

Tech Fair

The IT gala

'City IT 2002' captivates teens and twenties

NAFID IMRAN AHMED

THE PC hardware market has really changed since the BCS Computer City started off in 1999 at the IDB Bhaban in the city's Agargaon area. It has become an ideal place for computer shoppers. The City sports a festive look each year with the BCS Computer Fair. This year, the City IT 2002, has sparked off similar enthusiasm and festivity.

After a somewhat shaky start, the fair, which began on October 10 and runs through October 20, has gained momentum day by day. Some 170 hardware, software, games, multimedia, IT-enabled services and Internet service providers are participating in the fair. They have on display their latest products, most of which on special offer. The computer firms that are housed at the IDB Bhaban are also participating in the fair along with others. Most of the companies are providing 15 to 20 per cent discounts on different items, especially PCs. Many branded shops such as Flora, Daffodil, Imart, Computer Source, etc are showcasing their latest products at their outlets in the Computer City.

Young visitors keep the fair alive everyday. Most of them are school, college and university students. The gaming gears have flooded the fair and caught the imaginations of the teens and twenties. Companies such as Pro 2 Interactive has proved to be a gamer's paradise. They are offering latest game machines such as X-box and also has a range of high-performance graphics and sound cards. They are also offering professional video editing and



Colourful balloons and banners added more colour to the fair

capture cards.

The hardware accessories market also has a number of new items to offer. Various kinds of mouse, headphones, keyboard, solar cap and others are being offered. Different types of multimedia speaker system are also an attraction in the fair. Among them there are different models from Altec Lansing, Microlab, Inspire, Protone, Golden Point, Mercury providing Home Theatre, Dolby Surround Sound, Woofer and Sub-Woofer sounds. Intel dealers have

introduced 1.7GB Celeron Processors for this fair. Many participants at the fair are offering homemade brand computer.

Almost every shop is offering discount. One can buy a full-featured clone multimedia PC for only Tk. 18,500 plus there are gift items. One good thing about this year's fair is that many brand servers are being introduced in the market. Spectrum has introduced Intel's latest server at the fair. But one thing is clear. People are eager to purchase fancy computer accessories then buying a whole

PC.

There is also a Cyber Cafe inside the compound. People are being able to browse Internet through 15 computers attached to a radiolink connection provided by Global Access Ltd.

Since the beginning, regular events are also being held everyday at 5 p.m. Such a dynamic event titled 'PC for Office Management' was held on the first day. These events are open for all. Everyday 5 visitors are awarded with attractive prize for taking part in the quiz held in the event.

Tech News

HP ESG roadshow in Bangladesh

STAR TECH DESK

HP (Hewlett Packard) announced the launch of their ESG (Enterprise Systems Group) roadshow to enhance their presence in the Bangladesh market. In a news conference held on October 9, Chrisan Fernando, country sales manager, HP South Asia announced the launch. He was accompanied by Simon Tan, director, Enterprise Systems Group, Asia emerging countries and Lenh-Hong Ang, manager, marketing communications, ESG, South East Asia.

According to HP this launch will enable customers in Bangladesh to optimize their assets and achieve a better return on the capital they invest in IT infrastructure.

HP Enterprise Systems Group (ESG) provides the key technology assets of enterprise IT infrastructure - including storage, servers, software and a variety of solutions to enhance business agility. ESG solutions are designed to improve infrastructure management, continuity and flexibility, and to provide a technical foundation for the future.

HP products in ESG include: UNIX servers, fault-tolerant servers, Windows - based IA-32 servers, Linux - based IA-32 servers, enterprise storage, management software and high-performance technical computing.

The HP ESG roadshow involves many organisations such as, Industry Verticals and Corporate Accounts (IVCA), a team who will focus on driving business and managing relationship with HP's

250 largest customers worldwide; Solutions, an organisation who defines and delivers global, industry-leading IT solutions that combine hardware, software, services and expertise from HP and partners to address customers' business needs; Industry Standard Servers (ISS), a line-up built on open standards to perform in heterogeneous environments and includes the industry's greatest product breadth; Business Critical Systems (BCS); BCS leverages the strengths of HP's leadership in RISC and UNIX technologies and includes business-critical capabilities from Compaq such as NonStop fault-tolerant servers, leading Tru64 UNIX® Technology and Open VMS solutions; Network Storage Solutions (NSS); Enterprise and network storage provider, NSS is making new strategic investments, leveraging key partnerships and continuing to offer the industry's broadest enterprise storage portfolio for the heterogeneous storage market; Software and Financial Services (HPFS), which includes an expanded suite of offerings designed to help customers improve cash flow, reduce total cost of ownership, minimize risk of obsolescence and make the most of their HP infrastructure solution throughout its entire lifecycle.

HP is the leading global provider of products, technologies, solutions and services to consumers and businesses. The merged company had combined revenue of approximately \$81.7 billion in fiscal 2001 and operations in more than 160 countries. Information about HP and its products can be found at <http://www.hp.com>.

Tech Snaps

Intel launches new system-platform alliance

A long-time processor and chipset supplier, Intel on October 14 extended its attention into the PC manufacturing sector by teaming up with 12 PC hardware makers in Asia, says a press release.

Through the new "Innovation Alliance," Intel hopes to build a closer production relationship with its PC manufacturing partners by offering them design concepts and research on system products. Announced at the Asia-Pacific Intel Developer Forum (APAC IDF) Fall 2002, held in Taipei from October 14-15, the alliance consists of 12 Asian IT companies: Asustek Computer, Compaq Electronics, First International Computer (FIC), Foxconn Electronics (the registered trade name of Hon Hai Precision Industry), Gigabyte Technology, Inventec, Micro-Star International (MSI), Mitac International, LG Electronics, Quanta Computer, Samsung and Wistron.

To push the cooperation forward, Intel recently offered its PC manufacturing partners a "Desktop and Mobile Platform Vision" guide, which stresses the most critical issues in current system product markets, such as wireless communications and extended battery life. As an aid for the hardware makers when designing products, the guide will be updated annually to meet market needs, Intel said.

According to the chip giant, a prototype product based on the alliance concept will be launched in 2003. In the future, the efforts will be extended to the handheld device market. Though Intel will not participate in production, it appears that the company is still trying to establish its influence by leading the architecture development of systems products. However, as PC products have become highly standardized, it will be a challenge for PC manufacturers to develop diverse products while following Intel's guidelines.

A photographer's website

Web portal of a freelance Bangladeshi photographer Bayazid Akter has been hoisted on the net on October 12.

The site: <http://www.bayazidakterw2k.com> contains eight pages including photographs and award lists the photographer, who has received numerous awards in different national photo competition.

Byazid, who had worked in different national dailies as a Staff Photographer, recently completed his assignment as the commissioned photographer of the Banglapeedia, the first national encyclopedia of the country.

The portal would help global audience to know about the country its people and culture, Byazid said.

New Tech

Top 5 Scanners

Microtek ScanMaker 4900

- ⊠ 2400-by-4800-dpi max optical resolution
- ⊠ 8.5-by-11.7-inch scan area
- ⊠ USB 1.1 port
- ⊠ Adobe Photodeluxe 4.0 and Abby FineReader Sprint OCR software
- ⊠ Transparency adapter
- ⊠ Current prices: \$120.63 to \$160.3

Visioneer OneTouch 9000 USB

- ⊠ 1200-by-4800-dpi max optical resolution
- ⊠ 8.5-by-11.7-inch scan area
- ⊠ USB 2.0 port
- ⊠ ArcSoft PhotoImpression software
- ⊠ No transparency adapter
- ⊠ Current prices: \$86.72 to \$101.99

Canon CanoScan Lide 30

- ⊠ 1200-by-2400-dpi max optical resolution
- ⊠ 8.5-by-11.7-inch scan area
- ⊠ USB 1.1 port
- ⊠ ArcSoft PhotoStudio and ScanSoft OmniPage SE software
- ⊠ No transparency adapter
- ⊠ Current prices: \$79.79 to \$103.55

Epson Perfection 1650 Photo

- ⊠ 1600-by-3200-dpi max optical resolution
- ⊠ 8.5-by-11.7-inch scan area
- ⊠ USB 1.1 port
- ⊠ Adobe Photoshop Elements



Tech Toon



"I HACKED INTO THE SCHOOL'S COMPUTER AND CHANGED ALL MY GRADES. THEN THE SCHOOL HACKED INTO MY COMPUTER AND DELETED ALL MY GAMES!"

Star Tech Quiz

13

Check the box beside the correct answer

1. Search Engines are used to...
 search and index web documents
 display links to web pages that match your search
 find web pages
 do are all of the above
2. The World Wide Web (WWW) is
 a part of the Internet
 the Internet
 not a part of the Internet
 all of the above
3. Which was **not** an early mainframe computer?
 ENIAC
 BRAINIAC
 UNIVAC
 None of the above

Name: _____ Occupation: _____
 Address: _____
 Contact Number: _____ E-mail: _____
 Last week's answers: for none of the above view web pages
 3. mail attachments, all disks and rewritable Cds
 Winner: **Shahidul Islam**
 Room # 111, F. Rahman Hall, D.U. Dhaka 1000
 Please fill this up and send your answers to Star Tech Quiz, The Daily Star, 19 Karwan Bazaar, Dhaka 1215 by October 23, 2002.

Fibre Tech

Fibre-optic telecommunication and better ICT in Bangladesh

SHABBIH A. BASHAR

IT is said that the transistor has done for man's brain in this Information Age what the steam engine did for his brawn in the Industrial Age. Hence, it comes as little surprise that we are faced with the technological ability to communicate conveniently with anyone, anywhere and at any time in many different ways - voice, data, facsimile, e-mail, image and video - and all this at an affordable cost judging by the mushrooming number of "internet cafes" at every corner. Thus modern society has effectively been reduced to a global village and information exchange has experienced an enormous explosion. However, it is also said that the biggest hurdle to the full deployment of this technology is posed by the world's fragmented tele-communications networks especially in developing countries.

In Bangladesh the bulk of international telecommunication traffic still relies on the geostationary satellite and terrestrial microwave link system operated by the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB). Unfortunately, Bangladesh is well known for its monsoon rains and the annual floods. As shown in Figure 1, the flatness combined with the large number of rivers in Bangladesh makes it particularly prone to becoming water logged during the rainy seasons.

Despite system allowances for a large rain fade margin in this region, the handling capacity of the satellite links is reduced especially under adverse conditions. Also, floods (or any other water surface) can cause signal interference due to multi-path propagation as it travels through the microwave radio links. However, these are only the minor problems for the country's telecommunication system. The major natural disasters such as cyclones, high winds and tidal waves originating from the Bay of Bengal that cause substantial

physical damage to the towers and other equipment are by far the most significant problems. The 1991 cyclones knocked over the microwave tower in Chittagong thereby effectively severing the country's international link.

Thus, while appraising the country's telecommunications system requirements, optical fibre technology makes a compelling case as a solution to Bangladesh's

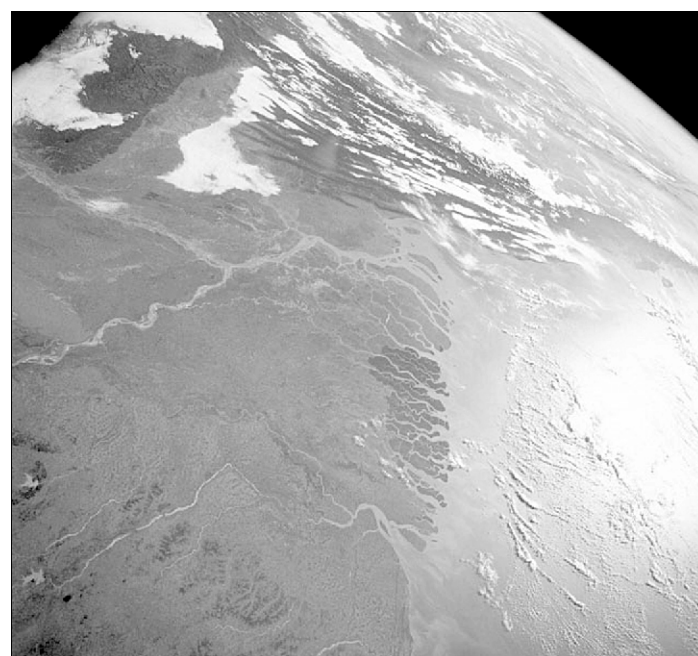


Figure 1: Satellite photograph of Bangladesh (obtained from material available through NASA in the public domain)

pressing needs. Short distance optical fibre links to handle dense traffic in intra-city communication started being used in the mid 80's in the digital telephone networks. With a view to establishing a fully optical ISDN system to link the capital with other major cities, the government has implemented several major inter-city fibre links.

An overview of satellite &

microwave technology

Since the introduction of modulated microwaves in the 1920's for communication between two distant points, this technology has gone through a tremendous amount of development. However, these links were limited to distances within the 'line of sight' (roughly 30 kilometers). Thus, the need for orbiting satellites to relay information over long distances was realized; pilot

'see' nearly one half of the Earth from this vantage point. To provide continuous coverage to any point on Earth, only three satellites in such an orbit are sufficient.

However, signals are weakened about a hundred times after traveling these large distances. A more pertinent problem, is the delay and echo often experienced in long distance phone calls that use these satellites. The accommodation of ever increasing traffic requires the usage of higher frequency bands for satellite communications. Some of the fundamental limitations on the performance of satellite communication systems at frequencies greater than 10 GHz result from a strong interaction of radio waves with rain and ice in the lower atmosphere. Thus, system reliability demands detailed knowledge of these interactions. Rain attenuation dominates the power margin for systems operating above 10 GHz; hence multiple sites are required to meet high availability objectives. Also, in satellite communication systems the capacity per beam is strongly affected by rain. For example, to provide the same quality of transmission during a rainy period, the capacity may have to be halved. Finally, a substantial number of terrestrial relays (microwave radio links that operate only within 'line of sight' distances) are required to transmit the information to the telecommunication network exchange that may be up to a few hundred kilometers away from the satellite ground station.

To be continued...

Shabbir A. Bashar is the director of Bangladesh Telecommunication & Electric Corp. (Pvt.) Ltd. He received his B.Eng. (Hons.) and Ph.D. degrees in Electronic & Electrical Engineering from King's College, University of London in 1991 and 1998 respectively. His doctoral thesis was on the study of components for fibre-optic telecoms.

Photo Tech



Japan's electronics giant Matsushita employee Aki Goto displays the new tiny digital camera "D-snap SV-AV30" weighing 95g and equipped with a 350,000-pixel CCD on its image sensor at Asia's largest PC trade show WPC Expo 2002 in Tokyo 16 October 2002.

Dr. Tech

Dear Dr. Tech, Please let me know how can I transfer my bookmarks or favourites into another computer. Ashfaq

Dear Ashfaq, It's easy to save your bookmarks and favourites. Here are two ways for two browsers. Hope it will help you.
Explorer: If you use Internet Explorer, just head to your Favorites folder, located under your Windows Directory. (The fastest way to get there is to right-click your Start button and select Explore. You'll end up, by default, in your Windows Start Menu folder, just scroll up to the Favorites folder).

Slip in a floppy disk, right-click the Favorites Folder, and select Send to, 3 1/2" floppy Unless you have several thousand bookmarks, they should all fit on a single floppy, no problem.
Netscape Navigator 6: For those who use Netscape Navigator, you can export your bookmarks to an HTML file. Here's how
 1. Open Netscape and hit the Bookmarks menu, Manage Bookmarks.
 2. From the resulting screen, hit File, Export Bookmarks.
 3. Stick a 3.5 floppy in and navigate to it via the Export Bookmarks dialog box. dailystartech@yahoo.com

Drought Proof



An emu carcass along the road between Broken Hill and Ivanhoe 11 October 2002. Many emus have died due to the ongoing drought. A group of Australian scientist slammed a plan put forward by leading business tycoons to "drought-proof" the country as "simplistic" and "stupid".

Best 10 Websites Category: Home Improvement

- Improvements**
 Since 1992 Improvements has been the leading helping hand around your homes, yards, and cars, providing products people need to fix-up, organise, and clean their homes, and avoid costly repairs later.
 URL: <http://www.improvementscatalog.com>
- Build.com**
 Build.com's comprehensive directories consists of the most complete source of building and home improvement information available today.
 URL: <http://www.build.com>
- Lowe's**
 If your weekend plans include any home improvement projects, Lowe's can help.
 URL: <http://www.lowes.com/lowes/index.asp>
- Better Homes and Gardens**
 We do the shopping for you... We'll send you an email full of specials and bargains from the best online merchants each week.
 URL: <http://www.bhg.com>
- Build Find Network**
 The BuildFind Network is a unified set of Construction, Home Improvement and Building Industry Web sites
 URL: <http://www.buildfind.com>
- HomeCentral.com**
 We're here to make your everyday life easier, more enjoyable, and more comfortable. We offer fresh ideas and fun tools for gardening, cooking, or just relaxing at home.
 URL: <http://www.homecentral.com>
- Builder's Central**
 The Online Superstore where Products are Sold with Real Value and Convenience.
 URL: <http://www.builderscentral.com>
- HomeCraftShow.com**
 Most items here are customisable and made to order.
 URL: <http://www.homecraftshow.com>
- HouseNet**
 An award-winning web site that is the ultimate resource on home, garden, and today's lifestyle.
 URL: <http://www.houset.net/main.asp>
- BuildFind BuildersData Directories**
 BuildFind Building Products and Services Directories.
 URL: <http://www.buildersdata.com>