

TechFair

# When tech is fun

## 3rd Techno Fun Fair ends

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

WITH new innovative categories, the 3rd Techno Fun Fair organised by the North South University Computer Club (NSUCC) was a raving success at exhibiting some of the latest technologies around the world to students as well as to entertain them in various other ways.

The different events of the fair were held at separate venues in and around the North South University campus in Banani on February 13. The fair, officially launched by Hafiz GA Siddiqui, vice chancellor, North South University sported events like

Hardware Exhibition, NSU Genius Hunt, Radio Controlled Toy Car Racing and movie shows.

The hardware exhibition was participated by Global Brand and Khan Jahan Ali Computers, two leading computer firms at present. The companies set up stalls at Sher Plaza where they displayed laptops, digital cameras, monitors, pen drives and webcams.

Alongside, the free internet prepaid cards which were being distributed by Onet, to the students of the University, attracted a huge crowd.

The Radio Controlled Toy Car Racing also created quite a sensation among students participating as well

as those who were in attendance during the event. NSUCC members arranged a huge winding track where the toy cars were raced.

"We received a substantial amount of appreciation from both visitors and the participants for holding such an event," said Abdullah Al Asad, media in-charge, NSUCC.

The movie show was a bit different from the shows arranged last year and the year before. "This time, we showed some latest movies like 'Taxi', 'Cellular' and 'Shall We Dance?' in a THX environment with over 16 speakers," said Asad, about the movie show which was highly appreciated by the movie-buffs of the

university.

The Genius Hunt was one of the highlighted aspects of the 3rd Techno Fun Fair this year.

"The whole idea behind the hunt was to find a special person who is quite innovative and creative as far as his technical knowledge and professional skills are concerned," said Ashiqur Rahman, president, NSUCC.

Students from different fields of study like Electrical Engineering, Computer Science & Engineering and Computer Science provided independent projects for the Hunt. Faculties from the Computer Science and Engineering Department judged the projects and awards were presented to the

winners at a separate event during the movie show.

"Our whole intention was to expose the student to some latest hardware as well as to entertain them in whatever ways possible," said Rahman. "We are glad that the fair was a success at reaching these objectives," he added.

Even though most of these events were arranged for the first time, sources inside the NSUCC assured that these will not be the last and other innovative events will be organised at the 4th Techno Fun Fair next year.



Hafiz G A Siddiqui, vice-chancellor of NSU tries his luck during the Radio Controlled Toy Car Racing event at the 3rd Techno Fun Fair.

Tech Review

Bdtradeinfo.com

# Not just a local search-site

STARTECH DESK

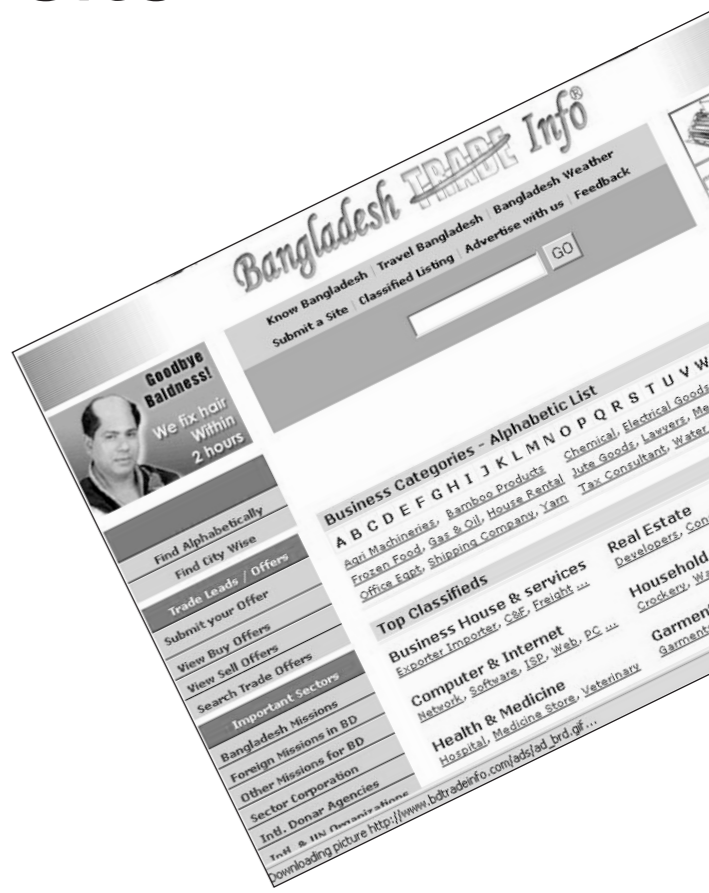
A local business search engine, bdtradeinfo.com, has recently introduced three new categories to its existing local search criteria which sum into a large collection for such a database. Now visitors will be able to search from more than forty different business sectors. The newly introduced departments are -- 'Info Tuition', 'Info Marriage' and 'Info Literature'.

The 'Info Tuition' category already has seventeen entries for tutors, who are in search for students. Very trimmed down, but important information for these tutors are located in the database. The site plays as a media through which, parents may locate tutors for their kids and the site administrators have kept this service entirely free of cost and hopes to update it on a regular basis.

Though it may be commonly taken for granted that the literature section will hold writings by renowned writers of the country, but unfortunately, at present it contains word-works from the CEO of the site. "The plan is to publish one issue of literary works per month," said Asim Tarafdar, CEO, BdTradeInfo, while talking to StarTech. He also mentioned how contacts will be made with Dhaka University's Department of English and other English and Bengali medium schools to setup a regular flow of write-ups, while both languages will be given priority. "There will be no financial matters involved in either direction, and this will only play to moralise potential writers and publish their write-ups online," Asim added.

"We are also hoping on successfully running the 'Info Marriage' section soon," Asim said, stating how currently the link is down because of technical difficulties.

Along with categorial search, alphabetical search may also be performed, which according to



the CEO is somewhat similar to the current idea of online business yellow pages. Performing a search city-wise is another option. "We tried to customise the site according to user demand," stated Asim. "All these links on search-sites were added one after another and we still are trying to expand and upgrade more information in the database for user-convenience," he cited.

Other than the search-categories, another potential section displayed in the site is the 'Important Telephones' which include phone numbers for ambulances, police, blood banks, fire service, hotels, air-lines, taxis, and different government

offices, and much more. The 'Share Market' section includes links to the Dhaka and Chittagong stock exchanges, NASDAQ, and several other international stock market sites.

T-Series is a multi-disciplinary firm specialized in Web development, Customized Software development, Networking, Graphics design and some other areas of Information Technologies. Future plans of the company include adding an online job site to BdTradeInfo, possibly by the name of 'Info Jobs', and the CEO plans to keep this job site cost-free to its clients.

TechNews

# bangladeshinovels.com finally adds a Bangla section

RIDWAN A KABIR

THE one and only site that holds detailed information on Bangladeshi novels and novelists, has recently added a Bengali section to its net location. This prolific addition to the site, bangladeshinovels.com, was announced at the recently held Ekushey book fair by Prof Mustafa Nurul Islam on February 25. Eminent literati of the country, including Al Mahmud, Mohammad Nurul Huda, and Imdadul Huq Milon attended the launching session.

The site carries information on more than thirty leading novelists from the current literature scene, along with some mentionable excerpts from their individual works.

An amazingly informative 'Introduction' page on Bangla literature itself, reflects the era



Prof. Mustafa Nurul Islam speaks at the inaugural ceremony of the Bangla Section of Bangladeshinovels.com, while Mohammad Nurul Huda, Subrata Kumar Das (writer and publisher of the site), Mia Md Moniruzzaman, Nasreen Zahan and Al Mahmud are also seen.

which existed prior to 1947, the birth period of India and Pakistan's border-lines, and thus of

Bangladesh and further continues to extend till the present day culture and its literary works. The

section also carries briefings on alphabets, mentioning extraordinary works and pieces acknowledged with the names of the writers along with the times when these works were published.

The main two links of the new additions to the existing site are: *Oponyashik* (Novelists) and *Bibidho Probondho* (Collected Articles). The novelists who have been discussed elaborately and analytically in individual pages are: Syed Waliullah, Shamsuddin Abul Kalam, Abu Ishaque, Shahidulla Kaisar, Syed Shamsul Huq, Rabeya Khatun, Al Mahmud, Hasnat Abdul Hye, Ahmed Sofa, Humayun Azad, Selina Hossain, Humayun Ahmed, Mohammad Nurul Huda, Shahidul Zahir, Imdadul Huq Milon, Nasreen Zahan and Anisul Hoque.

'*Bibidho Probondho*' includes two separate sub-links: *Bangladesher Sahityo* (local) and

*Opar Bangla Sahityo* (west-bengal).

The best seller section, *Bohulbikrito Upponnash*, includes newly released and books that came out in Ekushey fair. In addition to these the site contains short biographies and articles on prosperous writers including Dr Humayun Ahmed, Ahmed Sofa, Dr Humayun Azad, Anwar Pasha, Haripada Datta and many more. And thus enhancing the browsing experience of the literature lovers.

The author and site administrator, Subrata Kumar Das, is also a teacher of English at the Bangladesh Rifles College. Das updates the site regularly and maintains a clean and crisp outlook, which attracts many foreign readers and researchers. "I would feel accomplished if the site broadens the horizon of our literature," stated Das.

TechNews

# Soccer to test ball with microchip beep

AP, Wales

A soccer ball containing a microchip that beeps when it crosses the goal line will be tested at this year's under-17 world championship.

The International Football Association Board, which makes the rules for world soccer, agreed to the trial Saturday at its annual general meeting.

The microchip ball, which was produced in part by Adidas, was used in a game between Nuremberg and Nuremberg reserves on Wednesday in Germany.

When the ball crosses the line, the microchip transmits a signal to a watchlike device on the referee's wrist, making either a beep or vibration.

"Not a day goes by without technology making progress," FIFA president Sepp Blatter said. "We therefore have a duty to at least examine whether new technology could be used in football."

Blatter added that the key issue is to make sure the technology does not undermine the officials or rules of the game.

The English Football Association also offered to experiment with the ball. However, the Premier League and



PHOTO: AFP

A football team scores a goal. A microchip-equipped ball designed to end disputes over goal-line decisions could be used at next year's World Cup after world football's rule-making body issued a green light for a trial of the new technology.

Football League use balls made by rival manufacturers.

The under-17 worlds are set for Sept. 16-Oct. 2 in Peru. The technology most likely will not be ready for next year's World Cup in Germany.

Calls for new technology resurfaced in England after Tottenham was denied a clear goal at Manchester United on Jan. 4. Goalkeeper Roy Carroll dropped the ball behind the line, but the officials missed the call.

The IFAB, in rulings to take effect July 1, also decided that:

any tackle endangering a player's health will earn an automatic red card.

a player is offside if he is nearer to his opponent's goal line than both the ball and next-to-last opponent. "The position of any part of the player's head, body or feet will be the deciding factor, and not the player's arms," the IFAB said.

six substitutes will be allowed for international exhibitions.

opponents must be at least 2 yards from a thrower until the ball is in play.

Since its inception in the late 19th century, the IFAB has met annually to review soccer rules. The IFAB consists of four representatives from FIFA and one each from the soccer associations of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

TechNews

# Robot mannequins to strike a pose for their customers



PHOTO: AFP

A mannequin robot named "Palette" moves its arms and head to strike a pose like a supermodel through motion-capture technology before the press at a Tokyo hotel on February 28. The robot is expected to go on sale this year for fashion and service industries.

AFP, Tokyo

THE mannequin moving in the store window is no longer a fantasy. A Japanese firm has developed a mannequin robot that can strike a pose for customers -- and spy on who they are and what they're buying.

"Mannequins have been static but this will pose for the nearest person by sensing his or her position," robot designer Tatsuya

Matsui said.

"It makes the product the mannequin wears look more attractive, increasing consumers' appetite to buy," said Matsui, who heads Flower Robotics Inc.

The female robot, code-named "Palette", can draw inspiration from the world's most beautiful women, using motion-capture technology to replay the movements of supermodels.

But Palette will double-up as an industrial spy, with the maker

planning to program it to judge the age and sex of shoppers and even identify the bags they are carrying and pass along the information to stores for marketing purposes.

Matsui developed Palette with software company SGI Japan Ltd. and aim to start selling it this year for the fashion and service industries.

The price has not been set yet but SGI wants to make it "as close as possible to that of conventional mannequins," said Hiroshi Otsuka, who is in charge of new business promotion at SGI Japan.

There is a business chance as "the concept of showcases being static has not changed for more than a century," Otsuka said.

Palette for the time being will be off the catwalk, as its torso is on a metal bar. Otsuka said it was "safer that the robot stays in a showcase."

The robot may remind some people of a 1987 US movie "Mannequin," starring Andrew McCarthy as a department store window-dresser who falls in love with a mannequin who was actually an ancient Egyptian woman.

Palette, however, has no face to fall in love with.

"Consumer attention would be diverted to the face if there were one," said Matsui, the designer, noting he wanted customers to focus on the clothes or jewelry the mannequin wears.

Palette is available in two versions -- the whole-body models for jewelry displays. Matsui said he wanted in the future to design a Palette with legs along with male and child models.