

First Citi Financial IT Case Competition Concluded



D.Net in collaboration with Citi Foundation, Philanthropic wing of Citigroup and managed by Citibank N.A. Bangladesh organised the Gala Event of Citi Financial IT Case Competition for university students. The event was held on November 10, 2009 at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, Dhaka.

AKM Abdul Awal Mazumder, Secretary for Ministry of Science & ICT attended the event as the Chief Guest and handed over the prize money and crest to the winners.

University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB-GEEKS) won the first award. Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST-WEB PIONEER) and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET-SANGFROIDS) clinched the first and second runner-up positions respectively, in the first-ever competition in such a field. The first-prize winner received \$ 5,000 in award money, while the first and second runners-up received \$2,000 and \$1,000 respectively. The fourth and fifth winners were also awarded at the programme. Dhaka University (DU-MIS) and United International University (UIU-CATALYST) finished as fourth and fifth. Datasoft showed interest to finance the SUST team.

CFICC is the battle of talents where students from both business and IT background participate to develop cutting edge IT based solution for the financial market. The main goal of the competition is to promote a culture of business and technology development amongst the future leaders of the country based on the local needs as well as global business demands. The essence of this competition is direct participation of the stakeholders in the process of contest and this in turn will create awareness among the stakeholders on the huge possibility of adopting technology in the business sector.

In the first two rounds of the competition, that were held in the July-August period, 20 teams from 54 teams battled their way into the second round. A 22-member jury board then selected 5 teams for the final round. Participants came from 20 universities, including eight public universities and twelve private universities

Mamun Rashid, Managing Director and Citi Country Officer; Dr Ananya Raihan, Executive Director of D.Net and Professor Rafiqul Islam, Vice Chancellor of ULAB were present at the programme.

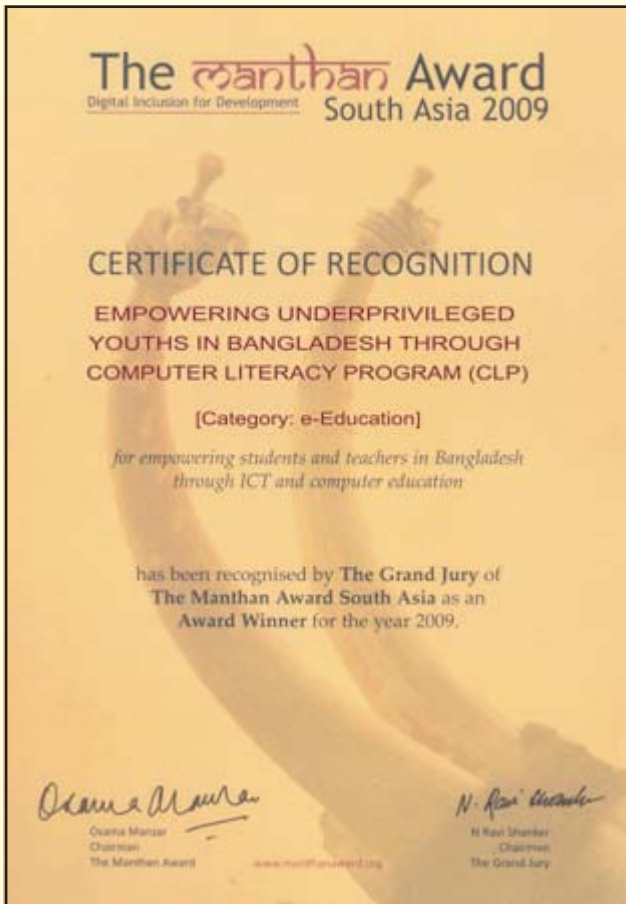
The Manthan Award South Asia 2009 goes to CLP



CLP coordinator Mr Ajoy Kumar Bose is receiving Manthan Award

Computer Learning Programme (www.clp.net.bd) has received Manthan South Asia Award 2009 under the e-Education category. This programme is for empowering students and teachers in rural Bangladesh through ICT and Computer education. The award giving ceremony was held at Delhi, India. CLP coordinator Mr. Ajoy Kumar Bose received the Manthan Award South Asia 2009, on behalf of D.Net and VAB-NJ.

Computer Literacy Programme promotes knowledge and usage of computers and information technology among the underprivileged youths in Bangladesh. Initiated in 2004, CLP has established 109 computer literacy centers (CLCs) in 39 districts as of December, 2009 across Bangladesh in collaboration with Volunteers Association for



Certificate of recognition of the Manthan Award South Asia 2009

Bangladesh-New Jersey (VAB-NJ), Bank Asia Ltd, Hossain Trust and individual donors. Volunteers Association for Bangladesh (VAB), New Jersey, USA, a non-profit organisation of non-resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) coined the idea of CLP and they teamed up with D.Net to provide financial assistance and distribute PC accessories to establish CLC across Bangladesh. Following the footsteps of NRBs, Bangladeshi individuals, corporate and development partners also came forward to expand the programme through their financial contribution. Most of them are considering this contribution under corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme. D.Net is implementing their initiatives through CLP-Bangladesh project under Pallitathya-Bikash programme. Through CLP 257 teachers and over 20,000 underprivileged youths and community people have already been trained. Other Bangladeshi initiatives also received Manthan Award 2009. They are Lemon24.com in E-Culture and Entertainment; Jigyasha7676 in E-Enterprise and Livelihood, and National Web portal of Bangladesh.

D.Net at e-Asia 2009

D.Net participated in e-Asia conference which was held on December 2-4, 2009 in Srilanka. Ananya Raihan, Executive Director, D.Net presented a paper titled “Community Empowerment through ICTs: Evidences from Grassroots in Bangladesh”. Another paper titled “Empowering women through ICT education: An Application of Gender Evaluation Methodology” was presented by Fatema Begum Labony, Research Associate, D.Net. Both papers were presented at “New Trends and Innovations in Technology for Telecentres” session and were appreciated by all participants and organisers. For detail information about the conference please visit www.e-asia.org/2009

Community Empowerment through ICTs: Evidences from Grassroots

D.Net started a study titled “Community Empowerment through ICTs: Evidences from Grassroots in Bangladesh and India” under “Governance and Human Rights” thematic area. This study has been initiated with financial support of IDEACORP, Manila, Philippines.

The research is going to be conducted in two South Asian countries, Bangladesh and India. Both qualitative as well as quantitative survey tools will be used for capturing quantitative and qualitative aspects of the research. Total duration of the project is 24 months. Bangladesh part started in July, 2009, whereas Indian part will start in January, 2010. Bangladesh is the lead country for the two-country research.

The research study aims to understand causal relationship between community empowerment and access to ICT-based information system available in a community. D.Net would conduct Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) for data collection in 30 unions. Four types of rural communities have been identified with four distinct qualifications whether the local government institution use ICTs and community members have both individualized and public access to ICTs or not.

As ICTs have been globally influencing different spheres of life, starting from economic activities and market landscape to the exercise of political power, it has become imperative to understand whether the use of ICTs by different players in a community can enhance democratic practices, collective decision making, informed exercise of rights and ensure better transparency.

Gunijan launched CD on Lebaration War Heroes

Gunijan team published a CD titled 'Mohima Tobu Udvasito: Muktijuddho- Volume 1' with fifty six freedom fighter's biography. Launching ceremony of the CD was held on 18 December, 2009 at the Liberation War Museum premises. Sayeda Mortaza, wife of martyred intellectual Mohammad Mortaza was chief guest at the ceremony.

Rokaiya Hasan Nily, daughter of martyred intellectual Rashidul Hasan; Mili Rahman, wife of Birshrestha Motiur Rahman; Zeba Mahmud, daughter of martyred intellectual Mamun Mahmud; eminent personalities from different sectors; children and general people were present at the ceremony. They also shared their war memories.

Along with the biographies of freedom fighters, the CD also contains photographs and various written as well as audio-visual documents on them. Gunijan published this CD to preserve the memories of those gallant war heroes and present their story to the young generation.



Gunijan launched CD on Lebaration War Heroes

Online survey developed by D.Net

D.Net conducted a research project titled “Extent and Nature of IT Enable Services in Bangladesh” during September-December, 2009. The study has been commissioned by Bangladesh Association for Software and Information Services (BASIS). It was a part of a strategy developed under the Bangladesh Quality Support Programme and funded by the European Commission to strengthen ITES sub-sector in Bangladesh. The programme was related to designing strategies for export and organising development activities to improve the application of quality standards and supply chain techniques of IT Enabled Services and a few other sub-sectors. This is an important project because under this project D.Net developed an online survey platform for data entry and processing. Seventeen surveyors completed the survey with 600 ITES providers companies.

Workshop on Creating Local Content Using WikiEducator and EasyNow

D.Net organised a four day long workshop on Creating Local Content Using *WikiEducator* and *EasyNow* from during December 12-15, 2009 at D.Net premises. Dr Savithri Singh, Principal, ANDC, University of Delhi and Ms Rukmini Vemraju, Programme Officer, Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) facilitated the workshop.

The training workshop was organised for the infomediaries from different telecentres who are involved in content development. A number of open source tools for editing audio and video were introduced to the participants which



Participants of the workshop with the facilitators

enhanced their content searching and developing skills. They also had the opportunities to enrich information by uploading the local content like indigenous

knowledge on herbal plants to the Internet.

Thirteen participants from different organisations participated in the workshop. They are Ali Ahammed, Dollai Nawabpur Girls School; Md. Bazlur Rahman, Samaj Jagoron O Unnayan Kendra; Md. Kamal Miha, WAFFH; Md. Baharul Islam, PROTIK Trust; Roushan Ara Khatoon, ARBAN, Md. Akhtaruzzaman Mirdha, Udayan Swabalambi Sangstha (USS); Md. Mahasin Hawlader, Gono Gobeshona o Unnayan Foundation (GOUF); Md. Shahajhan Ali, Hunger Free World; Mahmudul Huq Foez, Digonter Dak; Tasfia Jahan Dipa, Samasuddin-Nahar Trast (SNT); Afrina Tanzin; H. M Asad-Uz-Zaman and Farha Sharmin from D.Net.

Participants will collect content on Indigenous Knowledge using the training skills. After six month best content collector will be rewarded with a digital camera.

D.Net implements Right to Information Act 2009

Enactment of Right to Information Act (RTIA), 2009 is a victory of people of Bangladesh. Despite its limitations the unique feature of Bangladesh’s Act is that it brings Government under jurisdiction as well as organisations who work with public money. According this act Government offices and Non-Government Organisations have to disclose their information with some exemptions.

To ensure information supply and demand side activities relating with RTI D.Net developed an Information Discloser Policy (IDP). D.Net also uploaded information on its website www.dnet.org.bd proactively and appoint a Dayittyo Prapto Karmokorta (Information Officer) who is responsible to deliver information based on the public request within allowable time. A separate link named “Your Right to Know” has been created on D.Net website to ease the navigation process for information. It may be mentioned that D.Net is the first organisation of Bangladesh who developed their IDP and appointed a Dayittyo Prapto Karmokorta (Information Officer). Anyone now can easily access information regarding D.Net through its website.

Since its inception, D.Net is trying its best in prompting access to information to enrich livelihood of the poor people, ensure good governance and protect human rights as well. D.Net’s vision and mission statement also manifest this belief.

Under information disclosure policy any web visitor can access annual reports, financial reports, reports on socially responsible practices, memorandum of association, rules and regulations, certification of incorporation, certification of registration with NGO affairs, organoram, pay structure, policies, governance and different committees of D.Net through its website. Beside this, everybody also can get one pager, news, news clippings, audio-clippings, video-clippings, progress reports, reports and lesson learned report of all ongoing and completed projects through the website.

If anybody needs more information, she/he can place request through online or physically and can obtain information through online or in person or through authorised representatives depending on availability. No mailing service is available.

It should be mentioned that Manusher Jonno Foundation recently published a RTI manual contributed by Ananya Raihan, Executive Director and Mizanur Rahman, Research Associate of D.Net. It covers all the necessary information and guidelines related to Right to Information Act, 2009. This publication is available at this location: http://dnet.org.bd/RTI_Resources.php.

Celebration of Victory Day

To celebrate the victory day D.Net staff has organised a film show and open discussion on “Liberation War: Our Role and Responsibility” on December 17, 2009 at D.Net premises. All staff and management were present on the occasion. “Muktijudhdher Itihash” produced by ATN Bangla was showed and after the film show participants took part in the open discussion. This occasion created opportunity for the staffs to share their feelings about the victory day and the liberation war.

Seminar on Access to Finance and Access to Information

D.Net and Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM) jointly organised a seminar on Access to Finance and Access to Information on December 27, 2009 at the BIBM auditorium.

Dr. Atiur Rahman, Governor, Bangladesh Bank and Chairman, BIBM Governing Board was present as seminar Chairman. Dr. Bandana Saha, Director General, BIBM

to the formal sector lending and contribute to economic growth.

The central bank governor mentioned Bangladesh economy, supported by growth in exports and imports of capital machinery, now turns around from sluggishness. We have done well on various fronts. Exports have grown 12 percent during July-October of the current fiscal year, while the latest trend shows the signs of a rise in capital machinery imports. It is due mainly to the outstanding ability of our young entrepreneurs to face challenges.

To reach out the benefits of economic growth to the majority of the population, the central bank chief said, "a growth-supportive monetary policy will soon be announced for the first half of 2010. We want to allocate the benefits of growth to the mass population."

BB is set to launch a fully automated Credit Information Bureau (CIB) to facilitate banks and financial institutions to ascertain a full credit exposure of borrowers, the governor informed the seminar. "This is now in a mature stage and hopefully will go live very soon.

Banks will get credit related information directly from the CIB online information storage from mid-2010," he said. Referring to the issue of access to information and financial services, the governor said, "these two could be viewed as two sides of the coin. He said telecentres can play a role in gathering information about clients and channeling remittances to the recipients in rural areas timely and cost-effectively."

Echoing Rahman's view, the Krishi Bank chief said, "telecentres could be useful in rural areas in disseminating information about various financial products, as bank branches are inadequate at union parishad level." Taking part in the discussion, Kh. Ibrahim Khaled advised the policymakers of the telecom companies operating in the country to avert possible setback due to lack of ethical business practices.



Seminar on Access to Finance and Access to Information at BIBM Auditorium

delivered the welcome speech. Dr. Shah Md. Ahsan Habib, Associate Professor and Director (Training) as well as member of D.Net's Governing Body presented the key note titled "Economics of Integrating Access to Finance and Access to Information: The Bangladesh Perspective".

Mr. Khondker Ibrahim Khaled, Chairman, Bangladesh Krishi Bank; Dr. Uttam Kumar Deb, Additional Director and Head of Research, Centre for Policy Dialogue and Dr. Ananya Raihan, Executive Director, D.Net also attended the seminar as Designated Discussants.

In the seminar, panelist said that 80 percent of the population lived in the rural areas of Bangladesh. Among them, a very small number had access to the formal financial system. It was suggested that a linkage of commercial banks and micro-finance institutions (MFIs) with "telecentres" could help the poor people to have access



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