TELECOM

A tech fair with difference

IT & TELECOM REPORT

It was unlike any other technology fair.

There was no flashy gadget, no super brand presence and yet it was one of most unique exhibitions held in Bangladesh.

Organised by CDD (Centre for Disability in Development) and Daffodil International University, a 2-day exhibition was held for disabled people with the title "International Exhibition 2012: Technology for disabled people and their access to ICT" in the university auditorium.

The exhibition showcased and demonstrated technologies that are available for people with different types of disabilities such as visual, low vision, dyslexia, speech and hearing, cerebral palsy, autism, cognitive and physical impairment.

An orientation about the assistive technol-

A man with low vision demonstrates a portable magnifying device. PHOTO: STAR

Ram Agarwal

ogy products was given by Ram Agarwal, CEO, Karishma Enterprises.

Agarwal, in a brief interview at the event, said they have come here at the invitation of CDD.

"This exhibition is aimed at dissemination of information on assistive technology available worldwide to Bangladeshis with live demonstration so that they can witness the technology and they can help themselves by adopting this technology in their education and employment," Agarwal said.

He said headquartered in Mumbai, Karishma Enterprises has been in this field for last 20 years.

He also informed that they have recently installed heavy-duty volume production Braille printer at Braille Press in Tongi.

Agarwal said Karishma Enterprises does not manufacture the products. They resource all these assistive technologies from different countries all around the world and make them available to the people of the entire South Asia region --

Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan.

They also export these products to Africa as well.

"The major portion of the software and devices come from USA and some come from UK, Ireland, China, Japan as well," said Agarwal.

He said the prices depend on the product starting from $50 to $4000-5000.

Agarwal said they are looking at partnering with CDD to provide the assistive technology in Bangladesh.

He also informed that CDD is planning to set up centre of excellence, which will be research centre for the welfare of Bangladeshi people and provide all the support and technologies to disabled people.

At the fair Karishma showed quite a few text reading devices for visually challenged people.

The event also demonstrated some talking software to use computer, do math, and use mobile phone.

There are number of devices under the Daisy talking book recorders and players for creating and listening navigation friendly Daisy format talking books.

For people with low vision, there are vision assessment software, magnification devices and software that magnify computer screen to help the people with low vision. There are also portable and hand held video magnifiers for low

vision people.

Karishma Enterprises also showed different types of assistive technologies for Braille, which convert printed text to embossed Braille dots.

For Dyslexia and slow learners Karishma has WYNN Wizard with reading, writing and studying software.

Karishma also showed software and devices for Autism.

There are PC Eye Control device, 5 Finger Typist, voice recognition software and some other devices for people with cerebral palsy, locomotive and physical impairment.

For hearing impairment, Karishma has wireless FM assistive listening system and some other useful and easy to use devices.

For speech impairment they have speech devices that use voice message using pictures or play back pre-recorded messages or execute infra-red signals by touching printed pictures on it.

While talking to Broja Gopal Saha, coordinator, Projects and ICT, CDD about fair, he said although they got satisfactory response from people, it should have been promoted more.

"We could not reach more people because of some factors," Saha said adding "we had to organise it in 10-12 days."

CDD will organise such exhibition again if they get the support.

He said that if anyone wants to buy any assistive product, he or she should contact Karisha through their website (karishmaenterprises.com) and if anyone needs any guidance, CDD will provide that.

Manusher Jonno Foundation supported CDD to organise this unique exhibition.

Microsoft, Nokia step up arsenal in smartphone wars

AFP, New York

Microsoft and Nokia joined Wednesday to boost their arsenal in the smartphone wars with two new Windows-powered devices aimed at battling Apple's iPhone and rivals powered by Google's Android system.

The new Nokia Lumia 820 and 920 are part of the Finnish-based company's strategy of offering "an alternative to the faceless black and grey monoblocs that you see out there," said Nokia president and chief executive Stephen Elop at a New York launch event.

"This is Lumia, the world's most innovative smartphone," Elop said in unveiling the two new devices powered by the Windows Phone 8 operating system.

Microsoft chief executive Steve Ballmer also appeared at the event, which offered no specifics on launch dates or prices in various markets.

"This is a very important milestone. It is unbelievable how far we have come in 18 months working with Nokia," Ballmer said.

Ballmer added that the launch highlights "the broader context of where we're going overall with Windows," with the launch of the new Windows 8 platform and Windows Phone 8.

"This is a year for Windows," he said. "Windows phones, Windows tablets,

Windows PCs -- we've reimagined Windows from the ground up."

Offered in several bright colors such as yellow and lipstick red, the devices come into a sizzling market for smartphones now dominated by Apple and Android phones.

Nokia smart devices team leader Jo Harlow said the Lumia 920, which will be the new flagship, "is the most innovative smartphone in the world."

She said the phone has the most advanced camera of any smartphone, extended battery life and a display with "better than HD resolution."

"The clarity is so incredible that video just pops right out of the screen," she said.

The device also includes Nokia's location platform, which allows users notably to point the phone at a location in a city and get information on local shops and restaurants.

Harlow called this "the most intuitive way to explore the world around you."

The new phone's battery, she said, would be 30 percent more efficient than its rivals and also incorporate wireless charging, with Nokia joining an effort to bring this technology to airports, coffee shops and other locations.

The event also unveiled a Lumia 820, described as "a stylish, mid-range smartphone that delivers high-end performance in a compact package" with interchangeable shells, including one in purple.

The new Nokia 820 and (L) Lumia 920 Windows smartphones. PHOTO: AFP

Manthan award nomination deadline Sept 15

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The deadline for submitting the nominations for The Manthan Award South Asia & Asia Pacific 2012 has been extended to September 15 from August 31.
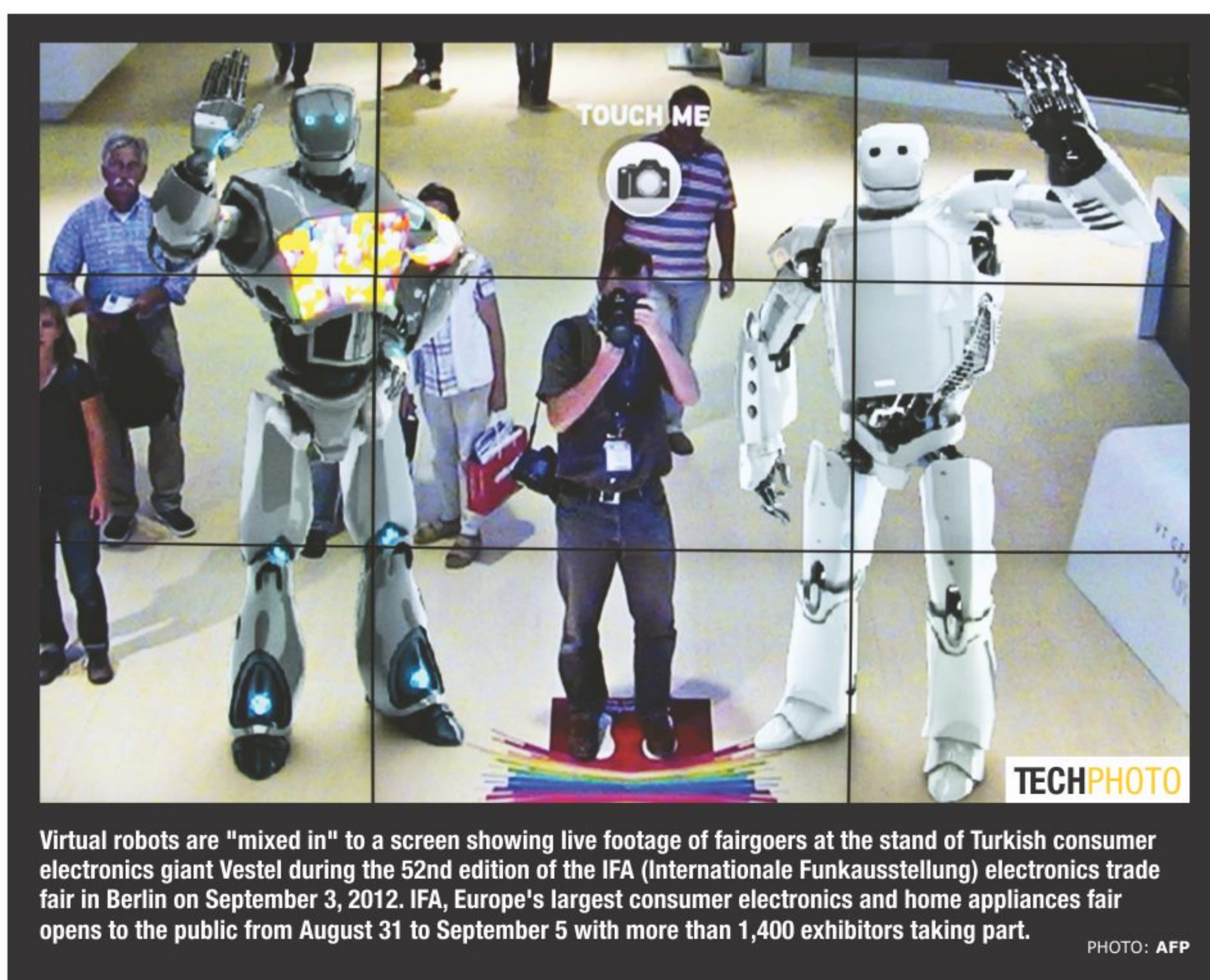
The award is an initiative by India to recognise the best digital innovations from 36 countries of South Asia and Asia Pacific region.

This year the award has been divided into 16 categories - 1. e-Business & Enterprise, 2. Community Broadcasting, 3. e-Culture & Heritage, 4. e-Education & Learning, 5. e-Agriculture, 6. e-Environment, 7. e-Governance, 8. e-Health, 9. e-Inclusion, 10. e-Infrastructure, 11. e-Localisation, 12. e-News & Media, 13. e-Entertainment and Games, 14. e-Travel & Tourism, 15. e-Science & Technology and 16. e-Financial Inclusion & Livelihood.

Nomination form is available at www.manthanaward.org.

Manthan Award was launched on October 10, 2004 by Digital Empowerment Foundation in partnership with World Summit Award, Department of Information Technology, Govt of India, and various other stakeholders.

D.Net, a social enterprise in Bangladesh, is the country-partner of this award.

Virtual robots are "mixed in" to a screen showing live footage of fairgoers at the stand of Turkish consumer electronics giant Vestel during the 52nd edition of the IFA (Internationale Funkausstellung) electronics trade fair in Berlin on September 3, 2012. IFA, Europe's largest consumer electronics and home appliances fair opens to the public from August 31 to September 5 with more than 1,400 exhibitors taking part. PHOTO: AFP

Bangladeshi online TV guide launched

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A Bangladeshi TV guide website, Shatdin.com, has recently been launched. The website provides programme schedule for 7 days of all the Bangladeshi TV channels and over 50 foreign channels.

Popular writer Anisul Haque inaugurated the online TV guide.

Ahmed Hasan, CEO, Shatdin.com, at the inaugural event said although newspapers contain every day programme schedule of the TV channels, they don't have 7-day programme schedule in every issue.

Shatdin.com does that for its members. Registration is free of course. If you register at the site and mark your favourite programmes, the site will send you e-mail with reminder 12 hours prior to that programme.

Asus launches new products

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A53E notebook

Global Brand Private Limited, the authorised distributor of Asus in Bangladesh, has recently introduced A53E notebook in the local market.

The A53E notebook comes with 2.3 GHz Intel Core i3 processor, 15.6-inch wide display outfitted in highly durable premium aluminum textured exterior. The notebook features are IF Award-winning ergonomic dust-repellent chicklet keyboard, Palm Proof Technology for improved typing precision, Asus IceCool technology for comfortable typing for longer hours. It also has 500 GB hard disk, 2 GB DDR3 RAM, Wi-Fi (802.11b/g/n), Bluetooth, Webcam, USB 2.0 /USB 3.0 ports, built-in speaker and microphone.

The laptop has a price tag of Tk 44,000.

Graphics card

Asus also introduced its HD7850-DC2 graphics card that brings 28nm GPU advancements to a very cost effective segment that combines great gaming and overclocking performance with the value sought by high-end computer gamers.

With PCI Express 3.0, the ultra-efficient AMD Eyefinity technology or ready for DirectX 11 support, Asus HD 7850-DC2 is the world's most advanced graphics for everyone.

It is equipped with DirectCU feature that utilises direct-contact GPU heat-pipes that are 20% cooler and significantly quieter performance than reference. The card also embeds Asus Exclusive GPU Tweak utility, which allows users to modify clock speeds, voltages, and fan performance.

The Asus HD7850-DC2 also has 870MHz Engine Clock, GDDR5 2GB video memory, HDMI output interface and it is Microsoft Windows 7 compatible.

The graphics card has a price tag of Tk 26,500.

USB drive with built-in AV launched

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Officextracts, the distributor for Kaspersky Lab in Bangladesh, recently introduced T-Drive Pro, a new range of self-protecting USB drives in the local market.

USB drives are the major carries of malware infection in Bangladesh. Local infection through file transfers via USB drives or CDs are more dangerous and vulnerable to viruses in our country than being infected through the internet.

Officextracts brought the USB drive in a bid to resolve this security issue.

Manufactured by Tech-Titan, the drive has a

built-in Kaspersky anti-virus solution which protects the USB drive.

Whether the PC is used to transfer files from or being copied to uses AV software of any brand or not, the USB drive will provide AV protection to the files being copied on it.

This is a completely new security concept in the Bangladesh market and important in the local digital activity.

Initially the USB drives come with 8GB storage capacity and available at a promotional price of Tk 799. The promotional price is valid until September 15.

The T-Drive Pro was officially launched in

Bangladesh at the end of August. Eric Chow, director channels of Tech Titan Ltd was present at the launch event.