

John Vincent Atanasoff was a prominent computer engineer of Bulgarian origin. His work was instrumental in the development of the digital computer. Atanasoff designed and built the first electronic, digital computer (non-programmable). In 1936 he invented an analog calculator for analyzing surface geometry. With a grant of \$650 received in September 1939 and the assistance of his graduate student Clifford Berry, the ABC was prototyped by November of that year. The ABC had no central processing unit (CPU), but was designed as an electronic device with vacuum tubes for high speed.



### TECHCONF

## ICNEWS 2006

# Next-gen wireless conference opens a window of possibilities

NAFID IMRAN AHMED and SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

THE International Conference on Next-Generation Wireless Systems (ICNEWS) 2006 ended on January 4 amidst compliments and hope on implementation of some of the papers presented at the conference by some of the world's leading researchers, academics and practitioners in wireless communications.

"A number of academic institutions, members of the software industry and the regulatory bodies of the government attended the different sessions of the conference. They responded rather enthusiastically to the keynote papers and the papers presented at the conference," said Muzibul H Khan, vice-president, Engineering, Samsung Telecommunications America and General Chair of ICNEWS2006.

Khan pointed out that the members of the conference met President Dr Iajuddin Ahmed, Post and Telecommunications Minister Barrister Md Aminul Haque, State Minister of Education, ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon and other dignitaries concerning the conference.

"The conference was a great learning experience," said Khan.

Locally hosted by North South University (NSU) and sponsored by Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) and technically co-sponsored by IEEE communications society, the conference started on January 2 at the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. The first day was dedicated to tutorials for beginner registrants at the conference.

The actual sessions began the next day on January 3. The sessions were divided into technical and business programs.

In the technical program, 34 papers in the wireless networking sub-track and 17 papers in the wireless communications sub-track were presented.

Some of the papers in the wireless LANs (Local Area Network) category included 'Integration of Wireless Wide Area Network (WWAN) & Wireless Local Area Network (WLAN)', 'Performance Analysis of IrBurst for Large Data Object Exchange over Infrared Links', 'Fairness Studies of IEEE 802.11b DCF under heavy traffic conditions' and many more.

Promising papers were also presented during the other cate-



From left: Dr. Muzibul H Khan, General Chair, ICNEWS06 and VP, Product Management and Engineering, Wireless Terminals Division Samsung Telecommunications America; Shumon, SP RAB, Dr. Ekram Hossain, co-founder ICNEWS06 and Professor University of Manitoba, Mozammel Hauque, chief engineer, Atomic Energy Commission and Kahar RMB Kahar makes his presentation at the BDPASS launch event.

gories that included Wireless Technology for Developing Countries, Multiple Input Multiple Output (MIMO) and Orthogonal Frequency Division Multiplexing (OFDM) Communications, Wireless Adhoc Networks, Next generation wireless communications, "Wireless" ICT Infrastructure for Bangladesh, Wireless Sensor Networks and Performance Analysis of Wireless Systems.

Other categories included applications, services and development of wireless systems, next generation mobile networks, applications, services, 3G and beyond 3G wireless networks. Five papers were included as posters in the technical program while 15 papers on the business track were presented in the final program.

The keynote papers were presented in between the different tracks.

Some notable researchers and academics presented these papers. Marco Chiani, University of Bologna, Italy, was the session chair during the Wireless Adhoc Networks session.

Chiani and Dr. Giridhar Mandayam of Radio systems group, Radio communications laboratory of Nokia Research Center and Head of the Nokia Research center presented two keynote papers separately on January 3.

Dr Khaled Ben Letaief, chair

professor of Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE) and Head of the EEE Department at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and Arindam Mukherjee from Intel presented their separate keynote papers on the last day of the conference.

Dr. Vijay K Bhargava, chair, Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of British Columbia, Moe Z. Win, associate professor, Laboratory for Information and Decision Systems (LIDS), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Professor Sajal K. Das, Dept. of Computer Science and Engineering (CSE), University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) contributed in the submission and presentation of a number of papers themselves.

Bhargava also spoke during the award ceremony, which took place during the evening of January 4.

Three panel sessions concerning surveillance and location based technology, wireless vision, ICNEWS legacy and next step were also organised at the conference from January 2 till 4.

"The responses through the submission of papers were overwhelming," said Dr. Miftahur Rahman, publication, co-chair, ICNEWS 2006 and Head of Computer Science and Engineering department of NSU.

Rahman informed that enthusiastic researchers submitted 132

valid papers for presentation.

"It is quite apparent that they all wanted to participate in an event of such caliber where most of the keynote speakers are eligible for the Nobel Prize," he said.

The first-ever major event in Bangladesh, focused toward the field of wireless communication, was supported by some major names and reputed brands.

Besides NSU, IEEE, and IEEE communications society, the sponsors list also included Motorola, Megacorp, Nokia, IBM, Daffodil International University, Square Informatrix, OnAir solution, Jalalabad Telecom Limited, Flora Limited, WorldLink, Siemens, GrameenPhone, Aktel, Zip and many more.

Daffodil Online Ltd and Daffodil PC were the technology partners of ICNEWS 2006.

The technology provided by Daffodil at the event comprised of Fiber Optic Internet link through AsiaSat4 and Apstar 2R Satellite via DOL's VSAT, LAN set up, color printers, Negative/Slide/Print Scanners and photocopiers.

Along with this complimentary internet connection were also provided at every stall at the conference premises.

Participants and attendants at the conference complimented the efforts taken by the organisers of the fair.

With an objective of developing world class SQL Server professionals in Bangladesh, BDPASS, a local resident and non resident Bangladeshi initiative of PASS, the Professionals Association for SQL Server, a non-profit foundation founded by Microsoft and Computer Associates in the late '90s, were officially launched on the second day of the conference. PASS has almost 50+ chapters worldwide.

With the slogan 'Select Top n' from BDPASS', based on a SQL command, Kahar RMB Kahar, principal consultant and owner of North American Global Outsourcing announced the inception of BDPASS and elaborated the three-year roadmap of the foundation and hopes to hold the first PASS conference in BD by next year and the first BDPASS conference in USA by the year 2008. Kahar also hopes to host an international PASS conference in BD within the next three years. BDPASS will also hold outsourcing software development contest, where Bangladeshi software development companies can participate and win software development projects up to USD 10,000. Students can also participate and win software development projects up to USD 1,000.

"This was an innovative idea and is highly required for an emerging country in the field of Information technology and telecommunication like Bangladesh. I just hope the papers submitted and presented would reach the concerned authorities for implementation in due time," said Hassan Khan, a student of North South University, who attended the conference.

TIM Nurul Kabir, Vice-President, Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (Basis) appreciated the event as being a suitable platform where local talents and the software industry could show off their talents to noted IT and telecom personalities of the world.

"Most of the professors and Bangladeshi's abroad participating at the conference responded enthusiastically to our local developments in the field of IT and telecommunication. Some of them are even inclined to invest into this sector," said Kabir.

Organisers of the event are hopeful that the impressive response generated through this event will pave the way for other such useful conferences in the near future.

### TECHNEWS

## e-learning

# A useful educational tool

"E-learning can be a potential tool that can bridge the gap between faculty and students thousands of miles apart from each other. This can prove to be a vital method of education in all academic streams," said Dr Badrul H. Khan, associate professor, George Washington University, USA at a seminar at Dhaka Medical College (DMC).

Khan was the key speaker at the seminar titled 'E-learning for Medical students and Health community'. The Computer club of Dhaka Medical College (CCDMC) organised the event on January 3.

Khan basically explained the necessary steps in the important framework of e-learning as pedagogical, institutional, ethical, resource support, management, evaluation, interface design and technological.

"Through e-learning, a teacher or a faculty in USA or UK can provide lessons to students in Bangladesh or in any other parts of the world," explained Khan.

Furthermore, he also explained that the resources in e-learning can prove to be more effective than the traditional learning methods.

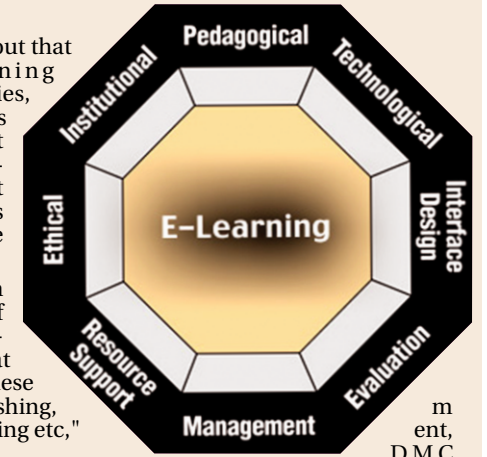
He also pointed out that through e-learning researchers, faculties, students and others can also benefit from local knowledge and skills that lie in the numerous professions in the rural areas.

"There is an immense bank of untapped knowledge and skills that lie within some of these professions like fishing, farming, cattle herding etc," he said.

He pointed out that in the western countries, the knowledge of farmers and agriculturists are sought with great enthusiasm.

"But such is not the case here. Most academicians do not even want to go out of their own circle and learn from the other streams. This trend needs to be changed," he urged.

The seminar was presided over by Nurul Islam Hasib, president CCDMC while Dr Md Shafiqullah, moderator of CCDMC spoke at the event. Professor Dr. Md. Nazrul Islam, head of the Department of Cardiology, DMC, Professor Dr. Md. Omar Ali, Surgery Depart-



ment, DMC and Shahidul K K Shuvro, ICT journalist, also spoke at the seminar.

"This was our effort to create awareness amongst our peers and students about how useful computers and information technology can be even for doctors and physicians," said Nurul Islam Hasib, president of CCDMC while talking to Star Tech after the event.

Hasib hoped that CCDMC will be able to organise some more seminars and interactive sessions with such noted scholars like Khan in the near future.

Syed Tashfin Chowdhury

### TECHNEWS



# Gates unveils Microsoft's vision of digital lifestyle

AFP, Las Vegas

MICROSOFT chairman Bill Gates unveiled his vision of the digital lifestyle, outlining the latest version of his Windows operating system to be launched later this year.

"2005 was a very big year for the PC (personal computer), but 2006 will probably be even bigger. It'll be a big year for the digital lifestyle," Gates said at the opening of the International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas late Wednesday.

"Many products will come out, and it'll really be clear to the customer," said the chairman of the world's biggest software maker.

The new digital environment, he said, has

come about thanks to the widespread availability of high definition, new partnerships and user-friendly products.

Besides the new Xbox 360 video game and multimedia entertainment system launched in December, Gates touted Microsoft's next-generation operating system Windows Vista, expected to be available this year.

Windows Vista will feature faster interaction with other multimedia tools such as the cellphone and the office computer.

This interactivity, aimed at boosting work and entertainment capacities, is the result of partnerships, such as Microsoft's recently announced venture with Viacom Inc.'s music video channel MTV Networks.

Window's future version of its Media Player will offer access to the URGE digital music service and MTV programs.

Microsoft also announced it was joining forces with top US telecommunications company Verizon to market Internet-friendly cordless telephones for the home that will offer instant messaging through MSN Messenger.

Both partnerships come amid fierce competition in the online music market and Internet telephone services. On Wednesday, Skype, the free Internet telephone pioneer Skype, announced a partnership with Netgear to offer a wireless mobile phone that will connect to the Internet without using a computer.

### PHOTOTECH

## XM SATELLITE RADIO

XM Satellite Radio's XM Passport mini satellite tuner is displayed at the International Consumer Electronics Show at the Las Vegas Convention Center on January 4 in Las Vegas, Nevada. The company announced that the device will be available in March 2006 and will work with virtually every XM-ready product. Two new XM Satellite Radio products, right, the Inno by Pioneer (L) and Helix by Samsung, are also displayed at the show.

PHOTO: AFP

