo taken March 16, 2003 shows dog owner Hajime Sasao (L) operating a dog-language electronic interpreter "Bowlingual", produced by Japanese toy giant Takara, with a price of 120 USD, with his beagle Robby at his residence in Tokyo. Takara and Japanese electronics giant Matsushita developed the new system to communicate with a dog from remote places with Takara's Bowlingual and Matsushita's telecommunication network with video camera. Takara and Matsushita will start a trial service from May 29, 2003.

Web / Tech

Kazaa says, on track to be the most-downloaded program

Sharman Networks Ltd. on Thursday said its Kazaa file-sharing software was on track to set a record in the next day as it becomes the most-popular free program on the Web with over 230 million downloads.

By hitting that total, Kazaa would surpass the popular ICQ instant messaging program, Sharman said.

Kazaa's growing popularity comes at a crucial time for the music industry as it battles file-swapping services in court and tries to develop commercially viable online music services.

As of late Thursday, the Kazaa Media Desktop application -- a file-sharing software that has drawn the wrath of the music industry by enabling its users to swap songs for free -- had been downloaded 229,150,955 times, as measured by CNET Networks Inc.

Sharman said by midday Thursday it expected Kazaa would top the record set by ICQ. As of Thursday, ICQ has been downloaded 229,363,307 times, according to Download.com.

A Sharman spokeswoman said Kazaa has been receiving an average of 366,000 downloads per day, whereas the ICQ application has been receiving an average of 50,000 downloads per day, as measured by Download.com.

This week, media software maker Roxio Inc. bought struggling online service Pressplay, launched by Vivendi Universal and Sony Corp. Apple Computer Inc. recently launched its own online music service, which analysts say has been a standout success in the struggling sector.

Record labels suffered a setback in April when a federal judge ruled song-swap networks Grokster and Morpheus should not be shut since they do not control what is traded on them.

Kazaa, which is involved in a separate lawsuit with the recording industry, also distributes licensed files, including music, movies, games and software through a partnership with a company called Altnet.

Reuters, Los Angeles

Best / 10 Websites   Category: Watches

WatchZone
How the Internet tells time.
URL: http://www.watchzone.com

Fossil
Fossil was founded in 1984 at a time when watches were created for function rather than fashion. The company sought to fill this void in the market and began designing watches to act as a fashion accessory.
URL: http://www.fossil.com

Ashford.com
Watches and more!
URL: http://www.ashford.com

Watches Planet
Offering variety of brand name watches from casual to elegant.
URL: http://www.watchesplanet.com

Versa Watches
Presents a large selection of manufacturers like Swiss Army, Bulova, Citizen, Swiss Air Force, ESQ, and Seiko.
URL: http://www.versawatches.com

About Time
Presents a range of name brand watches as a factory authorised dealer. Read client letters of recommendation.
URL: http://www.abouttime.com

Wristwatch.com
Offers a large number of watches to choose from as well as an internal search engine and manager's specials.
URL: http://www.wristwatch.com

Orolus.com
Offers a selection of major watch brands. Presents celebrity watch information.
URL: http://www.orolus.com

BestWatch4u.com
Offers a wide range of watches such as Movado, Seiko, Citizen, Concord, Omega, and Breitling.
URL: http://www.bestwatch4u.com

Junghans USA
Offers atomic watches in a variety of styles as well as clocks, and timing products.
URL: http://www.junghansusa.com