

'BanglarRoop' - Net service for the common people

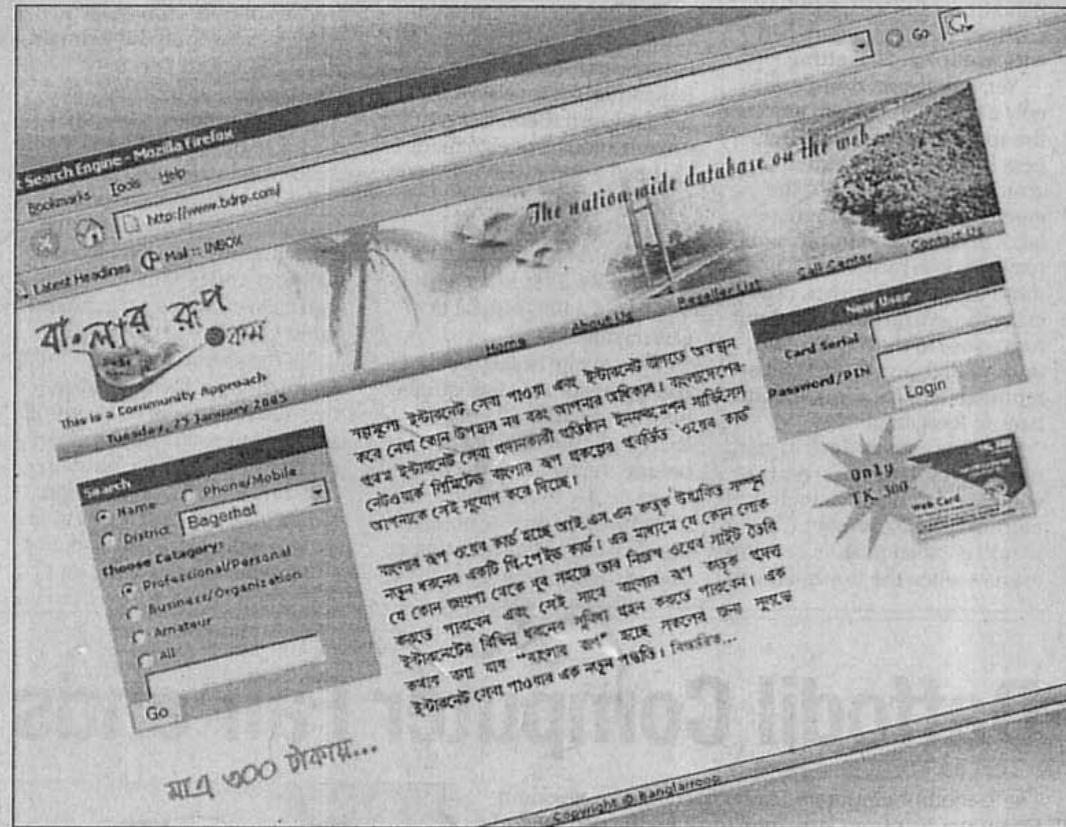
RIDWAN A KABIR

INFORMATION Services Network Ltd. (ISN), the first online internet service provider of the country, recently held a seminar on their recently released adaptable internet card, "Banglar Roop Web card" (Bdroop), at the office premises of ISN.

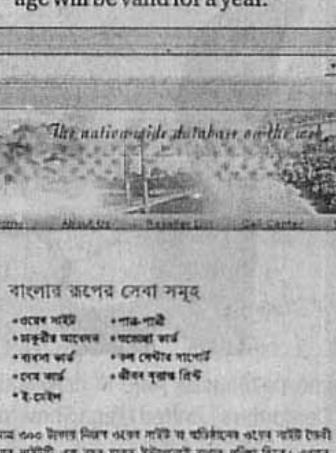
The web card, the first of its kind, was first launched at the recently concluded Bangladesh Computer Samity (BCS) Computer Showcase 2004.

"To get internet service at an affordable rate and locate a web space has become almost a social right for an individual," said SM Iqbal, managing director of ISN, indicating how the country has recently been experiencing quite an appreciable rate of growth in the ICT sectors. "And this is where Bdroop comes into play," he added.

Unlike anything the prepaid internet users have yet experienced, 'Bdroop' is a special kind of prepaid internet card priced at Tk 300, which will allow any user located anywhere in the country to use ISN's internet service and also includes a website development option for that particular individual or company by the web-



development team of Bdroop along with other important offline services, which was only accessible through an internet connection. The 'Bdroop' package will be valid for a year.



"Using the email is one of the added features," mentioned Manjurul Islam Tauhid, a member of the technical support team of Bdroop, while highlighting the various features of the service at the seminar.

Conventionally, it is necessary to use a computer for this purpose, but for the Bdroop registered users, it will be as simple as just making a call to ISN's call-centre with their registered password, and instructing them over the content and the destination of the email to be used. "This is expected to be of good use for the villagers of our country," said Tauhid, referring to those who have their relatives living abroad and use an amount of Tk 500 per annum on sending postal mails to these non-residents.

This tele-email service has been limited to at most four emails per month initially, for a typical user of Bdroop. "This will be an alter-

native way to educate the nation on internet usage," mentioned Tauhid.

Users may also use SMS service from their mobile phones to attain this email service. They

would need to SMS their serial number from Bdroop and the ISN server will pick out the appropriate file from the server to attach as an email to the destined address. "It is required that the user upload the accurate file to our server before he or she tries the SMS service," Tauhid pointed out. Users may also choose to send e-cards to any destination in the world on different occasions through this service.

"We are looking into building a nation where everybody will have a cyber-address to refer to," Iqbal said while chairing the seminar. Iqbal was referring to the websites that were to be developed for all Bdroop users

from ISN. These sites will have a simple outlook and provide space for only two image files and a personal profile. "The profile section may contain business profile for new business entrepreneurs," he added, "Users may also choose to upload a softcopy of the designated business card on the site.

The business prospect of Bdroop is expected to be used by different small-time vendors and gift-sellers, and also by matrimonial firms with photographs. "The user will attain mostly all the benefits of the internet through Bdroop," Tauhid added.

Users may also choose to search the internet by calling in the service center. The operator will present the user with selective results of the search he makes on the user's behalf. This method should bring in a wider use of the net, even when it is not quite physically and locally available.

At present the service holds around three hundred users of different profiles, but most of which are of students who are looking for attaining a job.

"They would want to upload their bio-data or curriculum vitae to be available to corporate net searches," states Tauhid.

Currently calls will follow in from different zones of the country, including Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Kishoreganj, Feni and Barishal. "On average we receive around 20 to 30 calls everyday," Tauhid says. Most of the callers end up buying Bdroop and instructing the service-agent on making his or her personal website. "We started putting advertisements of Bdroop right after the BCS computer show,"

Tauhid said mentioning that three hundred clients for Bdroop is quite a turnout in just over a month.

For more information one may contact ISN or visit the websites, www.bdrp.com and www.bangla.net.

Intel reveals new Desktop Boards in market

THE Intel Desktop Motherboard D915PGN and D915GAVL are now available in the Bangladesh market, says a press release.

Based on the new Intel 915P and Intel 915G Express chipsets respectively, these motherboards come with new features and technologies like PCI Express Architecture, PCI Express X16 Graphics port, and Intel High Definition Audio.

The Intel 915G chipset based D915GAVL also has Intel GMA 900 video onboard.



These new technologies make it possible for users to enjoy better system performance,

high definition movies, home theatre with Dolby Digital sound, and gaming. The storage controller of these motherboards feature NCQ (Native Command Queuing), which improves hard disk throughput, and the D915GAVL comes with a high performance Intel Pro 100+ network card.

The given software bundle include exciting titles Sonic Focus, InterVideo Home Theatre, WinDVD Creator Silver, Norton Internet Security, and MusicMatch Jukebox.

HP No. 4 on list of top US patent winners in 2004

STARTECH DESK

HEWLETT Packard (HP) moved up to No. 4 on the US Patent and Trademark Office's list of the top 10 organisations receiving the most US patents in 2004, says a press release.

The company was awarded 1,775 patents for the year, up from 1,759 in 2003.

"This achievement validates the strategy established five years ago when we put the word 'Invent' in the company logo and increased our efforts to build a patent portfolio to help ensure our technology leadership," said Steve Fox, vice president

and deputy general counsel, intellectual property, HP. "In 2000, we were No. 16 in the rankings. We've made steady progress over the years to get to where we are today."

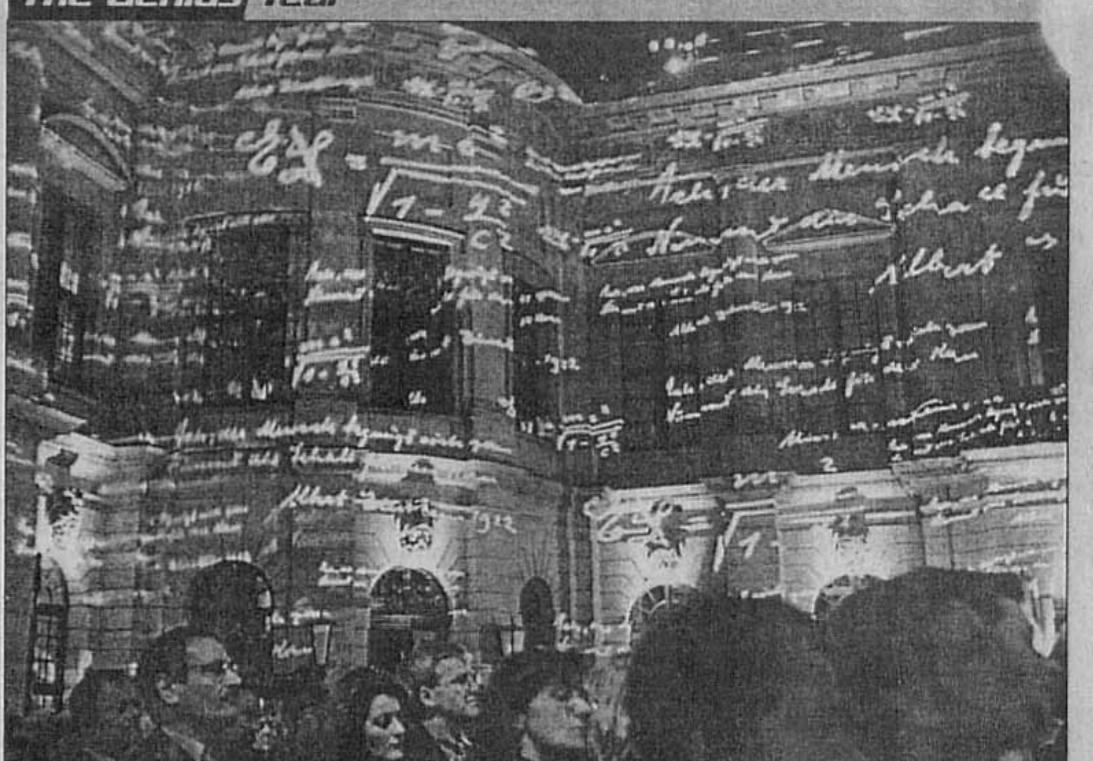
Worldwide, HP added approximately 4,000 patents to its portfolio in 2004, an average of 11 per day. Its total patent portfolio now stands at about 25,000, one of the largest in the world.

HP's patent portfolio is also unique in the information technology industry in the range of technologies it covers from computer systems and software, to PCs, imaging and printing and business processes. With its new

efforts in consumer electronics, many new patents are expected in that area as well.

HP also continued to leverage its intellectual property (IP) assets through its IP licensing organization, announced last year.

"In the past two years, we tripled licensing revenues because we created an organisation that is focused on obtaining value beyond traditional product revenue," said Joe Beyers, vice president, IP licensing, HP. "In addition to the protection that patents provide, they can also become an important conduit for direct revenue through licensing fees."



Scientific formulas are projected on the walls of the German Historical Museum during a ceremony in Berlin 19 January 2005 to launch "Einstein Year" in Germany. German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder launched a year of celebrations to mark 100 years since Einstein made the first of his discoveries that changed the way we look at the world.

Creating new leading PC business with global market reach

STARTECH DESK

RECENTLY IBM announced that it has signed an agreement with Lenovo Group Limited, the leading Personal Computer brand in China to form the world's third-largest PC business, bringing IBM's leading enterprise-class PC technologies to the consumer market and giving Lenovo global market reach beyond China and Asia, says a press release.

Lenovo's new PC business will benefit from a powerful worldwide distribution and sales network covering 160 countries, global brand recognition through the combination of IBM's highly regarded "Think" brand notebook franchise and

Lenovo's leading brand recognition in China, enhanced service and support for consumers and enterprise clients, and consumer strength and market leadership in China, the world's fastest growing IT

companies need to have global scope, leading-edge technology and highly efficient operations. Through acquiring IBM's global PC business and forming a strategic alliance with IBM, Lenovo will absorb and integrate the skills from both sides and acquire global brand recognition, an international and diversified customer base, a world-class distribution network with global reach, more diversified product offerings, enhanced operational excellence and leading-edge technology.

According to IDC figures for 2003, the combined unit market share of Lenovo and IBM's PC businesses worldwide is approximately 8 percent. The transaction will dramatically strengthen Lenovo's global presence in the fast-growing notebook PC marketplace.

Lenovo Group will locate its PC business worldwide headquarters in New York, with principal operations in Beijing and Raleigh, North Carolina, and sales offices throughout the world.

Apple seeks bigger bite of PC market with Mac Mini

REUTERS, San Francisco

MIGHT the Mac mini mean a bigger bite of the personal computer market for Apple Computer Inc.

That's the hope of Apple whose approximately 100 retail stores are opening an hour early on Saturday as the highly touted and low-priced Mac mini computer and iPod Shuffle portable music player go on sale.

Analysts are betting Apple's mini might just tempt users of rival Microsoft Corp.'s Windows to switch operating systems and go with the Mac and its Mac OS X operating system.

That transition hasn't happened yet despite Apple's "Switch" advertising campaign and in spite of the success of the iPod portable digital music players. More than 10 million have been sold since their introduction more than three years ago. Apple's portion of the worldwide PC market was 2 percent in the fourth quarter, according to preliminary figures from market research firm IDC.

"I believe the Mac mini is actually going to have more of an impact on Apple's market share position than their digital music efforts have so far," said IDC analyst



PHOTO: AFP

South Korean promoters show the new Mac Mini and the iPod Shuffle during its unveiling press conference in Seoul on January 20. Apple Computer Korea sells the new Mac Mini personal computer at USD 499 and the iPod Shuffle MP3 player for USD 99 from February in South Korea.

its sleek products, but, now, Apple is changing course.

"The Mac mini opens up lower price points for people who would like to try the Mac platform, and that's long been one of my chief complaints about Apple -- the high price," IDC's Kay said.

Steve Jobs, co-founder and chief executive of Cupertino, California-based Apple, said last week, "People who are thinking of switching will have no excuse." Jobs introduced the mini, which comes without a display, keyboard or mouse, at the company's annual trade show on Jan. 11.

Starting at \$499, the mini, which is 6.5 inches square and 2 inches tall, is Apple's cheapest computer ever.

Some analysts have said that Apple's blow-out fourth-quarter results offered clear proof of the "halo effect" of iPod sales boosting Mac sales. Kay said he was not so sure.

Apple's fourth-quarter share of the worldwide and U.S. PC markets rose by a mere 0.1 percentage point each, to 2.0 percent and 3.4 percent, respectively.

"That's not a whole lot of share gain, but will the Mac mini help them gain some more?" Kay asked. "I would certainly think so."