



# Computer Fair

Venue  
BCS Computer City

Date  
25-31 October

The Daily Star

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

October 25, 2000

## MESSAGE

It is a great pleasure that BCS Computer City is organising the seven-day long Computer Fair City IT 2000. This is the first Computer Fair organised by BCS Computer City since its inception. We have a plan to make it a regular affair. This is just the beginning.

Apart from making it a simple fair to sell computers, we tried to highlight the latest technology through this fair. But we may not be fully successful to reach that goal, but we will try to pay off those scarcities next year. It is important to mention that without the support from the members of BCS Computers City it was really impossible to make the City IT 2000 a successful. They provided their wholehearted 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 Society. 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 country. 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-

most all of the leading companies of the country. Computer related all organisations like - Hardware, Software, Training, Service, Publications & ISP have representation in this City. We believe this City is controlling the significant volume of computer business of the country. All these turned into reality with the help of buyers support, and friendly relationship among the members of BCS Computer City.

We are grateful to Honorable Finance Minister Mr. Shah AM S Kibria, Honorable Industries Minister Mr. Dofail Ahmed, FCCI President Yussuf A. Hanun, DCCI President Aftab ul Islam and BCS President Abdullah H Kafi for their kind support.



Ahmed Hasan  
Convenor, BCS Computer City

## Let's Have an International Centre for Information Technology to Eliminate Global Poverty

by Professor Muhammad Yunus

INFORMATION technology (IT) is going to change the world dramatically. 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 to suit their own purposes. Although IT can offer the most existing possibility for overcoming poverty, this potential will remain unexplored if we leave it to the market forces.

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 leave poverty behind and bring in their productivity and creativity into the market place as producers, and their newly acquired purchasing power to the market as consumers.

I propose that the world create an 'International Center

for Information Technology to Eliminate Global Poverty.' There are many resourceful people in the world with commitment to end poverty. This Center can bring them together to pool their resources and talents to design IT related activities to help poor people and the poor countries to participate in the great wave of prosperity. IT can introduce new ways of participation by the poor men, women and young people in the global economy in cost effective and poor-friendly ways. This Center can design appropriate tools, environment and market places for the poor, and 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 implementer of prototypes working in all matters related to building of IT infrastructure and development of information systems, whether it be about technology or networks or stand-alone application and whether it be desk-top or networked or mobile computing, in the service of poverty elimination (income, health, population services and educational deliv-

ery for the poor) anywhere in the world;

b) The Center would conduct requirement analyses for the creation of Information Technology infrastructure suited for elimination of poverty and delivery of health and educational products, and identify impediments to these goals that need removal by government and civil actions within particular regions;

c) It will identify the interfaces between the informational needs of the poor (in terms of what drives their productivity at work) and IT capabilities, and then proactively create the applications or applications systems that might be (are) needed;

d) In particular, because voice-activated and mobile computing platforms hold great promise for the often un-schooled and often mobile poor who live miles away from the reach of telecommunications utilities, the Center would sponsor the application of promising voice-activated operating systems to the problem of poverty elimination and health and educational delivery;

e) The Center would conduct situation analyses of how the delivery of essential health care to the poor can be improved by taking advantage of network-enabled IT and mobile comput-

ing, and would sponsor application-development in this area;

f) The Center would identify the imperatives for IT infrastructure of the delivery of education for the poor in the Networked Economy. The Center would also be responsible for responding to the imperatives for IT training and skill formation among the poor youth of ensuring that tomorrow's poor can compete ably in what would be a much more integrated market, especially for services;

g) It would take the lead in ensuring that the capabilities of IT is fully utilised for the poor people and poor countries, by investing in appropriate forms and contents of research and development (R&D), the Center will seek to supply IT-solutions that improve the poor's productivity, survivability, prevention and cure of diseases, nutritional status - thus ending poverty, hunger and malnutrition around the world;

h) It will facilitate poor women's access to IT-enabled legal help in order to protect their legal rights;

i) Document, monitor, publicise all applications of IT around the world applied in helping the poor;

j) Create sub-networks on the basis of geographic areas (national or regional), on the basis of causes and correlates of poverty (agriculture, product 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 action-research 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;

m) Assist promotion and preservation of art, culture of the indigenous and the poor people;

n) Act as the clearing house 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 tremendous source of economic expansion.

For the first time, the combination of Internet technology and distributed production of services has opened up a real opportunity to tap into what experts believe would be a rapidly growing - globalization of white-collar services. These services - range from human resources to translation to remote-ticketing to monitoring business and home networks for security in real time. Outsourcing of infotech-enabled white-collar services exports to mainly the developed country markets is believed to be worth a staggering \$ 180 billion by 2010. A large part of this can and will be located in poor countries of the world. And the poor can take full advantage of this coming opportunity provided an organized effort is put in place to promote their interest, explore the full potential of IT to get them out of poverty in a sustainable way.

Some of the Opportunities Created by IT are:

- 1.0 An Endowment Fund can be created by a consortium of donors and contributors to support the core program of the Center.
- 2.0 All businesses producing and marketing IT products and services may contribute to the Endowment Fund each year.
- 3.0 The Center will receive project grants from governments, IT industry, other businesses, foundations, individuals, etc.
- 4.0 The Center can earn money by selling their services, publications and products.

working poor, both women and 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 systems.

Fourthly, there is need to put the accent within poor-country 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 millennium.

### 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 network of institutions and persons around the globe. There will be a 'Core Network' which will keep the Centre dedicated to its mission and in achieving the objectives in the most efficient way. The Center will be a 'federation' of many institutions, programs, and individuals.

The Center will provide a global framework for all initiatives directed to eliminating global poverty. This will help the stand-alone initiatives to enjoy the benefits of a global support system. The Center will create room for everybody who wants to get connected with others in this global effort. Each participant will retain his/her individual identity and freedom of action while enjoying the company of all others around the world.

### Funding

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- 4.0 The Center can earn money by selling their services, publications and products.

BITS Limited is an Information Technology based leading company in Bangladesh. It is engaged specially in Accounting Software Sales, Support, Marketing and Consultancy. Besides the software services BITS is also engaged in Hardware Sales, Data Processing, Specialized Training and Networking Solutions.

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Manufacturing Concerns and Trading Concerns. A financial accounting (FA) package is not just about managing your assets, it's also about providing for efficient accounting system to reduce your workload. FA packages are one category where Indian software companies have been able to make a mark. There are lots of FA packages available in this sub-continent. The important feature to look for in a FA package is the user friendliness of the package, and its reporting capabilities. A package that can give you a visual as well as statistical

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