



TECH FOCUS

# Financial sector looks for ICT solutions among students

NAHID AKHTER

THE power of youth can never be underestimated. The young generation is always brimming with new ideas, but alas, very little is done to tap into this resourceful treasure chest, especially here in Bangladesh. One such venture had been undertaken by D.Net (Development Research Network) and Citibank N.A. Bangladesh by organizing an IT case competition for students from various public and private universities of different parts of the nation.

The competition was the first of its kind in Bangladesh that involved the development of relevant and unique software and information system solutions by the students for the financial sector in Bangladesh. There were a total of 54 teams from 20 universities all over Bangladesh and they were judged by a team of 25 jury members who all belonged to some of the renowned institutions and companies of Bangladesh, based on project evaluation guidelines.

After an intense competition in the first two rounds, 20 teams battled their way to the second round. From these 20 teams, the best five teams were chosen to compete in the final round. The winners were finally awarded at a Gala event held at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel Dhaka on November 10, 2009. The ceremony was attended by important officials from the ministries, central bank, diplomats and dignitaries, besides the students and their parents. A.K.M. Abdul Awal Mazumder, Secretary, Ministry of Science & ICT was present as the Chief Guest and gave away prizes to the teams. The winning team was the University of Liberal Arts, who received award money of USD 5,000.

Mr. Mamun Rashid, Managing Director and Citi

Country Officer, Bangladesh said during his speech, "Today, IT is one of the talked about but unexploited industries of our country. Though we have had some success, we lag behind our neighboring countries in terms of employment and revenue generation in this sector. As such, the aim of this competition has been to

route that is safer, more secure and more user-friendly.

A notable achievement of the contest was that the product developed by Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, one of the top five teams was appreciated by Data Subsystems Ltd. so much that they decided to fund the team in further developing the

future economy of Bangladesh, and the competition provided them with a platform where they could express all the novel ideas and concepts that they had for a better Bangladeshi economy.

The Business Product Outsourcing (BPO) sector of Bangladesh has still not made its mark in the global economy. But Mr. Mamun Rashid



PHOTO: STAR

help students improve their knowledge on the application of technology within the financial sector, thereby increasing the ability of the young generation to contribute positively to the broader economy."

The competition was ground-breaking for Bangladesh, as a number of innovative ideas have been yielded for the financial sector as a result of this competition. The University of Liberal Arts team, who called themselves the 'Geeks' developed an innovative solution for Extended SMS Banking. This service allows customers to use their mobile phones to perform their banking transactions round the clock through a

product. The product, called Ekushe-Finance is a crawler based focus search engine that will provide all finance related queries, business plan advisories, up-to-date information services including SMS based enquiry, transaction-related services and an all in one advertising system for finance related websites. Such a search engine had been unavailable in Bangladesh till date.

The competition targeted at promoting a culture of business and technology development amongst the future leaders of the country based on the local needs as well as global business demands. It is these youngsters who are going to lead the

expressed his confidence that it is not far when we see these students leading the BPO industries of the country that will provide much needed foreign exchange for Bangladesh.

In short, this competition could be considered as a head-start for many more such youngster oriented endeavors to elevate the IT and business standards of Bangladesh. These young minds are a depot of strength and imagination. Instead of wasting youth resources of the country into harmful student politics, more could be done in disseminating this force into other such productive undertakings.

TECH FAIR

## ECS features Digital ICT razzmatazz

MUSA IBRAHIM

Technology showcasing is now a well accepted phenomenon in Bangladesh, also prioritised in the ECS Computer City's 'Digital ICT Fair 2009' for the remote areas to make the Digital Bangladesh slogan a reality. Speakers at the inauguration ceremony of the fair on November 7 pressed home at this point indicating the digital devices should make known to the people from all walks through this kind of arrangements. The fair started on November 7 and will continue up to 15 of this month at Multiplan Centre situated at New Elephant road in the capital.

Information and Cultural Affairs Minister Abul Kalam Azad as a chief guest said though the government has taken different initiatives to accomplish the goal of Digital Bangladesh, private organisations and bodies also should come forward accordingly. He acknowledged to establish Information Technology (IT) park at different places across the country and also to make ICT education compulsory for school and college level within 2013.

Anisul Hoque, president of Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries said in the ceremony if there is no internet in the country for three days, then our life become jeopardised and so the dependency on technology is now an obvious consequence. Besides, this fair is actually a razzmatazz to take the technology ahead, he added.

Aftab Ul Islam, chairman of SME Foundation said if we could start planning at least 15 years ago, then our advancement would have been huge by this time. Though he expected the



PHOTO: COURTESY

youth can put Bangladesh forward with all constraints.

Among others, Mostafa Mohsin, chairman of shop owners association, Towfique Ehsan, convener of the ECS computer fair 2009 spoke in the ceremony.

Let the technology be a tool for changing the situation - the computer fair's slogan lures the people with latest computer accessories, laptops, other hardware and software, free computer gaming and internet browsing facilities. The school going students can enter the fair for free but for others the toll is Tk 10.

The computer fair committee also arranged a seminar on 'The influence of Wimax Technology in this world' on November 8, a quiz competition on

'The tech-savvy management system is the main tool to prevent misappropriation' on November 10. Today a seminar on 'The influence of IT to establish the Digital Bangladesh' is going to be held on the fair premises. An art competition for the children has also arranged on November 14 on the topic Digital Bangladesh.

The sponsors of the fair are Acer, Apecer, FND, HP, IndexIT, Max-5 and Microlab, web partner is E-sof, official ISP is Akij Online and media partners are Channel I, daily Jugantor, Radio Foorti and Computer Bichitra. The computer fair committee has established a media centre and also updates the news of the fair at www.digitalictfair.com.

TECH NEWS

## Windows 7 launched

STARTECH DESK

MICROSOFT Bangladesh believes that their latest operating system (OS) 'Windows 7' will successfully acquire most of the market share like their most successful OS 'Windows XP' in no time.

Atiqur Rahman, business development manager of Microsoft Bangladesh Limited said this while inaugurating the new generation operating system in Bangladesh's market in a programme titled '7 on 7 Dhamaka @ Dhaka' held at IDB auditorium at Agargaon in the capital.

He also said the new OS was an attempt of the US software giant to regain its stride after an embarrassing stumble with the previous generation OS Vista.

Importantly for Microsoft, versions of its popular programs such as Office, Outlook and Excel have evolved to work better with the successive Windows releases, he also added.

In the programme, Microsoft professionals demonstrated



PHOTO: STAR different developed features and technical highlights to the audience.

TECH NEWS

## Symantec joins hand with CSL

STARTECH DESK

SYMANTEC Corp. a global leader in security, storage and systems management solutions has announced the appointment of Computer Source Ltd (CSL), a leading IT distributor in the Bangladesh market, as their authorised distributor for enterprise and retail solutions in Bangladesh, says a press release.

The appointment will help Symantec's plans to strengthen presence and tap the growing SAARC (South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation) market. CSL will develop Symantec's geographical reach in Bangladesh through its broad distribution network.

According to Symantec's Internet Security Threat Report XIV attackers are moving their operations to regions with emerging digital infrastructures, malicious activity is growing at a record pace and data breaches are becoming more prevalent and costly. Further, the amount of data that enterprises are dealing with is growing

exponentially year on year and to manage this data enterprises are adopting newer technologies that eventually leads to increased complexity.

"Through CSL's extensive distribution channel we aim to provide the entire range of Symantec's storage and security solutions; ensuring that customers' IT infrastructures and related processes are protected completely, managed easily and controlled automatically," said Ajay Verma, Director, Channels and Alliance at Symantec.

"We are excited to partner with Symantec as the Company ventures into Bangladesh. Enterprises and consumers in the country will now have access to world class solutions to secure and manage their information. The synergies arising out of our in-depth market knowledge and Symantec's technology leadership will result in lasting value to our customers," said Asif Mahmud, Director - Corporate Sales, Computer Source Ltd.



## BCS hosts Digital Bangladesh Summit 2009

MUSA IBRAHIM

BANGLADESH Computer Samity (BCS) is going to arrange 'Digital Bangladesh Summit 2009' at Bangabandhu International Summit Centre on November 22. BCS expects the President Md Zillur Rahman will inaugurate the summit as a chief guest.

Prior to this, BCS will organise an interactive, colourful and international standard Information and Communication Technology (ICT) expo titled BCS ICT World 2009 from November 17-21. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to inaugurate the event in the same place on November 17. The theme of the five-day expo is set as Way to Digital Bangladesh which is designed to featuring the government declared goal Digital Bangladesh.

BCS is also planning to arrange discussion events on pre-digital Bangladesh summit 2009 following the ICT expo. The events

for pre summit sessions are Sustainable Connectivity for Building Digital Bangladesh, Legal & Regulatory Reforms for Establishing Digital Bangladesh, Digital Education, Knowledge & Economy for Digital Bangladesh, Creative Digital Bangladesh and Digital Parliament.

On November 20, the Digital Bangladesh Summit will entail a discussion titled Implementation Plan for National ICT Policy 2009 where finance minister, planning minister, telecommunication minister and science and ICT minister will be present as special guests.

The BCS authority said the public and private partnership is urgent to implement the activities for digital Bangladesh. The strategies, the plan and the also the work area should be defined for this along with awareness build up among the people is another factor. So this digital summit will help in this sector, they expected.



### World's slimmest mobile phone

In a handout picture released by Samsung Electronics, a model displays what Samsung claim to be the world's slimmest watch-shaped mobile phone, just 11.98 millimetres (0.48 inches) thick at a showroom in Seoul.

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