

IT & TELECOM

DHAKA, FRIDAY, MAY 17, 2013, e-mail: it.telecom@thedadlystar.net

BMD releases weather app

ARGHYA RAIHAN

Before Hasan goes out in the morning, he always checks the day's newspaper for the forecast. Sometimes he takes his umbrella with him, sometimes he opts for a pair of sunglasses. When Hasan got his first smartphone and found that he could check the weather conditions with just a touch of his finger, he was delighted. But there still wasn't an app dedicated to weather in Bangladesh. He had to depend on Google or Yahoo for his weather updates. But that's not the case anymore.

Even just a few years ago, it used to be joked that if the Bangladesh Met says it's going to rain tomorrow, you can be absolutely certain that it will be a great day to take your family out for a picnic. In recent years, however, the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) has managed to improve this dismal reputation and begun to take an active, IT-oriented approach towards weather forecast and information dissemination.

The BMD website (www.bmd.gov.bd) is now an important functional element of weather forecasting in Bangladesh. It has live forecasting, weather charts, climate outlook projections up to three months, options to send out bulletins and warnings and many more features. Now it's also providing the forecast information for an app.

Weather-Now is a mobile based weather forecast application in Bangladesh, developed by Multimedia Content and Communications Limited (MCC Ltd.). The app they have developed provides temperature and weather forecasts for all the major divisions in the country.

This app is currently available for the Android and Symbian platforms, with an iOS version being developed.

The app is very simple and user friendly. It opens to a page displaying the day's current temperature and weather condition – whether it's sunny or cloudy or drizzling or there's a thunder-



storm – with the maximum and minimum temperature in that area in a smaller font.

The forecast of the next four days are given at the bottom of the page, with icons display-

ing the prevailing weather conditions and the temperature extremes for the day.

The app provides the option to choose which region is showcased on the front page. Currently, the choices are limited to the divisions.

The company is working on expanding and refining this to include cities and districts, to give more specific forecasts. The user can flip through the divisions to check the forecasts all over the country before settling on one division to fix as his front page view.

The app is a simple and handy way of keeping track of weather events. While there's definitely scope to expand its functions – auto-reminders for turbulent weather, greater forecast ranges – it does what it does perfectly well. It's a handy little app for the average user.

The app can be downloaded from Google Play and Ovi Store.

Noakhali Digital Fair ends successfully

IT & TELECOM DESK

The three-day Digital Innovation Fair 2013 ended successfully amid huge participation and response at Maijdee in Noakhali.

Deputy Commissioner Md Sirajul Islam inaugurated the fair on May 10 on the premises of Noakhali Zilla School. The district administration organised the fair as part of the "Access to Information" programme being implemented by the Prime Minister's Office.

As many as 37 government and private organisations took part in the fair to promote the e-services they offer in the district. Among the government agencies, e-Service Centre of the district administration, Union Information and Service Centre, Regional Passport Office, BRTA, BTCL and the municipality were major participants who provide different e-services directly to the people.

Of the private services, DBBL, bKash, Edu-Smart, Dhaka and Banglalion attracted attention of a huge number of visitors.

Besides exhibition of e-services, the fair held several seminars and workshops at the auditorium of Zilla School. On the opening day, a seminar styled "Use of Digital Technology: Delivering Services at People's Door" was held. Paritosh Hajra, additional deputy commissioner, read the keynote.

On the second day, a seminar on the

use of ICT in education management was held by Edu-Smart, Dhaka. ASM Zillur Rahman, managing director of Edu-Smart, presented the keynote paper.

The final day had a workshop organised by Noakhali Government College on delivering lectures using digital contents. Mohammad Abdullah Al Mamun, lecturer, Md. Zafar Iqbal, lecturer, and SM Afjal Hossain, assistant professor, spoke, while Prof Swapna Chandra Roy, principal of the college, was the main speaker.

The fair also had several quiz competition for students and visitors and a game as well as wifi zone. On the concluding day, the DC handed prizes among the winners of different competitions and best stalls. The passport office clinched the best stall award, while BRTA became second and New Success Computers and Computer Shop jointly stood third.

"I had no idea such a huge number of government services are available online. Without this fair I might not have a chance to learn about these services," said Md Ismail Hossain who came to the fair with his son.

Zahidur Rahman, assistant commissioner, ICT, of the district administration said, "The fair has played a significant role in introducing the e-services provided by the government before the people of Noakhali. Participation of both the government and private organisations has made the fair a success."



Md Sirajul Islam speaks at the inauguration session.

Samsung appoints CSL as distributor

IT & TELECOM REPORT

Computer Source Limited (CSL), the leading IT distributor and service provider of the country, has been appointed as authorised distributor of world's largest IT manufacturing company Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd.

CSL and Samsung Bangladesh have formally announced their partnership at a press conference in the capital.

Computer Source will now distribute products of Samsung notebook, printer, monitor and ODD as the authorised distributor of Samsung.

CSL will also provide service support for the Samsung products.

Latest products of Samsung including notebook, printer and monitor were showcased at the event.

Among the displayed notebooks AMOR NP900X3 of Series 9, ATIV XE500TIS-AOIBD, LOTUS NP530U4C-S03BD and NP535U3X-A01BD of Series 5, RAMOS NP370R4V-A02BD of Series 3 and LAMPARD NP300E4V-A03BD of Series 3 are the latest products, which are now available in the local market.

CSL is providing of 12-month EMI (Insta-buy) facilities with American Express, Standard Chartered and Brac Bank credit cards for these products without any interest to its consumers.

This offer has started from last Wednesday and is available in CSL's 25 outlets all over the country and distributor channel.

Singer brings Huawei smartphones

IT & TELECOM DESK

Singer Bangladesh Limited has introduced Huawei smartphones to the local market.

Singer has initially launched four models- Huawei Ascend W1, Ascend G510, Huawei Ascend Y 300 and Ascend Y 200 at very special introductory prices.

Huawei Ascend W1 has the latest Windows 8 operating system with 1.2 GHz dual core processor, 512 MB RAM and 4 GB ROM, it has a 4-inch IPS LCD capacitive display screen along with a 5 MP Auto focus rear camera and 0.3 MP front camera. The smartphone supports up to 32 GB expandable memory through MicroSD and has 1950 mAh battery. The W1 has a price tag of Tk 18,990.

Ascend G510 runs on the latest Android Jelly Bean 4.1 operating system. The 4.5" FWVGA, IPS hard screen smartphone has the biggest display in its class. It has 1.4 GHz dual core processor based on Qualcomm CPU with 512 MB RAM with a 4 GB ROM. It features a 5 MP auto focus rear and 0.3 MP front cameras. The external memory is



expandable up to 32 GB. The device has a price tag Tk 14,990.

The 4-inch WVGA, IPS hard screen

display Huawei Ascend Y 300 also runs on Android Jelly Bean 4.1 and is powered by 1 GHz dual core processor with Qualcomm CPU with 512 MB RAM and 4 GB ROM. It has a 5 MP auto focus rear camera and 0.3 MP front camera. The external memory can be expanded up to 32 GB. The Y300 is priced at Tk 12,500.

Huawei Ascend Y 200 is powered by Android Gingerbread 2.3 that comes with 800 MHz processor with Qualcomm CPU with 3.5" HVGA, IPS display. The external memory can be expanded up to 32 GB. It has Dual MIC Noise cancellation built-in sound system for better music experience. It has a price tag of Tk 8,350.

Singer is offering 4GB memory card free with all the models. These smartphones are available at selected Singer Mega, Singer Plus shop and Singer Pro dealer outlets across the country along with dealers at Bashundhara City, Eastern Plaza and Motalib Plaza in Dhaka and Sanmar Ocean City, Akhteruzzaman Center, Singapore Bangkok Market and New Market in Chittagong.

Google launches streaming music service

REUTERS, San Francisco

Google Inc launched a music service on Wednesday that allows users to listen to unlimited songs for \$9.99 a month, challenging smaller companies like Pandora and Spotify in the market for streaming music.

With its new service, announced at its annual developers' conference in San Francisco, Google has adopted the streaming music business model ahead of rival Apple Inc, which pioneered online music purchases with iTunes.

Google's "All Access" service lets users customize song selections from 22 genres, ranging from Jazz to Indie music, stream individual playlists, or listen to a curated, radio-like stream that can be tweaked. It will be launched for U.S. users first, before being rolled out to several other countries.

Google unveiled a string of improvements to other services, including new mapping features and a voice-activated search, at the conference. The focus was on giving more options to users of mobile devices using its Android software, the operating system that now runs three out of every four smartphones sold.

Shares of Google, the world's largest internet search company, jumped more than 3 percent while Pandora Media Inc shares were down more than 1 percent on Wednesday afternoon.

Asus dual-screen Ultrabook

The Asus TAICHI 21 is a combination of notebook and tablet. Its double-sided 11.6-inch Full HD IPS display switches seamlessly between modes with a touch. With its lid open, the Asus TAICHI is a notebook with a full-size backlit keyboard. With its lid closed, the notebook instantly transforms into a multi-touch tablet.

Both Asus TAICHI screens work independently and simultaneously too, with dual-screen mode and mirror mode.

The TAICHI 21 features a powerful 1.7 GHz Intel core i5 processor with 4GB memory, Intel HD 4000 graphics and a choice of blazingly fast 128GB SSD storage. It also features dual-band Wi-Fi and Bluetooth 4.0, and two USB 3.0 ports that provide full support for the latest high-speed external storage devices and rapid mobile device recharging.

It comes with 5MP rear-facing camera capable of recording 1080p video, a front-facing camera capable of recording 720p video, and Windows 8 OS.

This Ultrabook hybrid is also claimed to be able to survive up to 5 hours on a single charge with Asus' Super Hybrid Engine II technology. The Ultrabook has a price tag of Tk 13,500.

Asus Nexus 7 Tablet PC

Global Brand Private Limited, the authorised distributor of Asus in Bangladesh has recently unveiled the Nexus 7 tablet PC in the local market.

The tablet PC runs on Android Jelly Bean 4.2 operating system and is powered by the NVIDIA Tegra 3 quad-core processor, which clocks at 1.2 GHz.

The Nexus 7 comes with a 7-inch scratch resistance Corning Gorilla Glass multi-touch display. It has 178 degree wide-viewing angle IPS display screen with a resolution of 1280x800 pixels and pixel density of 216 ppi that ensures unrivaled visual acuity.

The 3G supported tablet has 1GB of RAM, a front camera, 802.11b/g/n Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 3.0, GPS and NFC function. The tablet measures 10.45mm thin and 340g light.

The product has a price tag of Tk 36,000.

