BASIS SOFTEXPO
A showcase of talents and services

IMRUL KAYES CHOWDHURY

The 10th edition of the SoftExpo, one of the biggest ICT events of country, started with the theme 'Empowering Next Generation' got going with promising signs on February 22 in the capital.

The fair brings good news for IT professionals especially for the freelancers. Casada Technology Bangladesh Ltd has brought alartpay.com, an online payment gateway, in Bangladesh. Through this gateway individuals, who are doing outsourcing, software developments and other jobs with foreign countries, can easily receive their payments with any bank accounts in the country.

"It has been authorised by Bangladesh Bank with all legal approvals", said Khandaker Ahsan Mahmud, general manager, Casada Technology Bangladesh Ltd.

AalartPay has officially started its operation from this month. It is a Montreal-based Canadian company and Casada Technology is its franchise.

Casada's stall is located at Mobile Content and Application Zone, one of the 7 zones at the fair.

At the United International University (UIU) stall in the IT Education Zone, a group of students are showcasing their products which they developed as university projects. One of their products is 'Online Inventory Management System', which can be used by super stores. Walton and Nokia stores in Shyamoli are using it.

However, the exciting thing comes from Feroz Ahmed Siddiky, a lecturer of the UIU. Feroze made an Intelligent Military Robot that uses machine learning techniques. His robot is contesting in the IT Innovation Search Programme organised by BASIS. He made the robot while doing his Masters at the same university.

Feroze said he used Speech Recognition System and own algorithm to make this Robot. In other words you can use voice command to communicate with the robot. "It can communicate with people easily. Even a kid can communicate with it providing the proper training."

Visitors look at an online service at a stall at the fair.
PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

This year's SoftExpo is the largest in terms of participation and arrangements.

Feroz explained, "If the sound of your baby crying is pre-recorded in the robot, it can call and notify you when your baby starts crying and you can also see with its built-in camera remotely." The robot can also receive commands from phone too. Feroz claims the robot has an accuracy rate of over 98%.

These types of robots can be used by the military for spying, for home security or for the physically challenged. The robot can be attached to the wheelchair so that they can move around using voice command.

At the e-Commerce Zone, Future

Solutions for Business, a specialised IT service company established in the UK in 2003 and started its operation in Bangladesh in 2009, are showcasing their e-Commerce solutions.

At the outsourcing zone among others there is CIM Solutions Bangladesh Ltd, a new company based in Netherlands, which started their operation here last year. Official of CIM said their main objective in participating at the fair is to let people know about the company. They are already working with offshore clients. They also provide business and industry solutions.

Troyee, a company that provides integrated business solution can be found at the Business Zone. Uttam Kumar Paul, managing director of Troyee said they participate at the fair every year as they get good response.

At the Business Zone there is also DNS Software Ltd, which is showcasing two products-SMS based service and Online Payment Gateway- in particular among other services.

The company provides a variety of services such as promotional

activities, greetings, special offers and more through SMS. DNS can segment the market and send SMS to the prospective targeted clients. In Online Payment Gateway, DNS provide the platform for online transaction within the Bangladesh.

Huawei is showcasing its Unified Communication products (e-Conference, e-Learning, e-Education and Multimedia conference), and Cloud computing system at the Cloud and Communication Zone of the fair. The company explains in detail how the Cloud computing-the next generation computing-actually works.

The other zones at the fair are ITES and BPO Zone.

With participation of over 140 exhibitors from home and abroad, 30 seminars and tech sessions, over 20,000 corporate visitors alone with general visitors, international business matchmaking, contest and awards, and live events this fair is believed to be the biggest than the past SoftExpos in terms of arrangement and participation.

More than one hundred new IT inventions are being displayed at the fair.

Show real strength
IT and trade expert advises Bangladeshi tech companies

ABDULLAH MAMUN

Bangladeshi IT companies will have to build trust with European companies by focusing on their real strength. They should not 'overpromise', said an adviser working for branding Bangladeshi tech firms in the European market on the sidelines of BASIS SoftExpo 2012.

"They should never say I can do everything. Bangladeshi people will have to focus more on what they can do. They have to compete with the well known Indian and Philippino companies." he said.

Martin Labbe works as an adviser of Online Marketing and Digital Networks for International Trade Centre (ITC), a United Nations Body funded by Dutch government.

His job is to position Bangladesh as a global IT destination targeting UK, Denmark and The Netherlands. To create network between Bangladeshi and European countries he works with BASIS and Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industries (DCCI).
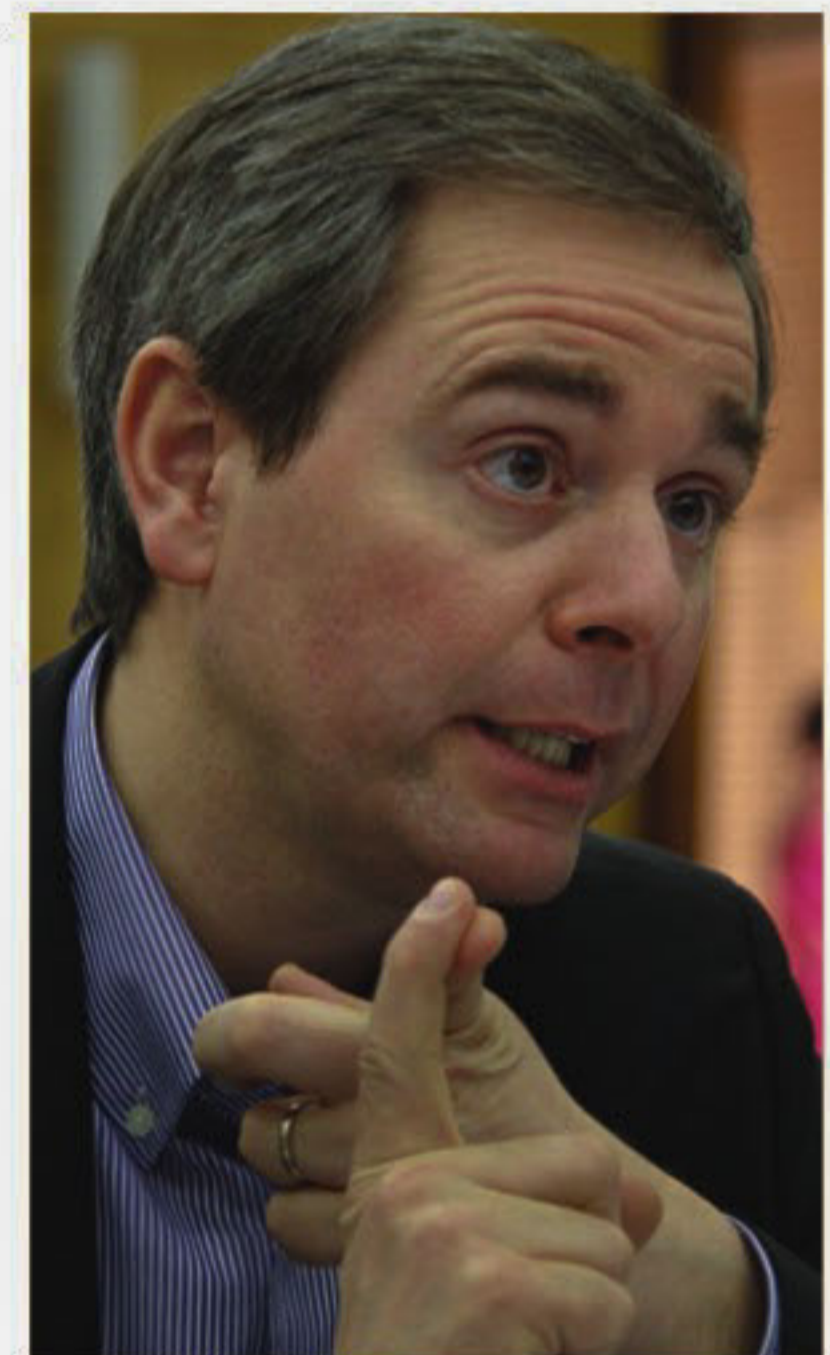
He said many other least developed countries don't have an IT sector like Bangladesh. There are 800 IT companies here, including some BPO (business process outsourcing) companies.

"This country is a combination of

low cost and high skills in IT and ITES", he added.

He managed to introduce local entrepreneurs with a team of 12 delegates from Europe at the event.

Mobile banking, online payment, online market, mobile learning and some other online related innovative services have already been introduced in Bangladesh. The country is showing some great resources in terms of innovation, he said.

MARTIN LABBE

Pointing at the infrastructure challenges he said Bangladesh needs a backup fibre optic line. Without that the country cannot become a BPO destination.

He added, "Who is the responsible ministry for outsourcing or ICT or BPO industry? Lots of support is needed from trade or other ministries but there should be a focused ministry that takes care of them. In Egypt they have one vision, one ministry and one focal point for the IT and BPO industry. They became 'zero to hero' in seven years following the way."

We want to see Bangladesh as a global destination in next two years, he added.

The local companies are being targeted basically to develop mobile phone applications and enterprise software development, he said. At the same time graphics designing and data process works are also being preferred, he said.

Apple, Google, Amazon, smartphone makers sign privacy accord

REUTERS, Sanfrancisco

Six of the world's top consumer technology firms have agreed to provide greater privacy disclosures before users download applications in order to protect the personal data of millions of consumers, California's attorney general said on Wednesday.

The agreement binds Amazon, Apple, Google, Microsoft, Research In Motion, and Hewlett-Packard -- and developers on their platforms -- to disclose how they use private data before an app may be downloaded, Attorney General Kamala D. Harris said.

"Your personal privacy should not be the cost of using mobile apps, but all too often it is," said Harris.

Currently 22 of the 30 most downloaded apps do not have privacy notices, said Harris. Some downloaded apps also download a consumer's contact book.

Google said in a statement that under the California agreement, Android users will have "even more ways to make informed decisions when it comes to their privacy."

Apple confirmed the agreement but did not elaborate.

Harris was also among U.S. state lawmakers who on Wednesday signed a letter to Google CEO Larry Page to express "serious concerns" over the web giant's recent decision to consolidate its privacy policy.

The policy change would give Google access to user information across its products, such as GMail and Google Plus, without the proper ability for consumers to opt out, said the 36 U.S. attorneys general in their letter.

EU authorities have asked Google to halt the policy change until regulators can investigate the matter.

California's 2004 Online Privacy Protection Act requires privacy disclosures, but Harris said few mobile developers had paid attention to the law in recent years because of confusion over whether it applied to mobile apps.

BASIS-GPIT training on ISO 20000

IT & TELECOM DESK

BASIS (Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services) and GPIT jointly organised a training session for BASIS members on ISO 20000 recently, says a press release.
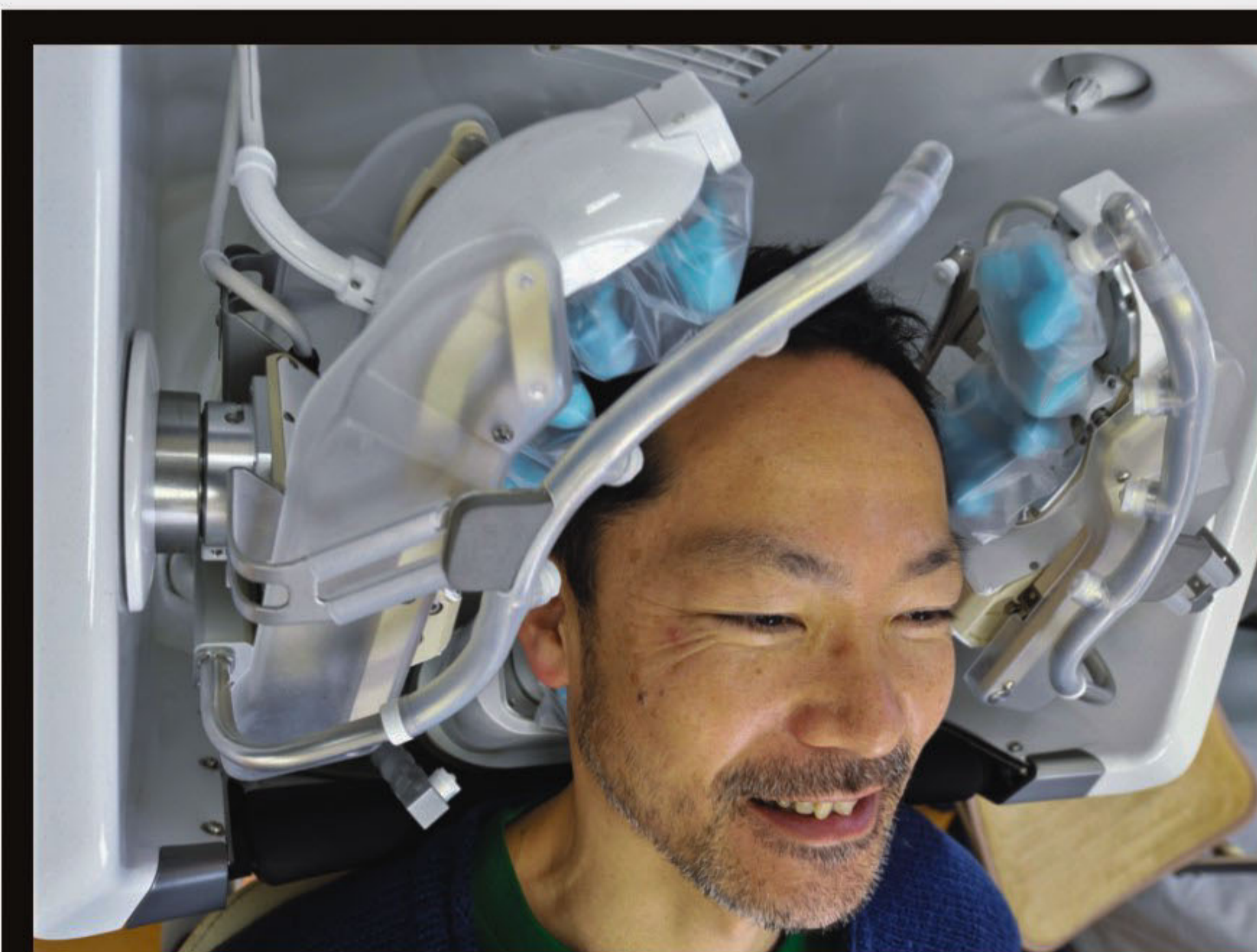
The session was held as the ISO 20000 certificate and the corresponding logo are increasingly becoming competitive advantage in the market. Many clients demand ISO 20000 compliance as a pre-condition for awarding contracts to IT service providers.

The day-long training session was conducted by ATM Didarul Islam from GPIT.

GPIT is the first organisation in Bangladesh to achieve this international certificate. Besides, it also received ISO/IEC 2700 certificate for its world-class IT security systems.

The session was attended by more than 15 people. It included presentations of the guideline on how to get the ISO 20000 with its necessity in business development.

The session also focused on practical ISO 20000 implementation cases and approaches, as well as topics on ways to maximising operational efficiency and minimising IT costs by leveraging IT Service Management.

TECHPHOTO
Shampoo Robot

A prototype of a high-tech head massager or a shampoo robot developed by Japan's Panasonic demonstrates its technology at temporary housing in Kesennuma, Miyagi prefecture on February 11. The seal robots have been made available to people living in temporary houses erected in a baseball stadium in the port town of Kesennuma, an area badly hit by the tsunami of last March that killed 19,000 people on the coast.

PHOTO: AFP