

Tech Seminar

Small businesses hold key to ICT development

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

"BANGLADESH has an underdeveloped, yet a very promising ICT sector," said Ram Venuprasad, project manager, Technical Assistance for the Development of Bangladesh's ICT sector, Commonwealth Secretariat, at a press briefing at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel on June 7.

Venuprasad was speaking about a project, which was formally inaugurated through a seminar at the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission auditorium on June 6. Speakers at the seminar titled 'Development of Small Business ICT Strategies for Bangladesh' discussed the potentiality, problems and solutions faced by the ICT sector of the nation. A project attempted towards integrating the commercial and socio-economic advantages of ICT development for the nation has been undertaken.

Minister for Science and Information & Communication Technology, Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan chaired the seminar while Dr Omar Faruque Khan, secretary of the ministry was present as special guest and delivered the welcome address.

TIM Nurul Kabir, vice president, Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) and Akhtaruzzaman Manju, president of the Internet Service Providers Association (ISPA) also spoke at the event.

Ram Venuprasad presented the keynote paper. "This project aims at assisting the Ministry of Science and Information & Communica-



Speakers at the seminar

tion Technology in developing and implementing a competitive ICT strategy toward developing the small and medium enterprises (SMEs)," he said.

The project is worth \$150,000, which is equivalent to Taka 76 lakh and is being funded by the Commonwealth Secretariat. The project is likely to be implemented within the next nine months.

"Hopefully by March 2005, we should be able to implement the key factors of the project," said Venuprasad. The project would develop appropriate business opportunities, marketing plans and hopefully change operational policies of the Bangladesh ICT sector, to aid the small and medium enterprises.

Through the project, international consultants will be training the industrial associations such as BCS, BASIS and ISPA.

"Through such training, the knowledge, should be disseminated to the larger community," hoped Ram Venuprasad.

"With the increasing awareness and such promising projects funded by Commonwealth Secretariat and various other international agencies, the ICT sector, would soon be seeing brighter days," said Abdul Moyeen Khan while speaking at the seminar. With an example, the minister pointed out the vital importance of computers and software which is being felt by the even members at 'the grass-root levels' of the society, who had no such knowledge even a decade ago.

Later, at the meeting with the journalists, Venuprasad commended the efforts of the ICT ministry. "The ICT Incubator is extremely impressive with a very standardised working environment," he said. He also hoped that

with the establishment of the proposed Hi-tech park, the ICT sector would finally possess the infrastructure required for its development.

"With the current potential, Bangladesh should have generated at least \$32 million a year through outsourcing and other services, rather than its actual \$3-4 million," he mentioned. He reasoned that this redundancy is due to the lack of an adequate marketing plan. "Hopefully with the completion of this project, Bangladesh would be standing firm with the marketing strategies that it always missed previously," he said.

The project manager also pointed out that with favourable results in this project, the ICT sector of Bangladesh might be the venue for a number of other such fruitful projects and ventures, in the near future.

Tech Snaps

Intel Channel Conference I, 2004

The Intel Channel Conference I (ICC) was held at the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel on June 1, says a press release. This is the first of the two yearly channel training programmes that Intel arranges for Genuine Intel Dealers (GID) all over the APAC (Asia Pacific) Region. During ICC, the GIDs are trained on Intel products for desktop and server platforms, product roadmaps, new technologies, channel activities etc. so that they can offer their customers with the best solutions and support.

Members of the Genuine Intel Dealer (GID) program from Dhaka, Chittagong, and other parts of the country attended the program. The training consisted of both sales and technical topics including desktop and server as well as a product showcase. GB Kumar, director, sales, Intel Technology India (Pvt.) Ltd. made the keynote speech while Nishant Goyal, channel platform manager updated the GIDs on the emerging new products and technologies.



Call2Net for common cell phone users

UY Systems, a local IT company has introduced 'cell2net', a service that will add value for the mass mobile user, says a press release. Through this service, mobile phone users can use their mobile as a separate web terminal for e-



mail, SMS service with other mobile phone operators and internet user can send SMS from the web free of cost. The strategy behind the service is to make a footstep in the highly competitive software and telecommunication sector. UY systems are also

adding a lot of new features with the existing GSM services such as SMS to E-mail and E-mail to SMS service. For more information, interested persons may visit www.uysys.com.

Tablet PC lucky draw



Award winners with HP team

HP Tablet PC Lucky Draw prize distribution ceremony was held at a city restaurant on June 6, says a press release.

The campaign started on March 15 and continued till April 23. Five winners were awarded at the programme. Each winner received a HP Compaq Tablet PC TC 1100. The resellers from whom the winning purchase was made also received a HP iPAQ Pocket PC h5500.

The awarding ceremony was preceded by presentations

on HP market share, Personal Sales Group (PSG) promotion, Imaging and Printing Group (IPG) product line, Color in Office and new supply sticker and original supply promotion updates. The presentations were conducted by Rumesa Hussain, business development manager and Shabbir Shafiullah, sales manager, IPG of Hewlett-Packard. About 70 participants from HP Premium Business Partners and Business Partners attended the ceremony.

Tech News

Seminar on e-Business

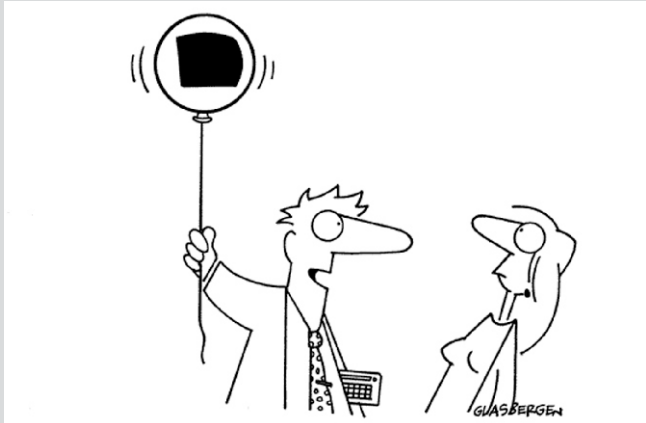
STAR TECH REPORT

Indecision and lack of foresight have forced the country to lag in the ICT sector, said Science and Information & Communications Technology Minister Abdul Moyeen Khan.

The minister made the observations while speaking at a seminar titled Challenges and Opportunity of e-Business in Bangladesh organised by Daffodil Institute of IT (DIIT), at its auditorium yesterday.

He said through proper connectivity the young generation of the country can contribute significantly in earning foreign exchange for Bangladesh.

M Zahidur Rahman, associate professor of Jahangirnagar University presented the keynote paper where he discussed the benefits and challenges of e-Business in Bangladesh. Fazle RM Hasan, president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), Fokhray Hossain, chief course co-ordinator of DIIT and Sabur Khan, chairman, DIIT and Daffodil International University also spoke at the seminar.



"It's the lightest portable computer we've ever designed!"

Tech News

Apple unveils wireless station to stream music

REUTERS, San Francisco

APPLE Computer Inc. on Monday unveiled a mobile wireless base station that lets users play digital music from their iTunes music libraries on a Macintosh or Windows computer over home stereo systems.

The device, called AirPort Express, is slightly larger than the power adapter for a Macintosh notebook computer and works with a new version of Apple's iTunes digital jukebox software.

AirPort Express comes as PC makers like Gateway Inc. and Hewlett-Packard Co. and consumer electronics companies such as Sony Corp (6758.T) are seeking to gain a foothold in the digital living room with entertainment PCs.

Apple said AirPort Express is simple in that it allows digital music to be beamed to



a home stereo, and it is a portable wireless base station that uses the 802.11g standard. It can be used in hotel rooms with broadband connections or for setting up instant wireless networks.

"This is really the product that brings these two worlds together," said Greg Joswiak, head of Apple's hardware product marketing, in a telephone interview, referring to wireless connectivity and digital music.

In May, Microsoft Corp.

said it would discontinue most of its own wireless hardware products. The world's largest software company launched its Wi-Fi business in late 2002, saying it wanted to make wireless networking and access to the Internet more accessible.

Apple has had more than 85 million downloads from its popular iTunes music store, which officially only works with its market-leading iPod digital music players. Songs typically cost 99 cents each and users can download them onto as many iPods as they like and on up to five computers.

AirPort Express plugs into a power outlet and has connectors for a DSL or cable modem, a USB port for printing and an analog and digital audio output that can be connected to a stereo. It uses iTunes music networking software to wirelessly stream music over remote speakers

or a stereo.

Joswiak said being able to wirelessly transmit songs from an iTunes music library on a Mac or PC was a top request from customers.

iTunes 4.6 detects a stereo or speakers, Joswiak said, and displays them in a pop-up list for users to select. Transmissions are encoded to prevent theft.

There has been speculation for months that Apple may soon unveil an iPod that plays movies, but Joswiak said the company has no plans yet for such a device.

AirPort Express costs \$129 and will be available in July.

Shares of Apple rose \$1.03, or 3.6 percent, to close at \$29.81 on Nasdaq amid a broad rally in technology stocks. So far this year, Apple stock has climbed 39 percent, and the Nasdaq has risen 0.86 percent in the same time period.

Tech News

Venus begins rare transit of sun

REUTERS, London

Venus began a transit across the sun yesterday for the first time in more than a century.

More than a hundred onlookers wearing special glasses joined scientists and journalists at London's Royal Observatory in Greenwich to watch as the planet began its path in front of the sun at 1:19 a.m. EDT.

"We will see this little notch coming out of the side of the sun," Royal Observatory astronomer Robert Massey said of Venus.

"There will be a period of about 10 minutes before the whole planet comes onto the surface. The first time is the crucial thing, that is

what people will be waiting to see.

"No one living has seen this so we have no experience of it at all."

Scientists said Europe, Africa and the Middle East would be the best vantage points for the rare event. Mostly clear skies are forecast in many parts of the regions.

Views will be restricted from Asia and the Americas.

Unlike a solar eclipse by the moon that is over in two or three minutes, Venus's transit -- which last occurred in 1882 -- will go on for six hours.

The planet will appear as an intense black dot, looking tiny on the solar disc. Venus was crossing from

bottom left of the solar disc to the right and will be 26.7 million miles from earth.

"Venus will be about 1/30 the size of the diameter of the sun, but it will be much darker and more intense



than sunspots," said Dr Robert Walsh, of the University of Central Lancashire's Center for Astrophysics in northern England.

Scientists recommend some form of indirect projection as the safest way to observe the phenomenon.

"Never ever look directly at the sun with the naked eye or any sort of optical equipment -- telescope, binoculars or even digital camera," said Walsh.

"Even if you glance at the sun for a short period of time you can damage your eye and lose some of your sight."

Internet sites will be covering the transit and observatories around the world have organized viewings.

"I stumbled across it on the Internet and I thought it would be really cool to be out here to see it," said student Kienda Bediako, 16,

from London, at the Royal Observatory to watch.

German astronomer Johannes Kepler first predicted a transit of Venus in 1627 but he died before he could witness one. English astronomer Jeremiah Horrocks first observed it in 1639.

The transit occurs four times in every 243 years. There are two December transits, eight years apart, and then 121.5 years later there are two June transits, also eight years apart. After another 105.5 years the cycle begins again.

The next transit will occur in 2012 when it will be visible from parts of Asia and the Pacific but not Europe.