

the world:

BCS Computer City

Date 25-31 October

The Baily Star

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

October 25, 2000

It is a great pleasure that most all of the leading compa-BCS Computer City is organising nies of the country. Computer the seven-day long Computer related all organisations like -Fair City IT 2000. This is the Hardware. Software. Training. first Computer Fair organised by Service, Publications & ISP have BCS Computer City since its representation in this City. We inception. We have a plan to believe this City is controlling make it a regular affair. This is the significant volume of comjust the beginning. Apart from making it a simple All these turned into reality with

highlight the latest technology friendly relationship among the through this fair. But we may members of BCS Computer City. not be fully successful to reach that goal, but we will try to pay Finance Minister Mr. Shah AM S off those scarcities next year. without the support from the FBCCI President Yussuf A. Hamembers of BCS Computers City run. DCCI President Aftab ul it was really impossible to make Islam and BCS President Abthe City IT 2000 a successful. dullah H Kafi for their kind They provided their whole- support. hearted support. Due to our combined effort top-ranking companies of the country and abroad came forward to make the exhibition lively. The young and energetic businessmen of BCS Computer city struggled hard to organise the fair. It came into being with a rare example of

combined effort. BCS Computer City, was founded on September 11, 1999 by the initiative of Bangladesh Computer Samity. It was inaugurated by the Honorable Finance Minister of the country Mr. Shah AM S Kibria. BCS members played key role to set up the Computer City in one of the finest building of the countru. Within a year it turned into a central place for computer vendors and computer buyers.

We are proud to say that BCS Computer City is made up of 109 companies including al- City

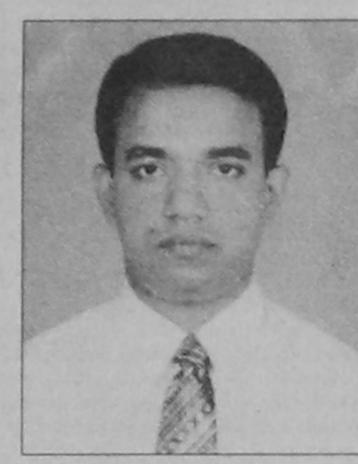
ITS Limited is an

Information Technology

based leading company in

puter business of the country. fair to sell computers, we tried to the help of buyers support, and

We are grateful to Honorable Kibria. Honorable Industries It is important to mention that Minister Mr. Tofail Ahmed.



Ahmed Hasan Convenor, BCS Computer

# Let's Have an International Centre for Information Technology to Eliminate Global Poverty working poor, both women and

by Professor Muhammad Yunus

NFORMATION technology (IT) is going to change the world Adramatically. It has already set the stage. The way people do business globally will change beyond imagination. IT is creating a distanceless world where communication is becoming instantaneous. IT is impacting on all dimensions of life. It is helping economies expand at an unprecedented rate. Rich countries will continue to become richer and rich people will become richer faster than ever before. Within the framework of the free market economy rich countries and rich people are calling the tune for design and application of IT to suit their own purposes. Although IT can offer the most exiting possibility for overcoming poverty, this potential will

Number of people under dollar-a-day income is now 1.5 billion. This number is going to double by 2040 if the present trend continues. I firmly believe IT, if properly applied, will be able to stanch and, eventually, reverse this trend. However. coherent and global efforts is needed to utilize IT most creatively to make this happen. World economy will immensely benefit if the world's poor can in their productivity and creamarket as consumers.

vastly remain unexplored if we

leave it to the market forces.

for Information Technology to ery for the poor) anywhere in ing, and would sponsor appli-Eliminate Global Poverty. There are many resourceful people in the world with com- duct requirement analyses for to pool their resources and talents to design IT related activities to help poor people and the poor countries to participate in ticipation by the poor men, ticular regions; women and young people in the global economy in cost effective and poor-friendly ways. This Centre can design appropriate tools, environment and market places for the poor, and then proactively create the ap- IT is fully utilised for the poor make the IT terminal to become a friend, guide, teacher, philosopher, doctor, consultant, in other words, everything a poor persons needs.

#### This Centre will Do the Following:

a) The Center would become a brain-trust and catalytic, implementor of prototypes work ing in all matters related to building of IT infrastructure and development of information leave poverty behind and bring systems, whether it be about technology or networks or tivity into the market place as . stand-alone application and producers, and their newly ac- whether it be desk-top or netquired purchasing power to the worked or mobile computing, in the service of poverty elimina-I propose that the world tion (income, health, population create an "International Center services and educational delivcation-development in this

b) The Center would con- area: (f) The Center would identify mitment to end poverty. This the creation of Information the imperatives for IT infra-Center can bring them together Technology infrastructure sui- structure of the delivery of eduted for elimination of poverty cation for the poor in the Netand delivery of health and edu- worked Economy. The Centre cational products, and identify would also be responsible for impediments to these goals that responding to the imperatives the great wave of prosperity. IT need removal by government for IT training and skill formacan introduce new ways of par- and civil actions within par- tion among the poor youth of ensuring that tomorrow's poor c) It will identify the inter- can compete ably in what would faces between the informational be a much more integrated

needs of the poor (in terms of market, especially for services. (g) It would take the lead in work) and IT capabilities, and ensuring that the capabilities of plications or applications sys- people and poor countries. By tems that might be (are) investing in appropriate forms and contents of research and d) In particular, because development (R&D), the Centre voice-activated and mobile will seek to supply IT-solutions computing platforms hold great that improve the poor's propromise for the often un- ductivity, survivability, prevenschooled and often mobile poor tion and cure of diseases, nuwho live miles away from the tritional status - thus ending reach of telecommunications poverty, hunger and malnutriutilities, the Center would tion around the world.

(h) It will facilitate poor promising voice-activated oper- women's access to IT-enabled ating systems to the problem of legal help in order to protect poverty elimination and health their legal rights.

(i) Document, monitor, pube) The Center would conduct licise all applications of IT situation analyses of how the around the world applied in delivery of essential health care helping the poor.

> (j) Create sub-networks on the basis of geographic areas (national or regional), on the basis of causes and correlates marketing, health, education legal, women, children, destitute. indigenous people, etc), on the basis of type of participants (individuals, civil organisations, governments. businesses) etc. (k) Create data base of skills,

knowledge and technologies for governments. international institutions, civil society organisations. NGO's working or planning to work in poverty elimination programmes. Undertake research, and actionresearch to develop IT facilities, ideas, modules which will help elimination of poverty.

(l) Help the poor and the indigenous people to participate and play active role in the democratic process.

for all needs of individual poor persons, opportunities available to them, connecting people to people, people to business and organisations and vice-versa.

#### IT Can Help Eliminate Poverty

Programs for forming quickly-marketable IT skills among poor women in developing countries are crucial to empower them to compete in the emerging international division of labour. Remote production of infotech-enabled services, will be a very large and rapidly growing part of such a division of labor between nations. IT skills have become central to competitive differentiation on the part of individuals and firms, those in the developing countries included This points to the imperative of drawing up an agenda for creating IT infrastructure and IT know-how in developing countries to facilitate the poor's access to IT-enabled economic expansion. And this will be a trêmendous source of economic

For the first time, the combination of Internet technology resources to translation to re- als. mote-ticketing to monitoring in place to promote their inter- the world. est, explore the full potential of IT to get them out of poverty in a sustainable way.

#### Some of the Opportunities Created by IT are: Firstly, IT hands down an

window of opportunity to integrate knowledge based techniques of production and dis-(m) Assist promotion and and survival options of the poor the Endowment Fund each preservation of art, culture of in the world. Those who want to year the indigenous and the poor eliminate the curse of poverty from the face of this earth are project grants from govern-(n) Act as the clearing house witnessing an opportunity of a ments. IT industry, other busilifetime unfold before their very nesses, foundations, individueyes. This would be too pre- als, etc. cious an opportunity to miss.

men. at work.

Thirdly. IT is of great importance to the poor by helping them cope more effectively and cheaply to survival hazards and to access healthcare delivery

Fourthly, there is need to put the accent within poorcountry on educational curricula and technology. Education can be made enjoyable, life oriented, promoting social and environmental consciousness through IT. It can leap-frog a backward country or community into a society fit for the new millenium.

### Strategic Partnership

The Center will build strategic partnerships with leading IT companies and their staff, research and academic institutions, social activist groups, financial houses, micro-credit institutions, development agencies. health and educational institutions, and professionals.

#### Organisation "The Center" will be a net-

work of institutions and persons around the globe. There and distributed production of will be a "Core Network" which services has opened up a real will keep the Centre dedicated opportunity to tap into what to its mission and in achieving experts believe would be a rap- the objectives in the most effiidly growing globalization of cientavay. The Center will be a white-collar services. These "lederation" of many instituservices range from human tions, programs, and individu-

The Center will provide a business and home networks global framework for all initiafor security in real time, tives directed to eliminating Outsourcing of Infotech-enable global poverty. This will help of poverty (agriculture, product white-collar services exports to the stand-alone initiatives to mainly the developed country enjoy the benefits of a global markets is believed to be worth system. The Center will a staggering \$ 180 billion by create room for everybody who 2010. A large part of this can wants to get connected with and will be located in poor others in this global effort. Each countries of the world. And the participant will retain his/her poor can take full advantage of individual identity and freedom this coming opportunity pro- of action while enjoying the vided an organized effort is put company of all others around

## Funding

1.0 An Endowment Fund can be created by a consortium of donors and contributors to support the core program of the

2.0 All businesses producing and marketing IT products tribution into the work options and services may contribute to

3.0 The Center will receive

4.0 The Center can earn Secondly. IT can help im- money by selling their services. prove the productivity of the publications and products.

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to the poor can be improved by

taking advantage of network-

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what drives their productivity at

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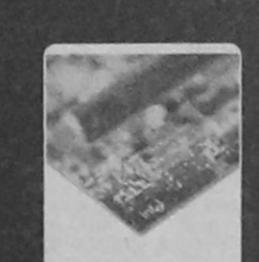
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