

TECHGALA

CES 2008 Electronics carnival peeks into future

AGENCIES, Los Angeles

THE mega exposition of hi-tech gadgets 'International Consumer Electronic Show (CES) 2008' kicked off with sneak peeks at smart cars, robotic massages and other innovations. The gala event was held in Las Vegas from January 7-10.

The CES first started in June 1967 in New York City with 200 exhibitors and 17,500 attendees. Today this show has become the world's largest annual hi-tech exhibition and at the same time America's largest annual tradeshow.

This year manufacturers, retailers, content providers and creators, broadband developers, wireless carriers, cable and satellite TV providers, installers, engineers, corporate buyers, government leaders, financial analysts from more than 140 countries around the world participated in this gala event.

Bill Gates in his pre-show keynote address said that within next ten years the world would see another hi-tech revolution. "The first digital decade has been a great success," Gates told an overflow audience in a ballroom at the Venetian hotel and casino.

Gates apprised that there are more than a billion personal computers in use in the world and more than 40 percent of people on the planet have mobile telephones.

The new digital decade will be increasingly "user-centric" and the trend is for media and entertainment to be software driven, Gates said. "The second digital decade will be more focused on connecting people," he continued. Gates said high-definition video experiences "will be everywhere," from televisions to wall projections and even built into desks or tables.

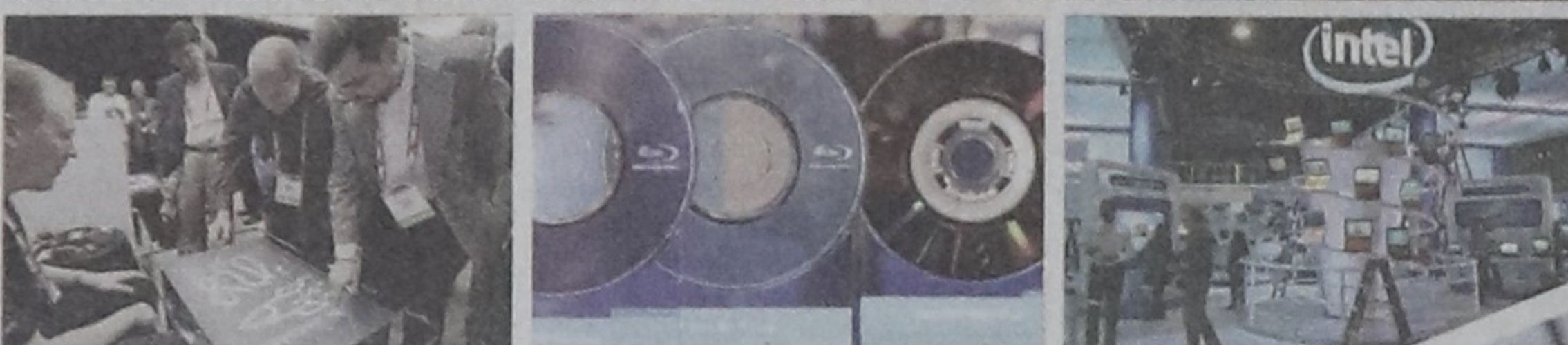
Beside regular exhibition near about 200 conferences were organised where more than 300 industry experts delivered their speech on contemporary issues and tech trends. Technologies that mainly showcased in this tech exposure were wireless/mobile communications, Wi-Fi technology, telematics and vehicle navigation, speech technology, satellite systems, robotics, photography/digital imaging, MP3/internet audio, internet applications and services, global positioning system (GPS), electronic gaming, e-commerce, digital TV/HDTV, computer hardware and software, broadband technology etc.

This year digital entertainment was one of the major attractions of CES 2008. Sony Pictures Television came with its array of content to the CES 2008. Sony Pictures Television showcased its entertainment content together with its parent company's electronics. This marks the first time Sony Pictures Television has exhibited its wide variety of content for all platforms on the show floor at the International CES.

"At Sony, we understand better than anyone that the marriage of great content with cutting edge devices is what brings entertainment alive. The 2008 International CES is the perfect forum to demonstrate that," said Steve Mosko, president, Sony Pictures Television.

The Consumer Electronics Show featured for the first time a "Sustainable TechZone" dedicated to "pioneering technologies that benefit the environment and sustainability of the global economy." Innovations in the TechZone will include voltaic solar-power generating backpacks and messenger bags made from recycled plastic soda bottles.

Control and other firms specialising in automating homes



Clockwise from top: Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates plays Guitar Hero as Slash plays a real guitar during Gates pre-show keynote address at the CES 2008, people visit the Intel display, Blu-ray discs are on display, a Microsoft employee shows people the new Microsoft Surface, a Vista-based platform that was formerly named "PlayTable".

will display computerised systems that reduce the amount of energy wasted in cooling, heating or lighting residences or by televisions and other entertainment electronics.

Latest gaming technologies also captured the mind of game lovers at CES 2008. CES' major gaming exhibitors include: Commodore Gaming, Entropia Universe, Red Lion Interactive, Shutte Computers and War Machine, all exhibiting at CES for the first time this year, along with CES veterans LumiSource, Red Beard and InterAction Laboratories. Microsoft and Sony also featured the latest developments in the gaming world at their respective booths.

'Guitar Hero III' and 'Rock Band' impressed gamers when unveiled, highlighting a growing niche in a market traditionally dominated by violent 'shoot 'em ups' or street-racing games.

Blu-Ray technology also hit CES 2008. Sony unveiled a 200-dollar Blu-Ray disk drive that enables personal computers to play the disks. Sony also introduced a line of Vaio laptop com-

puters with built-in Blu-ray Ray players. Sony said it expects a Blu-Ray win to bolster sales of its PlayStation 3 video game console, which doubles as a DVD player.

LG introduced MPH or Mobile Pedestrian Handheld, a new mobile TV standard at CES 2008. MPH utilizes bandwidth from the existing ATSC (Advanced Television Systems Committee) signal to broadcast live television to an MPH-compatible products such as cell phone, laptop or an in-car navigation system.

Microsoft at CES 2008 previewed a new version of "Tellme", Microsoft's integrated voice-and-video mobile service that enables people to use voice commands to say what they want and see the answer on their phone's screen.

The new service uses GPS capabilities to identify the caller's location, giving more relevant results. Tellme, a version of which is available already on AT&T Wire-

less and Sprint phones, will be available in future versions of the Windows Mobile software.

Panasonic unveiled a 150-inch high-definition plasma TV at CES 2008. According to Panasonic until recently it is the world's largest TV. The company claimed the plasma panel features an 8.84 million-pixel image resolution. Its screen is the equivalent of nine 50-inch sets, with an effective viewing area of 11 feet.

At CES 2008 Continental Automotive Systems a German based company displayed smart car technology that dramatically reduces highway accidents. Sensors mounted on sides of vehicles can signal whether rolling over is imminent and then adjust speeds to avoid flipping. Sleeping drivers can be awakened by "lane departure systems" that sound alerts or vibrate car seats.

When driver faces crash the car can automatically close windows to prevent limbs from dangling and adjust seats to maximize effectiveness of air bags. Technology called "telematics" will be utilised to notify cars about the road hazards.

Jerry Yang, Yahoo co-founder at his keynote speech spotlighted the recent strategy shift of Yahoo. Jerry said that Yahoo will open up its mobile platform so outside programmers can develop new applications that can be planted on Yahoo pages accessed on mobile handsets. Yahoo hopes the mini-applications, known as "widgets," will help attract more on-the-go users so it can make more money from advertising.

At CES 2008 Intel CEO Paul Otellini revealed his new plan regarding ultra-mobile computers. It is a sort of device that is smaller than average laptops but incorporates more resources than most cell phones. Paul said that this energy-efficient, web-connected computer with full functional keyboard and screen can give people more flexibility compared to cell phones to surf the net. Intel hopes with few months it will start shipping compatible processors and associated chipsets for the ultra-mobile platform.

Nafees Bin Zafar, a Bangladeshi software engineer, who has been awarded the 'Scientific and Engineering Award' by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science was also present as guest of honour. Rafiqul Islam Rowly, president, BASIS chaired the session.

Both of the guests of honours shared their views and valuable experiences they have gained throughout their journey to achieve the successful recognitions.

They showed a set of guidelines to turn innovative

endeavours in the software and ITES industry of Bangladesh. A good number of C level executives of the ICT industry, NRBS and media personalities were present at the program. Shameem Ahsan, joint secretary general, BASIS moderated the occasion.

Iqbal Z Quadir is currently the co-founder and co-director of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Program in Development Entrepreneurship, senior research associate at the Belfer Center for Science and

International Affairs at Harvard University's John F Kennedy School of Government, and the founding co-editor of Innovations: Technology, Governance, Globalisation, a journal published by MIT Press.

The feature film work of Nafees Bin Zafar includes credits on 'Stealth', 'Flags of Our Fathers', and 'Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End'. He is a software engineering graduate from the College of Charleston with many professional credentials and recognition in his area of expertise.

Source: AP, AFP. Compiled by Edward Apurba Singha.

TECHNEWS

SANOG XI kicks off in Dhaka

EDWARD APURBA SINGHA

SOUTH Asian Network Operators' Group (SANOG), a non-profit forum of data network operators in South Asia, is currently holding SANOG XI at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel. The prestigious nine-day event, which began on January 10, is jointly organised by Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh (Ispab) and Business Promotion Council.

SANOG was created with a view to increasing cooperation, enriching technical knowledge and expertise and sharing common goals.

The first SANOG meeting took place in Kathmandu, Nepal, in January 2003. SANOG works much like other similar forums such as NANOG (North American Network Operators' Group) in North America, RIPE NCC meetings in Europe and APRICOT (Asia Pacific Regional Internet Conference on Operational Technologies) in Asia.

In addition to participants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, this forum also welcomes people from West Asia to build up sustainable relationships.

Besides formal meetings, SANOG encompasses different workshops and tutorials. While tutorials will always be part of any SANOG meeting, workshops are organised



A SANOG training session in progress

when there is demand for them and resources are available.

This year the SANOG event is mainly divided into three segments: training programs, tutorials and a two-day conference. Training programs cover issues such as multiprotocol label switching network design and deployment, ISP/NSP security and routing, IPv6 deployment and applications etc.

Hi-tech experts are conducting these programmes attended by people from local ISPs, universities, ICT companies and related organisations. There are also participants from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. The tutorial sessions mostly put emphasis on routing, application and

policy-making. The event will come to an end with the two-day conference.

SANOG XI also includes a fellowship program with financial incentives from Internet Society (Isoc) and active support from Network Startup Resource Centre (NSRC). The fellowship encourages individuals from South Asian region to participate in the workshop, tutorials and conference.

SANOG has signed memorandum of understandings (MoUs) with Asia Pacific Internet Association (APIA) and APNIC, the Regional Internet Registry (RIR) for the Asia Pacific region, to exchange experiences, help each other in achieving the objectives, and to support and enhance each other's works.

TECHSEMINAR

BASIS seminar on 'Turning an idea into a successful enterprise'

STARTECH DESK

BANGLADESH Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) organised a seminar titled 'Turning an idea into a successful enterprise' at the BASIS auditorium, on January 9.

Iqbal Z Quadir, founder of GonoPhone and Grameen Phone was present as guest of honour and shared his success story which was followed by a lively discussion session, says a press release.

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From left: Nafees Bin Zafar, Rafiqul Islam Rowly and Iqbal Z Quadir

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PHOTO TECH



THE BOSS

"The Boss" a driverless automobile is seen at the CES 2008 on January 9 in Las Vegas. Using a combination of LIDAR, radar, vision and mapping GPS systems to see the world around it, the unmanned Chevrolet Tahoe used only electronics to successfully drive itself through a 60-mile urban course in November 2007. The prototype vehicle recognizes road geometry and perceives other traffic and obstacles on the road.

PHOTO: AFP

TECHNEWS

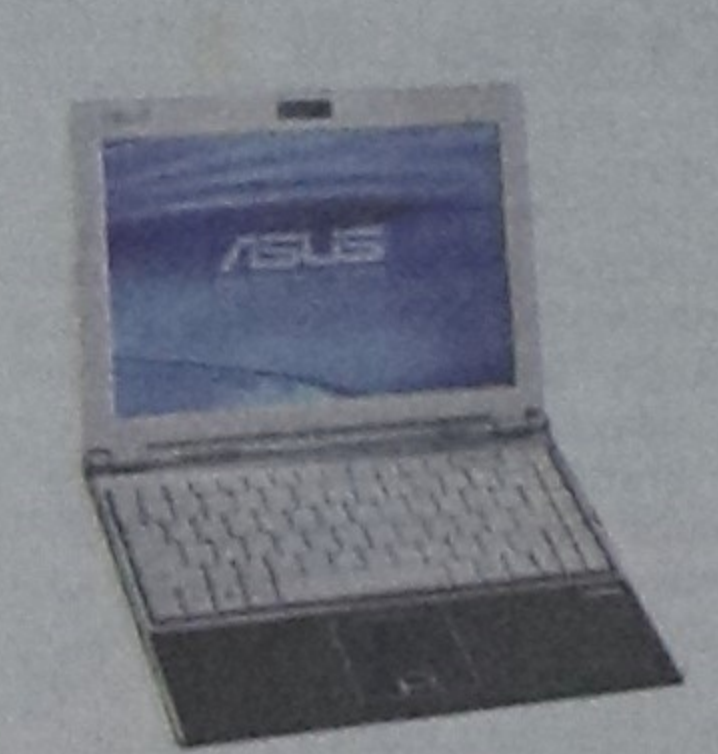
New levels of computing with Asus U6

STARTECH DESK

ASUS once again brings innovative notebook designs to new levels with the latest U6 notebook series.

Based on the latest Intel Centrino Duo Processor Technology and a host of Asus features, the 12.1" widescreen U6 series is the fabulous jewel to light up any computing experience with extra sparkle that will sure captivate all eyes, says a press release.

The U6S is further incorporated with 3.5G High-Speed



Downlink Packet Access (HSDPA) wireless broadband capability, which boosts current 3G download speeds by approximately 4 times,

allowing users to connect to the internet across cellular networks without the need to connect the computer to a mobile phone.

Users will be able to wirelessly send and receive emails, surf the internet, download attachments and access corporate networks through a virtual private network.

A built-in webcam allows instant high-resolution face to face communication without the hassle of external connections and messy wires. The notebook has a price-tag of Taka 1,58,000.