



Global Positioning System

The Global Positioning System (GPS) is the only fully functional Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS). The GPS uses a constellation of at least 24 Medium Earth Orbit satellites that transmit precise microwave signals, that enable GPS receivers to determine their location, speed, direction, and time. GPS was developed by the United States Department of Defense. Its official name is NAVSTAR-GPS. Similar satellite navigation systems include the Russian GLONASS, the upcoming European Galileo positioning system, the proposed COMPASS navigation system of China, and IRNSS of India.



TECH FOCUS

Streamlining Govt websites

NAHID AKHTER

WITH the whole world bustling towards the information super-highway, Bangladesh is not far behind. And at this point, our government is also making sure that it finds its place in the middle of the gigantic dot com traffic.

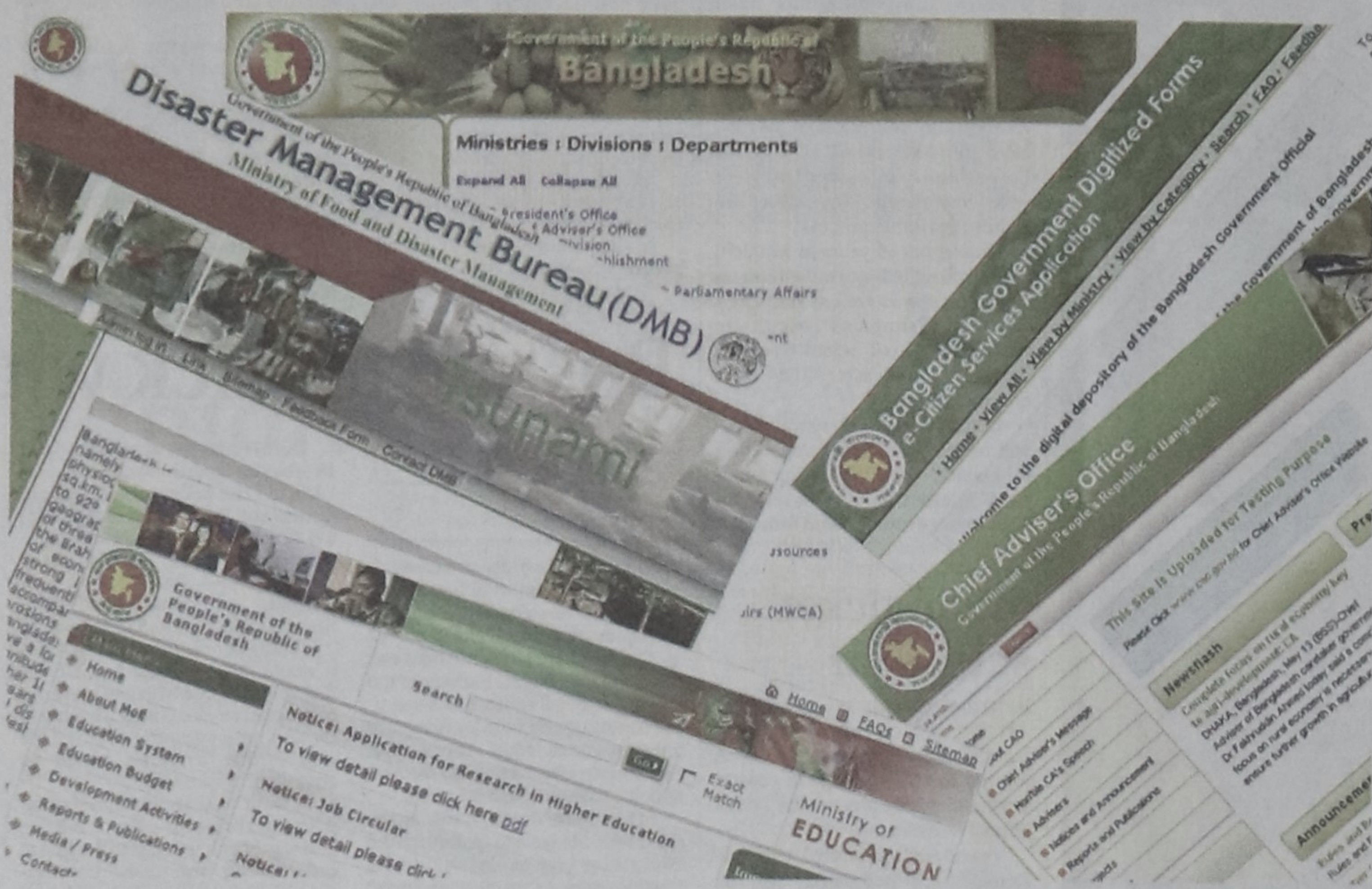
But then, when I started out to do this article, it took me some time to reach the actual authentic official website of the Bangladesh government. Since there isn't much publicity in the media, not many people know the address, so the common man is forced to try their luck on various search engines to give them a link to the website. The downside to that is that you are also presented with a number of links to non-official government sites, which may end up confusing you. Anyhow, for your information, the official web address of the Bangladesh government is <http://www.bangladesh.gov.bd>. Keep a note of that now.

Finally, I got hold of the webpage and following were my observations:

The interface of the website is quite simple, nothing flashy, just pictures of the national symbols and a whole list of links to websites of the various government ministries. You may say, what's the problem with that? Well, the problem is that the list is just too long and cumbersome. So one has to sift through a huge list of government ministries, divisions and departments to find what they are looking for. So if you want let's say information on having dual nationality, and you are one of those people who don't know much about which ministry does what, then be prepared to spend some time to find your target.

Moreover, the list is not even sorted in alphabetical order. Once you start clicking through the various links, you'll find a few websites that have incomplete web pages, featuring only two words... "Text here". And some links don't even open! The English used in the web pages are just not up to the mark, in both spelling and grammar. I actually found one of the web pages providing a link saying "Contract Us"! As a government website, which might be viewed by foreigners, it doesn't give much of a good impression about the country.

The Disaster Management Bureau website is quite flashy with animations and submenus. However, the popping-up submenus tend to become a little annoying and



the page has to keep getting refreshed whenever the mouse even so much as grazes past the menus.

The Ministry of Education's homepage is just anything but impressive and far from organised. There is just too much information for a homepage. All the details about various scholarship exam results don't need to be on the homepage. A good homepage is one that would have only a paragraph about the Ministry of Education in General and then provide links to the other details.

The funniest bit was, after all details about scholarship exam results and what not, I find a small paragraph speaking of what this website is all about...something that should have been put right on top! Anyway, since SSC results had recently come out, and I had heard that the results are available online, I tried looking for it on the website...none in sight. Even if it was available, it must have been hidden in such a place that after twenty minutes of searching, I still couldn't find something that is of so much public interest.

Now before you make any judgments, let me add that I'm not out to just criticise the government's efforts. I do understand how much hard work must have gone into building these pages and I do accept that there are things that deserve recognition. The government's initiative in starting such a

project for one does deserve appreciation. It really was a good idea to provide a platform such as this for the common public to get in touch with important government-related information.

A very important and actually quite impressive website is the Digitized Government Forms website. This website allows users to access government forms for various purposes, like Birth Registration, Internet Connection, Passport Application, etc. I didn't even know that such a thing existed and used to often mention why the government doesn't put its forms on the internet. Apparently, this was started by the Prime Minister's Office as a part of the government's e-citizen services initiative. Whoever designed the website truly deserves a big hand. Right at the top, it gives an option for users to view everything in English or Bangla. It even allows users to choose their required form by category, or by ministry, or by simply typing in and searching, and provides a handy list of frequently used forms for a faster search.

The forms are available in two varieties one which can be downloaded and printed, and one which can be downloaded, filled electronically and then printed. This certainly saves you from the ordeal of waiting in the long lines of government offices, just to get hold of a form and eventually wasting a whole

day. Unfortunately, a lot of Bangladeshis are unaware of the existence of such a useful website. The government should take efforts to make this known to the public through extensive advertising on the various media. For the time being, let me make the first, tiny step by providing you with the address: <http://www.forms.gov.bd/>. Keep this bookmarked, because, you're surely going to need it some-time or the other.

All said and done, the websites could do better with a few major adjustments.

The interface could be made more appealing and functional by arranging links by category, either according to the kind of user (foreigner, citizen, senior citizen, government officer, etc.) or by type of information one may be looking for (land-related, politics-related, travel and tourism, etc.) This will also allow the user to find what they want, without having to know the name of the government agency. The links should also be more descriptive, i.e. they should include a short line saying what the link is all about. This could ease a lot of pain, especially for laymen.

Although Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for most of the linked websites are provided, a list of FAQs in general could be added to the main page. The government could actually provide an online platform whereby the citizens

could provide their suggestions to the government on various issues. This is something that is done by governments in many countries. This would make the website quite interactive and would provide an opportunity for the government to be even more accessible to the citizens' reach.

A forum could also be included, where users could interact with one another on issues of interest related to the government and its online pursuits. Digitised forms could be taken a step further by allowing users to electronically fill in their details and submit the completed forms online. Of course, in doing this, a number of security and validation issues would need to be tackled. Other forms of media could also be included, like videos, audio recordings of important speeches, etc., which would spice things up a bit.

In today's era, use of the internet is becoming imperative at all levels personal, social as well as the government level. The Bangladesh government has taken an initial step and as such, shortcomings are bound to happen, as in the case of any new venture. But there is always room for change. It must be acknowledged that the Government has developed quite reasonably within a short period. Here's hoping that the benefit of this online venture will be able to benefit a larger portion of the common masses.

TECH NEWS

Gadget lovers flip for iPhone 3G but glitches mar release

AFP, New York

GADGET lovers around the world on last Friday crammed into stores to buy the latest super-fast iPhone 3G only to find activating the coveted devices was hit-or-miss due to Apple computer troubles.

The much-ballyhooed launch of iPhone 3G was marred by activation troubles blamed on Apple's online iTunes system.

Telecom giant AT&T, the exclusive service provider for iPhones in the United States, said iTunes computer problems were felt internationally but did not deter people from snatching up these second-generation models.

"It's an issue with iTunes," AT&T spokesman Mark Siegel told AFP. "We've just had a great day. Many of our stores are sold out. We're thrilled."

While Apple's plan was to require people to activate new iPhone 3G handsets before leaving stores, it switched to unlocking the software so people could tend to it later using home computers.

iPhones must be synced with iTunes before they will work even if service contracts have been signed with carriers.

Some customers shrugged off delay in bringing iPhones to life while others derided it as "a nightmare."

In New York, customers jostled outside the company's Fifth Avenue store as Apple employees cheered them on when sales kicked off at 8:00 am, one of the last places to join the global rollout.

First out of the shop with his

prize in his hand was David Yoo, 24, of New York. "I am very happy. I am going to call my mother," he said.

Yoo, who arrived at midnight and bought the 16G phone for 299 US dollars, said he bought it because it is "faster with the Internet, and for the GPS."

Nearly 200 people queued outside the Apple Store in downtown San Francisco north of

Chris Moorby, 26. Another customer, Antonio Guerra, 19, was prepared to be patient.

"I'm good, I've been here for 19 hours, I don't mind waiting a few more," he said.

Apple did not respond to AFP requests for comment but mobile phone network provider 02, its partner in Britain for the handset, said demand for the iPhone 3G had been "absolutely



Apple's headquarters in the California city of Cupertino.

Customers leaving the store with new iPhone 3G models after sales began said the shop's computers were down and the mobile phones weren't activated.

Britons crowding around Apple's flagship store in London took delays caused by the technical glitch in stride, saying the wait was worth it.

"I'm leaving now because I've got to go to work but I'd otherwise wait all day. I've got a lot of patience for Apple," said

phenomenal."

Staff at the London store said the glitch had apparently been caused by the volume of people overloading the system.

Apple fans across Asia queued for hours to get their hands on the new iPhone.

More than 1,000 people, many waiting through the night, besieged a store in downtown Tokyo as the iPhone went on sale for the first time in Japan, where having the latest gizmo is almost a national obsession.

HP expands its leadership in Bangladesh

STARTECH DESK

HP has been present in Bangladesh market for quite some time now and they reaffirmed their ongoing commitment to Bangladesh and plans to continue to drive initiatives

Sarkar, general manager, Personal Systems Group (PSG), Hewlett-Packard (HP) Asia Emerging Countries, at a press briefing on July 16.

"We are now well equipped in terms of manpower and products offering to meet the demand of the

market, says a press release.

The key drivers of growth for the personal computing market include the continued user preference towards mobility, greater adoption of international brands, and increasing consumer demand for PCs and notebooks.

HP identified mobility as a key strategic growth area in part because it has the industry's broadest range of offerings for mobile computing products and partnerships.

Expanding the countrywide channel network to reach out to more customers, HP currently has more than 110 Consumer HP Business Partners in 7 cities which is servicing more than 23 cities across Bangladesh.

"HP will continue to drive the consumer market in Bangladesh through more on-the-ground initiatives, specialized customer promotions and partner programs. We are well-poised to drive the growth of both PC and notebook market here," concluded Prasentjit.

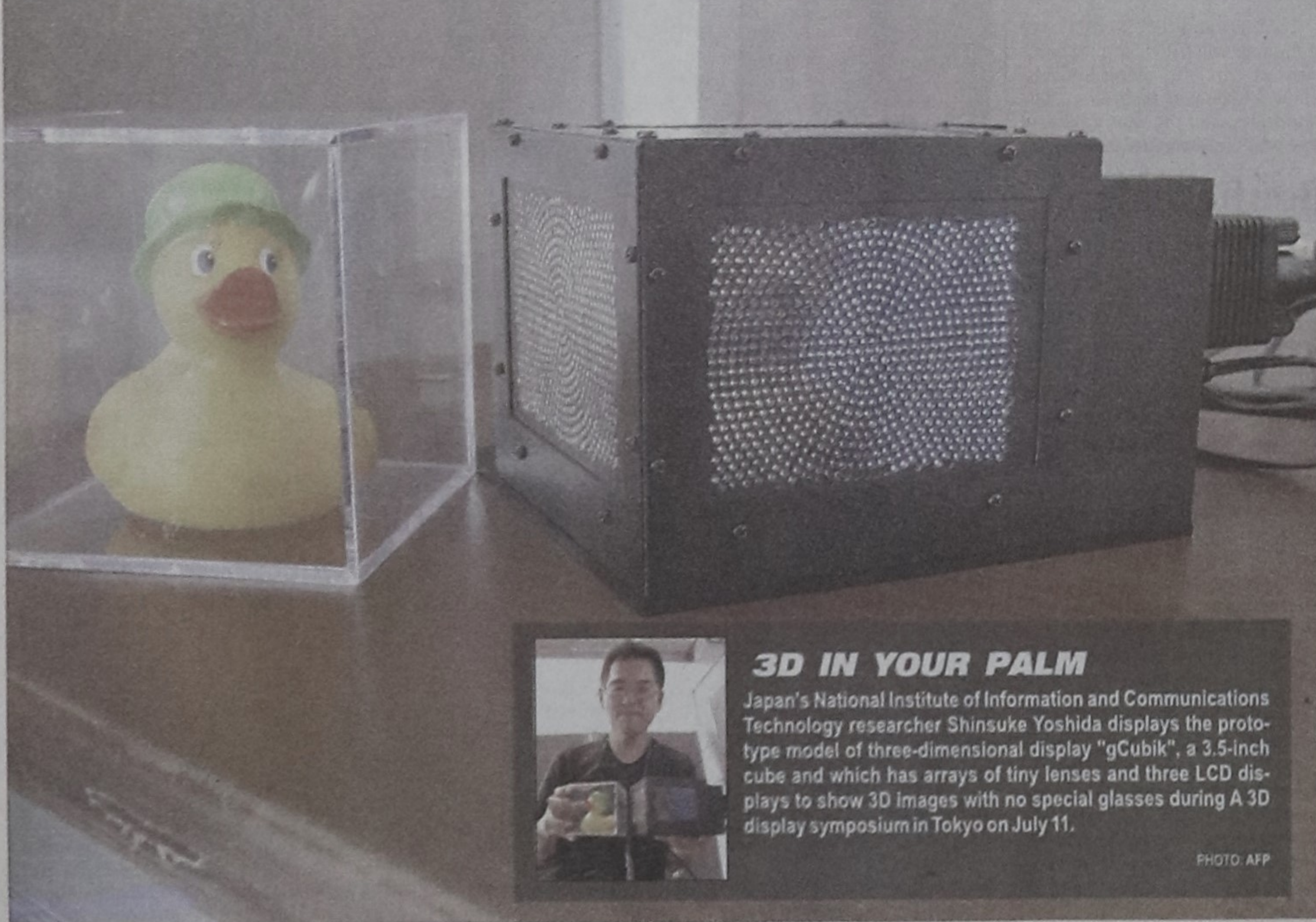


in order to leverage on the ever growing consumer markets.

"The consumer market continues to be a key focus for HP in Bangladesh," said Prasentjit

Bangladesh consumer market," he said. HP recently employed a team which is based in Bangladesh and are gearing up with long term investment to further grow the consumer

PHOTO TECH



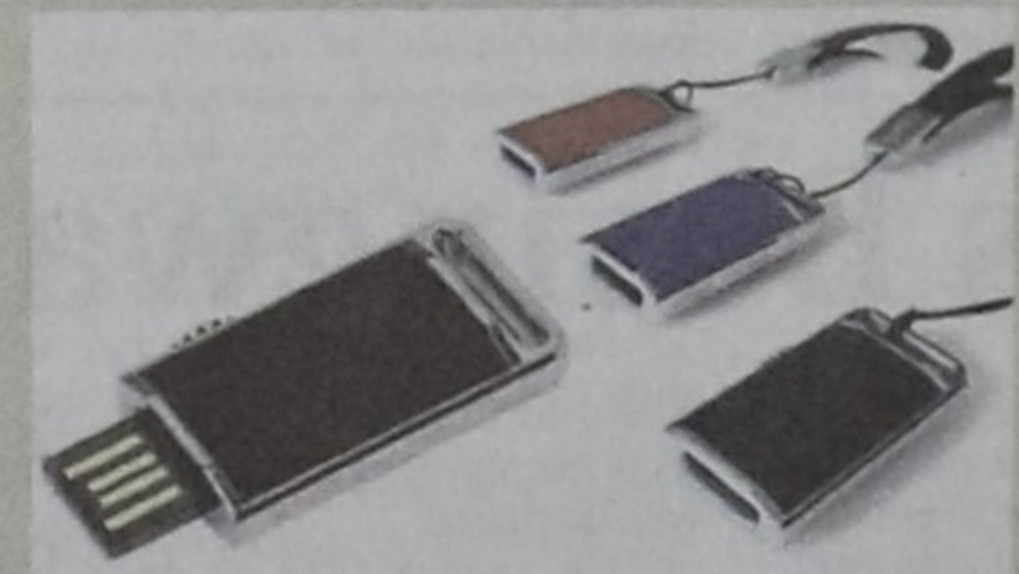
3D IN YOUR PALM

Japan's National Institute of Information and Communications Technology researcher Shinsuke Yoshida displays the prototype model of three-dimensional display "gCubik", a 3.5-inch cube and which has arrays of tiny lenses and three LCD displays to show 3D images with no special glasses during A 3D display symposium in Tokyo on July 11.

PHOTO AFP

TECH NEWS

A-Data Sport Series USB flash drives



STARTECH DESK

EVEN though you are stuck in traffic, you still cannot stop your desire for speed. By integrating an avant-garde design and special material, A-DATA Sport Series S701 Flash Drive is able to fully demonstrate the kinetic energy and explosive force of a sports car. The motive power continuously generated by the flash drive is an evidence of its endless energy.

In addition to conveying a sports car's style and material, S701's overall read and write efficiency also acts like a dynamic sports car, says a press release. The USB 2.0 high speed transmission interface effectively supports Windows ReadyBoost. It makes you feel like you are driving a sports car instead of using your computer.

Now 4GB memory capacities S701 flash drive are available in Bangladesh. The pen drive has a price-tag of Taka 1,700.

HP unveils Mini Note PC in Bangladesh

Targets education market

STARTECH DESK

HP Mini-Note PC 2133 might be small in size but it is big on usability, durability and attractiveness. Packed with an impressive combination of features, the HP 2133 offers a full-function PC with the extreme mobility.

The HP Mini-Note PC with ULV 1.60 GHz processor, 1024 MB memory, weighs in at just 1.19 kg and targets the education market, says a press release.

The 8.9-inch WXGA display with 1280x780 pixel resolutions, make this Mini Note PC the unique one. The HP 2133 Mini-Note PC features a durable design with a robust suite of wireless, multimedia and security capabilities to allow users to stay productive.

It is only 1.05 inches (27 to 33 mm) thin. The HP 2133 is designed to go where you go without weighing you down. This small wonder keeps you ultra-productive. It has high definition audio,

stereo speakers & stereo microphones. The HP 2133 Mini-Note PC helps you stay connected where you need to work by offering integrated Wi-Fi Certified WLAN and Bluetooth wireless technologies.

Computer Source Limited (CSL) is offering HP Mini-Note PC 2133 at Taka 60,000 with one-year limited warranty.

