



## Power controls from afar

**ADIL MAHMOOD**  
We are a power-starved nation. According to some statistics, access to electricity in Bangladesh is one of the lowest in the world -- around 70 percent of the total population does not have electricity. In other words, among some 30 million families, about 23 million are deprived of power, most of who live in rural areas. And neither are there any realistic chances that these people will get electricity any time soon.

The persistent power crisis is a common feature of our daily lives. During summer and the irrigation season, it takes such a horrible shape that the general people lose track of how many hours they have to live and work without electricity.

The problem grew such in the last few years that even the premier of the country called on countrymen several times to check their 'consumption of power' in order to reduce the crisis.

Checking consumption means electricity is now being considered a scarce resource and we should consume it 'according to our coat', not an ounce more.

But for the countless hours of load shedding, especially during peak hours, we generally forget whether we had switched off our home or office appliances, lights and fans before we leave.

Md Sahabuddin, a young man from Gangni upazila of Meherpur, came up with a solution.

Sahabuddin calls his invention the 'Power Controller'. Suppose someone, who installed the device, left his/her den with the lights and fans switched on. Later, when the person remembers, he or she can call a certain number that is set in the device. The device is connected to the electrical system of the house and will shut the power supply using software of its own.

The device is not only useful in households but in vehicles as well. He said, "I have used it on my motorbike for a couple of years and I also tried using it on cars to start or switch off the engine from a distance. The result was spectacular."

Sahabuddin was born and spent a quarter of his life in a village called Mohammadpur in Gangni. He came from a peasant family with 10 family members, including four brothers and four sisters.

"My academic career didn't last long. Right after the secondary school certificate examinations, it literally came to an end."

But the young fellow didn't lose heart. "I always had a keen interest in electronics. In fact, I own a



Sahabuddin installs a power controller to a car.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

small electrical shop in my village now."

The device can also be used as a tracker. When installed, someone can easily locate his/her vehicle's exact location using a mobile phone.

The idea behind this invention came when the young fellow from Meherpur was working for a certain company that had installed auto-start generators at mobile phone towers. He realised that even though the company installed the auto-start generators, due to some difficulties caused by excessive power failures, those failed to run.

"If a tower fails to run, subscribers of that particular company face trouble in the area. Maintenance would become a nightmare during night-times and in bad weather. From that point, I thought, why not make something that can solve the situation."

After several months of work, a prototype finally saw the face of light and Sahabuddin initially applied it on an irrigation pump in his vil-

lage. It worked beautifully there, he said.

Sahabuddin added: "The news of my invention spread quickly and a couple of stories about me were printed in some local newspapers. Then one fine morning, a gentleman who heads a well-known company involved in the automobile and power businesses, called me and asked whether I would like to work with him. I said yes, and here I am, working with my invention so that I can perfect it."

Sahabuddin has not filed for a patent yet. When asked, he said he had no idea about what is, and he worries someone might steal his idea.

It's an amazing story of how a person with no higher education came up with such an application, which can be so useful in our life.

Even though Sahabuddin is still to comprehend the magnitude of his invention, if this device gains popularity, it could save a significant amount of power and help reduce its crisis.

## Day out with N8

On an autumn morning on November 4, twenty-three journalists from electronic and print media participated in a river cruise organised by Nokia Emerging Asia, to experience their latest flagship product N8.

The goal of the expedition was to observe scenic beauty of the river Shitalakkha and glide through a series of competitions, games and activities using the supremely advanced and hi-tech features of the new Nokia N8 smartphone.

With the slogan 'Connecting People', representatives of Nokia tried in every possible way to get all participants 'connected' through dialogues, discussions and ice-breaking sessions.

At first, the organisers provided hands-on demonstration on the usability and special features of the N8. In addition, after dividing into four groups, they provided each group with an N8 and a Nokia representative to provide first-hand guidance in operating the device (if required).

The first competition was to take high quality thematic pictures of a loom industry, situated in a riverside village with N8's 12 megapixel camera equipped with Carl Zeiss lens.

Nokia claims that it is the best camera in a phone and judging by the snaps taken, the manufacturer has got a point with autofocus, face recognition, 2x digital zoom and Xenon flash.

The N8 is housed in a good-looking, anodised aluminium chassis with a scratch-proof coating to protect it from everyday damage. It also contains a compact chassis, measuring 113.5mm x 59mm x 12.9mm. What's more, at 135 gm, it's also pretty light. Its 3.5 inch screen also gives the handset a gorgeous look.

The second task was to make a short documentary on riverside palace.

With the phone's video recording capability in HD 720p at 25fps with 3x digital zoom and also a video editing feature, the competition geared up a lot.

Other features include a full touchscreen Qwerty keypad. Typing in portrait mode brings up a classic alphanumeric keypad.

A micro-USB port is also included, allowing the device to be synchronised with a desktop, and micro-SD and SIM cards are inserted through the left hand side of the device via two-hinged gates. Bluetooth 3.0 with A2DP, WiFi and 3G round off the wireless connectivity options.

The cruise ended with a presentation ceremony among the winners of competitions.

Eminent filmmaker Saidul Anam Tutul and Photographer of Thomson Reuters News Agency Andrew Biraj were the judges of the competition.

Adil Mahmood



Nokia representative demonstrates N8 features.

## Local blog receives global award

### IT.TELECOM REPORT

Somewhere in Net Limited, a company operating the largest Bangla social media community became the first organisation in Bangladesh to win the prestigious Red Herring Award.

Red Herring is a global media company uniting innovation, technology, financing and entrepreneurial activities in a verity of forums.

The company investigates and reports on how the world of innovation and entrepreneurship are transforming business and how the business of technology is transforming the world for last 10 years.

Technology industry stakeholders regard the Red Herring 100 lists as an invaluable instrument



to discover and advocate the promising startups that will lead the next wave of innovation.

"As the pioneer in creating social media and online communities for Bangladesh where the number of internet users may grow significantly by 2020, I think our practical way of creating services in Bangla with easy mobile access was well received", said Arild Klokkehaug, head of opportunities of Somewhere in Net, at a press conference at its office on Monday.

Apart from popular Bangla blog community *somewhereinblog.net*, the organisation also runs *aaawaj.com*, a popular location based community for activity sharing, allowing easy bangla text entry and SMS-to-web features.

## Acer unveils its tablets



REUTERS, New York

Acer Inc, the world's No. 2 PC manufacturer, unveiled a range of tablet computers to help it compete with Apple Inc's iPad, wading into the fast-growing market.

The tablet computer market is becoming crowded as more companies produce the new devices, which fall between traditional PCs and smartphones.

Chief Executive Gianfranco Lanci announced at a news conference in New York on Tuesday that the tablets would have 5-, 7-, and 10-inch screens, running on Google's Android software. A second 10-inch tablet will run on Microsoft's Windows.

The company said the WiFi-only models of the tablets would come out in April 2011, while the third-generation (3G)-capable models would arrive about a month later. The 5-inch tablet doubles as a smartphone.

Acer, based in Taiwan, said it was in talks with U.S. phone carriers for 3G con-

nectivity for its tablets.

No prices had been set for the devices, the company added.

"It's a gold rush right now," said NPD analyst Ross Rubin. "Everyone wants to get a tablet product out there."

Apple's iPad, a touchscreen tablet that began selling in April, still has an overwhelming lead in the fledgling market. It controlled 95 percent of the tablet market in the July-to-September quarter, according to research firm Strategy Analytics.

"PC vendors and hardware vendors are looking at this market and saying 'how will I compete with Apple?'" Gartner analyst Carolina Milanesi said.

Tablet sales are expected to grow to 54 million units in 2011 and to more than 100 million units in 2012, according to a forecast by research firm Gartner.

Acer also unveiled a screen laptop with two 14-inch LCD touch screens called the Iconia, along with a media store and software called Clear.fi that lets customers stream content on different Acer devices.



### TECHPHOTO Snapping thru' towns and cities

Oberstufen chief of touristic marketing Bianca Keybach poses at Hamburg's harbour on a trike equipped with Google Street View cameras in Hamburg on the launch of Google's street info service "Street View" from 20 German cities. Street View, which allows users to "walk" through towns and cities using photos taken by specially equipped vehicles, is already online in around 20 countries but ran into fevered opposition in Germany.

PHOTO: AFP

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