Star TECH

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PlayStation

The Sony PlayStation is a video game console of the fifth generation. It was first produced by Sony Computer Entertainment in the mid-1990s. It is a 32-bit system. The original PlayStation was the first of the ubiquitous PlayStation series of console and hand-held game devices, which has included successor consoles and upgrades including the Net Yaroze (a special black PS with tools and instructions to program PS games and applications), PSOne (a smaller version of the original), PocketStation (a handheld which enhances PS games and acts as a memory card), PlayStation 2, a revised, slimline PS2, PlayStation Portable (a handheld gaming console), PSX (Japan only) (a media center, DVR and DVD recorder based on the PS2), and PlayStation 3. By March 2005, the PlayStation/PS one had shipped a total of 102.49 million units, becoming the first home console to ever reach the 100 million mark.

TECHFOCUS

Intel opens up new vista for Bangladesh

NAFID IMRAN AHMED AND EDWARD APURBA SINGHA

IT was a sunny day for Bangladesh. Technology icon and Intel Corporation Chairman Craig R Barrett visited the country on September 4 to open the Bangladesh chapter of the chipmaker's global initiative in a bid to help the rural community by making technology available to them.

The technology evangelist's maiden trip here accompanied the corporation's signature project, World Ahead Program (WAP), which aims at providing people in developing countries with the benefits of better, faster access to information and communications technology (ICT).

Information and communications technology will have a very strong impact on four particular areas of human lives -- education, economic development, health care and e-governance, Barrett said at a press conference in Dhaka.

"We want to bring some of our own experience from around the globe here to accelerate the implementation of these processes and perhaps also take some of the best known methods and issues, such as telecentres to other parts of the world so that other citizens might take advantage of your experience," he explained his company's plan here.

Intel will work in Bangladesh with local entities, government and other organisations to help bring the boon of ICT to the rural community.

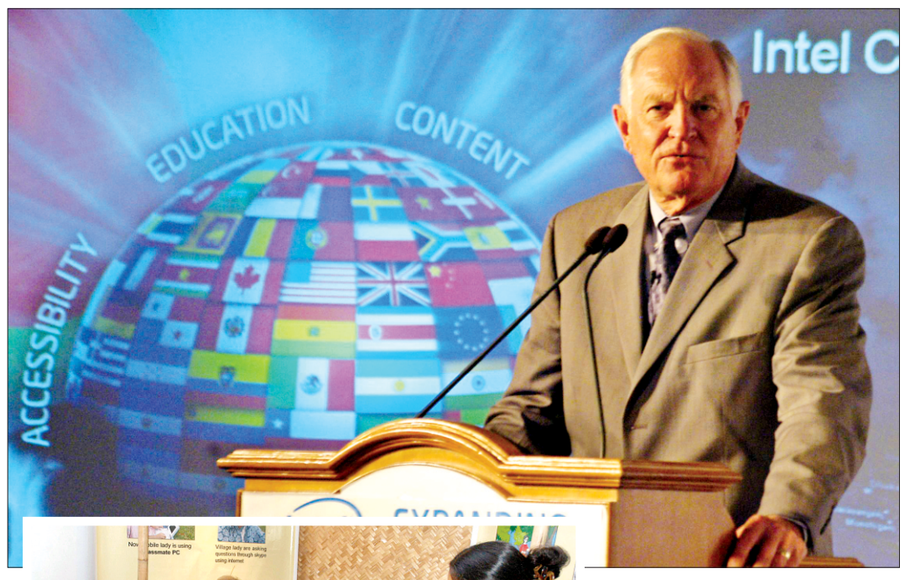
Dr Barrett said the Intel programme believes that the four fundamental, basic foundations need to be put into place to allow a society or culture to benefit from ICT.

To drive the World Ahead Program, the chipmaker teamed up with Grameen Solutions (GS), a company founded by Dr Muhammad Yunus to promote economic and social development through ICT.

Based on the agreement, Intel and Grameen will jointly promote and support digital inclusion projects across Bangladesh to improve education, connectivity, and access to technology, localised Internet content and software applications.

"By working together, Grameen and Intel can help Bangladesh make rapid progress in providing its citizens with opportunities for economic and social advancement", Barrett said.

With support from Grameen and the education ministry, Intel is developing plans to launch its education initiatives in Bangladesh, including the Intel Teach and Intel Learn programmes.



Intel Chairman Craig Barett speaks at the event, *top,* while his wife Barbara Barett speaks to 'Mobile Ladies', *left*, an initiative by DNet

The Intel Teach Program trains teachers how to integrate technology in the curriculum to enhance classroom learning. It has proved a big success in South Africa where universities have incorporated the programme into both pre-service and in-service qualifications.

The community-based Intel Learn Program teaches the use of technology and inculcates critical-thinking and collaboration skills into underprivileged youth in the 8-16 age bracket. Every year Intel spends millions of dollars to support education.

The chipmaker will work with local providers to translate much of the educational content that already exists, especially in the areas of mathematics, science and engineering, into the local language so that it can be used here.

It will also work with local software companies to develop localised Internet content and software for the government, schools and telecentres, because rich and localised content is essential to build a knowledge-based society.

Intel, for example, plans to work with local software firms in order to introduce its skoool™ Learning and Teaching Technology. The interactive learning website will provide math and science lessons tailored for local needs.

Dr Barrett noted that "content must be localised and teachers need proper training to utilise technology to motivate their students so that can play a constructive role for widespread implementation of IT".

Plans are already underway for Intel and Grameen to make the Intel-powered Classmate PC more available to students. An affordable, full-featured student laptop, the Classmate PC is seen as well-suited to promoting project-based learning in primary schools.

"Education is vital in developing a skilled workforce," said Dr Barrett, noting that Intel has committed to donating approximately 1,000 computers to schools over the next three years. Intel will work with the Bangladesh government to implement this programme and will donate enough PCs next year to set up a PC lab in 64 districts across the country.

In India Intel-powered Community PCs have become a vital component of rural Internet kiosks. Through this system rural people have now easy access to services like e-government forms -- for example, land records and marriage licences.

"We would like to work with the communications industry to bring the latest in wireless technology in Bangladesh, to ensure that all citizens, all communities have access to the Internet and also to work with the government to show the value of e-governance to citizens." Barrett said.

In China Intel architecture-based "Changfeng PC" project has opened the door to cost-effective computers that are simple to operate and comprises practical applications. Through these devices rural people can meet many of their educational needs and achieve practical knowledge.

Dr Barrett stressed the need for access to technology in order to get these benefits. Intel's plan to establish telecentres throughout the country will generate employment opportunities and at the same time connect rural people to information superhighway.

Intel and Grameen also plan to collaborate through public and private partnerships on the deployment of WiMAX (World Interoperability for Microwave Access) technology, because Internet-based activities will not flourish in rural areas if high-speed Internet connectivity remains beyond the reach of common people.

This technology is widely hailed as a cost-effective and efficient way to deliver broadband Internet access to rural communities. It could be a feasible solution to providing nationwide broadband Internet service in the country.

Intel and Grameen Solutions will work side by side in order develop and maintain WiMAX infrastructure and provide cheap service to the people. If the technology is made available in the rural areas it will nourish the Internet-related businesses, which in turn will create a hi-tech trend, generating more revenue.

Dr Yunus on Intel World Ahead Program said, "This fabulous opportunity will eliminate the barrier of poverty and pave the way to show our potential".

"I firmly believe that with proper support from the government, our collaboration with Intel will enable us to make unprecedented success like that of other developing countries within a short span of time", he added.

Dr Barrett said, "In order to enjoy the optimum benefit from IT, people must have access to technology, get affordable broadband connection, come across rich content and obtain the facility of right education to enrich knowledge level".

While talking to StarTech, Kazi Islam, chief executive officer of Grameen Solutions, promised a bunch of challenging initiatives from his organisation in days to come to take the country ahead. Praising the vision of Dr Yunus, he thanked the microfinance guru for engaging Intel in the country.

"Our first objective was to establish a coalition with Intel and introduce it to local talents; we believe we've successfully done that", he said, adding that their next plan is to analyse obstacles and opportunities and then take an action plan to go forward systematically with Intel World Ahead Program.

"Although Intel has no immediate plan to install any manufacturing plant in Bangladesh, we closely observe the immense potential and opportunities of this land", Dr Barrett told the media.

TECHVIEWS

Apple revamps iPod

AFP, *San Francisco*

APPLE has unveiled a slick touch-screen version of the iconic iPod as part of a product line overhaul.

"I think it is a deep and complete line-up," Jupiter Research analyst Michael Gartenberg told AFP after watching Apple chief executive Steve Jobs on Wednesday introduce revamped iPod models and the new iPod Touch.

"A lot of consumers said they don't want a new mobile phone but they want all the other stuff the iPhone has."

Apple's tinkering with its money-making iPod line was done shrewdly, with the company adding video, memory or other coveted features while not pushing up prices, according to analysts.

"Apple has models with a range of appeal -- fashion, function, price," Gartenberg said. "Apple has set the bar high for competitors."

IPod Touch models feature Apple's Safari web browser and a built-in wireless antenna, meaning users can connect directly to the Internet at Wi-Fi "hot spots" the same way they might with a laptop computer.

The new iPod Touch

Apple built custom Google and Yahoo search functions into iPod Touch models, along with YouTube video viewing and an iTune Wi-Fi Music Store that permits shopping at the online store without going through a computer.

The iPod Touch models have been localized to an array of languages and will be the first part of the new product line to ship worldwide, according to Jobs.

IPod Touch will be available by month's end. The devices are essentially iPhones without the mobile phone capabilities.

"We think it's one of the seven wonders of the world," Apple's chief executive Steve Jobs quipped as he pulled a new iPod Touch from a pocket of his trademark blue jeans during the San Francisco press conference.

"If you've used an iPhone you will feel very much at home."

TECHNEWS

Nokia opens Wi-Fi Zones in select Dhaka cafés

STARTECH DESK

NOKIA have launched four Wi-Fi zones at select Cafés in Dhaka City. The Wi-Fi areas will be free for consumers who own an authorised Nokia N Series handset, says a press release. The Wi- Fi zones are being powered by Agni Systems Ltd. and will provide high speed internet connection.

"This is a great opportunity for Nokia to showcase the capabilities of our mobile multimedia devices," said Prem Chand, general manager, Nokia Emerging Asia. "Wi-Fi in the cafes is an excellent way to pilot new services, while N Series users can enjoy some of their favorite pastimes while in the cafe - such as reading the paper, listening to music or accessing the Internet - in an entirely new way."

"Wi-Fi can be more than about Web surfing and checking e-mail," noted Prem. "What if a hot spot was not just a gateway, but a destination? What if it offered rich multimedia experiences based on the neighborhood where you are located? As prime neighborhood meeting grounds, Cafes are ideal places for people to experience this new approach to public Wi-Fi."

These Wi-Fi zones will be complete with an experience booth showcasing three of Nokia's N Series devices, the N 95, N93i and N73, Bose speakers and a 14" screen. This experience corner is open to all patrons of the café to experience the multimedia services of N Series devices.

"These Wi-Fi cafés will enhance neighborhood hot spots and allow people to simply connect, share, and build communities using the newest approach to next-generation wireless applications, services and experiences. "said Prem.

The Wi-Fi zones are located in Kozmo Lounge, Dhanmondi, PM Lounge, Kamal Ataturk Road, Banani, NSIS, Shoppers World, Gulshan and Déjà vu Café, Gulshan Avenue.

TECHSEMINAR

Huawei seminar on latest communication techs

STARTECH DESK

LEADING telecommunications equipment manufacturer Huawei organised a seminar on data communication and broadband technologies at Sonargaon Hotel on Aug 27, says a press release.

The seminar highlighted the development and evolution of datacom and broadband solutions including enterprise IT network, ISP broadband network and NGN-based VoIP.

The seminar touched on technical issues such as datacom products overview, metro Ethernet solution, IP/MPLS core network solution, enterprise unified communication solution, NGN-based VoIP solution, WiMAX solution etc.

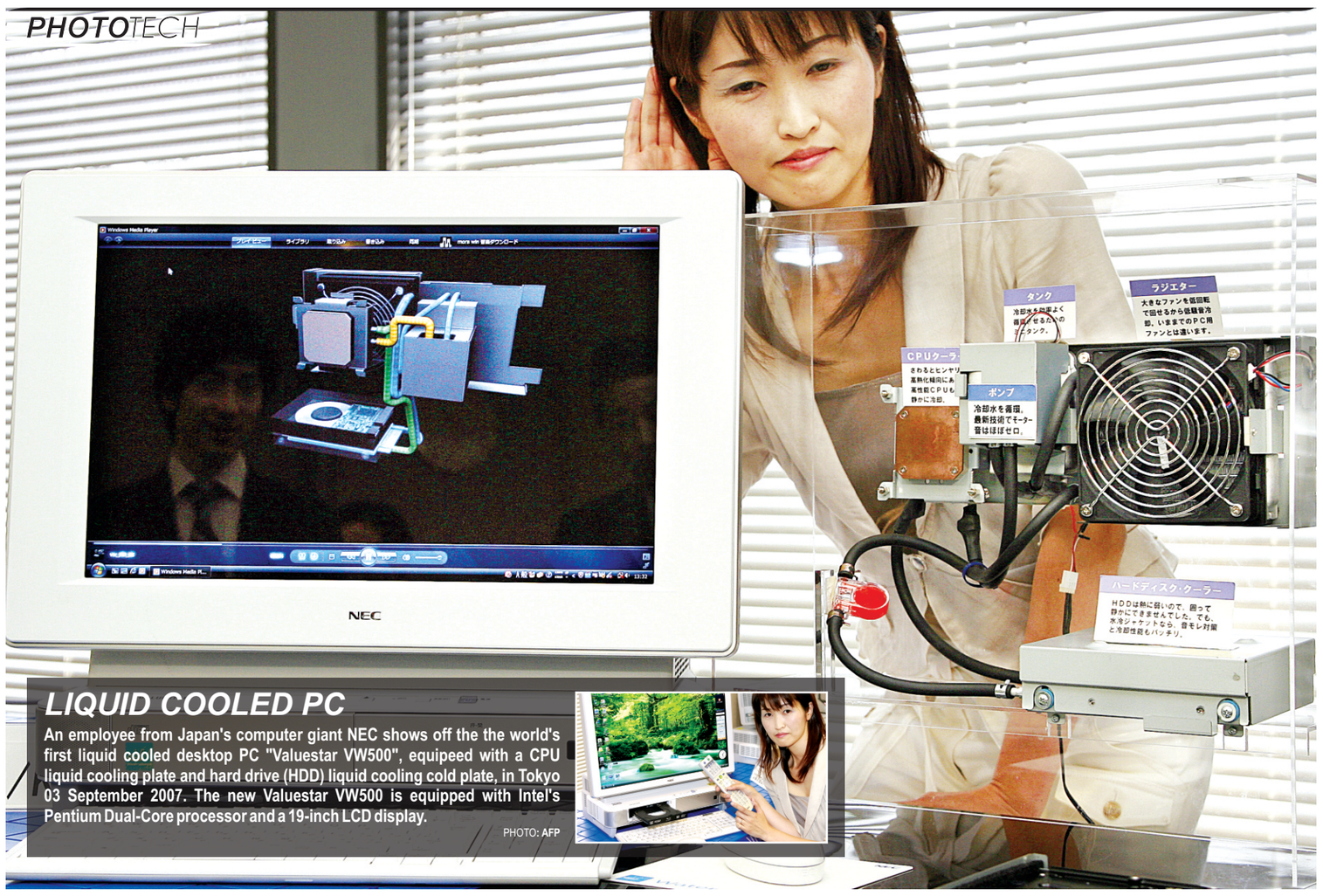
Founded in 1988, Huawei extended its effort to develop next generation telecommunications network solutions. The firm successfully deployed the Asia Pacific's first HSUPA (High-Speed Uplink Packet Access) commercial network for StarHub in Singapore. It has successfully deployed MSCG for Qatar Telecom and become China Unicom's largest IP network transformation partner.

In Bangladesh Huawei provides telecom equipment solutions to mobile phone operators -- Banglalink, Aktel, Teletalk and Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) operators.

The company has 62,000 employees worldwide, serving 31 of the top 50 telecoms operators. It is currently operating 12 R&D centres worldwide.

All the leading internet service providers (ISPs), local vendors, telecom operators -- both mobile and PSTN -- in the country attended the seminar.

PHOTOTECH



LIQUID COOLED PC

An employee from Japan's computer giant NEC shows off the the world's first liquid cooled desktop PC "Valuestar VW500", equipeed with a CPU liquid cooling plate and hard drive (HDD) liquid cooling cold plate, in Tokyo 03 September 2007. The new Valuestar VW500 is equipped with Intel's Pentium Dual-Core processor and a 19-inch LCD display.

PHOTO: AFP

Tech Jargon VI

TODAY'S topic…what was today's topic?…It was just on the tip of my tongue, but now it seems to have slipped my mind! My memory doesn't seem to be helping me out here. If only my memory were like that of a computer! Oh yes, that reminds me today's technical jargon is all about "memory"…not mine, the computer's of course.

Memory: Also known as RAM (Random Access Memory), it is a virtual space in your CPU where the computer holds whatever you are currently working on….just like the human short term memory holds whatever the person does or thinks. However, the contents of the memory are lost when the computer is switched off.

ROM: Stands for *Read Only Memory*. As the name suggests, it is a kind of memory whose contents are preset and cannot usually be changed by the user. In other words, it is "read-only".

A read-only file is one that has been set so that it cannot be altered or deleted. In other words, the file is "write-protected". You can easily make any file read-only in windows by right-clicking on it and checking the "read-only" box under "attributes".

Floppy disks can be write-protected by moving a small plastic square on the top left corner. Files on CDROMs are always read-only, so you cannot change the contents of the CDROM.

Cache: Pronounced as "cash" and not "catchy" as many would like to pronounce, it has nothing to do with the latest Hindi movie starring Ajay Devgan. Cache is a temporary storage area for frequently or recently used data, either from memory or from the internet. For example, if you go back to a web page you have recently visited, your PC will usually be able to display it from the Internet cache of your computer, making your page appear faster on screen, since the computer will not have to download it from the internet once again.

BIOS: Though BIOS is not exactly a type of memory, I thought of mentioning this as it will be needed to explain the next kind of memory. The BIOS is the program that loads first and foremost when you start your PC. You may have seen this familiar word on your startup screen. This program is built into every PC and is used for setting up very basic things, like how many hard and floppy disks your PC has and what type they are. But don't worry, I don't think you'll need to access the BIOS anytime, unless you're upgrading your hardware yourself -- for example, adding more RAM or an extra disk drive. BIOS settings are always stored in a special type of memory called CMOS.

CMOS: Short for *Complementary Metal Oxide Semiconductor* (a mouthful, isn't it?), it is usually pronounced as "see moss" (I know, nothing to do with the real thing). Obviously, the full form clearly gives out what it's made of. A CMOS is a special type of memory which retains its data even when the PC is switched off. It is usually used to store settings like how much RAM your computer has or what is the speed of your processor. These settings are accessed via the BIOS.

Mind you, the main difference between CMOS and BIOS is that the CMOS is a kind of memory, while BIOS is a program and the information that is stored in CMOS is accessed by the BIOS for our information, or other purposes. Hope I've been able to make that clear.

Nahid Akhter