

IT & TELECOM

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Turning dreams into reality

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK, back from London

Shampa Akter, a homemaker and entrepreneur of Kusthia, was not present at the biggest gathering of Nokia held recently in London. But her success story has been narrated to the world of mobile technology as an example of how mobile phones can develop and change the lives of ordinary people, even in the least developed countries.

In mid September, around three thousand people from over a hundred countries gathered at Nokia's two-day World Summit 2010 in London.

On September 15, day-two of the conference, a brief pictorial presentation drew the attention of the less than half dozen Bangladeshis. Shampa's pictures along with her dreams in life appeared in Bangla on display screens at the conference centre.

Shampa was a simple housewife with a dream to own and operate her own business. She took part in Nokia's 'Don't stop dreaming' competition and won the seed capital to start her boutique business in September 2009. She now employs 35 local women in her business in Kusthia and supplies clothes to retailers in Dhaka.

Shampa uses Ovi mail to connect to wholesalers and retailers in Dhaka and also sends pictures of her designs and clothing to retailers to get orders. This saves her travel time and cost, and ensures that she gets orders and feedback from her customers on time.

This is the story of Shampa that was narrated at the conference as the best example of how a mobile phone and its multi-dimensional facilities change lives of ordinary people across the globe.

"Dream: to open a tailoring shop and boutique and create scope for employment for many poor women through it," also appeared on the big screens in Bangla.



A session in progress at the Nokia World in London.



Shampa Akter

other concepts for developing countries like Bangladesh, where 40 percent of its 160 million people are living below the poverty line, the per capita income is \$750 and over 70 percent of the population lives in rural areas.

Carr elaborated, "Our role in markets, particularly in rural areas, is to educate the people on what content is available to help them enrich their lives, which is different from the role we play in the market in, for example, Singapore, where the understanding and awareness and capabilities of what's available is a little better understood. That's part of our social responsibility as a company -- we're looking to educate people, to help people discover the value they can derive from mobility."

Educating people or making them aware is one of the strategies of expanding the market of the technologies, but this is from the sense of social responsibility of a business house and through implementing its corporate social responsibility.

"We have corporate social responsibility programmes in all the markets," added Carr.

"When we put an office into a country, we realise we have an obligation beyond supplying handsets to the market. We commit to educating, we commit to different campaigns with a social responsi-

bility element. We commit to provide after market services. We have a retail presence. We continue to invest in the market and put back in the market some of the money that's derived as a result of the turnover in the market. That's something that we take as part of entering into a market, so we are not there just to extract value but also to contribute to the improvement of society and the lives of individuals within that society."

At the conference village, there were several stalls displaying the latest and upcoming facilities in Nokia handsets. Experts described the new devices and applications to the curious participants. It was an interesting occasion for the innovative developers of applications.

'Nokia Money' was one of the latest attractions for many, including people from the Bangladeshi banking sector.

Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director and chief executive of Brac Bank, attended the Nokia World Summit to understand how 'Nokia Money' can further mobile banking in Bangladesh, besides remittance transfer through mobile.

Brac Bank formed an organisation called bKash Ltd, which is part of the process of introducing mobile banking facilities in Bangladesh.

"I am here to look for the technologies to implement our new idea of introducing mobile banking," said Rahman at the Nokia Money stall, where an expert was narrating the use of the devices and how people would be benefited.

If the deal goes smoothly, Brac Bank is likely to come to an agreement with Nokia for using their devices/technology to introduce mobile banking in Bangladesh.

On Brac Bank's move, Carr said, "It is in an exploratory phase, but there is a clear intention based on our understanding of the market that we want to be able to deliver that service."

e-CONTENT AND ICT4D AWARD

Online war archives

ADIL MAHMOOD

Winner e-culture and heritage category.

"... we were told to kill the Hindus and Kafirs (non-believer in God). One day in June, we cordoned a village and were ordered to kill the Kafirs in that area. We found all the village women reciting from the Holy Quran, and the men holding special congregational prayers seeking God's mercy. But they were unlucky. Our commanding officer ordered us not to waste any time..." (confession of a Pakistani Soldier)

The inscription has been posted in the home page of the 1971 Bangladesh Genocide Archive (genocidebangladesh.org). There is no need to describe more about the extent of injustice and brutality orchestrated by the then Pakistan government.

The archive hosts chronology of events, documentations, audio/video files, images, media reports and eyewitness accounts of the 1971 Genocide in Bangladesh in the hands of Pakistan army, and Bengali collaborators.

This is a one-stop site for all information relating to Liberation war of Bangladesh that fully realizes

The website also provides a background on the political history of Bangladesh.

The site has been developed by a group of Bangladeshi internet-based activists who made it a source for online research on Liberation War of 1971 that led to killing of thousands of innocent Bangladeshis.

The website, which is in English, also contains archives in Bengali.

The Genocide website includes newspaper articles published that binds anti-liberation groups to their crimes.

The developers of the site plan to digitize more contents related to the liberation war and make them available online in future.



HP brings Multiseat Computer system

IT.TELECOM REPORT

In a view to save vast amount of time and money on client management, maintenance and upgrading difficulties, Hewlett-Packard (HP), a global technology giant on Sunday launched Multiseat Computer system.

Multiseat Computer system connects multiple users to one PC. Five to nine users can easily log in to the system at the same time and share a single PC while working on independent applications.

The system was introduced as a solution that allows businesses, academic institutions; specially schools, medical offices and organisations of all

sizes to offer more users a familiar PC experience by doubling the number of computing seats without increasing their budgets.

Moreover, the system is energy efficient, consumes only 2.5 watts of power and helps reduce energy consumed by up to 80%.

At a launching ceremony held in the city, Philp lau, general manager of HP Personal Systems Group, Asia emerging countries said the latest technology will empower

students to learn at their own pace anytime and anywhere, let teachers easily manage a classroom and free up IT managers from time-consuming maintenance.



Dell expands operation

IT.TELECOM REPORT

Dell, one of the leading technology corporations in the world, on Wednesday announced expansion of its operation in Bangladesh and setting up of a resident office in the capital.

At a press briefing in a city hotel, Varinderjit Singh, managing director of Dell South Asia Developing Markets said his company is very keen to make long-term investment in Bangladesh as for the last couple of years the PC market has grown over 40 percent in Bangladesh.

"Our commitment is borne out by the fact that in the last few months it has hired number of resources in country to focus on the business", said Singh.

He also said the enterprise is now working with concerned government agencies and stakeholders for investment opportunities.



Fact or fiction? Facebook film the latest "truth" tale

REUTERS, New York

They say Hollywood never lets the truth get in the way of a good story and while a new movie about Facebook has left some critics wondering if its story is fact or fiction, audiences are unlikely to care.

"The Social Network," which hits US cinemas on Friday, has been scoring early critical raves and even Oscar buzz, yet its claim on depicting the true story of the birth of the hugely popular social networking website is drawn from a book that was slammed for its reporting methods.

Just like Oliver Stone's "JFK" was criticized as taking liberties with historical facts in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, "Social Network" by director David Fincher follows a long line of Hollywood films that have caused controversy for their creative depictions of real-life characters and for scenes of events that never happened.

"The Social Network" tells how

Facebook co-founder Mark Zuckerberg was transformed from a socially awkward, arrogant student at Harvard University with girl troubles to largely creating the social networking website that currently has more than 500 million members and is worth tens of billions.

Besides questions about the book on which it is based -- Ben Mezrich's "The Accidental Billionaires: The Founding of Facebook, A Tale of Sex, Money, Genius and Betrayal" -- stirring the debate is that Zuckerberg did not cooperate with the film.

"A lot of it is fiction," he told Oprah Winfrey last week on her TV talk show. "This is my life, so I know it is not that dramatic."

But the film's makers argue the movie is basically true, told from three perspectives: that of Zuckerberg, his former good friend and Facebook co-founder Eduardo Saverin and former classmates at Harvard, brothers Tyler and Cameron Winklevoss.



TECHPHOTO

ATHLETE

The All-Terrain Hex-Limbed Extra-Terrestrial Explorer (ATHLETE), a prototype heavy-lift utility vehicle to support future human exploration of extraterrestrial surfaces, flexes its limbs as it moves across the northern Arizona desert on September 15 on the last day of NASA's two-week field testing of new aerospace technology at Black Point Lava Flow approximately 40 miles (64 km) north of Flagstaff, Arizona. The program, called Desert Research and Technology Studies (Desert RATS) is an annual opportunity for NASA engineers and scientists to stress test rovers and other cutting-edge space technologies in a series of field tests in an arid environment simulating the conditions found on the surface of the Moon, distant asteroids or Mars.

Photo: AFP



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