



Ebony, ivory and a few more

The second day of the Wills India Fashion Week was marked by understated collections with restrained colour palettes. But eclectic designs made up for the missing Bollywood celebs as fashion took front seat this time.

From Lady Gaga-esque structures to traditional angarakhas, there was a variety of silhouettes on display in the Spring-Summer 2011 collections, though there was no burst of colour on the ramp, with most designers favouring shades of ebony and ivory. Wendell Rodericks stuck to his trademark pastel shades and flowy asymmetrical designs with his collection, 'The Kunbi Tribe', where he showcased the "re-invented" Kunbi saree, nine yards of white hand spun cotton adorned with stripes of colour on the borders. "The Kunbi saree was the central theme running through the collection, but I decided to include dresses and tunics in the collection to give it a con-

temporary edge," said the Goan designer.

While most designers infused Indian inspirations into their collection, Amit Aggarwal chose to go the other way, combining latex and metal with cotton to create structured dresses with over-the-top sleeves and bustles. The grey and beige dresses were shot with accents of fluorescent red and yellow along with metallic pipings.

Kavita Bhartia's collection 'Trans-Global', began on a sober note with nude chiffons, which gave way to psychedelic colour and gowns in jewel tones teamed with printed tights. "The line has influences from different cultures and places, so it's all about a bohemian woman who travels a lot and experiences life," said the designer about her inspiration. "The garments are light and the look is layered with a lot of scarves thrown in," said Arora of her collection. — PTI

Models walk the ramp showcasing designer J J Valaya's creation. PTI Photos



BACK IT UP

■ Roopinder Singh

One of the boring things you are always told is to make a backup of your work. You read it in computer magazines, you hear techies tell you about the horror stories of people who asked for their help in recovering lost data, and yet you never do anything about it!

I learnt computers and was immediately told about the need to back up, and not just once. It is probably because of this training in the past that even before I start a document, I give it a file name and save it. Now, I know that Word, that magnificent word processing programme, automatically saves your documents in case your computer shuts down suddenly, but believe me, I am not going to trust myself to the mercy of a software safeguard, when a small task will allow me greater peace of mind.

Recently, I had reason to bless this habit. I changed my computer, and as a result, I found that somehow while transferring data, a manuscript I had been working on, off and on for four years, could not be located. I had used standard software that came packaged with the portable hard disk drive (HDD) that I recently bought to back up the pro-

Bits BYTES

gramme, but it was not in the drive.

I would not say that I panicked, because I did not, but I was tense—this was a lot of work that had almost disappeared. In a moment of epiphany, I understood why my father always said that he wanted to see his documents in his hands, "not inside the computer".

With a bit of effort, I remembered that I had "cut" the file and transferred it to a pen drive I was using, instead of merely copying it. I inserted the drive and found that the computer refused to "recognise" it. I plugged it in and unplugged it, but it did not register in the computer.

A quick search on the Internet followed. I wanted to find some software that would help in recovering data. I downloaded the "trial" versions of a few of these software programmes but nothing worked. Eventually, in desperation, I called for technical help and the person who came told me that my pen drive had been damaged. As a result, there was nothing that I could do to recover my data.

If ever there was a time to panic, it was now. When I started learning how to use the computer, the commandment was

not only "Thou shalt back up your data", you were also made to back up your data at more than one location, "in case of fire or some other disaster".

Commandments are hard to follow, but those who do so often realise their wisdom. I had backed up my HDD earlier, on a separate portable hard drive that I keep for important files. The file was there, along with the other data. Admittedly, it did not have the latest changes that I had made, but it did have the basic, all 100 pages, which was a good starting point. Much better than ending up with nothing!

Of late, with cloud computing options popping up, it is also a good idea to use online storage for important files. That way, you can access it from wherever you are.

Eleven years ago, Yahoo had introduced its Briefcase service that offered 30MB of online storage. However, it shut it down last year because of declining usage.

I was an early user of Hotmail, but now Gmail has all but eclipsed it. However, Hotmail, in its as Microsoft-owned avatar, Windows Live Hotmail, has the consumer-focused SkyDrive Web file-storage system, which gives a user 25 GB of free storage space. I have used it both to store files, as well as to share some files with

some specific people. This is a nifty feature that was useful in sharing the data with specific e-mail identities. Gmail does not have anything like it, but with it you can attach files (up to 25 MB) and either keep them in the draft folder, or mail them to yourself. Yahoo, too, has the 25MB limit for its attachments, as does Hotmail.

From time to time, I have read about software programmes that allow users to treat Gmail as a drive. I have also read that Google frowns on such usage, and blocks the mail. I would rather have my Gmail account, which is a repository of a vast amount of email "conversations" since many years, and thus have not taken any risk about using it. However, I found "Google documents" an easy way to collaborate with others and while it is not in any way a replacement for Word, it is still a very good tool, which also backs up documents.

Because Google Docs now supports files up to 250 MB in size, which is larger than the attachment limit on most email applications, you'll be able to back up large graphics files, RAW photos, ZIP archives and much more to the cloud. Google Docs allows users to upload a total of 1GB of such files.

Given the bandwidth problems in India, I, however, find that backing up heavy files like pictures and videos is not practical. Thus, I go in for offline storage in backing up data.

Digital cameras have replaced film for most users, and all your photographs are electronic. The flip side of this is that hardly anyone makes hard copies of digital photos; they are stored electronically, and just transferred from the device to a computer.

You just need to make sure that they remain safe, and for this you just have to back them up, not just on one location, but if possible, two. HDD drives are becoming cheaper by the day, and I find that portable HDDs the most convenient way of backing up data.

With the price of storage falling, it is worth to buy two drives and back up data on both. I do use two, one that I always keep at home, and a smaller 160GB drive that travels with me. I do back up my data regularly. I know that it's a boring task that ties up your computer for a certain amount of time. However, can you imagine the void that you would have in our life if one day all your electronic data vanished? I would not like to be in that situation, and having nearly been there a few times, I think it's worth it to have your data secure with a backup that gives you a tremendous peace of mind.



Spade WORK

Satish Narula

NO BED OF ROSES THIS

Gardener's moods keep changing. At times they want to have many colours of the annuals and after a few years some want very less annuals and something other than the routine. Some wants landscaping requiring no maintenance. Well, if you want to have a garden, you will have to maintain it or else it will turn out to be a mess. Yes, for minimum maintenance we can suggest some features.

The purpose of having beds in the garden is to add colour and also hide some of the problem areas. Also the areas where there is shade that does not let the grass grow is utilised to have beds with shade loving annuals. But if the purpose is to utilise the areas which are under good sun and are otherwise suitable for growing annuals etc, could be used to create permanent features with the help of shrub plants.

Howsoever, we treat the area; the purpose remains to be the colour addition. We have many options. Either we go in for flowering shrubs or we grow permanent kind of green shrubs but in that case we want to create topiaries. In such cases too, the colour content cannot be ignored. It is better to plant such shrubs or even tree species that are to be kept low headed by repeated cuttings. At least this you will have to do, i.e. give a monthly cutting in the normal times and pruning at fortnight interval during rainy season. And this is called the minimum maintenance garden planting. For open spaces the concept of minimum maintenance is different.

There is a wide range of plants to select from. In case you are going in for flowering shrubs, then it is a matter of choice whether you are going in for colour, foliage or fragrance. In case you are wanting to have topiaries later, then Ficus species plants like Ficus panda, Ficus benjamina are excellent choice. The latter gives yellow coloured foliage at top that appears after every clipping. These can be accommodated at small places too except that they should not be planted very near to walls. Ficus variegata and Starlite are good to add or yellow variegation and white variegation respectively. The bigger space trees like Mousaly give good result. One, they can be pruned and given shape and secondly, they are self disciplined plants and form very good umbrella on their own. In case of shrubs we should go in for variegated chandni, white snow bush, Euphorbia (deep maroon) bush adds immense colour to the arrangement. This is in addition to all the three textures of Durantas. To add to the colour by way of foliage one could intersperse the arrangement with hybrid Euphorbias that are now available in a wide range of colours. In case you want these trees and shrubs in group, then near the entry is most suitable place.

Log in....Tribune

Your gateway to information highway

Monday, October 9, 2000



Mouse getting mightier than the sword

PAGE 3

Web site advertisement on a bus



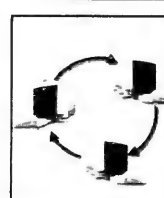
PAGE 2



China's directive to Net companies

PAGE 2

LAN administrator — server's sentry



PAGE 4

'Punjab should be like Mac, not Unix'

By Roopinder Singh

MOHANBIR Sawhney is one of the most influential persons in the world of e-business. A widely respected and published man, Sawhney was in Chandigarh recently where he met business leaders and government officials. Before arriving in Chandigarh, Sawhney, who has been listed as one of the most influential men in e-commerce in the world by *Business Week* magazine, had delivered a keynote address at the India Internet World exhibition in New Delhi. Sawhney touched on various aspects of economy and IT during an exclusive interview. Excerpts:

Which are the areas the youngsters should start aiming for careers in IT?

If you start looking at the school level, computer training has been added to the general reading, writing and arithmetic, because it has become an essential skill now. Not that everybody is going to become a software programmer, but because everybody will have to learn how to live with and intelligently learn how to use technology. I don't think that children have any problem; they take to it like a duck takes to water. All that you have to do is to provide computers and connectivity. You have to make sure that you are not creating a digital divide, because tomorrow, as it becomes an essential skill, then, if we do not have universal access in the schools, public libraries and other public institutions, then those people would be left behind.

As people go into professional education, while IT will still remain, in terms of percentage, not the bulk of the economy, at the same time some of the highest value jobs will be created in this sector and will be responsible for a significant part of the growth. For instance, in the USA now, IT accounts for almost 25 per cent of the GDP growth even though it is only 10 per cent of the GDP.

People who are looking at attractive career options have a whole set of attractive options around IT, whether it is programming-related, development jobs, call centres, medical transcription etc. There will be a sub-set of these people as entrepreneurs, who will need to be taught about various aspects of entrepreneurship, finance, marketing etc.

What has been the level of Punjabi success stories in IT in the USA?

Anecdotal evidence is that when *Business Week* named 25 of the most influential per-

sons in e-business, there were three Indians, one was a Khosla, one was a Sidhu and the third was Sawhney. (Vinod Khosla was the founder of Sun, and Sanjeev Sidhu is the CEO of I2 Technologies). If you look at the Silicon Valley, Punjabis have more than their share of proportional representation at the top. By all means, they are leading the revolution. The founder of fibre optics is Dr Narinder Singh Kampani.

What technologies should youngsters focus on?

Data base technologies is one area that will continue to be very fundamental. Oracle will be leading the pack there. There are specific areas in e-business in which some companies are emerging as leaders. You have BEA (<http://www.bea.com>) in the application server business, Vignette in the content management business, BroadVision in e-commerce.

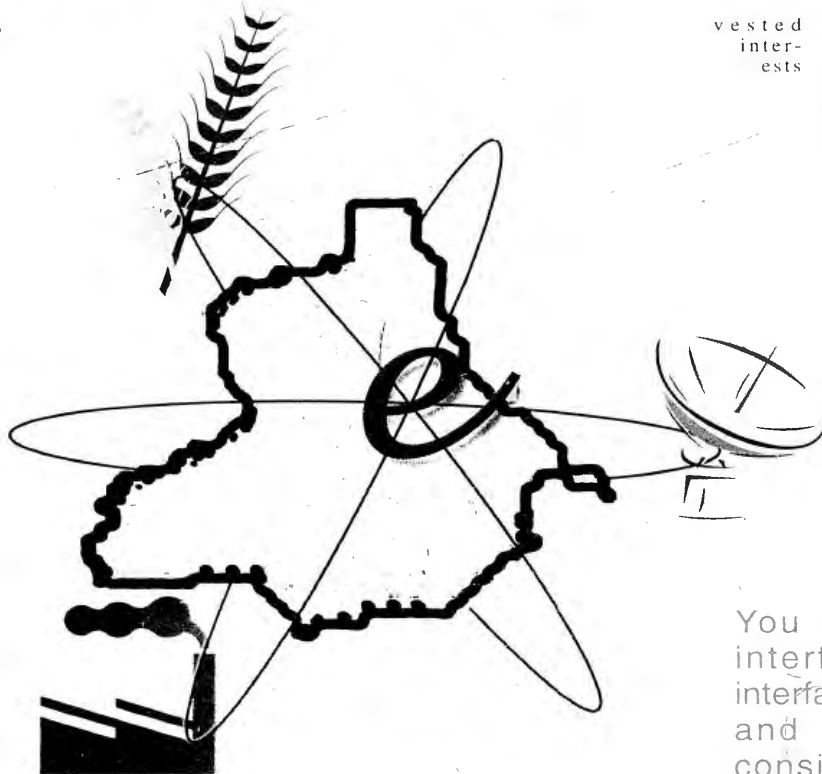
It's difficult to think about the future, but you have to focus leading companies like Microsoft (<http://www.microsoft.com>), Oracle (<http://www.oracle.com>), Vignette (<http://www.vignette.com>), BroadVision (<http://www.broadvision.com>).

In the emerging new economy what is the role that a government should play?

The optimal role for the government is actually no role. I would not go to the extreme of saying that government should go out of the business. The government needs to play the role of a gardener—to create the right environment, to protect the flowers from pests—but then you have to let the flowers bloom. You don't micro-manage, you don't watch each flower-bloom because a watched flower doesn't bloom. The Chief Ministers have to start thinking as if they are managing an enterprise. We have to think in terms of Punjab Inc. We can learn from people like Le Kuan Yeu in Singapore and Chandrababu Naidu.

What does all this mean to the common man? Will this have a trickle-down effect?

I think that one of the things that we have



GRAPHICS BY GAURAV SOOD

to think about is the process of using technology for governance. As Chandrababu Naidu says, "The state of the art can be used to re-invent that art of the state."

What does it mean? It means improving the delivery of government services—basic services like registration of land, vehicular transfers, birth/death registrations etc. All basic government services can be delivered through kiosks set up in villages. The interaction between the districts and the state capital can be done through networks.

Investment will come when capital is welcomed and is assured of transparency. I think that the big problem that one bumps into is

vested interests

What is the role of IT in agriculture?

Let me tell you about the little experiment that was tried in the Czech Republic where farming technology is quite limited but people there are well educated and reasonably smart. One of the agri-chemical companies there wanted to sell more pesticide and seeds.

They worked with the state to create a network and a system for the farmers where they gave computers to the farmers and created a network. Therefore, the farmers could use the system to plan their crops. They used remote sensing and satellite technology to map each field and figure out what nutrients and fertilisers were needed and the exact seeding patterns to maximise the production. The farmers used the access to all this data to model the crop patterns. They used it to optimise the mix and as a result these farmers are some of the most intensive Internet users in the world. They have formed virtual communities where they talk to each other and this has really revolutionised how farms oper-

Agriculture Revolution led to the Industrial Revolution and now it can improve agricultural production.

How should the state be positioned?

While we should learn from the states that are ahead of us, we should not copy them. We have to find our own road because the skill sets and the capabilities that are represented here are unique—the context is different. We have to see what are capabilities are and focus on them.

Even in the USA, there are regions that try to be like Silicon Valley because the unique conditions that exist in Silicon Valley don't exist anywhere. You have to find new niches.

Take the example of Ireland. They have become world leaders in outsourced services like Web hosting. Why can't we take a lead in creating customer call centre?

One other area is for small and medium enterprises. There are vast opportunities for custom manufacturing—linking suppliers here via the Internet to manufacturers in the USA. Two of my students, both Punjabis, have started a company called Capacity Web (<http://www.capacityweb.com>) which goes

You have to create user interfaces, institutional interfaces with entrepreneurs and investors that are consistent and persistent. You have to behave like marketers. You have to get your act together. Punjab has an image problem. In today's world, image has an important role.

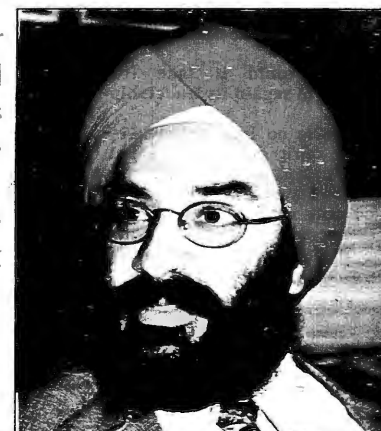


PHOTO BY PANKAJ SHARMA

Mohanbir Sawhney

to large manufacturers like Caterpillar and find for them suppliers who can come up with new manufactured products. The government could play a role in helping the manufacturers get the infrastructure they need to go up to the international level of certification.

Continued on page 2, col. 1

Dot . com World

Sitagita to plan family budget

www.sitagita.com

This is a women portal. It offers a wide variety of information, ranging from informative articles to fun and entertainment. This site has several interesting channels like health, beauty & fashions, maternal instincts, at home, Indian away, relationship, art & culture, legal-e-speaking, money matters, crafts, men, women at work and pet care. Besides this, it also has news, e-cards and free e-mail. Thus, it is a complete portal for women. Common to other portals, this site too has a section for recipes, and gossip, but the value-added feature of this site is the monthly expense planner, which can keep help you maintain your budget properly. For using this feature you will have to get yourself registered at this site.

www.classontheWeb.com

This is your virtual classroom on the Internet. The objective is to form a community of teachers, students, and parents for spreading knowledge through world's most powerful medium—the Internet. This site offers a lot of interesting material for the students, which they can combine with their regular text books and help books to make learning easier and clearer. It also has a lot of stuff for teachers in the form of teaching aid and new methods of effective teaching. This site is being updated regularly and thus on this site you can find new matter and more subjects. It has several communities

like Inkpot, Q-rious, GetSetGo, Expres-It, E Poll, News, Personal Counsellor and Personal Tutor, which offer complete information and help to students & teachers. In order to surf this site, you will need to register yourself.

www.khujasimsim.com

If you are looking for good bargains and deals, then this site may have something interesting for you. This is a well-laid out site and has galleries like group buying, e-coupons and promotional plaza. You can get yourself registered and be informed of all the deals currently being offered. You can also search this site for the latest bargains available in your town/zone. For example, if you want to search the bargains being offered in Delhi, then you can select Delhi as your city in the search zone and get the list of offers with details. Similarly there is another channel called hot deals, where you can find top picks. A good site for all you bargain hunters on the Internet.

www.kidshhealth.org

The health of kid is a major consideration for parents. However, a majority of parents are only aware of the most common health issues related to kids. In order to learn more about the health issues related to kids, log on to www.kidshhealth.org and find out the details on diseases like asthma, cancer and muscular dystrophy. You can also get answers to the FAQs related to kid's health on everyday illness, injuries and eating disorders.

Latest in IT

The death of dotcoms

During the last one-week, many popular Web sites have announced either closure or lay off plans. The latest addition to the list of casualties in the world of dotcom is the buying site Productopia.com, which provides product information and buying advice, said it plans to shut down operations. Another popular teen site Kibu.com also plans to shut down its operations and has also cut most of its staff team. Similarly, online drugstore more.com has also announced the plans of lay off to about a third of its staff. The list of casualties is however large and growing every month.

Pentium IV launch delayed

The much-awaited launch of the Pentium IV processors from Intel has now been delayed due to a technical glitch in the graphics chip. Recently, the company had announced the launch of Pentium IV chip within a month. Although, as per company, the glitch has been successfully corrected, but the processor has been kept under testing. Earlier, in the previous week, Intel had cancelled another Chip, code-named Timna, which was targeted at the budget market and was delayed earlier. This chip was cancelled due to problems with a companion chip, called Memory Translator Hub (MTH), which was not fixed. The purpose of the MTH was to allow PC makers to combine Timna with regular memory, instead of the more expen-

sive RD-RAM. Moreover, improvements in motherboards and existing chips had also eliminated the cost-cutting advantages Timna was supposed to provide.

Apple creates history

Disappointment over the company's financial performance in the fourth quarter of the fiscal led to a selling wave in this stock. However, history of sorts was being created due to aggressive selling by the investors as the Apple Computers posted the eighth-busiest day in the history for an US stock. On this day, the investors traded 132.4 million shares, which was also characterised by the company's biggest-ever fall in its stock price in any one trading day. On the fateful day, the stock plummeted \$ 27.75, or 52 per cent, to \$ 25.75. This steep decline wiped out almost \$ 9 billion in market value of the company's market capitalisation.

Yahoo e-mail service at fault again

The e-mail services of the world's one the most popular e-mail service provider, suffered a major setback recently, when it observed glitches for roughly two days. This time these services were disrupted in India also. The problem caused bouncing of mails and thus not reaching its destination. Moreover, there were also problems with many users in accessing their accounts.

2-year-old form,

www.tribuneindia.com

120-year-old soul



Maize research centre awaits land

AFSANA RASHID

SRINAGAR, MAY 4

To expand the golf course at Pahalgam, the government utilised the land meant for a maize research centre of the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology-Kashmir (SKUAST-K) a few years ago.

The government, however, offered an alternative site for the centre at Sagam-Kokernag in Anantnag district, which never materialised.

"Consequently, our activities related with maize got scattered. Maize is so important that we cannot afford to neglect its production," said Prof Anwar Alam, Vice-Chancellor, SKUAST-K, adding, "whatever resources available and wherever they are, we are trying to use it for maize research and multiplication of seed varieties."

The Vice-Chancellor expressed hope that someday the government would provide them the required land in order to do the work on maize in an organised manner.

The university at present has a maize research centre at Karewa Damodar farm.

The VC said maize production was the largest occupation in the state as well as the valley. "Produc-

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Maize is so important that we cannot afford to neglect its production

tivity of maize in our state is below the national average."

Prof Alam said the university had developed cold-tolerant maize varieties (like Shalimar Kishenganga 1 and Shalimar Kishanganga 2) for cold regions of the state as Gurez, Karnah and Machil. He said: "The centre has released nine composite varieties of maize. Popular ones are C6, C8, Shalimar, C15, Super 1 and Shalimar hybrid maize. With these varieties, maize productivity can be doubled, but we will require higher productivity."

The varsity had conducted 3,000 front line demonstrations in six districts of the valley, he said. "The US produces nine tonnes per hectare and raise almost hybrid maize. This is largely cultivated in American parries under proper management. We have a daunting challenge of raising it on hill slopes that makes the job difficult."

Dressing up like gods for alms

Scores of beggars can be seen at almost every crossing. Child beggars are quick in grabbing attention with their unique ways. Some of them are attired like deities (see picture) or mystic fakirs to seek attention and alms. Irrespective of their age, they shower blessings and curses alike on passersby. However they try to carry themselves, 'childhood innocence' gets reflected in their words and deeds.

On a Sunday, a small boy dressing up as 'Shani devta' was asking for alms, assuming that it was Saturday. The poor chap would reach out to people seeking charity on Saturday to ward off bad luck. As the people dipped coins in the mustard oil-filled bowl, the "small creature" appeared perturbed as everyone winked while giving alms to him.

SSP in love with cricket

Cricket is a sport almost every Indian likes. People play this sport whenever they find time. Even Jammu SSP Basant Rath, known for his special working style, is also a big fan of this sport. In the past one month, the SSP was noticed twice playing cricket at various grounds in the city. As soon as he arrived in the stadium, he procured a bat and started knocking the ball.

Though Rath did not participate in the J&K Police Martyrs' Memorial T-20 Cricket Cup yet he was seen trying his hand with the bat and that too amid the presence of all senior police officers during the inaugural and conclusion of the tourney. Alas DGP XI lost the tourney in the final played against Corporate XI. But then the SSP was not a member of the DGP's team.

Donkey protest catches cops' attention

The Jammu unit of the PDP organized a rally to "convince" the Union Government to take some serious efforts for resolving the Kashmir problem. Some unidentified persons brought a donkey

JAMMU DIARY



and pasted some posters on it.

As soon as the rally ended, the local administration swung into action and picked up the owner of the donkey for questioning. A senior PDP leader, who was standing near the donkey, was also summoned by the cops as the administration had taken serious note of such a "derogatory" style of protest.

Fearing action from the cops, the PDP leader expressed his ignorance as

to how the donkey strayed into the rally. He stated that it was coincidence that when mediapersons were clicking photographs he was standing near the donkey. The police is still trying to find out as to who had brought that donkey to the rally.

(Contributed by Ashutosh Sharma, Archit Watts and Dinesh Manhotra)

SRINAGAR HELPLINE

Police Control Room	100, 2452138, 2452098, 2483596
Fire Services	101, 2452222, 2452155
Hospitals (Ambulance)	102
Traffic Police Control Room	2455164
J&K Tourism Department	2452690-91, 2479548
Tourist Reception Centre (TRC)	2472449
Deputy Director, Enforcement (Tourism)	2477224
Airport	2303336, 2303333, 2303868
SMHS Hospital	2452013
SK Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura	2401013
JVC hospital, Bemina	2493316, 2493104
GB Pant Children Hospital	2466113, 2466610
Bone and Joints Hospital	2430149, 2430155, 2432135
Lalla Ded Hospital	2313714-16
J&K State Road Transport Corporation	2476758
Sightseeing (SRTC)	2455107
Government Arts Emporium	2471962

FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Arrival

Air India IC-821	(From New Delhi via Jammu) 1.55 pm
Air India IC-825	(From New Delhi) 1.00 pm
Go Air G8-152	(From New Delhi) 11 am
Go Air G8-372	(From New Delhi) 1.10 pm
Kingfisher Red	(From New Delhi) 12.05 pm
IT-3301	
Spice Jet SC-224	(From New Delhi) 1.50 pm
Spice Jet SC-851	(From New Delhi via Jammu) 11.15 am
Jet Lite S2-165	(From New Delhi via Jammu) 12.30 pm
Jet Airways	(From New Delhi) 12.35 pm
9W-605	
Kingfisher Class	(From New Delhi) 1.30 pm
IT-602	
Go Air Business	(From New Delhi) 1.10 pm
G8-372	
Jet Lite S2-101	(From New Delhi via Mumbai) 2.00 pm
Kingfisher Red	(From New Delhi via Jammu and Chandigarh) 12.00 pm
IT-4633	

Departure

Air India IC-822	(To New Delhi via Jammu) 2.35 pm
Air India IC-826	(To New Delhi) 1.40 pm
Go Air G8-151	(To New Delhi) 11.30 am
Go Air G8-457	(To New Delhi) 1.35 pm
Kingfisher Red	(To New Delhi) 12.35 pm
IT-3302	
Spice Jet SC-209	(To New Delhi) 2.30 pm
Spice Jet SC-852	(To New Delhi via Jammu) 11.50 am
Jet Lite S2-166	(To New Delhi via Jammu) 12.55 pm
Jet Airways	(To New Delhi) 1.10 pm
9W-606	
Kingfisher Class	(To New Delhi) 2.00 pm
IT-334	
Go Air Business	(To New Delhi) 1.35 pm
G8-457	
Jet Lite S2-672	(To New Delhi via Mumbai) 2.30 pm
Kingfisher Red	(To New Delhi via Jammu and Chandigarh) 12.30 pm
IT-4634	

The information given is only indicative and is subject to change



Sun struck

Hands-free communication is essential while on the move whether it is from a hotel, airport, or car. i.Tech, the leading innovative wireless mobile solutions provider, headquartered in Hong Kong, has announced the launch of its new range of revolutionary Bluetooth products and devices for the Indian markets. The company has introduced 15 Bluetooth devices for the Indian market with the entry price point of Rs1,149-6,499. The range of products includes the new age Bluetooth devices-Solar Voice 908, Solar Charger 906, Clip D-Radio. Ingram Micro is the national distributor of the products in India. The products are designed for use in a variety of environments, the solar-powered Bluetooth headset lets its users go green while maintaining their productivity and listening to their favorite tunes.

According to Rajat Bal, general manager EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa), "Deploying innovative design, cutting-edge technological know-how and superior manufacturing capabilities, i.Tech combines form and performance to create compelling products that offer powerful functionality yet are easy to use, easy on the eye and easy on the pocket. The Indian market provides us a lot of opportunities keeping in mind the number of mobile users in the country."

i.Tech Dynamic Ltd. specialises in the design, marketing and sales of mobile telecommunications accessories. Since its inception in 2002, the company has established a reputation for developing products with sleek designs and enhanced value. Dedicated to innovation, and supported with advanced manufacturing and research facilities, i.Tech delivers wireless accessories for telecommunication as well as electronic products that have made the company a market leader in the Asia-Pacific region. —TNS

ROOPINDER SINGH

It was a Mamiya medium format camera that triggered this article. The occasion was the 90th birthday celebration of Mahijit Singh Sodhi, one of the grand old men of Chandigarh.

His grandson, Karam, was making a valiant attempt to photograph the extended family of, well, around 90 people together and his tool of choice was this medium format camera that uses a film which I started my photography with - the 120-film that was used in the Agfa Click III cameras and the Yashika and Roliflex twin-lens reflex cameras, common in photo studios in the 1960s and 1970s.

Now, there were digital cameras galore at the wine and cheese evening. You could say that everyone had one, from the Nikon and Cannon digital SLRs to the ubiquitous cameras in phones, and as drinks circulated and the roasts were savoured, many flashes punctuated the darkening sky. A number of pictures were snapped, as often happens when people meet after a long time.

Why was the seemingly antediluvian film camera doing amidst all these snazzy digital ones? Well, it still holds true that practically nothing in the digital world can match the tonal range and even resolution of a film. A medium format film image can record an equivalent of approximately 50 megapixels. The 120-film dates back to 1902 and a century later, the best digital camera was made by a film-maker, Fuji, and the FinePix S602Z Pro had a resolution of 6.0 mp. Top cameras have managed to double the resolution now.

The convenience of reducing light to binary digits, the bits (Binary digit, i.e., 0 and 1) and bytes (8-bit bundles) that dominate the digital world is, however, undeniable. We can do so much more with pictures than we could do using the traditional chemical methods.

Often comparisons in digital cameras have been reduced to the megapixel game, but this is not an accurate measure.

Megapixel (one million pixels) is a term



Karam Sodhi examines the frame of his picture through the viewfinder of a Mamiya medium format camera. Photo: Avi Sodhi

used for the number of pixels in an image. It is also used to express the number of image sensor elements of digital cameras or the number of elements of digital displays. A pixel is generally defined as the smallest single component of a digital image. Instead of a film, digital cameras use photo-sensitive electronic image sensors. They can either be charge-coupled device

(CCD) or complementary metal-oxide semiconductor (CMOS). These sensors have a large number of single sensor elements, often called pixels.

A colour film normally has three layers of emulsion and each layer is basically the same as in black and white film, but sensitive only to one-third of the spectrum (reds, greens or blues). Similarly, each pixel in the sensor will record only one channel (red, or green, or blue) of the final colour image.

When comparing cameras, one must look at the size of the sensor, and bigger is better in this instance. Just as the 120-film is three

times size of a 35mm, the size of the CCD in compact cameras is much smaller than that in digital SLRs, which have only recently been able to give a "full frame" 35mm CCD.

The size of the CCD determines the size of the individual elements in it and the bigger the sensors, more the information they can store.

Most phones now have fairly acceptable pixels in their camera, yet the sale of compact digital cameras is booming. This is interesting, since most of the people who buy these cameras would have camera-equipped cell phones. This brings us to the fact that sensors are but one aspect of the camera.

The most important thing in a camera is arguably its lens. Normally made of glass, it can have one or many elements. SLR cameras have mounts on which a photographer can mount different lenses, depending on the situation and the effect that is desired.

Compact cameras, however, have only one kind of lens fitted to them. Most of them have a zoom feature, which allows you to change the frame of your picture without

moving back and forth. Thus, you can go nearer the object or go wider to include more of the background without moving.

The range and optical quality of the lens plays a major role in the way the image is formed, and that's the reason people pay thousands of rupees, even lakhs, for a high quality lens. My photo lab person says that most of the images that he processes daily come from digital cameras, not from films.

The wide-scale adoption of the digital medium means that storage of pictures has also moved from shoeboxes to computers and hard drives. Since, unlike film, digital pictures do not cost money to take, just to print, people tend to take more, and thus have many more to store, process and catalogue.

What use is a picture unless you can find it when you want to? On a computer, it can become difficult unless you have some sort of picture processing software. After long use, my favourite is Picasa, a software application for organising and editing digital photos.

The word Picasa is a blend of the name of famous Spanish painter, Pablo Picasso, the phrase 'mi casa' for "my house" and "pic" for pictures. It was created by Idealab, but Google bought it in 2004 and has since offered it as a free download. I have been using it since the beginning, and thousands of my digital pictures are catalogued via Picasa. The retouching and other functions are basic, though effective. The recently introduced face-recognition programme is fun, although sometimes intrusive.

Since on my phone I can store pictures of the callers, I have used the recognised and tagged faces from various pictures and exported them to the phone. Seeing a smiling face when you receive a call definitely puts you in a good mood to talk! Other photo organisers include Adobe's Elements, Apple's iPhoto, Novell's F-spot, PicaJet and DigiKam. And you may want to try out these too.

When we take a picture, one of the primary reasons is that we want to share the moment with others. The people who took pictures at the party also shared them with others. How? Well, that's what we will look at the next time!

(This column will appear fortnightly)



Log in... Tribune

Your gateway to information highway



2 Defrag should follow scandisk run

3 Networking as career

4 Andhra section of travel portal

ROOPINDER SINGH

RAJESH was doing quite well in his new job in America. He missed home, but had made some friends; his company was not paying too much, but he was getting some work by freelancing. One day, the bubble burst.

Rajesh had been maintaining contact with his clients through a popular Web mail company and he felt quite secure, because it was something that would not show on his computer. "You know, there are two kinds of e-mail accounts—POP accounts from which you can download your mail right to the computer and Web mail accounts, like Yahoo, Hotmail etc, which you can access from any computer. In such accounts, the mail is not downloaded on the Web."

"I had a Web account, and I thought that I would keep in touch with my clients during my spare time in office. We had a fantastic dedicated con-

What we need to be clear about is that merely something being possible should not be the reason for doing it. That e-mail can be read is no justification for reading it, just as the availability of a gun is no justification for killing someone. All too often, the ethics of the issue are ignored.

nection and my mail used to download really fast, even attachments that I could have never been able to download on the slow connection that I had in India."

"Soon he was tempted into uploading from the office connection and for a while it seemed that all was well, till one day when his senior colleagues came to him and told him to pack his bags. His e-mail had been monitored and they knew that he was moonlighting, which was not allowed in the contract. Poor Rakesh was on the next plane back to India. "I always thought that no one would be able to see the mail that I was sending because I was using a Web mail service, but they had printouts of all my mails, I really had no leg to stand on," he rues.

His employer had been monitoring his activities, including his e-mail. But are employers allowed to do so? What is the level of privacy that employees can expect? This is an old con-

Achtung! Your e-mail is being read



flict since employers want to be sure their employees are doing a good job. At the same time, employees don't want that all their trips to the loo or even chota tea breaks be logged by the employers.

Even in the USA, where privacy rights are much more sacrosanct than in most other nations, including India, employers are given a wide latitude in monitoring e-mail, because after all it is office time and office machinery that the employee is using. Employers have, however, to be careful in not doing too much monitoring lest they discourage employees by providing a less-than-congenial work atmosphere.

But what about others who access a computer from home or even from cyber cafés? Well, their mail is also something that can be monitored, intercepted or even retrieved, in case they run foul with the law.

As Rajesh found out, servers are simply computers, and whether near or far, they store information that can be retrieved. In a way, in case of using an ordinary letter, you could be fairly sure that once you had destroyed it, no one would be able to read it, whereas with an e-mail letter, even if you delete it from the server, it may be saved somewhere, it could have been backed up and so on.

"Many Internet providers and network administrators archive" (store) your incoming and outgoing mail on a computer disk for six months or more after you think that you've deleted your mail. If someone sues you, he or she may be able to subpoena and read your previous correspondence. Of course, unauthorised snoops might choose to read your archive for their own reasons," says André Bac-

ard, author of Computer Privacy Handbook.

For some reason or another most people think of e-mail as something anonymous and of course less formal than regular mail, points out Satvinder, a computer professional in Delhi. "Writing a letter is an art, the paper, ink, composing your thoughts, you think twice before committing anything to paper. In e-mail, it becomes informal, you would tend to use bad grammar, silly abbreviations and even a degree of swear words that you would never use in a letter."

Add to this informality a feeling that you can get away with anything on e-mail—after all you have not really written anything, just typed out a few sentences—and you have the makings of an embarrassment. Most persons are not aware that Internet service providers and e-mail providers are required to keep logs and records of all their e-mails. Thus, for any determined investigator, your e-mail can be traced and for can be held accountable.

Satvinder points out another e-mail issue—that of harassment. "You would never think of sending a risqué joke to another person if you had to photocopy it and mail it, the effort would be too much. But what happens when you get a naughty e-mail, the first thing you do is sent it to a few of your friends and they will pass it on to others, it will be forwarded to persons of the opposite gender and so on... at any time a person could find the matter being sent out offensive and take objection to it, in which case, you are in a bit of a soup—you could be accused of harassment." It is not quite clear how deep the trail would lead. There have been cases when disciplinary action has been taken against

employees and they have even been dismissed for such actions.

There was a case in Chandigarh when the employee of a private company got a letter from his fiancé asking him what he was doing. He described what he had been doing, and told her about the meeting he had just attended, in which some company marketing strategies were discussed. The letter then went on to the kind of stuff that recently-engaged people write.

They both did not give any thought to this; they had a lot of other things to think about, like their future. However, all too soon, the man was asked to report to the general manager's office and was accused of leaking out company secrets. His e-mail had been intercepted by the network administrator. Ultimately, the employee who had a promising future in the company had to resign.

"I knew that my mail could be intercepted on the network, but what the hell, it was just a casual comment in a casual communication," he says, adding that he has a much better job now.

Actually, his comment about the casualness of the communication illustrates a part of the problem that lies in the analogy used to describe e-mail. Most representations of e-mail, including those in popular software packages like Outlook Express and Netscape, show envelopes for e-mail, and thus it becomes analogous for an e-mail being like an e-letter.

An e-mail message is more like an e-postcard that can be read by anyone on the way even as it is delivered to you, rather a letter. Actually an encrypted e-mail would be analogous to having the envelope of encryption for the e-

mail letter inside it. This has been discussed earlier in Log in Tribune dated October 1, 2001.

However, security is always inconvenient, though one of the better and more convenient free encryption standards, Pretty Good Privacy (PGP) has been around since June 1991. Philip Zimmermann, who developed it, faced prosecution from the US government, which ultimately backed away.

Encrypting e-mail typically involves a dual-key mechanism known as public key infrastructure. Under it, one key locks a message and a different key unlocks it. Though efforts have been made to simplify the process, it has not yet caught on with only 10 million people using PGP, out of a worldwide Internet population approaching 400 million!

10 commandments of computer ethics

1. Thou shalt not use a computer to harm other people.
2. Thou shalt not interfere with other people's computer work.
3. Thou shalt not snoop around in other people's computer files.
4. Thou shalt not use a computer to steal.
5. Thou shalt not use a computer to bear false witness.
6. Thou shalt not copy or use proprietary software for which you have not paid.
7. Thou shalt not use other people's computer resources without authorisation or proper compensation.
8. Thou shalt not appropriate other people's intellectual output.
9. Thou shalt think about the social consequences of the program you are writing or the system you are designing.
10. Thou shalt always use a computer in ways that insure consideration and respect for your fellow humans.

In fact, what we need to be clear about is that merely something being possible should not be the reason for doing it. That e-mail can be read is no justification for reading it, just as the availability of a gun is no justification for killing someone. All too often, the ethics of the issue are ignored.

An attempt has made in the

USA and other places to come up with ethical guidelines for computing.

The first National (read American) Computer Ethics Conference in 1992 was titled "In

Pursuit of a 'Ten Commandments' for Computer Ethics," and the Ten Commandments, arrived at the conference are given in the box item accompanying the article. Though the organisers called it a "rough draft" it was in itself the product of over a decade of work in the field.

Even a cursory glance will show that we are enjoined to respect confidentiality, as per commandments 1, 2, and 8 and this if we were to take the example of forwarding the mail, we should check that whether the sender would not have any objections to our forwarding the mail. More often than not, people forward the mail and along with it multiple addresses from the original sender's list. This is also wrong, as it violates the privacy of the persons whose addresses are unwittingly being circulated on the Net.

At the very least personal and other information that could identify the person who sent you the mail and other addressees should be taken out of the mail.

At another level, network administrators and others have to keep ethical considerations in mind—always. There are situations in which mail is intercepted, in fact, fairly regularly in certain organisations like the Army, but the censors are enjoined to behave like gentlemen, and not use the information that they might come across unless it is inimical to the security of the nation. Similarly, in many women's colleges, letters to hostel residents are censored by the wardens, but they also maintain a proper code of conduct.

As for those who are writing letters, it is a question of taking simple and proper precautions. Do not treat your e-mail letters too casually. In fact, it is a good advice to be careful in one's expression, whether in speech, writing, or while typing an e-mail.

If you were to ask what you were to do, all that you have to remember is that the cyber world is a reflection of the real world, warts and all. Just as

Right to privacy in office still debatable

ALI HASNAIN

IN India there is no express statute or law that guarantees an individual's privacy. The Supreme Court has broadened the ambit of Article 21 of the Constitution, which talks about an individual's right to life and liberty so as to include the right to privacy.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of Kharak Singh v State of UP and others took this position. Kharak Singh had lodged a complaint that the police made domiciliary visits to his place of dwelling at odd hours and as such harassed him and invaded his privacy. This was the first time that the court upheld an individual's right to privacy as a fundamental right.

In many cases involving general discrimination against AIDS patients in places of work the Supreme Court has opined that such persons have a right to privacy and even there doctors are under moral and ethical duty of not revealing such sensitive information.

The employee's right to privacy in the work place would probably find an answer in the law of torts. According to Halsbury's Law if interference with privacy is of such a nature as to amount to a recognised tort, resort to that tort action maybe taken to prevent interference.

The courts have also recognised that an obligation of confidence can arise out of a particular relationship other than a contract and breach of confidentiality can be prevented by restraining by injunction publication of confidential information to the detriment of the plaintiff. The European Convention on Human Rights spells out the right of privacy thus: "Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his correspondence." The right is not absolute. The right can be taken away only in accordance with law for national security, public order etc.

The USA enacted the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986 aimed at regulating the acts of private parties. The ECPA covers all form of electronic communications including personal e-mails. The act prohibits unauthorised interception and also governs unauthorised access to stored communications. The distinction between messages in transmission and stored messages is important as the former are afforded a much higher level of protection than stored communication.

In Steve Jackson Games v. United States Secret, the courts were of the opinion that stored e-mails, not yet accessed by the user is stored communication for the purpose of this Act.

The law provides for an exception known as the "ordinary cause" exception under which the employer may intercept an employee's e-mail under certain circumstances. Since the jurisdiction of the US Congress is limited to interstate commerce therefore a computer system, which does not cross state lines, may not be covered under the ECPA.

To take an Indian perspective, as per Section 43 of the Information Technology Act of 2000 if any person, without permission of the owner or any other who is in charge of a computer, computer system or computer network accesses or secures access to such computer, computer system or computer network shall be liable to pay damages by way of compensation not exceeding Rs 1 crore to the person affected.

In case of e-mails, it is a question yet to be decided in whose computer does the specific information contained in e-mails actually resides. A person who otherwise in possession of a computer legally belonging to him may access some one else's e-mail account.

The most reasonable solution to this issue would probably be to consider the e-mail server where all information resides as the original computer and any access through hacking or other deceptive means like key logging through any computer by a person other than who is authorised to access the e-mail may be penalised.

The Internet has made surveillance of individual habits and traits easier than ever before. The employer maybe within his rights to intercept e-mails of his employees, which deal with official matters. Whether the correspondence is official or not is a question of fact to be decided on the basis of available evidence. Although, broadly speaking any correspondence on an employee's official e-mail address may, under normal circumstances, be presumed to be of "official nature" and hence accessible to the employer.

The position would differ if the employer were to keep tabs on his employees' surfing habits and thereby violate their privacy. Such surveillance may reveal personal habits and traits of the employee, his likes and dislikes and so on and so forth.

The Supreme Court has opined that the freedom of speech and expression also includes the right to privacy. It held in the case of PUCI v. Union of India (1997) 1 SCC 301, that if any person is speaking on the telephone, he is exercising his or her right to freedom of speech and expression and any tapping of the phone will be a violation of this freedom. This right would therefore extend to all forms of communication and if the state exercises any undue interference with an individual's right to communicate through such medium then it would be a violation of the person's fundamental right to privacy.

So in effect this case would also cover e-mails. However it is to be noted that even fundamental rights are subject to some reasonable restrictions by the state. For example, the right to freedom of speech and expression does not mean that a person can propagate any hate speech or seditious statements etc. As such no right is absolute the same is the case with right to privacy.

It is quite clear that the available judicial position would cover an individual's right of privacy over the Net. The problem is that since the right to privacy has been equated with a fundamental right, an individual can only bring action against the State and not another private individual or organisation. This is because fundamental rights are guaranteed against the state.



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Your gateway to information highway



2 Joints in cable can hinder connectivity 3 Design on computer, be seen on TV 4 Athlon XP processor

JUDGE Colleen Kollar-Kotelly of United States District Court in Washington may seem as an unlikely person to have an impact on our lives, but as the person presiding over the Microsoft antitrust case, she is taking decisions that will have a significant impact on the computing world.

Even as the settlement that was

negotiated between Microsoft and the US Justice Department is under a cloud as many states refused to endorse it, Judge Kollar-Kotelly will ponder over the future of the antitrust case that has embroiled Microsoft since 1998.

The agreement, cobbled together last week, required Microsoft to provide technical details that would help rivals make products compatible with the Windows operating system (OS). It was also required to provide an oversight panel full access to plans for five years. Exclusive contracts with computer makers that put rival software vendors at a disadvantage were banned. All this is designed to help make the software more competitive, which would ultimately make the consumer's life easier.

Microsoft has built an operating system that has improved dra-

atically over the years, but has always been surrounded by controversy. More transparency, better monitoring, and more awareness about the expectations of the customers would all serve to make the operating system better and remove the glitches, as has been done over various versions. The cloud has almost lifted, and the biggest software company

more than a decade now. It was on May 30, 1990, that the US Federal Trade Commission opened the antitrust investigation. This followed complaints to the agency that charged that the company's pricing policies illegally thwarted competition and that it deliberately created hidden codes in its operating system to hinder competing applications.

days of trial and some later proceedings, US District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson ruled on April, 2000, that Microsoft was monopolistic and had violated two sections of the Sherman Act.

The judge later ordered that Microsoft be broken into two and restricted the company's business conduct, withholding

and the launching pad for Microsoft, as the company was known then.

While DOS worked fairly well, the main grouse that users had was that it was complicated. This was in contrast to the Apple operating system, which used the GUI (Graphic User Interface) to simplify the operating system's use. Microsoft addressed the

monopolistic (over 80 per cent of the operating systems used in personal computers the world over are by Microsoft) position in the operating system market to restrict competition.

To cite some examples, discussed recently, it licensed its operating system more cheaply to computer makers such as Dell and Compaq, if they exclusively

Navigator instead, it was shown at the trial that its performance was not as quick. In a short time, Microsoft won over half the browser market, which it proceeded to dominate thereafter.

Sun Microsystems, a bitter Microsoft rival, contended that Microsoft introduced a modified version of the Java computer language, which runs only on Win-

practices to extend its dominant position in the market for personal computer operating systems sector into the market for low-end server operating systems that are used by corporate departments or small businesses to connect PCs with shared printers, shared files and Web servers.

In 1994, the European Commission and the US Justice

Roopinder Singh gives an overview of the latest in the battle between the largest software company in the world and the biggest legal eagles that American justice system can muster and wonders if...



negotiated between Microsoft and the US Justice Department is under a cloud as many states refused to endorse it, Judge Kollar-Kotelly will ponder over the future of the antitrust case that has embroiled Microsoft since 1998.

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Microsoft has built an operating system that has improved dra-

could come out more unscathed than it ever dared to hope. However, this is what enraged the critics who called the 21-page agreement full of loopholes. One example bandied about was a clause that permits Microsoft to ask consumers whether they want to restore, after 14 days, any changes made to Windows by computer makers. The agreement also allowed Microsoft to maintain the secrecy of any technical details of its anti-piracy, security, anti-virus or encryption technology.

Now it's up to the Judge Kollar-Kotelly to chart out the course the case will take, though it will be a long time before it is resolved, perhaps over a year, if all goes well.

Antitrust investigation

Microsoft has been facing an antitrust enquiry in the USA for

Of course, these charges were brought out by competitors who alleged that Microsoft had unfairly bundled its Internet Explorer (IE) software with its operating system in order to thwart competition (Netscape) and threatened to withhold Windows from hardware manufacturers or forced them to agree to exclusive contracts that shut out Netscape, thereby further enhancing its monopoly. Under the American law, it is not illegal to be a monopoly, but a corporation violates the 1890 Sherman Act, which seeks to curb monopolistic conduct among US corporations, if it abuses the monopoly.

Earlier ruling

The US Justice Department and 19 states in the USA agreed with this contention. They filed antitrust charges against Microsoft in May, 1998. After 76

technology that would let software makers create products that work smoothly with the operating system or taking actions that knowingly interfere with the performance of the competitor's products etc. He later stayed both orders pending appeal.

An appeals court in June took back the break-up order, but in remanding the case to a lower court, upheld the monopoly ruling and ordered that new remedies be set in keeping with that ruling. In August, Judge Kollar-Kotelly was randomly assigned to the case.

How it began

The beginnings of what was being branded as a monopolistic enterprise go back to 1981 when Microsoft introduced MS-DOS (Microsoft Disk Operating System). It became a standard for the IBM-based personal computers

problem in 1983 when it unveiled its GUI Windows interface. This was shipped two years later, and there have been many improved versions to the basic Windows system.

IBM-compatible computers dominated the personal computer market and Microsoft was the biggest gainer, since it supplied the operating system to all such hardware vendors—IBM as well as its competitors. This enabled the company to play a very significant role in the emerging computer market and given the growing numbers that Microsoft operating systems represented, developers flocked to the Windows platform, further strengthening its hold.

Abuse of power

At some point, the US government and competitors alleged, Microsoft started abusing its near

installed its software. At the same time, it turned on the company that started it all—IBM. When IBM refused to drop sales of its own rival operating system and software packages, it was not given certain important details of Windows '95 until 15 minutes before it was launched, while other hardware manufacturers already had computers installed with it. IBM lost millions of dollars in sales because of this.

IE vs Netscape

A key issue was the way in which Microsoft pushed its browser, the Internet Explorer, in a market that had been dominated by Netscape's Navigator. It not only gave away the Explorer free, when Netscape was being sold, it also "bundled" it into Windows, making manufacturers pre-load it on their computers. Even if users wanted to use

downs. This violated the very basis of Java's creation—it had been designed to run on all operating systems.

For its part, Microsoft contended that consumers had gained from its actions. For example, while Netscape charged money, Internet Explorer was free, and soon Netscape also became free. It also said that the

The decision was harshly on the company.

Microsoft went on to appeal and won significant concessions.

European investigation

While Microsoft tackles its American legal travails, trouble is also likely on the European front where authorities said in August that it might have violated their antitrust rules by using illegal

Department had jointly forced Microsoft to abandon its licensing agreements with personal computer makers that had forced them to pay a royalty on every PC, whether or not it had Microsoft software preinstalled. It remains to be seen how much bearing the latest case will have

Microsoft is under pressure. It is obvious that the company has become much more aware of consumer concerns and is making efforts to address issues. One thing is quite clear—all investigations and the pressure have served a purpose by making the consumer more aware as well as in protecting him from abuse. Customer is king, still, it would seem.

Las Vegas is just a click away for Namblers

PEEYUSH AGNIHOTRI

THERE has been a change in trend this Divali. Gambling, an illegal activity in India, is going off the course. Agreed this festive season, a majority of persons are gambling offline in close coordinated groups, yet in what could be called a trend indicator, a number of them are preferring cyber cafes to try their hands at Nambling, a sobriquet for Net gambling. And the law of the land has been kicked in the hind. Both offline as well as online.

In one of its new avatars, the Net is Las Vegas and Kathmandu incarnated for Namblers. Ever since the news spread that Casino-on-Net gave away the largest one-day bonus payout (\$40,00,000 in two-hours flat) in the history of online gambling almost a month ago, curious surfers are visiting casino sites just to have a peep on what it's all about.

"My favourites are Black-

jack and Roulette. I prefer those sites where I can play merely for fun, though I do not mind winning hard cash," says Dilpreet, one of the regulars at a Sector 15 café.

For a Net-savvy person it is fairly easy to charter a route through casino sites. All that one needs is a credit card with global acceptance, besides other essential requirements like a Net connection and a valid e-mail address. Some of the Net casinos allow playing without putting in stakes in 'practice session' or what one may call a 'test drive,' but actual playing involves filling in a form online right up to the minutest detail of entering account number and password. Most of the time, the payment is done through a credit card. Almost all sites want that the player should be above 18. But then who bothers on the Net.

Nambling is fast settling in the world of e-commerce. "It's too early to predict a change in trend but yes, the spurt in interest about e-gambling among surfers

is overt," a café owner agrees.

Interestingly, most of the e-casinos operate from the USA yet are registered and have their servers at places in the Caribbean, Gibraltar, Antigua, Kahnawake, Australia and Grenada from where they can get Internet gambling licence. Gambling is illegal in the USA and a Nambler can be fined up to \$20,000 or imprisoned or both.

Some online casinos do not accept players from the USA till the law spells out the legal aspects clearly. Even then, 90 per cent of the total gamblers are Americans. Market estimates also say that Nambling would be a \$800-million industry by 2010. For that matter, even the number of online casinos has swelled up to 1,500 from mere 200 just two years ago.

Paradoxically, this illegal activity is fair and honest primarily because casinos do not need surreptitious means and crooked games to earn. They have enough margins elsewhere.



Casinos have to get a guarantee from one of the top credible auditing firms and regular auditing is a must. Even the software they use has to be vetted by the authorities under a mandatory clause. Some of them may be slow in paying the winners but then it's their loss in the long run.

Accurate tracking and recording of cash balances is of utmost concern to Namblers. Some casinos have gambling software that provides records of transactions. The best software, according to most of the seasoned Namblers, is the Crypto-Logic's gaming software and e-cash system. The cash balance is recorded on the server as well as the computers hard drive.

It's not necessary that some software be downloaded before playing on the Net. However, downloading ensures better sound, animation and graphics quality. Financial transactions are handled by electronic cash systems akin those used for online shopping. In case, a person wins,

casinos credit back the booty through the credit card in case a player uses that to deposit money. A few of them send a personal identification number (PIN) through snail mail to aid the winner withdraw money. For example, William Hill Casino (www.williamhillcasino.com) advocates the use of PIN, for new players, at least.


Some of those in B2C portal business say that such sites have not been able to create a credible and reliable platform for those interested. Virtual is not real, after all, according to them. "Online payment for gambling is, or rather can be, made as safe as any other online shopping site. However, there are no regulatory bodies to monitor such sites. Also, most sites that offer such a service also indulge in promotion through spamming that further reduces their credibility," Dinesh Aggarwal, CEO, Indiamart, an online e-commerce enabled portal says.

Nambling threatens to be ungovernable under current legal

regimes, as most laws were not made to deal with intangible cyberspace. Even if the law takes e-casinos in its ambit, jurisdictional issues may crop up. Till then the stakes would be what a Nambler decides.

TOP 10 CASINO SITES

English Harbour — www.englishharbour.com
Caribbean Gold — www.caribbeangold.com
Captain Cook's — www.captaincookscasino.com
Blackjack Ballroom — www.blackjackballroom.com
The Sands — www.thesands.com
Slot Land — www.slotland.com
Global Player — www.global-player.com
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Jackpot Palace — www.jackpotpalace.com
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z Roopinder Singh

I-Phone 4 is here and as usual it was all over the media; it's slimmer, has a 100 improvements over the last model, the battery lasts longer and in short, you MUST have it. "What will I do with my I-phone that I can't do with my phone?" asked my wife.

Now, she is much into phones, had a smart phone years ago when they were rare, expensive, and weighed a tonne, and thanks also to Jansher, our son, is more than usually queued in about matters electronic. The query was more rhetorical than actual, since she knew the specs of the new phone as any well-informed tech-savvy person.

I was stumped. None of the things that I said seemed to be convincing enough reason for a new purchase, till I hit the nail in the head, more due to exasperation than thought, and said: "It just the way they do it."

Now, that set us thinking. We had struggled in the morning on the Indian Railways website, among the most visited websites in India, trying to book Shatabdi tickets to India, but finally giving up after many frustrating delays. Now, this is something that I have done in the past, so it is not that I was unfamiliar with the process, but the site is a good example of a counter intuitive functioning, and despite some recent improvements, retains the unmistakably tied in the blue ribbon of the morbid bureaucracy. By the afternoon, she had booked the tickets, through a travel website that was friendly and fast.

Our user experience on any website is governed by its navigation. As we navigate the site, we either bless the persons who thought of what we would be doing and made it easier for us to do it, or get exasperated with the way the website is done. We would, therefore, avoid it as much as possible in the future, and ignore its existence if we can.

When we use computers and electronic devices, the place where interaction between humans and machines occurs is called user interface. Any machine is designed to do

JUST THE WAY THEY DO IT



certain tasks, but in the case of machines that we use constantly, what sets one apart from the other, everything else being equal, is the fact that we interact better with some machines than other. The fact is that a lot of thought and attention must go into just how this interaction takes place. It is not only we who are interacting with the machine; it is the way the machine has been set up to interact with us.

In this specialised field, the website we were talking about failed, whereas others passed, as a result of which they got our business. Now, by now, long-time readers might have realised that I am among those ancient numbers who have actually worked on computers that did not have user interfaces, the DOS kinds. It is another matter that in India we often have computers that still run on them! When the Mac came out, it was

BITS AND BYTES

With growing stress levels in corporate jobs, online gaming has emerged as a good tool for relaxation

Game for it?

z Jasmine Singh

There is nothing that one can do about the grilling, tiring and exhausting 24x7 drill of a workplace. There is nothing we can do about the boss sending stinkers as and when he sees his mobile, there is nothing that one can do about staying back in the office to rustle up a weekly report. Tiring? Well then here is a quick remedy.

Online gaming can help break the monotony and is also a good stress busting exercise. So, next time, pull out five minutes from work and play Farmville to ward of that extra stress.

Pushpesh Ahuja, a software analyst with T-series, shares his schedule, "I reach office at nine in the morning and I leave my cubicle at 11pm. In between this time I get up five-six times for a refreshment break. My personal life has gone for a toss and so has my health."

Pushpesh was introduced to the world of online gaming by his wife. "A short game of Sudoku or Golf is pretty refreshing and relaxing," he sounds surprised. "I have seen my friends play online games, but I never thought it could be so addictive. For me, it works as a good stress buster."

Leisure breaks in between work are the most awaited thing in office. Anything that can take the mind off the files is always welcome. And if you can do something worthwhile like growing carrots, brinjals, and even farm animals, nothing like it! Agrees Mehak Singh Sidhu, a regional executive with Maxmark, "Any kind of online gaming is fun and relaxing. I play Snooker, Texas Poker, Mind Jolt. It is better than gossiping, discussing family problems or reading some glossy magazine." With Mehak travelling for work virtually everyday, online gaming is a wonderful proposition, which she suggests everyone working in the corporate sector could take to.

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just a phenomenon like no others. In the mid 1980s, we unpacked it straight out of the box, plugged it in, and my first story was filed that very evening, printed out on a dot-matrix printer with a font called Chicago. The machine had a nine-inch black and white screen, and as the joke went, even if you thought about opening it, the Apple warranty was void.

What a great user experience it was! WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) was a huge leap over the "control codes" equivalent to today's "mark-up codes" that had to be inputted into the typesetting machines and computers that preceded the graphic user interfaces that we are familiar with today.

Apple was not the first GUI computer; in fact, it got its GUI under license from Xerox Alto, but took the lead, and retained certain elegance in the way the GUI was executed, even as eventually Windows garnered the market share.

Apple operating system has a certain verve that makes it the favourite of creative people. Even though it has a small market share its influence on the way people use computers is undeniable. Windows GUI is inspired by the Apple OS, as is much of what we use in computers today.

Rajiv Kaul has been in love with his Apple iPhone since he got it. He takes pictures with it, uses it for communication, and much, much more. A person who was totally a Windows man, he is a partner in a company that designs graphic interfaces for software firms. They recently worked on software that helps prepare students for the SAT exams.

"Whenever we went abroad, we were told to get a Mac-like feel in our design. So we got ourselves Mac computers, and then saw the difference," he says.

It's just the way they do it. Technical details are important, but they are a tip of the iceberg that is Apple iPhone. What sets it apart, like other Apple products, like iPod, iPad and not to forget, the Apple's computers, both desktop and laptop - is the whole experience, including the hype!

Second to none



Refurbished computers are a good option if one wants to cut down on the cost

z Amitpal Singh Grewal

Today, computers can be found in almost every household, but for those who can't afford to buy one there is an option of getting hold of a used or refurbished computer. Buying a used computer from a quality sales company means that the gadget has been refurbished and tested to make sure it is in excellent working condition.

There are several advantages of buying a used computer other than procuring it for less cost. You will also receive a warranty of almost a year. Depending on where you buy it from, you will be offered the option of extended warranty. And because these computers are used, they will undergo thorough testing to make sure they are in excellent working condition. The computer you receive will look and perform like

it is completely new since the damaged components would have been replaced.

You can also get discount offers in special cases such as in the case of charitable organisations, students, senior citizens etc. While a brand new laptop will cost anywhere between Rs 40,000 to 50,000, used laptops can be bought for less than half the price.

Buying a used computer is also a blessing for the environment. Computers are made of certain toxic materials that are harmful for the environment if dumped in landfills after single use. Recycling the parts thus helps the cause of the environment.

So the next time you are looking for a computer, take out time to explore used computers, or if you are going to discard one, try and donate it.

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Geek SPEAK

Haute pick

Power driven

WD introduces its new 'My Passport Studio' portable drives with superfast FireWire 800 interface and a highly innovative customisable e-label. They are stylishly sleek and trendy, and loaded with automatic and

continuous backup software called WD SmartWare. They also have the user selected password protection. To add to it, they have packaged the product with eco-friendly recycled materials. These are available in capacities of 320 GB, 500 GB and 640 GB, and the price starts from Rs 9,600 for 500 GB and Rs 10,750 for 640 GB in India.

Stay connected



email access available only to a meager 4 per cent of the total mobile user base 'Hotmail alert on your SMS' breaks all technological barriers and helps you stay connected anytime, anywhere. All you need is a Hotmail / Live ID and a mobile phone.

"Today staying connected is very important. We have gone on to integrate two of the most widely used & needed technologies & tools that help people stay connected - email and SMS! We saw a large addressable audience who would require a service such as this to make email available to them while on the go. We wanted to ensure that it's simple, easily accessible and absolutely free! So now consumers are connected anytime

anywhere and can actually carry their Hotmail in their pocket," said Prashant Thakur, head mobile and search, Microsoft India Pvt. Ltd.

In the coming months, you can get the cool new Hotmail which integrates not only your Hotmail account but other email accounts and your social networks like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn all in your SMS. The all new Hotmail helps you integrate, share and cut the clutter in your with features such as conversation view, one click sweep, powerful spam filters and Microsoft SmartScreen. The seamless integration of Bing search within Hotmail, the Active View to view photographs & slideshows without leaving your inbox, the new 10 GB attachment limit per message in Hotmail now makes it possible to bring your virtual world to you via SMS! — TNS

Matte touch

Enjoy the best of personal computing with the all new Vaio E Series which comes in a variety of choices in screen sizes, configuration, and vibrant glossy and matte colors to match everyone's lifestyle. Gorgeously styled to stand out from the crowd, the E Series makes an unmistakable style statement. The Glossy Basic colors, Black and White, with square gradation finishes are complemented by the Glossy Vivid colors, Blue, Pink, and Green with dot gradation that demand attention when you're out and about.

E Series is the ultimate HD entertainment machine with Full HD

Display* for all the family as it offers powerful graphics and an extra-large screen in a slim chassis. Whether you're editing photos or just browsing the web, you will enjoy a high-contrast, detail-packed picture on the generously-sized and 16:9 real wide Vaio Display. The E Series models are designed with everyday ease of use firmly in mind. Touch the Web button and Quick Web Access instantly start surfing without needing to boot up Windows. For even greater convenience, Quick Web Access* offers multiple tabbed browsing and a 'split' view that is great for browsing two web pages side-by-side. — TNS

ROBOTIC HAND

If you see an army of hi-tech robots all over the NHS hospital, don't be surprised. For the first time in the UK, the state-of-the-art-technology is being used to carry out various activities. The robots will be used for transporting clinical waste and dirty linen, delivering food and dispensing drugs.

Ahead of the opening in August, the robots are being tested at the 300 million pounds Forth Valley Royal Hospital in Larbert, Stirlingshire.

The robots will operate along a dedicated network of tunnels beneath the hospital. The human staff will use a hand held personal digital assistant (PDA) system to call the robots.

The robot will then move towards the lift, collect or deliver its item and return to the lift.

This technology will work with the help of sensors, which will direct the functions.

Elspeth Campbell, spokesperson of NHS Forth Valley, said the new system would help in preventing infections.

"Staff is very pleased. It is exciting to be the first in the UK to do this," says Campbell.

"We know they work well in other hospitals elsewhere in the world. While it is new, we aren't nervous because we know it is a system that works well," Campbell added. — ANI



Charged up

Amitpal Singh Grewal

The dependency of humans on electronic items has grown by leaps and bounds. Today, one can hardly imagine a life without electronic gadgets and they have made our life convenient in more ways than one.

In general, direct-current powers static devices like computers and televisions whereas portable handheld devices such as laptops, mobiles, notebooks, tables, music and video players are battery-powered. Some devices like laptops, note books and even tablet PCs can be run on direct current as well as with in-built batteries. However, the universal truth is that all these devices need some kind of electronic energy to perform.



Geek SPEAK

But what happens if you run out of battery? What happens when you are outside your home or office with no access to any stable power sources and your mobile or laptop starts giving 'low battery' messages? Although you can find several products in the market like rechargeable batteries, high capacity batteries with long backup time, these cannot guarantee a permanent solution.

However, one can choose powerful solar battery charger for individual devices or go for a mobile laptop charger or a portable car charger so that you can even charge your batteries while on move.

Several such devices have been invented during the last few years, but more such products are the need of the hour.

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Haute pick



TIME OUT

The Travelling World Time Alarm Clock with an LED torch is a perfect companion for backpackers as well as luxury travellers. This handy gadget not only displays the time and date, it also shows world time, temperature and has an LED torch. The world time function features 18 cities from across different time zones; the clock switching easily between them at the twist of a dial so that there is no need to reset the time and date.

FEATURES:

- Perpetual calendar with 12/24 hour format display
- Daily alarm and snooze circular
- World time converter with 18 cities
- Temperature displayed in Celsius or Fahrenheit
- Countdown timer
- English, Spanish, German, French and Italian for display
- Torch with three white LEDs

Drink to it

Want to get a drink that goes well with your age and gender? Well, you can do it now as Japanese scientists have developed a new vending machine that uses facial recognition to recommend drinks based on a customer's age and gender.

Developed by JR East Water Business Co, a subsidiary of railway firm JR East Co, the machines use sensors to determine the characteristics of an approaching customer. 'Recommended' labels will then appear on specific drink products and suggested products also change depending on the temperature and time of day.

—ANI

Bits about BYTES

ROSE IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE

Roopinder Singh

People are going to access the Internet in their mother tongue in greater numbers as it becomes more and more pervasive. In India, we have many languages that are mother tongues of our people, and in the recent centuries, English has emerged as the lingua franca, which means a language used to communicate between persons who "do not share a mother tongue, in particular when it is a third language, distinct from both persons' mother tongues".

Since English is also the lingua franca of the Internet, we have an advantage of a significant base of English-speaking individuals and thus we have been able to make major inroads in the world of information technology, where English rules. Here we have a distinct advantage over China, something that is now being steadily eroded because of the emphasis that China is placing on teaching the English language to its students.

In Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, Juliet says:

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

What about rose in any other language, it not only smells the same, it is also a major literary device used by poets in other languages with as much élan.

What would Urdu poetry be without references to 'gulab'? But how would we read Urdu poetry if we don't know the language? In English translation? Much would be lost and in fact if we could read Urdu script in Hindi language, we would be nearer the original in culture and context. *Gulab* would still be *gulab*, but it would be written in a script that many would not be able to read.

Now, some computer scientists have been working on making people understand and read information that has been originally given in a language that is neither their mother tongue, nor English.

The Advanced Centre for Technical Development of Punjabi, Punjabi University Patiala, has recently

released an Urdu to Devnagari script conversion software. It also does the reverse, i.e. from Devnagari to Urdu...and it works on websites.

Dr Gurpreet Singh Lehal, director and chief coordinator of the project, demonstrated the software here in my office and indeed, the results were impressive. We saw how the Urdu newspaper from Pakistan like the Daily Jung, Nawai Waqt and Afsana were rendered in Hindi. He also converted the Dainik Tribune website into Urdu.

One can also write an email in Urdu and it will be delivered in Hindi at other end and similarly email sent in Hindi can be read in Urdu.

Dr Lehal said that his programme had been funded by The Information Society Innovation Fund (ISIF), which emphasises on applying Internet technology for the benefit of Asia-Pacific users and communities. The project was awarded to Punjabi University in 2009 after a competition in which 148 competitors from 22 countries participated.

In a credible 18 month the team comprising Dr Lehal, Dr Virinder Singh Kalra from Manchester University UK and Tejinder Singh Saini from Punjabi University, completed the project, which is now freely available on the Centre's website (<http://uh.learn-punjabi.org>). We must remember that there are differences in the way Devnagari and Arabic scripts render sounds, and thus this is not a simple case of transliterating which can introduce various howlers. Dr Lehal pointed out that the main challenges had been restoring the missing diacritical marks in Urdu text, resolving the lexical ambiguities in these languages, both at the level of characters and words. Dealing with split/merged words in Urdu script and the issue of multiple/zero equivalence of characters in the two scripts also proved challenging.

Dr Lehal claims that the current system has been tested on more than 200 documents and the word level transliteration accuracy has been found to be 98.03 per cent and 99.15 per cent for Urdu-Hindi and Hindi-Urdu transliteration systems, respectively. That would make it a hot contender for the best system in terms of transliteration accuracy.

It is interesting that a university dedicated to Punjabi has become a bridge between two other languages-Urdu and Hindi. I am sure that this software developed by the university will provide a bridge between people who have a natural cultural affinity, but are divided by the ignorance of each other's script.

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COOL CALL

Samsung India has launched a new range of frost-free and direct-cool refrigerators for the Indian market. The 29 models across four different capacities in the Inspira frost-free and Pride direct cool range, are all five star rated. Both the Inspira and Pride ranges represent the perfect blend of design, convenience and performance.

The entire Inspira frost-free refrigerator range comes equipped with dual cooling sensor (DCS) technology that ensures independent temperature controls for the freezer and fridge compartments, while the Power Surround Cooling ensures

quicker and more even cooling of the stored food. Additionally the Inspira refrigerators have the innovative Cool Pack feature in the freezer section that maintains the freezer temperature inspite of the power cuts, a Frrunch vegetable box and a stylish surf handle. The stylish Pride direct cool refrigerator models come with a clean look, new recess handle, a bigger transparent vegetable box, deep door that provides space for bigger bottles and rust proof base. Both the Inspira and the Pride range are completely stabilizer free and energy efficient with a BEE 5 star rating. Furthermore taking into account

the Indian consumers' preference for more storage space, the Samsung refrigerators break the limitation of storage space in conventional design, by providing a larger fridge section. Eg the Samsung 303L Inspira model has a 23 per cent, 77 per cent freezer to fridge ratio compared with 31 per cent: 69 per cent ratio seen in competitor models.

While the Pride series is available in 192L capacity variants priced between Rs.9,900 to Rs 11,600, the Inspira range includes models in the capacity ranging between 255L to 303L priced between Rs18,100 to Rs 26,000. — TNS



Passion Unplugged



Today's generation is so much hooked to mobiles and the Internet that depriving them of their cell phones, emails and gadgets like television and iPod could leave them suffering from symptoms similar to those seen in drug addicts trying to give up, a new study has revealed.

For the study, an international team of researchers asked volunteers to stay away from all emails, text messages, Facebook and Twitter updates for 24 hours. They found the subjects began to develop symptoms typically seen in smokers attempting to quit. Some of those subjects taking part said they felt like they were undergoing "cold turkey" to break a hard drug habit, while others said it felt like going on a diet. The condition is now being described as Infor-

mation Deprivation Disorder. "We were not just seeing psychological symptoms, but also physical symptoms," Dr Roman Gerodimos, a lecturer in communication who led the UK section of the international study, said. In fact, in the experiment, called Unplugged, the volunteers at 12 universities around the world spent 24 hours without access to computers, mobile phones, iPods, television, radio and even newspapers. They were allowed to use landline telephones or read books.

In the research, led by the University of Maryland's International Centre for Media and the Public Agenda, the subjects were asked to keep diaries about their experience. Entries in the diaries showed that many recorded feeling fidgety, anxious or isolated.

— PTI

TEAM



Wishes you all a very Happy and Prosperous New year 2011

And

specially thanks all guests, well wishers and sponsors for making the first new year's eve 2010-2011 a success!



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The use of Bluetooth technology in vehicles still does not go down well with many

NO BLUES ON THE MOVE

■ Jasmine Singh

More than often, we tend to ignore the biggest blessing - life - till the time something comes as a sudden jolt to make us sit and notice; something like a road accident. The mobile phone rings, without thinking for a second you jump to take the call, least acknowledging the unpredictability of traffic. Boom, there you go! A two-minute call could cost Rs 2,000 or even Rs 20,000, not to mention the life at stake.

Throw in 'our' word, technology and the nearest that comes to mind, to ensure safety in cars is Bluetooth. While most users feel this has reduced the chances of accidents, while others think it is not a comfortable proposition to communicate through Bluetooth in cars with someone sitting besides you. Of course, all conversations are not to be heard! What good is the invention then? Is the technology a blessing in disguise or not really?

Vivek Gohil, manager for service, Mercedes, talks about the Blue-Fi technology being offered by all Mercedes dealers wherein if you have Bluetooth on your mobile when you enter the agency, you can get all technical specifications of all models of cars on your phone. You can download the information if you want. When it comes to using Bluetooth in cars, Vivek has seen people going in for the same, but they have second thoughts as well. "Driving while talking on the phone is anyway not safe. But the new technology enables the customers to put the phone on Bluetooth and talk without any hindrance. At the same time, it is not always comfortable to talk when someone is sitting with you in the car. You wouldn't want someone else hearing your conversation," he says.



“ Driving while talking on the phone is not safe. But the new technology enables the customers to put the phone on Bluetooth and talk without any hindrance. At the same time, it is not always comfortable to talk when someone is sitting with you in the car. You wouldn't want someone else hearing your conversation

Vivek Gohil, manager for service, Mercedes

Interestingly, Bluetooth technology is much more prevalent in cars in the US than mobile phones. The solution allows drivers to keep both hands on the steering wheel while simultaneously talking on the cell phone. Despite the goodness, the technology doesn't have many takers. Hear out Janish Mittal, director, Snow View, Shimla, "It is present in top-end variants. We cannot ignore other features that are pres-

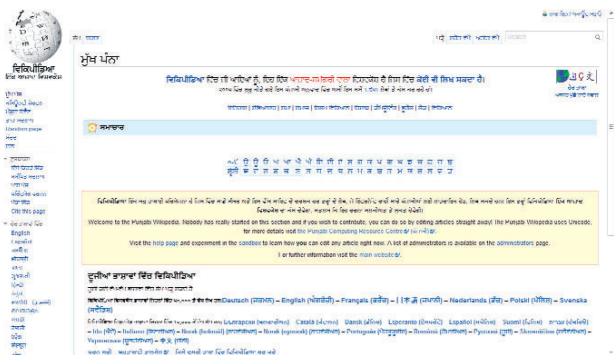
ent in the hi-end models, which the customers would like to go in for." He adds, "Of course, most customers are not comfortable talking on speakers. Using Bluetooth headphone is a better option." Bluetooth wireless handset connects to your Bluetooth cellphone, but you still need to dial the number on the cell phone. The good part is that incoming calls can be answered with the push of a button.

How can we forget that everything comes with a price and so does this one! After-market kits installed by professionals are another option. Despite this, people prefer the credibility of factory-installed Bluetooth kit. The problem persists. Raj Naresh Singh, managing director Bhagat Ford, answers in a lighter vein. "Talking on phone does distract you any which way, whether you use Bluetooth or don't. But if one feels awkward talking on Bluetooth, it can always be put on private mode." At the same time, Raj Naresh Singh does not deny the benefit of technology on long routes. Why talk on phone while travelling in the first place we believe? "It is difficult to practise what you preach," he laughs. 'Road habits' die hard, what say?

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Bits about BYTES

Build Internet's Vishavkosh



The home page of the Punjabi Wikipedia

■ Roopinder Singh

In 1930, the first definitive encyclopaedia in Punjabi, *Gurshabad Ratnakar Mahankosh*, was published. Written by Bhai Kahan Singh of Nabha, it was one of the earliest works of its kind, and is still the standard reference book consulted by all serious researchers, who wish to know more about Sikh religion, customs, heritage and ethos. Today we can access this encyclopaedia online and a PDF version of the volume can be downloaded at <http://www.rarasahib.com/downloads.htm>.

We all know that the most accessed online encyclopaedia is Wikipedia, and on January 15 it celebrated its 10 years. Wikipedia is accessed by millions of users; the site has grown from nothing to around 1.7 lakh articles. Out of this, 35 lakh are in English.

Wikipedia is making a major push to add more Indian content and it has you know, there are only 67,171 articles in Hindi. Though Punjabi was an early entrant (since 2003) it is yet to make a significant presence. As of now, there are 2,803 users and 1,949 articles, but only 27 contributors to the Punjabi wiki. By the way, there are close to 1,500 articles in Sanskrit.

Why? We really can't say, but let's make the effort to make a difference this time by writing for Wikipedia in Punjabi and Hindi. We must generate more content that people can use and be enlightened about. The procedure for adding content is rather simple, and you will have the 'early-bird' advantage. Please log on at <http://pa.wikipedia.org/wiki> to see the Punjabi and at <http://hi.wikipedia.org/wiki> for the Hindi home page.

While the quality of the Wikipedia articles is not consistent, there is no doubt that the encyclopaedia is consistently the top resource for those who are looking for information.

In fact, this is where you can help, you contribute to sharing your knowledge with others, and for this you get their gratitude and the pride of a job well done.

I would also appeal to various educational institutions, schools, colleges and universities, to get the students and the faculty involved in contributing to Wikipedia, in English as well as in the other languages.

Punjabi University,

Patiala, is one of the few universities in the world to be named after a language. It has an excellent Advanced Centre for Technical Development of Punjabi. The department has done significant work in taking Punjabi to the world of computers.

Now, we have competence in Punjabi computing. Along with it there is a commitment to the Punjabi language, which is the core of the charter of Punjabi University, Patiala. It is thus only fitting that the intellectual resources of this university should now be harnessed to publish more informative articles, in Punjabi for the online world. The university has been working on a project to translate Gurshabad Ratnakar Mahankosh, and thus from a Mahankosh to an online Vishavkosh is a natural progression.

The *Mahankosh* and the Wikipedia models are very different, but represent significant attempts to share knowledge with the world and enlighten readers. If we want to be recognized by the world, we must share what we have, so that they can appreciate it.

No doubt there will be problems adjusting to a democratic resource where anyone can challenge and change what you write, but then, this particular Wikipedia attribute has stood the test of time, and has proved again and again how even if someone mischievously changes some information, others correct it and eventually the collaborative effort brings forth objectivity and transparency.

By the way, even as far as revision is concerned, even Bhai Kahan Singh revised Gurshabad Ratnakar Mahankosh, himself, before publishing the next edition.

By contributing to Wikipedia, we will learn much ourselves and also put online knowledge about ourselves to the rest of the world. Will it make the world a better place? Let's wait and watch!

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Frame by frame

Samsung announced the launch of NX10 - its first foray into the mirror-less interchangeable lens camera segment. The Samsung NX10 has the heart of a DSLR embedded inside the compact frame of a digital camera, successfully integrating the APS-C size CMOS sensor with a mirrorless interchangeable lens, in a small, light and ergonomically designed body that ensure maximum portability for users. With the launch of its flagship, next generation NX10 camera model, Samsung is looking to establish itself as an innovator in digital still camera market.

The NX10 incorporates a fast and decisive auto focus (AF), 14.6 MP APS-C size CMOS sensor and unique, large 3.0" AMOLED screen, allowing users to easily view their images, even in bright sunlight. The 3.0" AMOLED screen facilitates by providing easier viewing in bright sunshine or at acute viewing angles, meaning users no longer need to shield their screen with their hand. The AMOLED screen also provides 30,000 times faster response rate than conventional LCDs, has lower power consumption and a higher contrast ratio - 100,000:1 vs. 500:1.

According to Ravinder Zutshi, deputy managing director, Samsung India Electronics Pvt. Ltd. "The new Samsung NX10 marks the start of the next generation of cameras. For the first time in the market, Samsung has successfully integrated an APS-C size sensor into a compact body by eliminating the mirror box, meaning that our users can now be as creative as they want to be on the move without having to compromise on image quality."

The NX10 also contains a range of intelligent features to put professional quality images within reach of the amateur photographer. First with an 18-55mm lens kit (Rs 42,990) and second with 30mm Pan Cake lens (Rs. 44,990). With the addition of this new model, Samsung's Digital Still Cameras range now comprises a total of 31 models priced between Rs. 6,990 to Rs. 44,990.

— TNS

Time to PLAY

■ Amitpal Singh Grewal

Every generation has a hit gadget, but in our case we have super hi-tech gadgets and that also so many that pointing out one is really difficult!

However, out of all, MP3 players are really popular. With all due respect to the DVD player and GPS, MP3 is clearly the favourite.

Before the MP3 player, people had to purchase portable cassette or CD players. Not only were these devices much heavier and less portable, they could only play one CD or cassette at a time. Users would only have access to ten or twelve songs at a time. In comparison, even a small MP3 player can hold a few hundred songs. MP3 players also give the users the ability to purchase only the songs they like. So, instead of paying for a full CD with two or three hit songs, they can simply download songs from the Internet for free or at a minimal price. Like any innovative new technology, the MP3 player actually saves people a lot of money.

When choosing an MP3 player, probably the most important con-



Geek SPEAK

sideration is of usage. Regardless of the manufacturer, the price and size of an MP3 player is often determined by its memory. As a general rule, the larger the player, the more memory it will have.

The size of the player is very important when you use it to work out or while travelling.

One of the most common mistakes new MP3 player owners make is that they purchase one that is too big. Larger, heavier and more expensive units can store thousands of songs, but so much storage is not required if one uses an MP3 for just 40 to 45

minutes a day. For this purpose you would want a smaller, lighter player that can hold an adequate number of songs. Moreover, even the smallest of MP3 devices can store multiple albums. For example, a player with 1 GB of storage can hold as many as 240 good quality songs.

Millions of drivers across the world are connecting their MP3 players or memory sticks to car stereos. This simple and inexpensive accessory is very convenient. A 4-GB memory is more than enough for the car. If your car stereo doesn't have a USB port to connect your player to the audio system, you will need an FM transmitter, a Bluetooth transmitter or an iPod dock that is compatible with your car stereo.

Haute pick

Lighting up

The LED rechargeable emergency lamp can be used as a light bulb, which can be attached directly to the standard type light bulb holder. It can be used as an emergency backup; once connected to the holder it will automatically light up when there is no electricity. The lamp provides 5-6 hours back-up light when fully charged. The lamp can also be removed from the holder and still be used as an emergency light or an inspection lamp in workshops or even while one is camping.



Features:

Connector: Standard bulb type holder
Back-up time: 8 to 12 hours
Charging time: 8 hours (20 hours for a dead battery)
Model NO.: YITENG YT-9181
Standard: 23LEDs
Origin: China
Material: Plastic
Installation Mode: Handle
Bulb Type: LED
Battery Type: 4.0V/600 MA
Cost - 100 to 140 INR

June 25, 1994

Dakia dak laya...ya computer pe message aya?

By Roopinder Singh

USED to be a time when lovers waited for the postman to bring messages of their loved ones, poets penned poems on the theme and songs such as "Dakia dak laya" dominated the airwaves, as they were broadcast on the radio in programmes. In the English-speaking world, there were songs like: "Please Mr Postman, have you any letter for me..."

The information highway is no longer something far away. It is accessible to people in big cities like Bombay, Bangalore, Calcutta, Delhi etc., and will soon spread to other towns.

But, as modernists would point out, times have changed. This is the era of instant gratification. Who is going to wait for a missive from a loved one, or, as some would say, the loved ones? Everyone has the inclination, but who has the time? Let's move it, man.

"Ankhon hi ankhon mein ishara ho gaya" went the popular song. That was then, as in pre-historic times. Things are different now in cyberspace (from cybernetics — the study of communications and automatic control systems), that ever-increasing digital ether which substitutes for airwaves of yesteryear.

The change in times is well reflected in the advertisement for Casio Computer Co., Ltd's new product, "My magic diary." It shows a young boy and a girl sending each other messages via the hand-held electronic diary. They agree to go out on a date while sitting across a room full of people without anyone getting to know what they are up to.

Post or regular mail, also disparagingly called land mail, is as passe as the good ol' fashioned romance or the radio. The latest gizmo in town is electronic mail, or e-mail. It is this that is dominating cyberspace now. Cyberspace is what provides the ground for the "information highway" which connects millions of computer users with big electronic networks, information repositories and electronic message services.

The electronic highway is linked in many ways, including phone networks (in many cases via fibre optic cables), infrared, microwave and laser links, as well as satellite connections.

Technically, e-mail is a term which covers all non-interactive communication of data and as such includes telex and fax ser-

vices, but the definition has been narrowed down to the process of sending or receiving messages between computers over the telephone/satellite networks.

E-mail has revolutionised communication and everyone — from students to scientists, bureaucrats to businessmen — is jumping on the e-mail bandwagon. Even Pres-

a fee for which they let you access the system and send/retrieve messages which are stored in electronic mail boxes, the equivalent of post office boxes in the traditional system. Every user has his own unique mailbox.

Often, companies set up their

promptly did — much to the amusement of the rest of the office and the discomfort of the couple!

Such instances apart, most companies go in for e-mail services because of the ability to exchange information instantaneously and thus effect prompt

corporate companies.

Private networks are showing a great interest in new markets like Chandigarh which have been targeted by Access, of BI Infotech, Bombay; Uninet India, Hyderabad and DART, Bombay. The Madras-based Sterling computers has been given licences for 40 cities, including Ludhiana and Amritsar. Other private e-mail providers include Icnnet, Madras and GEMS400 of the VSNL, Bombay.

seductive.

As an article in *Wired* magazine says of Internet, the mega-network of networks which has over 15 million subscribers: "It eliminates the barriers of race, sex, attractiveness and social grace. Many social ills arise from perceptions of differences based on physical characteristics. In cyberspace, everyone's body is the same: Nobody has one."

Internet was used by Chinese

There is this apocryphal anecdote of these two love-birds exchanging messages and enjoying their little cyberspace tete-a-tete till one day, by mistake one of them told the machine to "broadcast" the message, which it promptly did — much to the amusement of the rest of the office

Many more companies are expected to provide e-mail service soon, and there are a number of tie ups with international networks.

The Bombay based Asian Paints is a pioneer of sorts in corporate e-mailing in India. It depends on e-mail to transfer production, distribution and sales-related data between its 12 offices in different parts of the country. Analysts credit much of the 500 crore company's competitive edge to its adaptation of ultra modern technologies like e-mail.

The cost savings also help. Hero Motors was trying hard to control its swelling fax, telex and long distance phone bills when it switched to e-mail in 1992. They had been paying more than Rs 60,000 per month and were understandably shocked when they received the e-mail bill of Rs 250! Sending a one-page message by e-mail costs about 1/3 the fax rate on most networks, on some it is even less!

This is because in most cities, like Delhi, Bombay, Bangalore etc., calls to electronic networks are local. Where they are not, users make a reduced rate STD call to the nearest centre. Once the e-mail message has been received by the centre, it is routed through high-speed data links to its destination.

Often, you are asked to specify the priority to be assigned (the sooner you want to send it, the more you pay), and the message is pooled accordingly. Of course, you can carry on a simultaneous "conversation", participate in a discussion with others in different corners of the world etc.

The most important use of e-mail is simple connectivity, the ability to interact with millions of computer users all over the world, and many users find the combination of intimacy and anonymity which e-mail BBS's give, very

students to report on the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre after the Chinese government banned all news reports. E-mail also played a major role in thwarting the 1991 coup against Gorbachev. It disseminated the non-official information all over and was also used to convey crucial messages of support from the western leaders and the NATO to Boris Yeltsin, who was surrounded by tanks in the "White House," the Russian parliament.

The only way this electronic dissemination could have been stopped would have been if the whole telephone networks had been shut down, since all it took to send a message was a modem connected with any phone. And, of course, the authorities needed the phone networks for their own communications.

The staggering possibilities of exchanging data this freely have raised their own fears and there have been various attempts to monitor or regulate the electronic traffic, but to no avail.

Will the computer pe message ever replace the one which the *dakia* brings? One doubts it. Telephones, telegrams, telexes and faxes have all supplemented the *dakia* not replaced him. What the consumer gets is not a substitute, but an important option, with its own advantages and disadvantages.

Would a love message on e-mail evoke the same reaction as a perfumed, lovingly hand-written love letter? Or the "Ankhon hi ankhon mein ishara..." "One would say: "No way! Nothing like the real thing!"

But there is more to life than exchanging love letters and e-mail is here, it is now available and is your electronic window to the world of information technology. You just have to get hooked to it. Happy e-mailing.

Tribune Features

Ranjit Singh

Last flicker of hope before darkness

By Sant Singh Sekhon

WITH Ranjit Singh's death on June 27, 1839, died the last hope of a renaissance India faced with the might of British imperialism. Patriotic voices from all over India, from among the Marathas, the Rajputs and others, and even from Nepal had been exhorting him to strike for India's emancipation from British rule. But in vain. He had listened unmoved, rather sardonically amused.

With the shrewdness of a peasant that Ranjit Singh essentially was, he had read the writing on the wall. On one occasion when shown the map of the British empire in India with its boundaries marked in red, he is reported to have observed that not long after his death the red would spread over the Punjab also.

When the treaty of Ropar was foisted upon him in 1829, it looked for once that he would find the courage to give fight to the British. For he was being obliged to forswear forever his natural mission of uniting the Punjab under single sway. The Phulkas and some other local chiefs south of the Sutlej were, unjustly taken under their wing by the British.

world they had been, and have bitterly felt that they were betrayed by their own treacherous generals and administrators.

But they have seldom pondered over the fact that it is the generals and administrators of the decade, indeed the weaker side, that have any reason to be treacherous. An army or nation really capable of victory can never be betrayed.

The Sikhs, before or after Ranjit Singh, could never hope to defeat British power in India. If they had won at Ferozepore, they would have lost at Ambala. And if they had won even at Ambala, they would have lost at Delhi. That was the inexorable logic of history at that time.

But as the English poet, Auden, has admirably put it: "History to the defeated can only say alas." And for long periods individuals and nations continue to draw emotional comfort from the brave part that they may have played even in their defeat.

The Punjab has, often in Indian history, looked standing like a peer, a rival of Hindustan. The Bactrians, the Scythians, the Kushans about 2,000 years ago

Maharaja Ranjit Singh died on June 27, 1839.

This was a bitter pill to swallow for one like Ranjit Singh who had an uninterrupted career of successes so far. Indeed, the common feeling in the Punjab was that he was invincible, that he had been invested by providence with the mission of redeeming the Hindus in India after their centuries long humiliation by Muslim conquerors; that he was indeed the Emperor Aurangzeb reborn as a Hindu to expiate for his sins against the Hindu people.

The loss of an eye was regarded by popular superstition as a punishment for the unfairness of his rule as Aurangzeb. His kindly treatment of Muslims in the Punjab had created an impression that he would not repeat Aurangzeb's mistake.

Even the most cautious and the shrewdest of Ranjit Singh's ministers, Raja Dhian Singh Dogra, had insisted on giving a fight. He had even accused Ranjit Singh of lacking courage. But Ranjit Singh knew better.

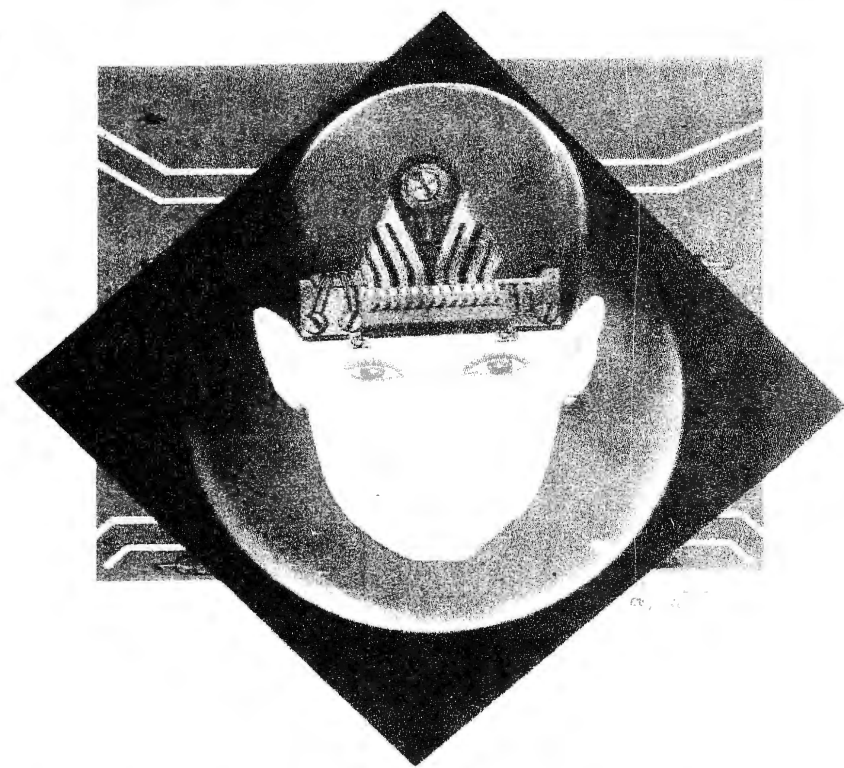
Of course, the Sikhs had ultimately to fight the British empire, and they lost. The battles they fought were very tough indeed, comparable in military and political significance to the greatest battles in history before the First Great War. Sikhs and some others sympathetic to them have never since forgotten how near victory over the mightiest power of the

had made it the centre of their empire. At the beginning of the next millennium the Ghaznavis built it into a separate empire with their capital at Lahore. And when in 1193 Prithvi Raj of Delhi lost to Shahabuddin Ghor, it had again been a contest, in a way, between the Punjab and Hindustan.

Towards the end of the next millennium, between the British on the one hand and Ranjit Singh and his peasant armies on the other, the Punjab again stood apart from the rest of India; so that the great Anglo-Sikh war of 1845-46 was called by the poet Shah Mohammad a contest between Hind and Punjab, in which the Punjabis (Sikhs, Dogras and Muslims) were fighting against Hindustanis, Purabis and Dakhanis, and the Punjabis were exhorted to uphold the great reputation of the Sikh sepoy.

In fact, to Shah Mohammad, as to most people in those days, the terms, Punjabi and Sikh, were almost synonymous, even though Shah Mohammad takes note of Dogras and Muslims fighting by the side of the Sikhs. In this war against precedents from Indian history, the Punjab represented native Indian power, and the rest of India was under alien rule. The Punjab lost to the alien power, and thus failed to redeem national sovereignty.

Capital Features



ident Bill Clinton of the USA is linked to e-mail via the Compu Serve network.

How does e-mail work? Your computer must have a modem which connects it to a telephone outlet and converts the (binary digital) computer signals into (analog sound) signals for the phone line and vice versa.

Once your computer has the modem connected to a phone line, you dial the phone number of the network/computer you want to communicate with and if the two are compatible (romance isn't dead after all), then they can send/receive data. Modern e-mail systems make it easy to connect even normally incompatible computer operating systems such as MS-DOS, Macintosh, UNIX etc.

Mostly the e-mail connections are linked to bulletin board systems (BBS). A BBS is an information and message service accessible to computers. It is a sort of electronic post office and a data repository rolled into one.

Most of the BBS services charge

own e-mail networks for intra-office work. These are very useful in streamlining the work and speeding up the response time between various functionaries.

When you get to your computer and switch it on, it gives you the various messages it received in your absence. You can answer them and send back your replies in a jiffy. The moment you read your message, the sender knows that it has been read.

Most of the communications are now encrypted, and only the recipient's computer can decode the messages. Thus, secrecy is maintained to a high degree.

Where there are people the personal angle comes in. Many a time the messages could be like "Let's have coffee together," "The boss is a jerk", or even love messages.

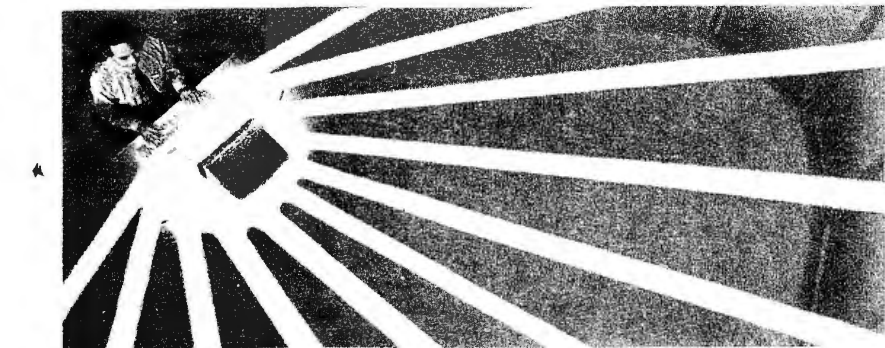
There is this apocryphal anecdote of these two love-birds exchanging messages and enjoying their little cyberspace tete-a-tete till one day, by mistake one of them told the machine to "broad-

cast" the message, which it decisions. The computer manufacturer Hewlett-Packard has a network of 94,000 mail boxes which deliver over 350 million e-mail messages to its 90,000 employees!

The information highway is no longer something far away. It is accessible to people in big cities like Bombay, Bangalore, Calcutta, Delhi etc., and will soon spread to other towns.

Chandigarh is already connected with government networks like Nicnet, the Delhi-based National Informatics Centre's Insat I-D satellite-based data network which connects 270 district headquarters. Nicnet facilities will soon be made available to private parties, and a show-room has already been earmarked for this, according to informed sources.

The Education and Research Community Network (Ernet) is also accessible from Chandigarh. This network links 170 research and education institutions all over India. It is also used by



By Sylvia Torres

Nicaragua's hi-tech highway

THE 'mailbox' serves pretty much the same function as the one at your local post office. The password is like the key you use to open your mailbox, and the electronic address is the place where you want to send your messages."

As Martha Silvia Zepeda explains the use of electronic mail to a group in Nicaragua, her students concentrate on every word she says.

Although a decade behind industrialised nations, Nicaragua is now advancing slowly but energetically along the high-tech road of computer telecommunications.

Ten years ago, as a civil war raged, even access to a personal computer was a distant dream for Nicaraguans. Owning a computer was out of the question.

Today, thanks to Internet and Association of Progressive Communications (APC), two of the largest international electronic networks, Nicaraguans can now be linked with over a million

computers around the globe.

The credit for heralding this information revolution in the 1980s goes to the staff of the Regional Centre for Economic and Social Research (CRIES).

Many are surprised to learn that this coffee-and-sugarcane-growing nation, poor even among the developing countries, is now at the forefront of electronic communications in the Central American region.

According to statistics from the customs department, at the end of the 1980s, there were about 8,000 computers in this country of 3.5 million people. But personal computers soon became so common that today no one in either government or the private sector has any idea of the number of computers in the country.

In 1980 CRIES installed a network "node", called Nicarao, that serves as a clearing-house for electronic data transmissions. The

aim of the node was to facilitate communication between the various "CRIES" offices in other countries.

In 1989 the network extended to other institutions and non-governmental organisations in Nicaragua, and by 1991 it established a full Central American network accessible to all subscribers.

The Nicarao network quickly became a reflection of the region's budding civil society. Environmental, human rights and women's organisations soon became adept at sending and receiving electronic messages from their counterparts in neighbouring countries.

Even some news services, such as Women's Feature Service and Inter Press Service, took advantage of the network to bring their stories to new readers.

Now experts say that there has already been a second information revolution in Nicaragua.

At the end of March this year, the Nicaraguan University of Engineering (UNI), through the Nicaraguan Academic and Information Network (RAIN), established a direct 24-hour contact with the now celebrated Internet.

Earlier RAIN, which managed the Nicaraguan Internet node since 1988, provided e-mail services only to academic researchers. This year, with the support of the government and the United Nations, RAIN established a direct line with Internet.

Besides facilitating the exchange of messages, RAIN now allows professors, researchers, students, activists and others, almost instant access to the databases of the most important universities and institutions of the planet, such as NASA or the White House.

Internet allows its users to read, copy and print out all sorts of information.

Nicarao allows its 500 users in Central America to participate in electronic "conferences", a sort of virtual forum where people can discuss specific topics such as human rights, literature and environment.

While WFS was interviewing the six young women who run Nicarao from a small Managua office, Socorro Flores, the coordinator, was at her computer, participating in a technical meeting with representatives of the 15 APC nodes around the world.

On the flickering screen was a message: "Jill Small (from the Green Net node in Britain) is here". Karen Banks of the Pegasus node in Australia pitched in: "I want to be a part of this work." Sue Mooney announced from the United States that she is a sociologist who speaks Mandarin, does volunteer work and is willing to help in any way.

These and many other electro-

nically savvy women came together to help women's groups worldwide communicate and carve strategies for the forthcoming International Conference on Women scheduled to be held in Beijing in 1995.

Being able to communicate with people around the world three times a day is a remarkable luxury for the region's NGOs, who otherwise, would have to rely on airmail or pay exorbitant long-distance telephone bills.

In spite of the fact that Nicaragua faces poverty comparable to that in some African countries, computers have lost their exotic, science-fiction image.

With the end of the civil war, and with the progress in computer technology, an increasing number of Nicaraguans now have sophisticated machines in offices, factories, homes and schools.

As the 21st century draws nearer, for Nicaraguans, the networks of Nicarao and RAIN, have become gateways to development.

WFS