

Tech Expo

The grand tech gala

BCS Computer Show 2004

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY and
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"Bangladesh will finally have an efficient and extremely economical internet connection once it is connected to the global information super-highway in 2005," said President Iajuddin Ahmed at the inauguration of the six-day long Bangladesh Computer Samity (BCS) Computer Show 2004 this Sunday at the Bhasani Novo Theatre.

Identifying the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a high priority sector, the president also said, "The government is ready to make efficient decisions that will lead to effective growth of the ICT sector in Bangladesh."

With 83 stalls and 26 pavilions at different levels of the Novo theater, the BCS Computer Show promises to be an exciting one this year. Besides the exhibition of ICT products and services, eleven seminars, gaming contests, programming contests and animation competitions have also been arranged. The grand exposition showcases colorful laser shows every evening of the event.

The Science and ICT Minister Abdul Moyn Khan described the efforts the government is taking towards ICT growth as "adequate" and encouraged the ICT sector to acquire positions in the global market.

British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Anwar Choudhury talked about the potential of the ICT sector in Bangladesh. "Good

leadership is a must, in order to ensure the growth of the ICT sector," said Choudhury.

Science and ICT Ministry and BCS jointly organised the gala event having international brands such as -- Asus, Intel, Lexmark and Philips as sponsors and SKYbd as the official ISP.

Most participating companies offered discounts on their products. Flora is giving out lottery coupons on their printers, WinTrade is offering a 7% discount on all of their products, while Daffodil Computer is cutting their retail prices by a generous 20%.

Akiz Barnamala software developed by Akiz Computers is being offered for only Taka 70. Renowned brand Asus has introduced wireless products, CPU coolers and notebooks. Lexmark is handing out free jackets with its printers.

On the first floor, ten ICT exporter companies are showcasing their export items and software. BCS has arranged the floors such a way, so that the youngsters and students of Bangladesh will get a glimpse of the items that are being exported by our country all together.

A gaming show is also being arranged everyday at the basement of the Bhasani Novo Theatre. Organised by Sparkle AGP, such a networked gaming environment has been arranged at an ICT fair for the first time in Bangladesh.

Three seminars took place on the second day of the BCS computer



The new venue has given the largest software exposition of the country a new dimension

PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

show huge presence. The first seminar was titled, *Skill based IT Education for the under privileged youth* and was based on a project, under which, more than 200 under-privileged children would receive computer training and thus make a living through IT means. Two private sector companies, Scholastic Netpreneurs and Aporajeyo Bangladesh jointly organised the seminar.

SM Iqbal, president, BCS cited how efforts should be made to bring the rural people under one establishment of technology

training as soon as possible. "We should also get prepared for the optimised usage of the upcoming nano-technology," said Iqbal, while referring to the worldwide dominance of nano-technology in the ICT production phases.

In the second event of the day, *Texas Group* launched their web portal *deshimobile.com*. Syed Marghub Morshed, chairman, Bangladesh Telecom Regulatory Commission (BTRC) as the chief guest of the seminar. The third seminar was about bridging the digital division that exists among

the ICT users of Bangladesh.

Special arrangements have been made to facilitate more visitors at the show, including free bus rides throughout the city. A total of six buses with a seating capacity of 40 each will run on circular routes covering Bijoy Sharani west crossing, Agargaon crossing, Shyamoli, Aarong (Manik Mia Avenue west) crossing, Science Laboratory, Shahabag, Banglamotor, and Farmgate to the Bhasani Novo Theatre. This service is available for free from 9:30 a.m. till 8:30 p.m.

Tech News

Sniffing success with fragrance machine

AFP, Saint-Malo

THE first pioneering steps have been taken in France to add one of the most emotive of the five senses -- the sense of smell -- to the already mind-boggling universe of multimedia.

Life and art already jostle for our attention through myriad Internet sites, DVDs and video games with often richly layered, high-definition images and videos.

Now, following the efforts of an engineer from his offices on an industrial estate in the picturesque northern French port of Saint-Malo, we may soon be able to smell the action, too.

"The French are ahead of the rest of the world in olfactory multimedia, probably thanks to our traditions in gastronomy and perfumes," said Yvan Regard, 33, who has just launched the first company of its kind in the country.

"Unlike images or sound,

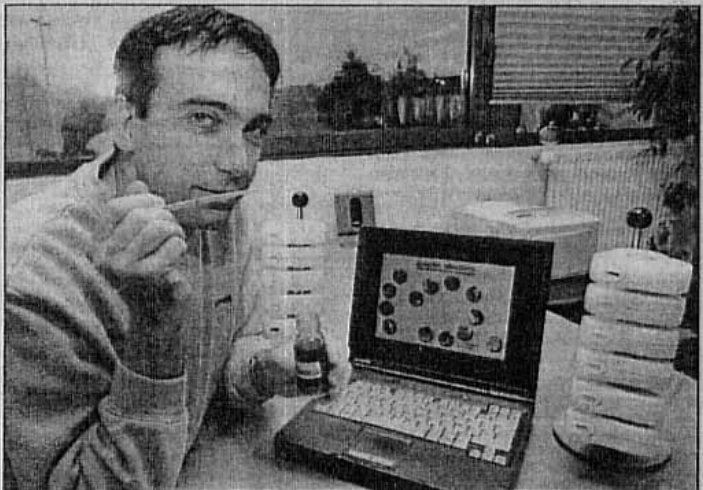


PHOTO: AFP

A picture taken on November 24, shows CEO of the French company Exhalia, Yvan Regard, at his office in Saint Malo..

smells can trigger previously forgotten memories and emotions. We are talking about Proust with his slice of Madeleine cake," he mused.

In his novel "The Remembrance of Things Past", French

novelist Marcel Proust describes his reaction after drinking a spoonful of tea in which a piece of cake has been soaked.

The experience brings back an intense memory of his family triggered not by the sight of the

cake, but by its taste and smell.

Regard, an engineer at France Telecom who has been given leave of absence to get his project off the ground, demonstrates his multimedia version of the Proust experience by inviting his visitors on a fragrant journey through the timeless vineyards of Burgundy.

A couple of clicks on the mouse on a portable computer connected to two perfume dispensers, which look like small loudspeakers, and the smell of undergrowth, vanilla and wild fruit drifts into the room.

"My dream is that one day this will become the world standard for olfactory applications, that it will become a small cog in the Windows system," he said.

Regard works with computer-controlled fragrance diffusion systems developed by France Telecom which the company has patented worldwide. Before setting out on his own, the Frenchman spent four years working on olfactory multimedia

research at the telecoms giant.

The project is being eyed with special interest by the agri-food and perfume industry, he said.

In the short term, incorporating smells into DVDs and on to Internet sites could be useful for professional trade fairs, for training students or sales personnel or for demonstrating products to customers.

In the long term, smells could be worked into video games, television programmes and electronic trading sites. Marketing specialists are already on the trail of the new concept.

Now Regard is on the lookout for investors in his new company, Exhalia, who would be willing to inject the 400,000 euros (530,000 dollars) he needs to take his ideas to the next stage.

To develop and perfect its fragrances, Exhalia has formed a partnership with perfumer Robertet, based in one of France's most famous perfume towns, Grasse.

Tech Focus

Toshiba rolls out mobile computing products at BCS Computer Show

NAFID IMRAN AHMED

THE Computer Systems Division (CSD) of Toshiba Singapore Pte Ltd, (South and Southeast Asia Regional Headquarters) introduced a wide range of innovative and wireless-enabled mobile computing solutions catering to the varying mobile computing needs at the BCS Computer Show 2004, one of the largest computer hardware exposition of the country that started on December 12.

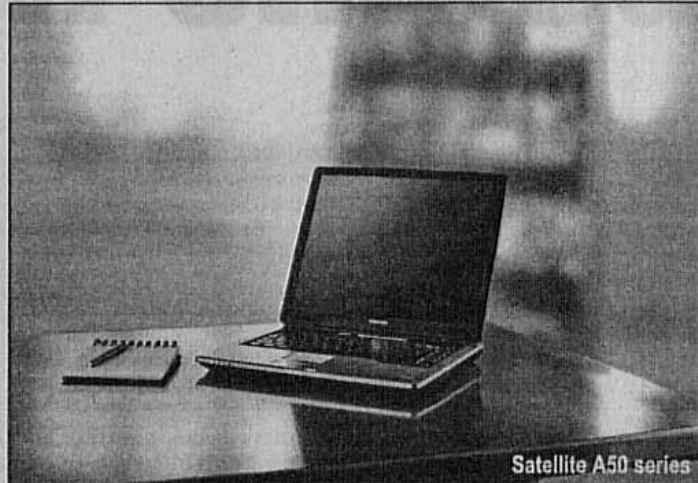
In an exclusive interview with StarTech, Ivan Kam, manager, Distributor Business, South Asia, CSD, Toshiba Singapore Pte Ltd, elaborated the notebook models and Tablet PCs that formed an acute line-up meeting the need for all ranges of customers starting from students to roving business executives.

"As a leader in the mobile arena, Toshiba offers unrivalled innovation with its unique experience and massive R&D investment to ensure the best-available mobile solutions," said Kam. "The products offered at the BCS Computer Show are of premium quality and reliability. They have gone through rigorous testing and contain state-of-the-art components creating technology that guarantees to last for years," he added. Mary Lim, asst. manager Marketing and Communications, South and South East Asia, CSD, Toshiba Singapore was also present during the interview.

A combination of design, value, performance and quality Among the three Satellite Series, the Satellite A60-S536 model has been designed to deliver powerful mobility, offering high-performance. It includes industry-leading video graphics capabilities, integrated communication and connectivity features, as well as multimedia for work or play.

This series is coupled with the enhanced brightness with the new Clear SuperView (CSV) LCD display technology that offers a better visual experience with images 30% brighter than standard screens and with a 160° viewable angle. While CSV makes video clips and DVDs look better, the integrated stereo speakers with SRS TruSurround XT sound technology will also make them sound better.

We understand the users are looking for products that are easy to easy to install, operate and yet remain productive, both in and out of home or office," said Kim while taking about A60. "Toshiba's new Satellite A60 series provides customers with many choices when it comes to meeting a specific price point or performance level for the notebook," Kim added.



Satellite A50 series

Among the other two Satellite series, the A40 includes a hassle-free navigation with Toshiba Touch and Launch program while the A50 series has an extended battery life for an enhanced mobile computing experience.

"The Satellite A50 puts Toshiba ahead of competition with its superior multimedia capability. The new CSV TFT technology featured on the Satellite A50 will allow customers to enjoy high-quality video playback and overall multimedia experience," said Kim describing the A50 series.

Among the Satellite series, the A60-S135 equipped with Celeron 2.8Ghz has been specially priced at Taka 81,000 for the fair, while the A60-S310 having Pentium 4 2.80Ghz costs Taka 88,000.

Ultimate mobility, the wireless style Designed for the most mobile and demanding business users, the PORTÉGE M100 is the perfect synthesis of form and function. Weighing at just 1.8kg with an integrated slim select bay, the system offers the latest Intel Centrino Mobile Technology as well as extended battery life. This has been designed for the corporate notebook users having greater mobile flexibility and a truly feature-rich wireless mobile computing.

The PORTÉGE M200 is an ultra-portable wireless Tablet PC with enhanced features including Intel Centrino mobile technology and the unique screen technology. It features the world's first ultra-bright 12.1" SXGA and TFT Polysilicon display and dual-axis accelerometer utility for optimal viewing and usability functions. This enhanced graphics performance is further supported by the

latest NVIDIA GeForce FX Go5200 chipset with 32MB video memory.

"Over the past year, Toshiba's tablet PC has gained acceptance because of its portability, versatility and ability to function beyond the traditional range of PC applications. Customers of all sizes across vast industries including insurance, pharmaceuticals and medical are using our award winning platform and finding new ways to increase productivity during their entire business day," said Kim.

The PORTÉGE M200 offers exciting new options including the Tablet Multi-Dock docking station and the reserve pen that provide new usages scenario and increased application use, for everyday mobile computing needs," he added.

First-class stability, power and connectivity Designed for greatest mobile PC experience, the TECRA M2 series has been equipped with Intel Centrino mobile technology and high-end graphics capabilities. Its extended battery life, integrated Wi-Fi connectivity and Toshiba ConfigFree software for "hassle-free" network connection make the TECRA M2 series ideal whenever mobility is desired.

"For the past several years, we recognised that reducing the cost and complexity of notebook ownership, while increasing performance and functionality, is critical to IT professionals and SMB customers," said Kim while talking about the M2. "Our continued investment in TECRA product line including advanced wireless connectivity, long battery life and a lightweight form factor reaffirms Toshiba's commitment to providing high performance notebooks that businesses of all sizes would easily appreciate," Kim concluded.

Tech News

Firefox gains suggest browser wars may heat up

AFP, Washington

THE Internet browser wars, dormant for several years, shows signs of heating up again as a result of gains from a new program called Firefox, a research report showed.

Use of Firefox, created by the nonprofit Mozilla Foundation, has grown by more than a third over the past month, research firm WebSideStory.

In the period from November 5 to December 3, Firefox's online usage share grew from 3.03 percent to 4.06 percent, following a 13 percent gain during the previous month.

Microsoft's Internet Explorer retains its overwhelming dominance with 91.8 percent of the market, the report showed. But that has slipped from over 93 percent two months ago.

Microsoft, by integrating the browser into its Windows operating system crushed Netscape Navigator, which had been the dominant browser in the late 1990s, effectively ending the browser wars at the time.

But some Web users are concerned



about the security of Internet Explorer and have been using alternatives.

"Since June 4, when IE's usage share first began to drop due to security concerns, IE has lost a total of 3.68 percentage points," WebSideStory said.

"Firefox's gains are clearly accelerating," said Rand Schulman, WebSideStory's chief marketing officer. "Much of it has to do with the release of Firefox's version 1.0 on November 9, after several months of offering a preview version. Firefox's stated goal of gaining 10 percent of the market over the next year no longer seems unattainable."

Netscape, which is now a part of Time Warner's America Online unit, held a 2.83 percent market share in early December, down from 3.05 percent two months earlier.

Netscape shares some of the same origins of Firefox, and includes some of the same features including "tabbed" browsing to allow several pages to be contained within a single window, accessibility to search engines and pop-up blocking.

Photo Tech

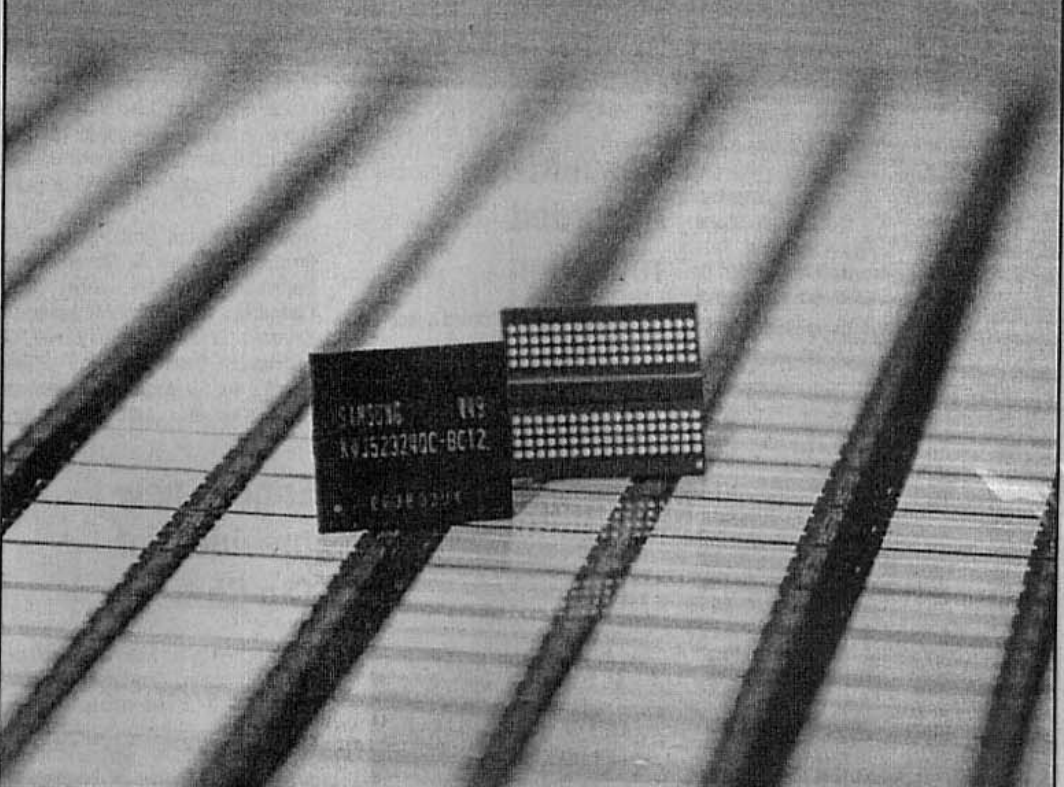


PHOTO: AFP

South Korea's Samsung Electronics developed the world's first 512-megabit graphics double-data-rate (GDDR) memory chip, the most advanced graphics memory device. Samsung 512Mb GDDR3, the first JEDEC-standard GDDR3 to operate at up to 1.6Gbps, is faster than any other graphics memory on the market. Samsung said the 512-megabit GDDR3 is the most advanced dynamic random access memory chip for graphics card makers and game console manufacturers. Mass production of the 512Mb GDDR3 will begin early next year.