

iMac

The iMac is an 'all-in-one' desktop Macintosh computer designed and built by Apple Inc. It has been a large part of Apple's consumer desktop offerings since its introduction in 1998, and has evolved through three distinct forms. In its original form, the G3, the iMac was egg-shaped with a translucent plastic casing, mainly enclosed by colored, translucent plastic. The second major revision, the G4, moved to a design of a hemispherical base containing all the main components and an LCD monitor on a freely-moving arm attached to the top of the base. The iMac G5 and the Intel iMac placed all the components immediately behind the monitor, creating a slim design which tilts only up and down on a simple metal base.



TECH FOCUS

# Knowledge Based Society Towards a social transformation

EDWARD APURBA SINGHA

TECHNOLOGY has become an integral part of human life, dramatically reshaping the existing socio-economic structure and driving the modern civilisation towards a destination where only a knowledgeable community will survive.

No doubt technology has a great influence on our imagination and at the same time it is playing a crucial role in determining our lifestyle. This new phenomenon has given birth to a new concept called knowledge-based society (KBS).

KBS does not necessarily envisage a society where only intelligent people will live; rather it paves the way for the equal participation of people where their rights will be ensured.

Basically the concept of KBS became a reality when information technology integrated with social mechanisms to empower the people and spur sustainable development of the society.

People experienced phenomenal changes in their livelihood due to this influence of technology. Since then information technology (IT) has become a dynamic of KBS.

In a KBS, all people must have access to the right opportunity to utilise their inner potential and have the scope to take part in socio-economic development.

The ingredients of a KBS are technology, people and knowledge. We live in a technology-dependent world and access to potential technology is mandatory to face the upcoming challenges. We also require sufficient flow of skilled manpower to generate innovative solutions by utilising high-end technologies.

Before producing skilled human resource, we need to provide them with right knowledge or create the scope so that people get the chance to gather knowledge. On the other hand we need to create awareness to attract people.

There is no specific model of KBS, but worldwide this new-age concept is adopted and practised by many countries. These countries in fact successfully incorporated IT in their national activities with a view to providing best possible services to their citizens.

Slovak Republic has taken many pragmatic steps to build a KBS where people enjoy the blessing of modern technology in their daily activities. The Slovak government believes this kind of society is a prerequisite for democratic development, scientific and technological progress, economic growth and social security, employment and growth.

Under this initiative the government envisioned to create a knowledge network between academia, research institutes, government organs, corporate world and others in order to bring the 'unreachable' opportunities to the citizens.



India has already formed a National Knowledge Commission (NKC) in 2005 and one of its prime objectives is to make India a knowledge-based society.

India adopted such a strategy in order to address the existing social problems. They are optimistic about gaining three objectives, such as enrichment of educational process, empowerment of Panchayats and ethical commercialisation of the country's creative and cultural tradition.

African country Uganda is also trying to merge itself with global information society trend. Other African countries such as Kenya, Nigeria and Senegal are also pacing towards knowledge-based society.

Bangladesh is now going through the transitional phase in terms of forming a true knowledge-based society. But the recent technology scenario also indicates new prospects for the country. The underlying reason for the sluggish development is government policy.

Now it is high time the government adopted right policy and took timely action in order to expedite the process to turn this country into a knowledge-based society. The first imperative for the government is to address the rural community and at the same time digitalise all operations in order to ensure transparency to citizens.

Bangladesh is a densely populated country and it is not possible to build KBS without the right participation of rural community. The government should take the lead for proper knowledge management and use IT as a catalyst to meet the objectives.

By adopting appropriate policies, the government must open all high-end technologies to the citizens. For instance, there is a high demand for IP telephony and in this regard prompt action is essential to attract BPO-related (Business Process Outsourcing) services in the country. This can create young entrepreneurship and leave a unique scope for IT-educated people.

Bangladesh is also an emerging market for WiMAX (World Wide Interoperability for Microwave Access) technology. WiMAX is a dynamic solution to establishing long-haul data communication link to distant areas. Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has plans to give WiMAX license in May this year.

The introduction of WiMAX can have a synergetic effect on rural areas. The government and private stakeholders could come forward and utilise this technology to build knowledge centres across the country where people can get e-

health, e-education and e-business related services which will effectively improve their livelihood.

Besides, the government can mobilise its existing telecommunication infrastructure. State-run BTTB (Bangladesh Telephone and Telegraph Board) has its DDN node in 64 districts. Areas under these nodes can easily be connected with the internet, generating tremendous opportunity to unlock the potential in unprivileged areas.

Bangladesh can also take the advantage of regional cooperation. In this regard regional forum like Saarc can play a substantial role in sharing knowledge, technical expertise and financial matter to face the global challenges.

Right action plan is another important thing. In the World Summit on the Information Society, all countries agreed to develop action plan but Bangladesh, unfortunately, failed to unite itself with this practice. It is mandatory to develop proper action plan based on right national policies for the successful implementation of any strategy.

Public-private partnership is also crucial to materialise the idea of KBS. Private sector can come forward to develop solutions and generates employment opportunity. But it is the government's responsibility to ensure the atmo-

sphere for investment.

Alliance between industry and academia is another important thing to promulgate the concept of KBS. The active participation of academicians significantly improves knowledge management tactics and helps to take prudent decision.

The role of the media is also important in the development of knowledge-based society. The media can ensure wide access to information and create awareness as well. Bangladesh has 10 private TV channels which air different constructive programs. As satellite connectivity is needed to view the programs, most rural people do not have access to them. The government can provide some TV channels with terrestrial transmission facility.

Some private organisations have helped a lot in building a knowledge-based society. Reza Salim, project director of Amader Gram, told StarTech about "Knowledge Fair", an initiative to promulgate the idea of knowledge society across the country. "There is a bright prospect of knowledge society in Bangladesh. We first require three things such as enabling the environment, proper policy and strategic planning", Salim said.

Microsoft Bangladesh and Development Research Network (D.Net) have started their venture to produce knowledge-based manpower by initiating Click (Community for Learning Information, Communication and Knowledge) programme, a part of 'Microsoft Unlimited Potential' scheme and under this programme thirteen village information centres will be established in different parts of Bangladesh.

Anayana Raihan, executive director D.Net said, "We need more investment in education sector because it is necessary to produce skilled human resources". He also suggested following the instance of ICTA (Information and Communication Technology Agency) of Sri Lanka for the well coordination of ICT-oriented activities.

D.Net's concept of Mobile Lady, local language information knowledge base for the rural poor -- 'Jeeon' and Village Information Centres known as 'Pallitathya Kendras' have revolutionised the access to information and knowledgebase for the rural community.

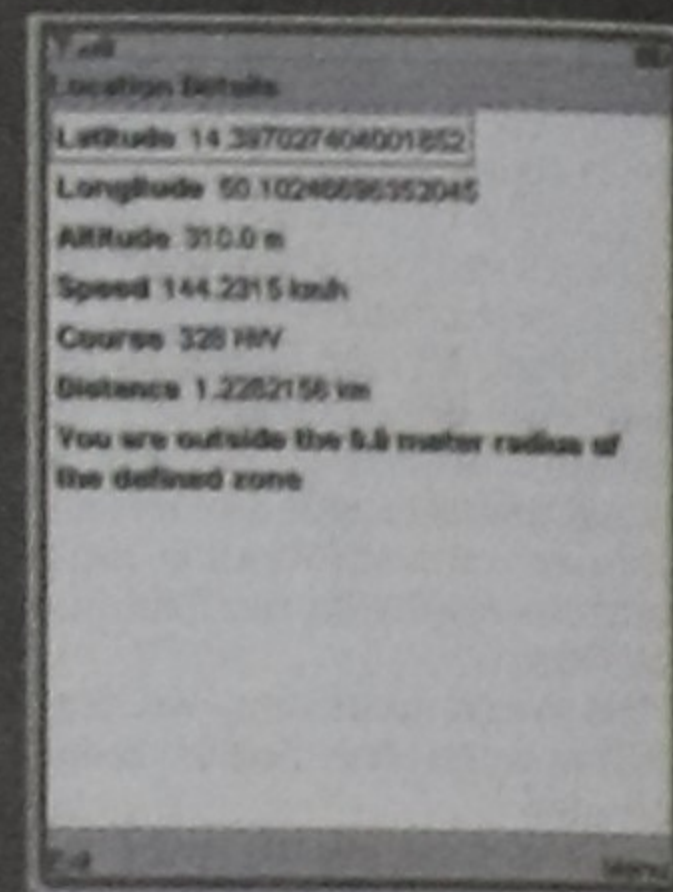
It is true that the concept of knowledge society is not limited to information technology. But IT can be utilized to ensure transparency, empower poverty and make uniform distribution of opportunities. So it is equal responsibility both government and citizens to ensure best possible use of IT.

## Kuet student develops tracking software

QUAZI AMANULLAH from Khulna

Mohammad Montazur Rahman a.k.a Niloy, a fourth year student at electrical and electronic engineering department of Khulna University of Engineering & Technology (Kuet) has developed a software through which any individual's motion and location through his cell phone can be measured accurately.

A press release issued by Kuet said security services, especially the intelligence



using application programme interface. Niloy said collecting data through Global Packet Radio Service or GPRS mainly identifies the location of an individual. The software also provides location details such as latitude, longitude, altitude, speed, course and distance.

Recently, some particular areas of Khulna city were selected for the project. I got positive result out of it. It is possible to identify any location from the whole country in future with the active development of the software, he claimed.

Niloy has developed a digital map of Kuet and its adjoining areas along with a database to test his software.

"This project is of international standard. Its active development can help a lot, particularly the security and intelligence department to identify and catch criminals," said Narottom Kumar Roy who is a Lecturer of the Department of Electrical & Electronic Engineering of Kuet.

"I am looking for developing this software more to retrieve the exact name of location. The Java location API is a very powerful and handy thing to retrieve location," Momtazur Rahman said.

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TECHNEWS

## Jetro usher new opportunities for local IT firms

JAPAN External Trade Organisation (Jetro), whose Bangladesh chapter is known as 'Jetro Dhaka', is involved in creating opportunity for the local IT industry so that they can expand their business, in the Japanese market and draw more investment in Bangladesh.

Jetro is the official trade and investment promotion agency under the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of the Government of Japan. Its main mission is to support trade between Japan and other countries with the aim of achieving balanced global trade.

Jetro has 73 overseas offices in 54 countries worldwide as well as 36 offices in Japan, including Tokyo and Osaka headquarters. It has been operating in Bangladesh since 1973.

Jetro Dhaka has always tried to develop sustainable relationship between Japanese and Bangladeshi companies. But the Bangladesh chapter is also concerned about the potential of local IT industry for which reason this year it brought seven Japanese IT companies at BASIS SoftExpo 2008.

"From the software exposition, we have received response from 40 Bangladeshi companies. It surprised us and at the same time drives us to expedite the future collaboration process," Tomohiro Kinomoto, Jetro representative, told StarTech.

"Our office is dedicated to providing information about the trade culture in Japan and helping local firms find out the right opportunity. Each month our office on an average receives 110 responses from the local industry. But not all companies qualify to make trade ties with Japanese companies



Jetro officials at SoftExpo 2008

as some are not able to fulfil the criteria. Most Japanese companies require speedy execution which means right time delivery", he added.

Regarding language barrier, Kinomoto said Jetro has no language training facility and has no plan to introduce this anytime soon, adding that some local firms offer tuition in Japanese.

Business delegates from Japan, who have participated in BASIS SoftExpo 2008, exchanged their views with StarTech. Nobuhiro Hotta, chief executive officer of Dream Cluster Inc, said, "Bangladesh IT market is expanding day by day. Several Bangladeshi companies are now working with their Japanese counterparts and I believe that it is a positive sign to draw more business from Japan".

"We are mainly interested in the potential of Bangladeshi youth. In Japan, near about 7,000 Bangladeshi students are now studying in different disciplines. Many young Bangladeshis have already proved their competency and

this scenario inspires us a lot to utilise Bangladeshi talents in our hi-tech business", he said.

Takahashi Hidehiro, senior managing director of ABL KLEIN Co Ltd, said, "At this moment, web-based solution and web-content related tasks have huge demand in the Japanese market. If Bangladeshi companies address it seriously, this scope will bring a breakthrough in the Bangladeshi IT industry".

Kazuyuki Ono, CFO, Spacemaster Co Ltd, said, "We have received positive response from 40 Bangladeshi companies. In China the cost of labour is increasing day by day and this is equally true for India. So we need a new competitive destination to outsource our activities".

According to Jetro Dhaka, more Japanese companies will come to Bangladesh in the coming years. For this, local IT companies require human resource with right technical skills and proficiency in Japanese language to grab this opportunity.

Edward Apurba Singha

PHOTO TECH



NO MORE NOISE

Japan's electronics giant Sony unveils the world's first digital noise cancelling headphone "MDR-NC5000", which enables to cut train, plane and automobile sounds by up to 99 percent and enjoy hi-fi quality audio reproduction at the company's headquarters in Tokyo on March 13, 2008. Sony will put it on the market on April 21, 2008.

PHOTO: AFP

TECHNEWS

### Asus VW198T Finer images with higher resolution

STARTECH DESK

Global Brand Pvt. Ltd. (GBPL), one of the leading IT vendors of the country, recently unveiled the VW198T model of Asus LCD monitor in the local market.

Asus VW198T is the first 19-inch 16:10 wide-screen LCD monitor that supports up to 1680 x 1050 resolution. Perfect for editing images, watching movies, or playing games, says a press release.

The innovative ASCR (Asus Smart Contrast Ratio Technology) provides the high contrast ratio of 3000:1, which can dynamically adjust contrast between black and white, to create sharper and more stereoscopic images especially during video and movies.

The monitor also incorporates DVI input with HDCP (High-Bandwidth Digital Content Protection) support to ensure high-resolution video signal integrity and image quality. It also has built-in stereo speakers for audio experience. The product has a price-tag of Taka 21,000/- only.

TECHNEWS

## CSL offers HP Pavilion PCs at lower cost

STARTECH DESK

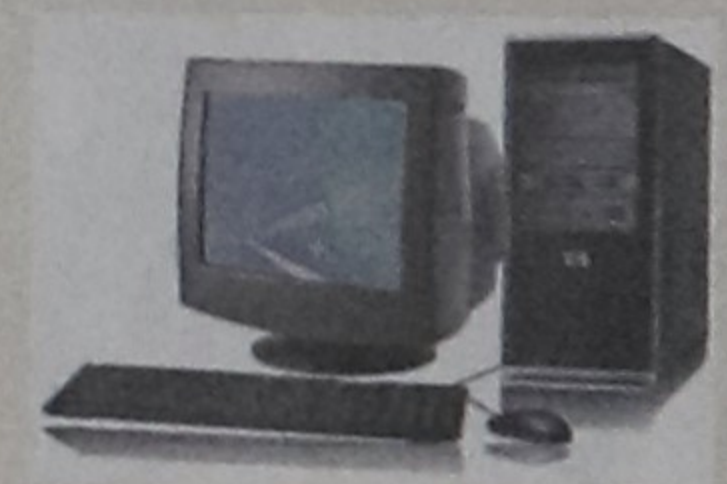
COMPUTER Source Ltd (CSL), a leading computer accessory vendor, formally announced the availability of the popular Hewlett Packard (HP) Pavilion and Business PCs with 15" CRT monitors at a lower cost in the local market.

Asif Mahmood, executive director, CSL, announced this at a press conference on March 9, at a city restaurant.

"We want to make the HP PCs more accessible to the consumers," said Mahmood while speaking at the event. He also highlighted some of the key features of the HP Pavilion PCs. "Inexperienced assembly of

PCs and grey products only bring sufferings to consumers," he mentioned adding that by paying almost the same price, consum-

will also benefit the consumers. CSL also mentioned that the both models will be available for the customers for Tk 31,600.



HP Pavilion PC, right, Asif Mahmood of CSL, speaks at the event.

ers now can enjoy three year's warranty with HP brand PCs.

The 15" CRT monitors has been added to make the HP PCs more affordable. The smart and compact size of the monitors

It should also be mentioned that CSL is also marketing HP's LCD and CRT monitors of different size and quality. Each of these monitors are covered by three years' warranty.