The Daily Star

IT & TELECOM

DHAKA, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2011, e-mail: it.telecom@thedailystar.net

Powered by banglalink

Linux 20 years and on

IMRUL KAYES CHOWDHURY

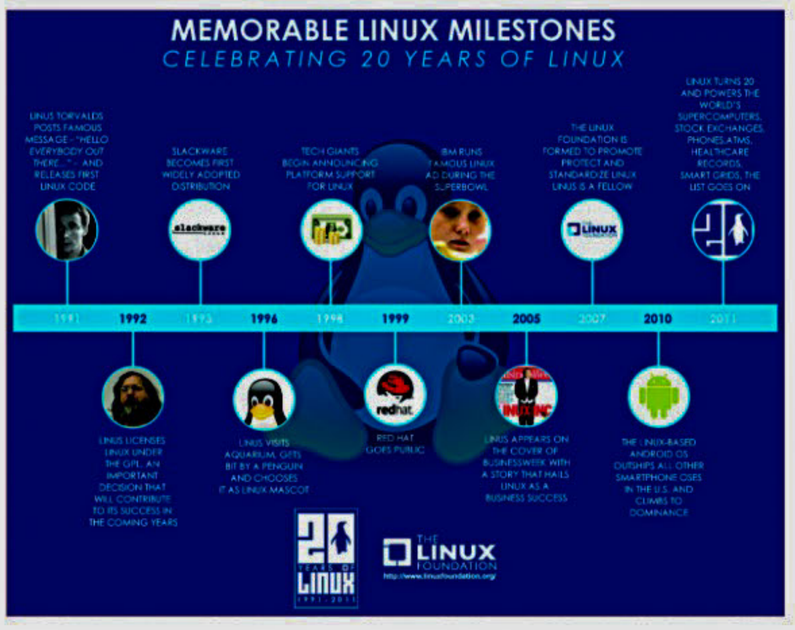
Although some of us are not familiar with the Linux OS (operating system), it is out there and we are using it whether we realise it or not. When we use the internet to browse or check emails we are using Linux servers hosting most of the websites and also at the ISPs end; some ATMs and of course the latest craze -- Android based smartphones and tablets are also Linux powered.

On August 25, 2011 Linux crossed the 20 year milestone. Linus Torvalds first created Linux as only a hobby in 1991 when he was 20 and was studying computer science at the University of Helsinki, Finland.

When Linus was in third year of his graduation, he bought an Intel 80386-based PC. He spent a month playing Prince of Persia and waited for his copy of Minix (an Unix-like computer OS based on a microkernel architecture) to arrive. Minix was free for educational use, but its licence did not allow modifying and it was only 16-bit OS, which did not match well with the 32-bit 386 processor.

Linux had to wait few more months to come to life. At first, it started as a terminal emulator, which Torvalds used to access his university's Unix system. It was built under Minix using the GNU C Compiler (GCC), which Stallman & Co. released a few years back.

But before knowing it, he had written a complete operating system kernel for his 386 PC, and drafted the following email to the Minix mailing



Linus Torvalds

list on August 25, 1991:

Hello everybody out there using minix -

I'm doing a (free) operating system (just a hobby, won't be big and professional like gnu) for 386(486) AT clones. This has been brewing since april, and is starting to get ready. I'd like any feedback on things people like/dislike in minix, as my OS resembles it somewhat (same physical layout of the file-system (due to practical reasons) among other things...

By then he had already ported Bash and GCC to his new OS, and was taking feature requests. But the newborn OS did not have a name. Linus wanted to call it Freax- a portmanteau of freak, free, and "x" of the Unix, but later, when the codebase was moved to a FUNET FTP server, Linus' coworker (and the FTP admin) Ari Lemmke named the directory "linux" as he did not like "Freax".

Linus first released the kernel under his own, non-commercial licence, but by December 1992 it was released under the full GNU GPL licence and the first Linux distributions (Debian, Slackware, and others) started to appear.

Linux soon grow into the first truly successful open source project.

Tux, the mascot of Linux, came much later in 1996. The OS by then gained ability to perform multi-processor symmetric multiprocessing (SMP), a feature that made Linux a viable option for enterprises and supercomputers right away. Companies like IBM and Oracle soon started showing their support to it.

By the beginning of the 21st century Linux became unstoppable and combined with Apache it became a key component of the DotCom Boom.

Seventy-five per cent of stock exchanges worldwide now run Linux as well as the servers that power Amazon, Facebook, Twitter, eBay and Google and many more web servers (50 to 80 per cent).

With 95 per cent, Linux now dominates the supercomputing world. And with Ubuntu's popularity, it is coming to more desktops than ever before. Most of the ATMs around the world are also run by Linux.

Linux is also the kernel behind Android, which puts it in the heart of mobile world. Linux also powers most wireless routers and DVD players.

The way Linux has been growing it would not be overstating to say that Linux is becoming an indispensable part of our life.

The article has been compiled from various internet sources.

Developers get early taste of Windows 8

REUTERS, *California*

Microsoft Corp handed out 5,000 sleek Samsung tablet computers running a test version of Windows 8 at its annual developer conference on Tuesday, hoping to stoke excitement over its new operating system.

The devices, powered by Intel Corp i5 chips, are the first chance for people outside Microsoft to play with Windows 8, the temporary code name for its next software system that includes features tailored for touchscreens and tablets. The company is betting the new system will stem the tide of consumers switching to Apple Inc's iPad.

Microsoft, whose software still runs more than 90 per cent of personal computers, needs the new system to appeal to developers in the hope that they will create thousands of applications to attract users.

"Kids today are seeing more Apple logos than Microsoft logos, and Microsoft needs to change that if they are going to continue being the force that they have been," said Michael Silver, an analyst at tech research firm Gartner, who was attending the developer conference.

Tablet makers are expected to start selling products with Windows 8 by the middle of next year at the earliest.

Developers worldwide can download a preview of Windows 8 from Microsoft.

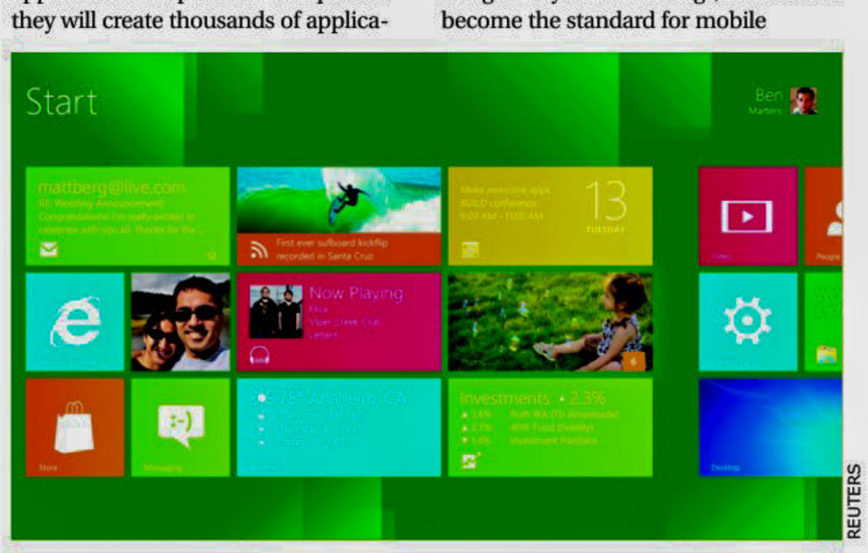
The new system boots up in seconds and features a home page filled with colorful tiles taking the user directly into applications such as Facebook, messaging or news feeds.

Rebuilt from the ground up, Windows 8 uses less memory to run than Windows 7, freeing up space for apps. The test Samsung device, using Internet Explorer 10 as its browser, worked smoothly, although some of the demonstrations on stage at the conference did not work perfectly.

"Clearly this is pre-beta, but all things considered, I was impressed with the speed and responsiveness of the user interface and also the IE 10 browser," said Al Hilwa, an analyst at tech research firm IDC, who tried out the Samsung tablet.

Windows 8 is less likely to appeal to business users, analysts said, given that many companies are still working their way toward switching to Windows 7, released in 2009.

The new system is the first to be compatible with low-power chips designed by ARM Holdings, which have become the standard for mobile devices.



Windows unit chief Steven Sinofsky stressed the new operating system is the first to focus on applications -- it will contain an online app store for the first time -- reflecting the way people now use computers, tablets and smartphones.

He said tablets running Windows 8 will be able to connect easily to printers, cameras and other devices. Windows 8 will also work on PCs with regular mouse and keyboard commands. Thin new laptops by Acer, Asustek and Toshiba featured in presentations at the conference.

Analysts said Microsoft wants to get Windows 8 devices in stores for the "back-to-school" season next year, starting around July, or the holiday shopping season at the latest.

Sony's new console in spotlight at Tokyo game show

AFP, *Makuhari*

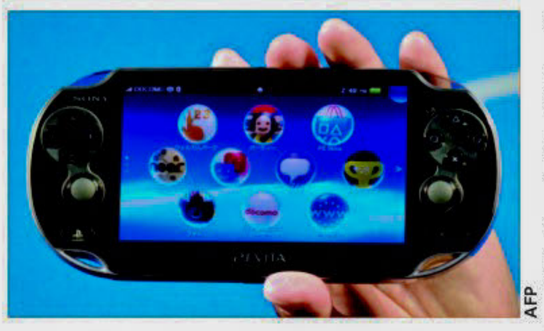
Asia's biggest annual video game industry event got underway in Japan on Thursday, offering hardcore gamers their first chance to get their hands on Sony's next generation Vita console.

Nearly 200 hardware and software makers gathered for the four-day Tokyo Game Show at the Makuhari Messe convention hall near the Japanese capital, with the growing clout of games for smartphones, tablets and social networks evident.

As models dressed as game characters walked around the hall amid the clatter of electronic noise, the mood was far from the kind of Japanese restraint that followed the March 11 earthquake and tsunami six months ago.

Nintendo did not take part in the annual event, but held its own showcase on Tuesday as it looks to revive sales of its struggling 3DS console that boasts three-dimensional images without users having to wear special glasses.

But one of the big attractions was Sony's Vita console, which does not hit stores in Japan until December 17.



AFP

Among the titles the new console boasts is Reality Fighters, in which players can create their own combat avatar.

The game allows users to map their face using one of the Vita's two cameras, select from a range of body shapes and weapons and even use their current surroundings as the backdrop for the battle.

The Vita is Sony's drive to push a vast library of content through its game consoles, smartphones and tablet computers amid competition from Apple's iTunes and App store and hardware rivals such as Nintendo.

The PS Vita features a five-inch (12.7 cm) multi-touch OLED (organic light emitting diode) screen with a pad on the back for "touch, grab, trace, push and pull" finger motions. The handset also has front and rear facing cameras.

Users will be able to use the device to watch videos, listen to music, connect to internet sites and social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter.

The Vita's launch comes as both Sony's PlayStation and Nintendo's gaming models are under increasing pressure from cheap smartphone games that can be quickly downloaded and played, and also social networks.

Nintendo cut the price of its 3DS game console by up to 40 percent only six months after it launched due to weak sales.

On Tuesday it announced some upgrades to the device, a new pink version targeted at women and 30 new game titles to help drive hardware sales.

The Tokyo Game Show opens to the public from Saturday. Organisers expect up to 190,000 people to attend.

Nokia rolls out 3 new localised apps

IT.TELECOM DESK

Nokia on Wednesday announced its latest series of Mobile Apps- Weather Now, Stock Assist and Scoreboard for the consumers in Bangladesh at an event at Bangladesh Meteorological Department in the capital.

All the applications have been developed by MCC, an award-winning commercial organisation specialised in the development of mobile technology and contents.

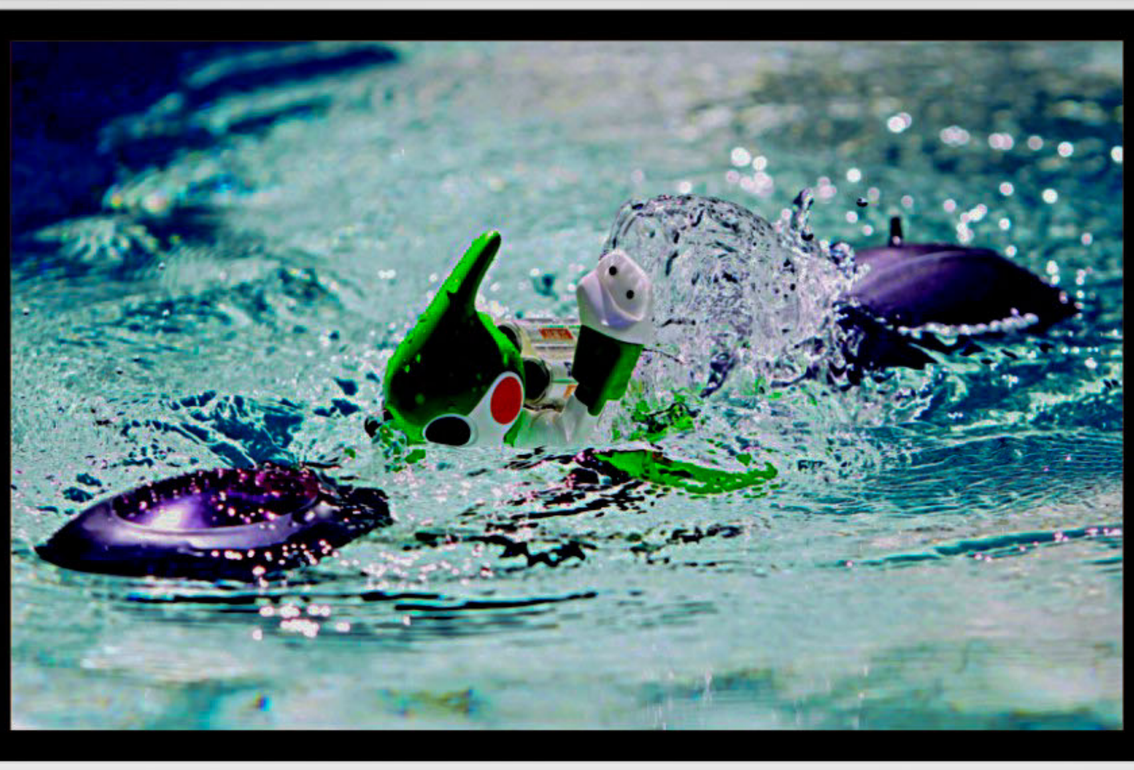
The Weather Now app features real-time current temperature and weather update, information on weathers of eight major cities of Bangladesh, four days of weather forecasts, options to check weather in Fahrenheit and Celsius and storm, cyclone and other weather emergency warnings.

The Stock Assist app comes with fast and advances searching option, real-time update on the stock exchange prices, graphical representation of stock data for analysis, detailed information on the companies, options to choose favorites for faster navigation, personal virtual stock portfolio management and options to calculate investment return in real-time.

ScoreBoard is a board examination result checking tool for students. The app syncs with the education board of Bangladesh to keep the students informed with 16 years' results from all the boards of Bangladesh. It shows result details on all subjects along with the overall result, enables students to check their results through text messaging. It also ensures privacy as student has to put in five different parameters.

Nazrul Islam Khan, Project Director of A2I, Prime Minister Office, *2nd from right*, Abu Daud Khan, country manager, Nokia EA, and two other high officials of Bangladesh Government's Meteorological Department at the event.

TECHPHOTO



Evolta

Panasonic's "Evolta" swim robot, powered by the company's Evolta rechargable batteries, is demonstrated at a pool during a news conference in Tokyo September 15. The company said three types of Evolta robots, developed to swim, bike and run, will challenge to complete an Ironman triathlon course in Hawaii, a total of about 230km, within one week or 168 hours from October 24,powered by three AA-size rechargeable Evolta batteries.

PHOTO: REUTERS

banglalink internet
log on to your world

1GB only @ Tk. 275

the world is now on your banglalink mobile
enjoy the best internet package of the country

• to avail this package, SMS "P6" to 3343
• Tk. 275 per month (VAT applicable)
• for details please call 121 or visit www.banglalinkgsm.com

banglalink
An ORASCOM TELECOM Company