TECHFOCUS

Magic Pen reads Tona Tunir Galpa

ZAM KHAIRUZZAMAN

MAGIC sticks were used to wake up and help get to sleep the princess in fairy tales. Down the generations these tales have whetted the imagination of the kids. Though nuclear families are increasingly becoming the norm of the day, the art of storytelling is still a monopoly of grannies, at least in our part of the world.

Our society, however, is fast catching up with the trends of the advanced economies. The time is not far away when kids here will no longer have their grandmas to take them to the fairyland. What's waiting for them in a nuclear family?

In developed countries, technology is serving people their needs for a long time. The manifestation of development in Bangladesh is also visible in certain areas.... cities are growing with multi-storey buildings, joint families are mutating into nuclear ones and, importantly, both parents are developing careers in a variety of fields.

At present, most children in the fast growing segments of Bangladesh society are left with no option but to grow up in isolation because of the disintegration of traditional extended family structure and the absence of necessary technological assistance to help beat their loneliness in nuclear families.

An assortment of technologies offers people in developed countries the opportunity not only to break through isolation but also to help kids grow with technology.

"Hopefully children of Bangladesh will also get some assistance from technology as do their peers in the developed countries", said Mohammad Kamruzzaman, managing director of Visual Magic Corporation (VMC).

In Bangladesh context, we have experimentally developed the story of *Tona Tunir Galpa* (story of sparrows) with animation and digitisation, said Zaman. The VMC is already contributing in developing kids' learning tools for foreign countries, he added.

"Response from people at the experimental stage has been quite encouraging", he said adding that they would soon start marketing their *Tona Tunir Galpa*
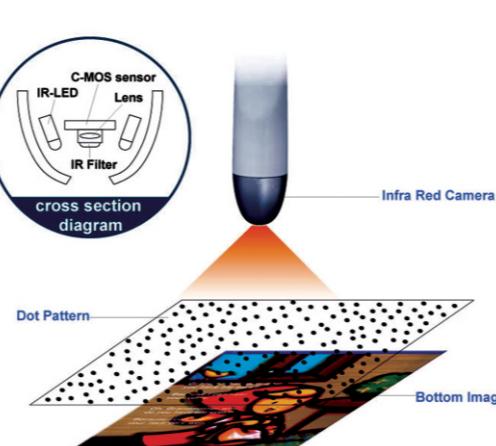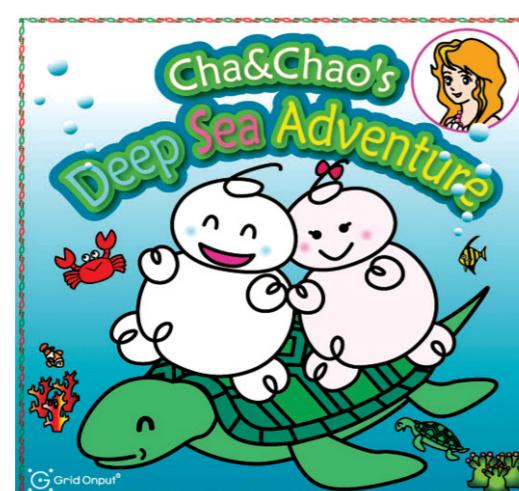
in the country.

Software loaded gadget, looking like small piece of a stick or a pen, makes books talk, be it a storybook or a pre-school book for toddlers.

When the magic pen touches any section of the story, relevant animation appears on the computer monitor along with corresponding sounds and voice, Zaman said, explaining how the gadget works.

With direct input from some Bangladeshi scientists, a Japanese company and its Bangladesh counterpart, VMC, developed the technology that makes a book talk, said Zaman.

The talking books have already been successfully introduced in Japan, he said adding that this

latest development in IT has been especially designed for kids from 4-6 years of age.

Elementary kids' books, including storybooks, musical chart, painting etc., have also been developed using this technology and they are now being used by pre-school kids and elementary-level schoolchildren in Japan, he added.

Reading out the book is not the only thing the magic pen does. Along with voice, visuals also appear on the computer screen. In some cases, the melodies can be heard when the device touches the picture of an instrument. Besides, kids can also paint an object by touching the colours given in a chart.

During a demonstration, this correspondent witnessed how the magic pen operates. The device starts talking after the lead is connected to the computer and the script of the book touched.

When the pen touches a particular picture or item in the book, it appears on the computer monitor and a sound introduces the item.

All that one has to do is to touch the page of the book and the reading will follow. The visuals also start showing up on the screen.

The items of *Tona Tunir Galpa* get alive on computer screen and the characters start talking once the animation of the book is touched with the magic pen. As the story goes on, Tona asks Tuni to go on an outing which Tuni

refuses. Tona then goes out alone and finds a farmer's wife who was preparing pancakes (*pitha*).

Tona returns home and asks Tuni to prepare some *pitha* for him. Tuni hands him a list of items to be brought for making the *pitha*. As Tona goes out to collect the items, he comes across the elephant, tiger, frog and cat. They all ask him the reason for collecting those items.

Tona tells them that Tuni would prepare *pitha* and invites them all to join the *pitha utsab*. The story ends with a big party in the jungle in which all the jungle animals show up. They enjoy and appreciate the *pitha* Tuni has prepared.

The book ends with a game, where all the characters of the story appear in a ladder. Scoring and losing points take one up and down the ladder. Tona and Tuni are the main characters here and they come across the frog, tiger and cat as the game goes on. The successful one finds the farmer's wife preparing pancakes.

Cha and Chao's Deep Sea Adventure is the English rendering of the Japanese version of the story that deals with the rescue of a princess at sea.

'The story is very popular in Japan and is considered one of the best books available in the market there', said Zaman. Books in this method have been devised in such a way that the process of learning does not get monotonous; it rather becomes entertaining, he added.

In the painting section of *Cha and Chao's Deep Sea Adventure*, sketch of a turtle is given with some shapes around it. Any given shape gets painted on the back of the turtle when the pen touches one of the shapes and is placed on the turtle's back, the figure will take the same colour of any of the painting brushes chosen by the pen and touched on to it.

The musical instrument shown in the picture will start playing their tunes as soon as the pen touches them.

TECHNEWS

aiminlife.com

Not a typical job site

EDWARD APURBA SINGHA

IN this internet-dominated world, websites are like information hub, where people get the opportunity to acquire diverse knowledge to improve their lifestyle and at the same time modernise work strategy. Nowadays, many job sites are available on the internet to give out career information, provide interview tips and guidelines to job seekers.

In Bangladesh, a similar initiative has been taken up by aiminlife.com in a bid to promote internet-based career hunting trend in the country. Jamil Siddiqui, chief operating officer of aiminlife.com, describes their site as a career portal instead of a job site. He said very soon this site will be a virtual career centre where students will get relevant information on building up their career.

In this regard, aiminlife.com has expanded its affiliation to different academic institutions. Among them U21Global is worth mentioning. U21Global is a online education service which is backed by nineteen world-class universities, including the University of Glasgow, the University of Birmingham, the University of New South Wales and the University of Queensland. Programmes offered by U21Global are MBA, MSC Tourism &

Travel Management, Master of Management in Information Technology, diploma courses and others.

aiminlife.com in association with U21Global will develop an e-learning scheme for local students. As a result, they will be able to easily earn global degrees at reasonable price from their own country. aiminlife.com also offers four types of membership – platinum, golden, silver and corporate.

In the near future, aiminlife.com hopes to develop a sustainable relationship with local universities in order to provide quality service to their students. Ekram Hossain, vice-president of aiminlife.com, told StarTech that soon they will post part-time job and internship information on their website. Apart from these, they also plan to organise career seminars, workshops, training programmes and consultancy services for the students concerned.

Based on the hits, aiminlife.com is upgrading its position day by day and initiators of this portal anticipate more turnout in coming days. This portal also provides information on scholarship to different foreign universities.
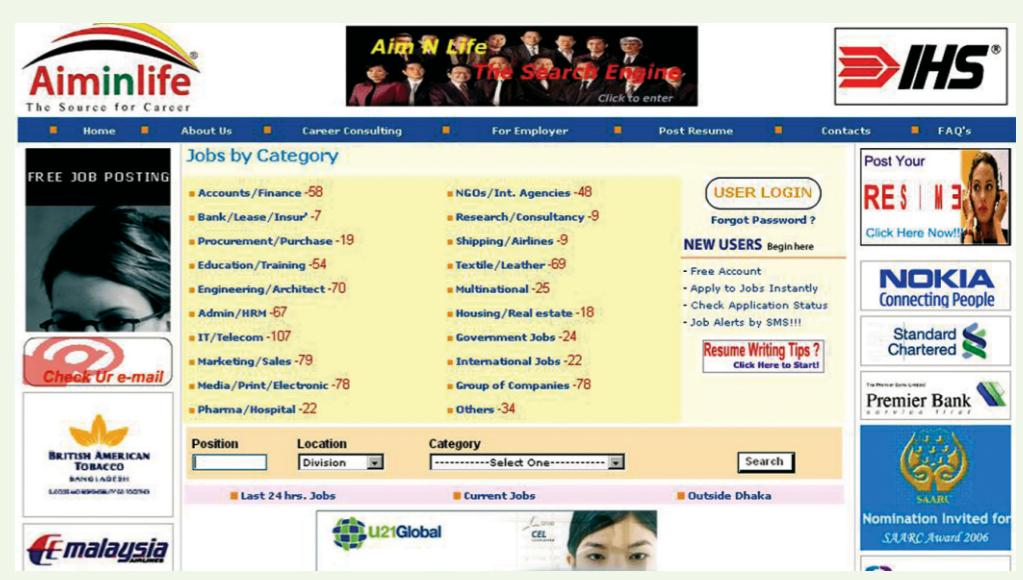
TECHNEWS

CSL introduces HP C567TU laptop

STAR TECH DESK

COMPUTER Source Ltd. (CSL), a renowned vendor of IT accessories recently introduces HP Compaq Presario C567TU Notebook PC in the local market. It is a low cost solution and main targeted users are students, teachers, service holder and business personnel.

This notebook is powered by Intel Celeron M 440 processor with a clock speed of 1.86 GHz, 1 MB level 2 cache. The motherboard is based on Intel 945 GM chipset, has 512 MB DDR2 SD RAM and 80 GB SATA harddisk.

The notebook also encompasses a combo drive, 56 Kbps fax modem, 10/100 Mbps LAN and wireless LAN card. The display is 15 inch wide and its high definition feature allows user to enjoy cinematic view in the portable PC.

This newly launched notebook has also been enhanced by a HP bag, earpiece, USB mouse, travel adapter, webcam and a USB hub. CSL is offering

one-year warranty with each notebook. In addition, CSL in association with HSBC is offering instalment facilities for students.
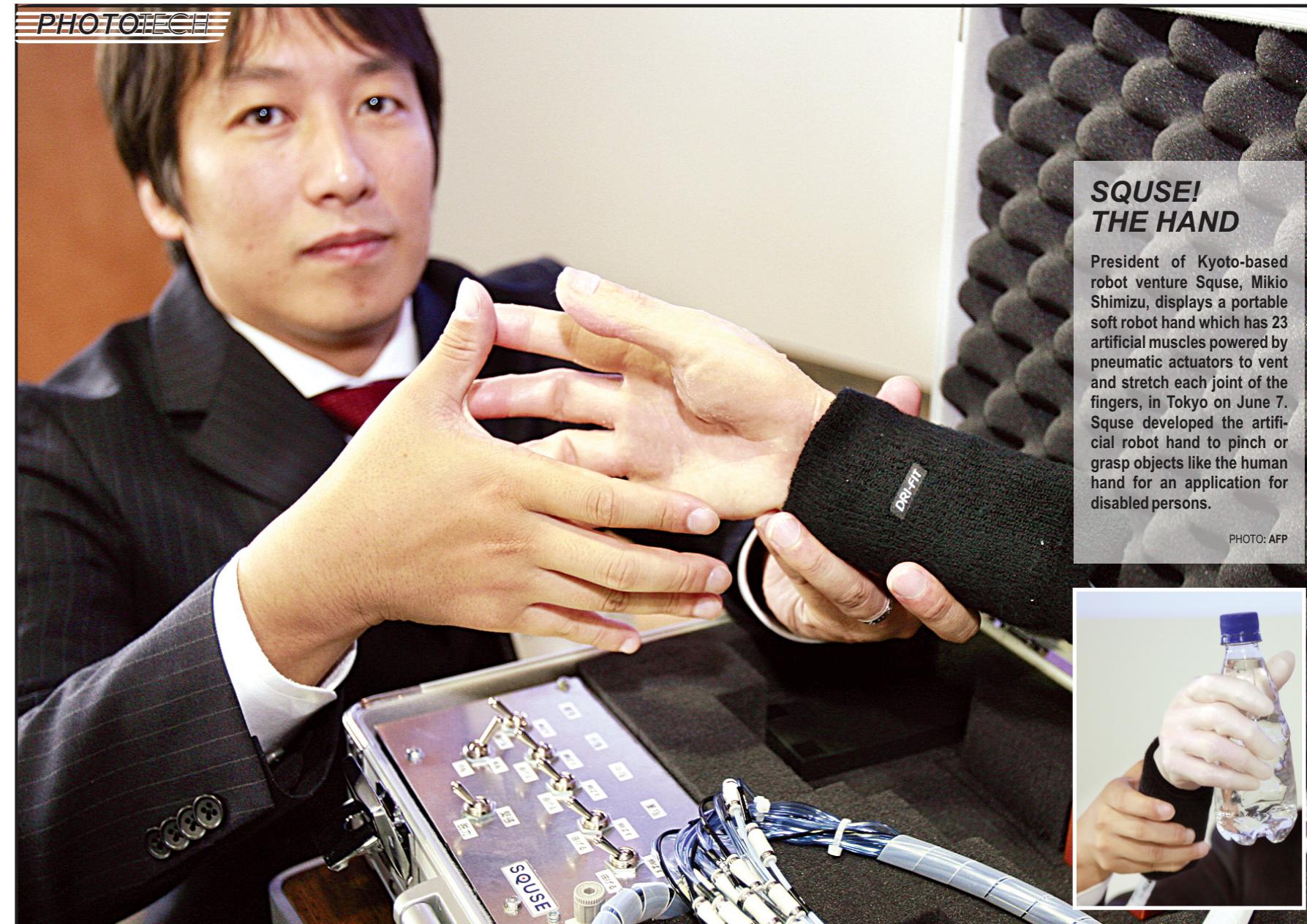
TECHNEWS

Home delivery a click away

RAJA ALI HASAN

OUT of the blue your friends have called on you one Thursday evening and placed an 'orderly' request to have a surprise party at your home. No occasion, just to warm up the couch watching movies and eat some delicious food together. You hang up the phone and in a minute they crash into your house and you find out that they are more in number than what you thought they could be. They are hungry to death but you don't have even a single cookie to cool them down. You wish if someone would bring some food at your door!

If you live somewhere in Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara, Mohakhali DOHS or Baridhara DOHS you can sit in front of your PC, go to the website expressmealservice.com, choose from a long menu and call them to place an order and get the food delivered to your house. expressmealservice.com has been developed as a key marketing and operational tool of Express Meal Service.

Aslam Khan, manager (operations) of Express Meal Service, was excited while

sharing his experience of the website as it has brought the company more responses from customers than traditional marketing methods have.

"We've circulated thousands of printed flyers but really got busy receiving orders after we developed the website," Khan said. "The reason behind the higher response through the website is that flyers are not reachable to everyone in the city whereas the internet is a good option to show what we have to our target market".

The cost of printing the flyers

or other advertisements is much higher than that of developing a website.

Express Meal Service sends their staff on bike to deliver your food but you get to know and choose those items easily through the website.

The significant response this website has got proves again that internet has become a part of our daily life like television, radio and other common technologies.

PHOTOTECH