

IT & TELECOM

DHAKA, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2010, E-MAIL: it.telecom@thedailystar.net



countries, augmenting livelihoods for the poor. The report examines two ways in which ICTs in enterprises can benefit the poor: first by use of ICTs in enterprises of direct relevance to the poor. For example farmers, fishermen and other micro enterprises in low-income countries are rapidly adopting mobile phones as a key tool to advance commercial activities; secondly by being involved in the ICT producing sector. The report finds that the potential is far from fully exploited. ICT-related micro enterprises are spreading rapidly in many low-income countries, offering work of real value to populations with little education and scant resources. Such activities include selling airtime on the streets, refurbishing mobile phones, repairing personal computers and running cyber cafés. Such commercial undertakings have relatively low entry barriers. The costs and skills required are often modest and the poor are making good use of this accessibility. Mobile phones have also impacted the lives of millions of people in African countries like Kenya, Gambia, Ghana, Uganda and Nigeria. However, Unctad stresses that ICT micro enterprises typically operate in a volatile and risky sector and the returns on investment are often low. Micro entrepreneurs must have the capacity to adapt and respond to changes. The report notes that the opportunities for ICT micro enterprises to survive and grow are greater in urban settings, where it is easier to establish essential relationships with other enterprises, both formal and informal. The scope for creating long-term jobs around such activities in rural areas appears to be more limited. The Unctad has been publishing such reports since 2005, but Bangladesh was included for the first time this year.

ICT report hails Bangladesh

SAJJADUR RAHMAN
A global information and communication technology (ICT) report has lauded Bangladesh's two initiatives - one by Banglalink and the other by Grameenphone that cater to the market information needs of rural farmers. Banglalink's helpline Jigyasha and Grameenphone's telecentre-based market solutions have been helping address the farmers' needs across the country, said a report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Unctad). The report titled "Information Economy Report 2010: ICTs, Enterprises and Poverty Alleviation" was released in October. Over 100,000 people, mainly

farmers call Banglalink's Jigyasha to know about farming related issues, according to the report. It said poor people often lack access to vital information such as market price information, income-earning opportunities, weather forecasts, use of pesticides and fertilisers and health and disaster risk reduction. "This is where ICTs come in. By providing the means for poor men and women to access useful information and to communicate, they potentially help them build and improve their livelihoods," said the Unctad report recognising Banglalink's efforts to address those issues. The report also said Grameenphone's 500 community

information centres across the country are helping each rural small investor earn \$3-4 a day, much better than almost half the population who earn less than \$1 a day. Grameenphone has also created 350,000 'village phone ladies' who are earning a decent income. The report also hailed Bangladesh for its success in the mobile phone coverage in terms of population and territory and a relatively faster penetration and lower call-charges than many countries. ICT and mobile phones particularly are helping nations develop in many ways, for example, the case of Bangladesh combating poverty, it said. Mobile phones are helping create thousands of new micro enterprises mushroom in many



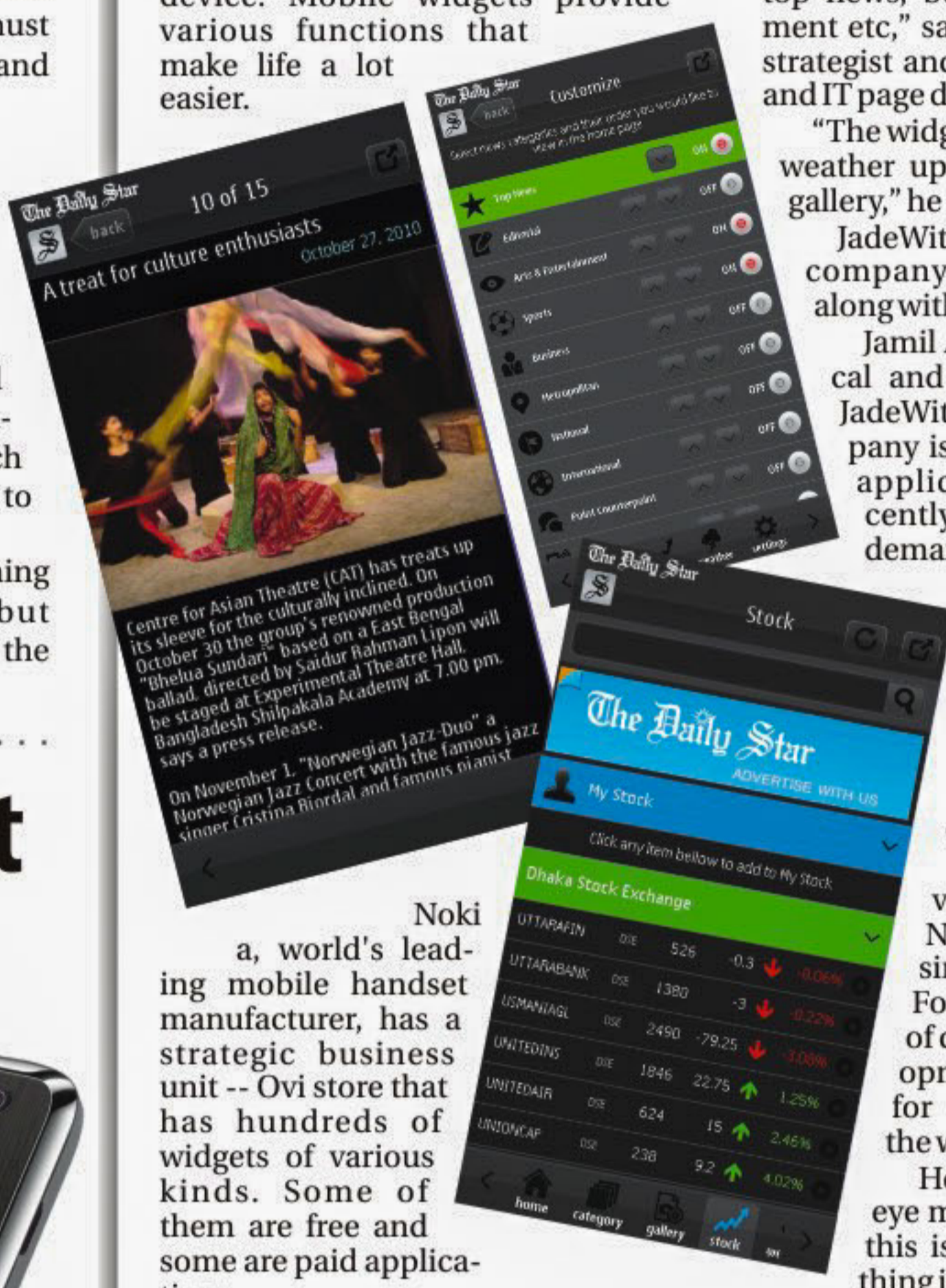
Prem Chand, general manager of Nokia, EA speaks at the event. PHOTO: STAR

Star app hits Ovi

ADIL MAHMOOD

Since the inception of smartphone revolution, mobile widgets became one of its most crucial tools to add versatility. Mobile widgets are applications that can be installed on mobile phones or mobile devices to add useful functionality to the device. Mobile widgets provide various functions that make life a lot easier.

Daily Star Widget from Ovi Store on their Nokia smartphones," said Sajid Rizwan Matin, acting head of marketing, Nokia Emerging Asia at the event. "After installation readers will get to choose their favourite news category from 12 categories to be displayed on the home screen of the app that includes top news, business, sports, entertainment etc," said Nafid Imran Ahmed, IT strategist and in-charge, online edition and IT page during a presentation. "The widget also offers live stock and weather updates along with a photo gallery," he added.



JadeWits Limited, a local software company developed the widget along with The Daily Star and Nokia. Jamil Ahmed, director of technical and development division of JadeWits Limited, said the company is focusing more on mobile application development recently due to the increasing demand in the industry. "Since the initiation of Web Runtime (WRT) platform, we were looking for an opportunity to develop an application based on it. The Daily Star and Nokia provided us the opportunity," said Jamil. "We observed that developing applications on Nokia platform is quite simple and we must thank Forum Nokia, a community of developers related to development of Nokia applications, for their help on developing the widget," said Jamil. He said local developers may eye mobile app development as this is going to be the next big thing in the industry. Jamil also cautioned that before installing it, users should update their device to latest operating system version through 'Device Update' option, in order to get best output of the widget. There might be a chance that the widget might not perform well if the device has not been updated. The application will presently work on Nokia smartphones running Symbian 3 and series 60-third edition OS models such as N8, N97 mini, X6, C3, E72, 5800 and so on primarily. The Daily Star and Nokia are now working together to offer the service for cheaper series 40 devices which should be available by the end of the year.

Australia's Telstra unveils iPad-style budget tablet

AFP, Sydney
Australia's major telecom firm Telstra unveiled a tablet device to rival Apple's iPad on Wednesday, featuring many of the same functions but with the added bonus of also working as a mobile phone. Telstra's T-Touch Tab, which goes on sale next week, allows users to make video and phone calls and send text messages, and is being touted as the country's "most affordable wireless tablet". "T-Touch Tab will suit Australians' appetite for quick and affordable access to information, useful apps and digital media wherever they may be," said Rebekah O'Flaherty, executive director of Telstra's consumer division. "From games that keep the kids amused, reading e-books, checking your email or catching the weather on the move, the possibilities are virtually endless." The device will retail for 299

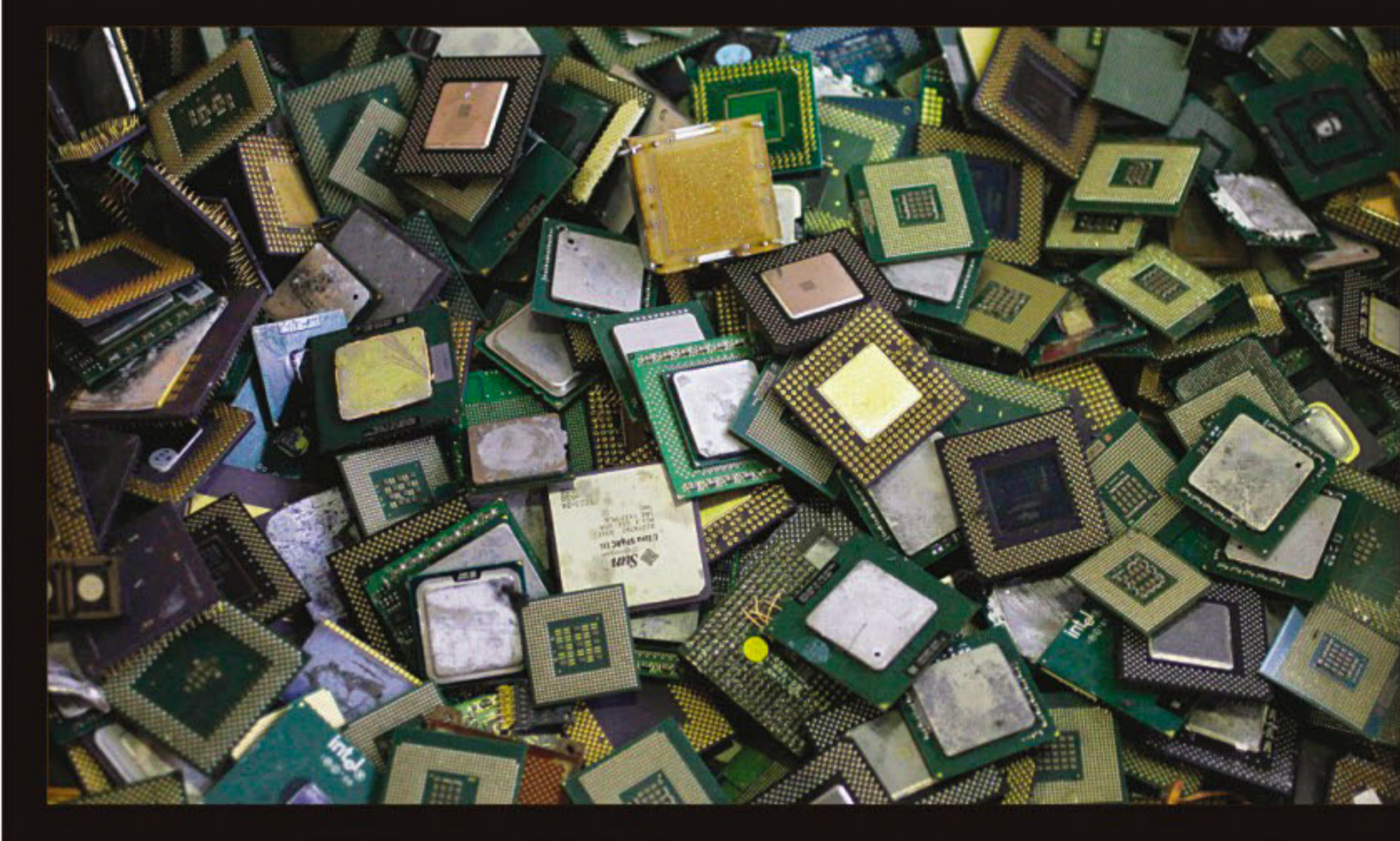
Australian dollars (295 US) and has a seven inch (18 centimetre) touchscreen. It runs on Google's Android 2.1 operating system, offering access to more than 80,000 applications. Experts have described it as Australia's first budget-priced tablet, giving it generally warm reviews. PC World computer magazine said it stood out compared with competitors like the iPad and Samsung's Galaxy Tab as an "affordable, entry-level tablet that doesn't skimp on too many features". Tech website Gizmodo Australia said the device was aimed at teenagers and older buyers "who might be interested in the idea of a tablet but don't want to pay 650 dollars for an iPad". But the T-Touch's resistive touchscreen -- meaning users have to push down on it slightly -- was



"probably too big a sacrifice for any discerning gadget lover," it cautioned. Apple launched the iPad in Australia to much fanfare in May, with some customers holding overnight vigils to be first through the doors. Marketing firm GfK recently estimated almost 200,000 units had been sold.

Apple told AFP it "does not break figures down to a country level" but said more than 4.2 million iPads had been sold worldwide in the three months to September alone.

Nokia, a world's leading mobile handset manufacturer, has a strategic business unit -- Ovi store that has hundreds of widgets of various kinds. Some of them are free and some are paid applications. Apart from widgets, the store offers a range of contents including applications, games, videos, podcasts, location-based services and personalised contents. Nokia on Wednesday, in association with The Daily Star launched a mobile news application -- The Daily Star Widget, the first of its kind in the Southeast and Asia Pacific region. Prem Chand, general manager of Nokia Emerging Asia and Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star officially inaugurated the app at an event. "Users can download and install The



TECHPHOTO
Chips for recycle
A worker disassembles a computer at a recycling facility of Re-Tem Corp in Tokyo October 15. Re-Tem Corp researches and develops the recycling of rare earth metals vital to the production of electronics. Japanese high-tech companies face higher input costs for rare earth metals as dominant supplier China curbs exports. PHOTO: REUTERS

BCS fair kicks off tomorrow

IT/TELECOM REPORT
Country's largest annual ICT showcase 'BCS ICT World 2010' kicks off tomorrow in the city with the theme of building a "Digital Bangladesh for the new generation". Organised by Bangladesh Computer Samity (BCS) - the national association of the ICT companies, the four-day event will be staged at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center of the capital. Around 1.5 lakh to 2 lakh visitors are expected to stroll this year's event, which would be participated by 66 organisations from home and abroad - the organisers said at a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday. Finance Minister AMA Muhith is expected to inaugurate the event through a formal opening ceremony, which would also be attended by Commerce Minister Muhammad Faruk Khan and State Minister for Science and ICT Yeafesh Osman. "An array of computer hardware and software items of various local and foreign compa-

nies, laptop, handheld devices, network, data and telecommunication equipments as well as multimedia based materials for ICT education will be featured in the event in 69 stalls and 26 pavilions", said Mazibur Rahman Sawpon, convener of this year's BCS ICT World fair. "The event would not be a mere exposition of equipments and materials, this would also be a hub for exchanging knowledge, education and experience on ICT", said BCS President Mustafa Jabbar. During the exhibition, three seminars will be organised concurrently with the event on topics related to information technology and its practical usage and commercial aspects. The fair venue would also feature Wi-Fi facilities, free gaming zone, online video streaming, IP TV, radio and internet gaming facilities for the visitors - the organisers informed. The event would be open for the visitors from 10 am to 9pm. The entry fee for the fair would be Tk 20 for every individual. However, school students would get free access to the fair.

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