

With just a pen and paper, he peeked farther behind Nature's curtain than anyone had since Newton. Now, when we think of genius, we see his face. In 1905 publishes three seminar papers on theoretical physics, including the special theory of relativity which was proved correct three years later. In 1922, wins Nobel Prize in Physics and in 1939 Urges F.D.R. to develop atom bomb.



TECHFOCUS

The mirror of splendor

First part of documentary serial on tourism unleashed

RIDWAN A KABIR

REFLECTING the breathtaking beauty of Bangladesh, a tourism related informative multimedia production "Banglar Aayna" has recently been released by Panaroma Tourism in co-operation with Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation and Jubok Tourism Limited. ABC-Digital, a multimedia distributor agent for the local market is working as the sole distributor of the product.

"This informative documentary is the first of its kind in Bangladesh," stated Masud Chowdhury Pitu, a noted documentary filmmaker of the country, who has been working on the project for more than five years now.

The compact disc (CD) version of the documentary includes ten exclusive videos on various natural beauties and traditional attractions of the rural Bangladesh, such as 'Sharer Lorai' (Bull fight), 'Ahsar Chor' (an island in the Bay of Bengal), 'Duranta Podda' (on river Padma), 'Lalmal Pahar' (Lalmal hills that were uplifted in the Middle Pleistocene

time during the final orogenic movement of the Himalayas), 'Lobon Chash' (salt production), 'Porjoton Nogory Cox's Bazaar' (the tourism capital of the country) and some other enchanting extravagant natural sites.

"You will be surprised to see what these rural people do to their oxen to win the fights," Masud said. "They will even believe in 'baan mara' (black magic) against the competitor's ox," he continues while describing the Lorai (fight) in a rural village of Netrokona, Maimensingh. There is even a committee to decide on how the conduction of the fight will be executed. Such bull-fights are ways of utter entertainment for the villagers.

'Ahar Chor', an isolated island in the Bay of Bengal, is another exclusive site that is expected to claim a lot of tourist attention from the adventure-loving crowds from in and out of the country. The residents of the island survive from dry-fish production and its revenue. "You will be surprised to find out that the sea-gulls often outnumber the number of residents of the island," said

Masud.

'LalMai Pahar', documented in the presentation are sited about 8 km from the main city of Comilla. It is believed to be the oldest land rising from the sea-womb around 15 million years ago, according to archeologists. It is a common scenario to find fossilized tree-trunks aging more than thousand years old on this site.

"These amazing natural treasures of the country should get more and more attention from the government," Masud said, hoping that one day these locations will uplift the country in a well-ranking tourism list.

'Banglar Aayna' also includes footages on 'Atiya Mosque', a four hundred year old monument situated in the village of Atiya under Delduar Thana in Tangail district. According to an inscription (preserved in Bangladesh national museum), the mosque was constructed in 1019 AH (1610-11 AD) during the reign of Emperor Jahangir by Sayeed Khan Panni, son of Baizid Khan Panni, in honour of Shah Baba Kashmiri. The builder also

excavated a big tank on the western side of the mosque. Atiya came into prominence after the arrival of a great saint Shah Baba Kashmiri, who propagated Islam in this part of Bengal. Now a replica of the inscription, fixed over the central doorway of the mosque, indicates that it was erected in 1018 AH (1609 AD).

"This is just the first publication of the series 'Banglar Aayna'," stated Masud assuring that more episodes are on their way and will be available in due time, mentioning further that work on the second project has already started.

Masud expressed extreme dissatisfaction on the fact that his collections of photographs are



being used by some other website, referring that such action defies the laws on copyright. "These photos and clips are also screened in different music videos, portfolios, and in most of the private channels including national television," he mentioned.



Stills from 'Banglar Aayna'

TECHNEWS

Bridging work and study

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

LAST month, North South University (NSU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Alcatel, one of the leading Telecommunication Company, setting a landmark in bridging academia and the industry.

The Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) Department of NSU is acting upon their vision in educating students through the introduction of new programs, research groups and other features needed to create a dynamic Information Technology (IT) workforce for the nation.

The signing ceremony was held at the University premises on February 9, where Dr Hafiz Siddiqui, vice chancellor of NSU and Christian Rene Looten, country senior officer of Alcatel, signed the MoU on behalf of their respective institutions.

According to the MoU, Alcatel will provide their journals and newsletters to the University. Alcatel will also provide the university with a link through which the Alcatel Virtual University can be accessed.

The company will participate in different IT and Telecom seminars and events organised by the University as well as invite

students from the university to similar events organised by Alcatel.

The company will also offer internships for NSU students, contribute toward NSU's video learning libraries, and update students through presentations on latest IT and telecommunication developments. The company will provide NSU with technical support and knowledge to set up high tech telecommunication lab.

Both NSU and Alcatel will work on programs toward the readiness of Bangladesh for the anticipated submarine cable network and other ICT related technological infusions.

NSU faculty members will aid Alcatel at developing project concept papers. The company will also sponsor researches and work with NSU for European Union funded ICT projects.

NSU and Alcatel expects to materialise the aforementioned within a short period of time.

With the MoU as an added advantage, the CSE department has plans for other developments that will facilitate the institution and thus the nation as a whole in the long run. Already, the department has issued tenders to set up two new

Telecommunication and Wireless Local Area Network Laboratories.

"Apart from the 14 existing laboratories, which include Digital, Networking, Programming, Database, Microprocessor and Basic Electronics lab, the new additions will have state-of-the-art equipment," said Dr Miftahur Rahman, chairman of NSU's CSE department, while discussing the new developments.

The new laboratories have become a necessity since the launch of programmes like Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering and Bachelor of Science in Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering in September 2002 and May 2004, respectively.

The Department is currently awaiting approval from higher authorities on setting up a Center for Information and Communication Technology (CICT) which will facilitate the future nation-builders and the country as a whole.

The proposed CICT will have 5 sectors which would have a CICT Education, Training and Research Service, a CISCO Academy, a Software

Development Center, a Hi-Tech Chip development Structure and a Plastic Design Technology.

"Using the proposed CICT, both the academia and concerned industries will benefit through research and innovation, training and education, technology transfer and job creation," mentioned the chairman.

Research groups on Control and Robotics are being formed to encourage students from CSE background. The efforts of the North South University Computer Club (NSUCC) on organising different annual events like Techno Fun Fair, Softfair and others need to be commended as well.

"Being the first private university of this nation, we feel that it is our responsibility to pave the way for drastic and meaningful developments for the increasing number of institutions," said Rahman.

Dr. Souheil Marine, manager, Digital Bridge and Shajel Qureshi, manager, Market-Business Development Department of Alcatel and Dr. SAM Khairul Bashar, pro-vice chancellor, other faculty members and students of the university were present during the ceremony.

TECHWORKSHOP

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Living the Java life

LIVING up to their words, in trying to promote the Java programming sector of the nation, JPPgroup (Java Programmers Group) organised a knowledge-sharing workshop on Agile software development methodologies in collaboration with Brac University on February 28.

Titled *Agile Approaches Towards Software Development: Extreme Programming (XP) and Others*, the workshop was held at the university auditorium having Dr Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, vice chancellor of Brac University as the chief guest. Dr Yousuf Mahbubul Islam, director, Research and Advisory Services, Brac University chaired the session.

After the chief guest, session chair and the Moderator of JPPgroup addressed the even, a presentation discussing the background of the usual Water Development and Iterative Cycles was made by Hafiz Ahsan, vice president of JPMorgan, who has worked with other major names like ThoughtWorks, Valtech and Lucent Technologies earlier in his career.

Hafiz completed his Masters from Texas A&M University after graduating with a Computer Science and Engineering degree from Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology (BUET). "These processes have some

After his presentation, the Vice-President of JP Morgan answered some questions raised by those in attendance.

Most of the attendees at the event comprised of students, faculty members from various private and public universities, programmers, software engineers, analysts and important personnel from the various software houses of the nation.

"We are extremely satisfied with the response and we hope to organise some more events and workshops in the near future," said Ashikuzzaman, moderator, JPPgroup.

Small projects for Computer Science and Engineering department (CSE) students will be channelled through the group pretty soon. Also, there will be a monthly sessions organized by the group regularly.

Efforts for an online technical presentation of this kind that would involve participation of reputed non-resident Bangladeshi IT professionals from some major companies like Cisco, Oracle, Sun and IBM are also underway.

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

PHOTOTECH



PHOTO: AFP

David Hanke, an officer from the Exhibition Department of the Field Museum in the US city of Chicago, makes final touches on the skull of the world's largest Tyrannosaurus Rex, Sue, on display at the Dinosaur Expo 2005 at the National Science Museum in Tokyo on March 14. Sue was discovered by fossil hunter Sue Hendrickson in 1990 and purchased by the Field Museum in Chicago at public auction in 1997.

TECHNEWS

Nation's first Software and ITES directory launched

SAAD HAMMADI

TO increase local software trade and exposure beyond the boundary, Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (Basis) launched country's first directory on software and IT enabled services on Wednesday.

Science and ICT Minister Moyeen Khan unleashed the ITES directory at an event held at the IDB Bhaban auditorium in the presence of Katalyst, the Swiss organisation working for the industry and rural business development, who partnered the publication.

Yet at its' childhood, as Peter Roggekamp, directing general manager of Katalyst, mentioned, the country has taken major initiatives like this to jump steps forward in order to secure its position in the global market.

The purpose for the directory is to brace the ITES businesses as this would represent them in the international market. The first issue, being highly praised by industry leaders and the minister himself wears a featured layout carrying profiles of companies. Unlike the



Science and ICT Minister Moyeen Khan officially reveals the software and ITES directory

directories of yellow pages, this one gives complete information about a company under the subheads of products and services offered, key competencies, technology focus, representative clients and projects, foreign collaboration and key executive profile alongside its

detailed contact information.

Software and ITES firms operating in the international field have been able to achieve a success in their market growth every year and more recently by 122% in comparison to the period last year.

"I am so glad to see this one book that may dispel that lack of communication with the rest of the world," said Khan while speaking at the launch. "I believe our office at the Silicon Valley should take up the assignment of disseminating the book. This single directory can contribute to the IT business for Bangladesh as a kit from where anybody would be able to make an assessment of the professional capacity of our organisations working in this area and make contacts with them for further collaboration", he continued, requesting Basis to upload the directory as a database to the website which would be the best way to disseminate its information.

He also mentioned the directory as one of the major items to be held at Bahrain on the forthcoming Asian IT ministers' summit.

The minister also said that it is not wise to compare ourselves with neighboring countries like India in the volume of trade or export, on the contrary we should focus on the quality of work.

TIM Nurul Kabir, vice president, Basis, told StarTech that they have asked the government to allocate

two percent of the Annual Development Programme (ADP), which could provide an opportunity for the development of IT sector and make the industry vibrant. Continuous visibility of the market sector is important, which we are not able to sustain at present. Export Promotion Bureau and ICT business promotion council jointly took an initiative of promoting market for the ITES but failed to continue after one single event due to the high costs of such event management.

The software and ITES directory encapsulating 152 companies from both member and non member companies of Basis has been priced at Taka 150, which also includes a digital version in CD. Basis has made the enlistment in the directory free of cost for the companies.

Sarwar Alam, president and TIM Nurul Kabir, vice president of BASIS, AKM Fahim Mashroor, CEO of Bdjobs and former presidents of Bangladesh Computer Samity (BCS) Abdullah H Kafi and Sabur Khan were also present at the event along with other noted ICT personnel of the nation.