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IT & TELECOM

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Roopkatha's genius uncovered

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How do you define genius? The dictionary generally states it as a person having strong natural talent, aptitude, or inclination and Wasik Farhan Roopkatha will come as close to matching that definition, word for word, arguably more than anyone ever could. At the tender age of seven, he already boasts a list of achievements and accomplishments than most people ever could in their lifetime, with the highlight being acknowledged as the world's youngest computer programmer by Ripley's Believe It Or Not in November last year.

But that's barely scratching the surface. "From the time he was a few months old, he would not want to eat until the computer screen was on and he could see it," says his mother Cynthia Farhan Risha. "We tried to resist at first, worrying it might do harm to his eyesight but our efforts went in vein as he would not eat or sleep and would cry if he wasn't in front of the PC," she adds. From then on Roopkatha has gone on to spend "an average of 12 hours in front of the PC every day and over 30 thousand hours so far" according to his mother.

Roopkatha can type better than most adults and with proper English, not a wonder, given that he has learned how to program all by himself. "We saw that he took a liking for the PC and learned everything about programming by himself. Most of what he does currently is honestly too complicated for us to fully understand. He did not get any guidance or help in learning programming or operating the computer," adds an amazed Cynthia.

And amazing it is given how naturally gifted Roopkatha is. If ever the words perfect marriage were to be used, it would be for between Roopkatha and a computer. One would imagine that Roopkatha is given a massively powerful state-of-the-art PC with a better than average net connection, but truth be told his PC monitor has a dead pixel and his laptop runs on a Sandy Bridge Core i3 Processor, regulation stuff.

His father, Wasim Farhan, a businessman, believes there is no end to how far Roopkatha will go in life. "I think he has the capability in him to one day be able to stop time!" He adds, "While Roopkatha has been able to make headlines in mainstream media, there is still very little of him that has actually gone public," and because of that a simple timeline has been created to further decipher Roopkatha's genius.

2006 - 07

Roopkatha started computing when he was just 7 months old and learned basic typing by the age of one.

2008

By the age of two he completed games such as Age of Empires, Need for Speed and Star Defender. He could create folders, install software and make graphs and tables. He started writing properly constructed sentences.

2009

At the age of three he had played over 200 games including the likes of Red Dead Redemption and Modern Warfare 2. He had become an efficient typist, typing without having to look on the keyboard. By then he had learnt how to edit images in Photoshop and operate advanced software such as Flash5 and Adobe Illustrator.

Roopkatha works on his laptop.

2010 -11

By the age of four had learnt to develop software using emulators such as Project64 1.7, DeSmuME, QEMU and ePSXe. He learnt to create animations using PIVOT as well as work on CamStudio and HyperCam. By the time he was five, he became proficient in C++. In January 2011 World News Agency recognised him as the world's youngest computer programmer.

2012

He learnt to use RPG maker expertly and also started working with VMware Workstation which began his interest for working with multiple operating systems. He soon acquired a high level of knowledge and competence on various operating systems and programming languages - tasks considered advanced for even senior experts. While at the same time he started working on Virtual Box and Parallels Workstation. In April, BBC World News would acknowledge him as the youngest computer programmer in the world.

2013

In January, Roopkatha's story so far would get included in a class eight (Bengali Medium) English text book. He recently created an entire operating system with SUSE studio. Till date he has played over 1000 games and he is in line for writing his name in the Guinness Book of World Records as the youngest IT expert. He recently developed a knack for editing and creating Wikipedia pages and takes great interest in cosmology.

Roopkatha is a genius no doubt. He has not been entered into an educational institute and nor should he be. He is too good for that and deserves special care. However that is where the problems arise. Our country simply does not have the tools to help ensure a special talent such as Roopkatha's can be raised as well as he should. He will not get the necessary help that he needs, if and when the time arises, to move even further. He is still a child, innocent, pure and naïve.

He can come up with smart one lines such as "I will one day be the ruler of the world," and "Windows 8 is Microsoft's bad version of Windows 7." But there lies a problem in that first line, he is essentially aware that he is extremely good at what he does, and has developed a personality. And at this age it is not unexpected, "He makes sure he uses the PC, and there is no way we touch it when he is on it. He might put a complex code to lock it for us if we try to stop him," says his mother jokingly. "I've been trying to teach him to read and write in Bangla. Hopefully he will learn to read and write in his mother tongue soon," his father adds.

"We plan on going to the USA soon in hopes that Roopkatha gets his best chance and reaching his potential," his father says. "Either that or we hope to get support from our government to ensure Roopkatha gets what is best for him," his mother quickly adds. Whatever the case may be, he is and will be our nation's pride and one would hope he continues to put Bangladesh in the forefront for the right reasons, even if he gets scooped up by NASA, Google or Microsoft. So far though, his journey has been exactly what his name suggests – a fairy-tale.

Dell launches new laptop

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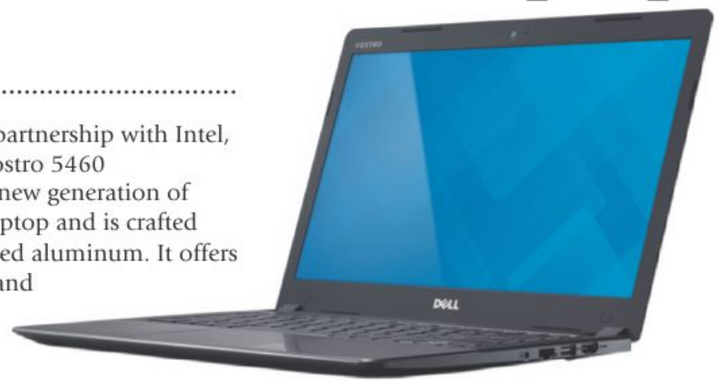


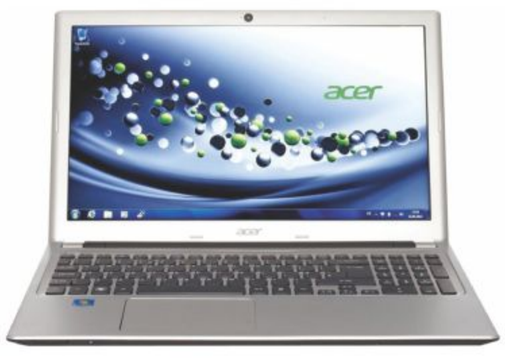
Dell Bangladesh, in partnership with Intel, has launched Dell Vostro 5460

Dell Vostro is the new generation of ultrathin and light laptop and is crafted with sleek and brushed aluminum. It offers maximum mobility and flexibility without compromising on the overall performance. It is 18.3 mm thin and weighs only 1.5 Kg.

The 14-inch truelife HD and widescreen notebook is powered by Intel 3rd generation core i3 and i5 processors. It comes with 4GB DDR3 RAM, 500 GB hard disk drive, full communication suite with built-in webcam and MaxxWave audio enhancement software, USB 3.0 x 3 (including power share), HDMI 1.4, Ethernet, SD card reader and 2.1 channel audio system with built in subwoofer, embedded battery.

The notebook is available at Tk 53,500.

Acer introduces Aspire V5-571



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Acer has introduced its Aspire V5-571 laptop in the local market. The laptop is powered by 3rd generation Intel core i5-3337U processor. It also comes with 15.6-inch HD Acer CineCrysral LED backlit display. It has 4 GB Ram and 750 GB HDD with card Reader, webcam, DVD writer, Wi-Fi, 1x USB 3.0 and 2x USB 2.0 ports, HDMI port, Dolby Audio. It has battery backup up to 4 hours. Weighing 2.5 KG, the laptop is available in black and silver colours.

The laptop has a price tag of Tk 51,500 with one-year local and international traveler's Warranty.

TMSS signs agreement with DataSoft to operate in Microfin360 services

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TMSS, the third largest microfinance giant in Bangladesh signed an agreement to expedite regular operation using Microfin360 services with DataSoft Systems Bangladesh Ltd , a leading software development company in country.

Microfin360 offers online integrated management and accounting solution to microfinance institutes.

TMSS has signed the deal for 651 branches with head office where all branches will be brought under Microfin360 services.

At present TMSS is operating 543 branches throughout the country and will expand a number of branches in overseas soon.

Prof. Dr. Hosne-Ara Begum, Executive Director of TMSS and Mahboob Zaman, managing director of DataSoft signed the contract.

DataSoft Microfin360 team has also launched a brand new mobile application version of their web services.

The app is available at www.microfin360.com/mobile_apps/ and Google Play Store.

Nokia offers interest free credit card purchase

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Nokia is offering interest free credit card installment purchase scheme for Nokia phones at all Nokia Stores across the country, making the facility available to even more people than before.

Any Nokia device above the price range of Tk 10,000 can be purchased in installments through credit cards of Standard Chartered Bank, BRAC Bank, Bank Asia and The City Bank (AMEX).

Customers can buy Nokia phones in 3, 6 or 12-month equal installments.

Internet balloons to benefit small business: Google

AFP, *Singapore*

Google's plans to beam the internet from giant balloons sent to the stratosphere could boost small businesses in rural parts of Asia by connecting them online, the company said Wednesday.

Karim Temsamani, Google's head of Asia Pacific, said in a speech at the Communicasia conference in Singapore, that the Internet balloons might also facilitate communication during disasters.

Google last week revealed top secret plans to launch thousands of balloons to provide Internet connections to remote parts of the world, allowing the more than four billion people with no access to get online.

Its scientists on Saturday released up to 30 helium-filled test balloons flying 20 kilometres (12.4 miles) above Christchurch in New Zealand, carrying antennae linked to ground base stations.

"What's devastating is that only a tiny fraction of SMEs (small-medium enterprises) all across Asia are online right now," Temsamani told the conference.

He said India, one of the region's emerging economies, has 47 million small businesses, but only one percent are online.

Visitors stand next to a high altitude WiFi internet hub, a Google Project Loon balloon at the Airforce Museum in Christchurch. PHOTO: AFP

"Getting more businesses online is crucial to every single country in the region," he said.

The experimental balloon project, called Project Loon, is one way to provide affordable Internet access to "rural, remote and under-served" regions, Temsamani said.

"For farmers in remote rural areas, this would bring market information that allows them to get better prices from merchants," he added.

The balloons, which once in the stratosphere will be twice as high as commercial airliners and barely visible to the naked eye, will also help in disasters when communication infrastructure is down, Temsamani said.

"For places with few doctors, this could help relay drug information. In disasters, this could help coordinate supplies," he said.

The balloon network is controlled by ground stations connecting to the local Internet infrastructure and beaming signals to the balloons, which are self-powered by solar panels.

Users below have an Internet antennae they attach the side of their house which can send and receive data signals from the balloons passing overhead.

Some 50 people were chosen to take part in the trial in New Zealand and were able to link to the Internet.

Temsamani cautioned that the project remained in an experimental stage, and would require a lot of work from participating nations.

"These balloons need networks' co-operation to function, we're all going to have to work together on this," he said.

He said Google expects half a billion people in emerging markets worldwide, most of them in Asia, to have Internet access "between now and 2015".

"These people will drive this transformation even faster. They will not have all the desktop-based habits we've developed over the past 10 years," he added.

TECHPHOTO

Japan's high-tech giant Canon displays a prototype model of handheld 'Mixed Reality' (MR) goggles at the annual Virtual Reality Expo in Tokyo on June 19. Canon developed a similar system last year with a special head mount display, which displays a merged image of real and virtual worlds and will be commercialised with the new system in 2013.

PHOTO : AFP