

Tech Focus

Beep, beep... SMS barrier broken!



MUSTAK HOSSAIN

A local software firm has developed solutions to send bulk text messages to cellphone subscribers to initiate an alternative medium of communication to reach wireless audience.

Business Automation Limited (Bal) has developed three types of applications for Short Message Service (SMS) to terminate bulk messages, a senior official of the company said.

"We have developed SMS gateway, push-and-pull and web-based SMS applications," Business Automation's Executive Director Jahidul Hasan Mitul told The Daily Star last week.

He said SMS gateway is an ideal application for corporate houses, as it enables users to send bulk SMS to their target wireless audience. It could be used for company disclosure or disseminate information quickly among its clients or workers, Mitul elaborated.

He added push-and-pull -- the

second application -- helps cell phone users to gather information just from sending an SMS to a specific gateway number, where ready information is stored in a server.

GrameenPhone (GP), the leading cellphone operator, has launched different value-added services in push-and-pull mode from where subscribers can pull down various information including local and foreign news, sports updates and currency rates just by sending an SMS.

The web-based application, the third in line, is a solution to send SMS from websites, if the application is configured on a website.

"What the prospective gateway client has to do is use a SIM (Subscribers Identification Module) with a GSM modem and install the software to send SMS," Mitul added.

Corporate clients or content providers, in case of terminating bulk SMS, could reach an agreement with cellphone

providers to have a special discount rate as the system is there in many countries, he added.

Mitul said there is a tremendous potential for SMS applications as text message is becoming increasingly popular in the country and most cellphone operators have introduced such facilities. Currently, there are over 1.5 million cellphone users in the country.

"First, we developed solutions for GSM (global system of mobile communications) operators based on the GSM modem but we have the technology that works out for CDMA (code division multiple access) operators. There



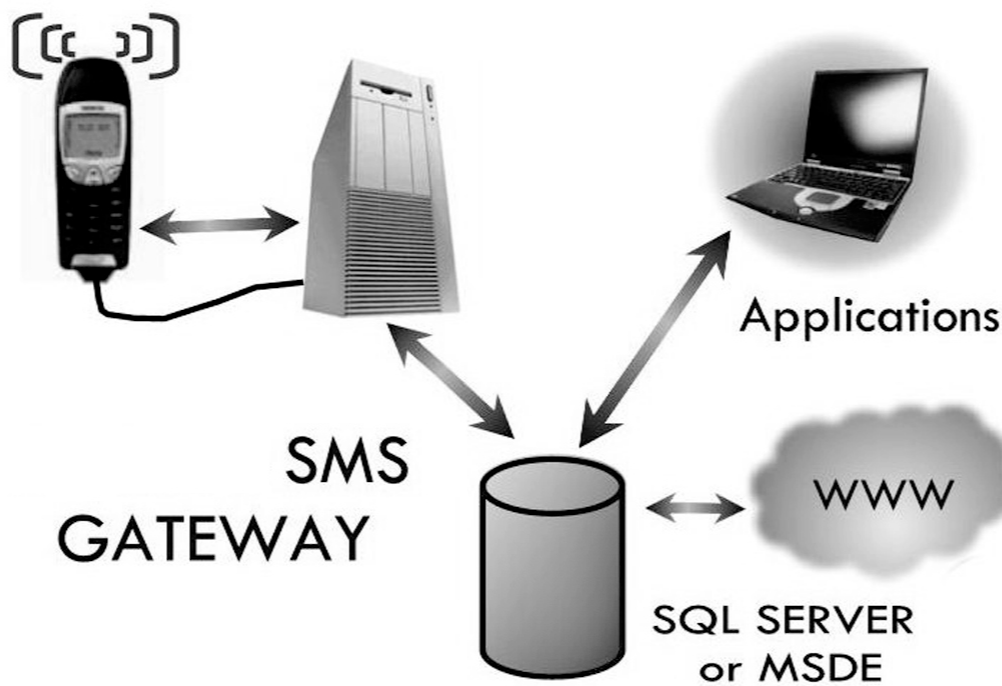
are three GSM operators and one CDMA operator in the country."

The SMS market would grow faster if there were inter-operator SMS connectivity, Mitul said adding that the cellphone users currently can send text messages to mobile phones run by the same operator.

GP, which has inter-operator agreement with 166 operators globally, is able to send and receive SMS to and from those operators abroad but GP users are to be able to send SMS to CityCell, AKTEL or Sheba subscribers at home.

Telecom Malaysia International Bangladesh (TMIB), the service provider of AKTEL, plans to improve on its short message service centre (SMSC) by year-end, an official said.

Officials at Sheba Telecom said they would consider expanding the SMSC or reaching an agreement with other operators to facilitate its users to send and receive SMS from other phones.



Tech News

Security goes Skyroute

STAR TECH DESK

SECURITY industry is now better off with a new technology styled Skyroute, which has been launched by Digital Security Control (DSC) Ltd., a premier manufacturer of intrusion alarm systems and detection devices in the world.

Skyroute helps security industry quickly trace areas wherever an intrusion takes place. It is a hi-tech device that communicates with the central station using the breakthrough technology called Cellemetry Data Service as soon as an alarm is triggered at the monitored site. Skyroute enables alarm equipment to prevent intrusion.

Cellemetry Data Service is a breakthrough technology that transmits short messages through control channels of cellular network. It works similar to the technology used for the cellular phones in a roaming network. When a cellphone is operated outside its home system it sends its mobile identification

number (MIN) and electronic serial number (ESN) to the cellular system through one of the control channels.

Basing on the cellphone number, the local cellular switch communicates with the home system through the SS7 network. The Cellemetry radio, like a roaming telephone, sends its MIN and ESN numbers through the SS7 network, but the MINs are specifically assigned so that the MIN and ESN are routed to the Cellemetry gateway which is also connected with the SS7 cellular network.

Connect 24, a member of DSC group of companies, is the service provider specifically designed to offer the Skyroute service to the security industry. Founded in 1997, Connect 24 has put in place a secure facility that meets the highest standards of UL (Underwriters' Laboratories) ratings for the routing of critical condition signals. It also offers reliable and fully automated system for the activation of Skyroute transceivers.



As a routing centre, Connect 24 receives signals from the cellular network and re-routes them to the central station. Skyroute transceivers receive a confirmation of delivery of an alarm condition or opening/closing of the central station, eliminating the chance of signal loss.

Skyroute is helpful for fast security access. It is reliable and fully automated. The technology is so fast that the "first" signal is sent by the Skyroute in fractions of a second and there would not be any delay unless consecutive signals are sent. Over 140 countries are using such security controls provided by the DSC Ltd., a leading manufacturer of electronic products.

HP awards the lucky ones

STAR TECH DESK

HEWLETT-PACKARD (HP) Grand Lucky Draw monthly prize distribution ceremony was held at a local restaurant on November 4.

The winners for the September slot won air tickets to Thailand and Nepal. They are Aminul Islam Liton from BCCP and Kawub Uddin Ahmed from Shyamoly Garments.

Shabbir Shafulah, sales manager-IPG, Rumesa Hussain, business development manager-PSG and Rezwana Ali, support manager-



Bangladesh from HP were present at the occasion.

Aminul expressed his joyous emotions, "This is the first time I have ever won a prize. We have 18 HP laser printers in our office." Aminul got lucky after buying a HP LJ1300.

"I never thought that using tech products can be so surprisingly

rewarding. I am looking forward to the final draw."

Hewlett Packard has recently launched a mega promotion, "Travel the World with HP" Grand Lucky Draw 2003.

The promotion spans a period of three months starting from 18th Aug to 30 Nov 2003. Shoppers who buy any selected HP product will stand a chance to win air tickets to dream destinations round the world every month, plus there is a Grand Lucky Draw at the end of the promotion. The Grand Prize is a Round-the-World Air Ticket.

Photo Tech



PHOTO: AFP

This NASA Mars Global Surveyor (MGS) Mars Orbiter Camera (MOC) image obtained on November 5, shows patterns created by subliming carbon dioxide frost in the south polar region of Mars. The circular feature on the west (left) side of the image is a meteor impact crater; its center is just out of view. The dark, spotted features at the bottom and right are patches of windblown sand that have been covered with frost. In this springtime image, the frost has been subliming away for several months. As frost is removed from the patches of sand, it creates a pattern of dark spots.

Star Tech Quiz

65

Check the box beside the correct answer

1. Which is the best hard disk seek time?

- 5ms 20ms
 10ms 100ms

2. What piece of hardware do EIDE cables connect to?

- floppy disk cooling fan
 video card hard disk

Name: _____ Occupation: _____

Address: _____

Contact Number: _____ E-mail: _____

Last week's answers

1. rem 2. 33Mhz

Winners: Shafkat Hossain

5/6 Arambag, Dhaka

Please fill this up and send your answers to Star Tech Quiz, The Daily Star, 19 Karwan Bazaar, Dhaka 1215 by November 17, 2003.

Celestial Delight

Red Moon dives behind Earth

BBC ONLINE

A total lunar eclipse has been visible this weekend from Europe, Africa, the Americas, and much of Asia.

The Moon regularly passes into the Earth's shadow and becomes dimmer. It happens about every six months or so.

A lunar eclipse has no great importance astronomically but can be enjoyed by many people without special equipment.

The Moon started to enter the outer edges of our planet's shadow from 2215 GMT on Saturday.

Majestic clockwork
Mid-eclipse took place between 0106 and 0131 GMT on Sunday as the Moon transited the southern edge of the Earth's shadow.

Totality was quite short this time because the Moon only passed just inside the full shadow of the Earth, and the Moon's southern edge, in particular, remained fairly bright.

As the show progressed, the Moon got dimmer and turned reddish during mid-eclipse, when the only light that could reach the lunar surface was red light refracted through the Earth's atmosphere.

Astronomers scrutinised the Moon's surface through telescopes to note how its appearance changed as the Sun was obscured by the Earth.

The Moon left the last bit of shadow at 0422 GMT.

Skywatchers in North America were able to see the eclipse begin in twilight as the Moon rose on Saturday evening.

Imperturbable serenity

Although lunar eclipses have no great scientific significance, they are a spectacle of nature that delights and enralls.

In the past things were different. It was a portent from the sky, possibly a sign of divine displeasure.

But as superstition has given way to reason, a lunar eclipse has rightly come to be regarded as an example of the majestic clockwork of the heavens.

Thomas Hardy said the movement of the Earth's shadow over the Moon had an "imperturbable serenity".

The colour effect is the stuff of myth and legend. An account in 331

BC said: "...all her light was sullied and suffused with the hue of blood."

Some ancients called it "the time of the blood of the Great Mother's wisdom", linking the Moon's colour with menstruation.

This was a natural thing to do given the link between the length of the month and human fertility.

Ugly orange glow
In 1503, Christopher Columbus, stranded in the Caribbean, used a lunar eclipse he knew would take place to impress the natives and secure respect and fear, as well as a regular supply of food.

In the UK, countryside campaigners have used the eclipse to highlight the increasing problem of

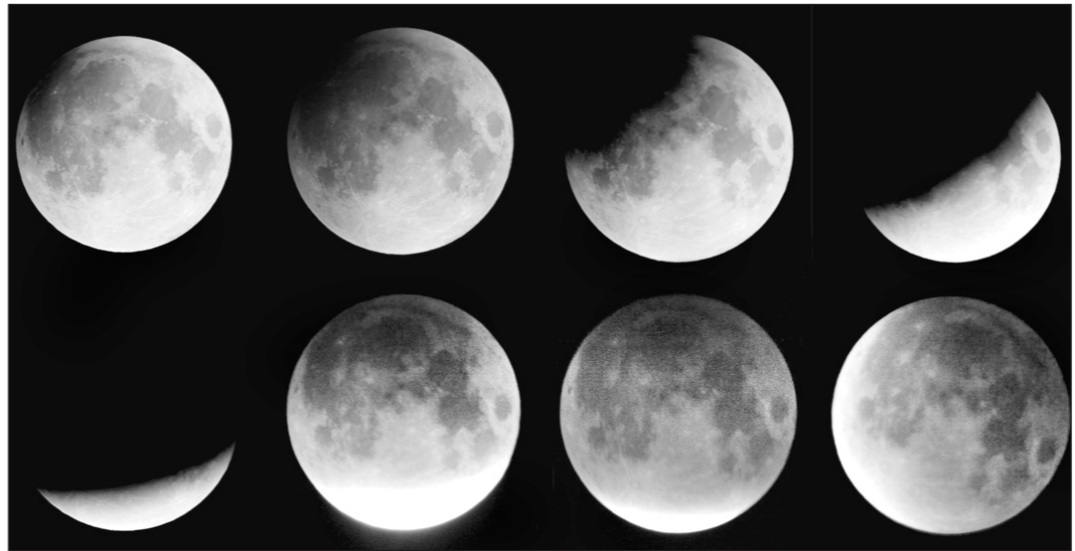
light pollution of the night sky.

The Moon was visible in southern England and East Anglia, although dense cloud blocked the view in the north of England and Scotland.

But the CPRE says scattered light from towns and cities is all too often snuffing out the stars - however clear the skies may be.

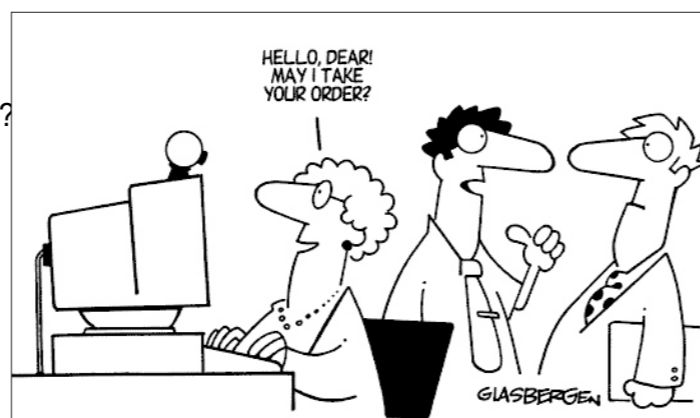
"A lunar eclipse is spectacular, but more often than not the sky in which it appears is smeared with an ugly orange glow from light pollution," said Tom Oliver, the CPRE's head of rural policy.

"Why should thoughtless, wasteful outdoor lighting spoil so many people's views of the heavens?"



Combo shows the evolution of a lunar eclipse seen over the western town of Essen, in the night from November 08 to 09.

Tech Toon



"Some people are still afraid to use their credit card online, so I set up our e-store with a web cam and a grandma."

Tech News

Computer Jagat Mega Quiz Competition 2003

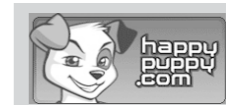


The prize giving ceremony of monthly tech magazine -- Computer Jagat's 'Mega Quiz Competition 2003' was held on November 10 at Hotel Sonargaon.

Aftab Ul Islam, president, American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh was present as the chief guest while Sabur Khan, president, Bangladesh Computer Samity, ASM Abdul Fattah, chairman, Global Brand (Pvt.) Ltd. and Indrajit Sarkar, chief representative, Ingram Micro Asia Ltd. were also present at the ceremony.

Best 10 Websites

Category: Game Sites



Happy Puppy
Keep up to date with the top games including Nintendo, Dreamcast & web games.
URL: <http://www.happypuppy.com/>



GameSpot
Top gaming site from ZDNet with news, reviews, game guide, hints & much more.
URL: <http://www.gamespot.com/>



GameLand
Astonishing array of shockwave games.
URL: <http://www.gameland.com/>



GameScene
Wide variety of cool games to keep the neurons firing.
URL: <http://www.gamescene.com/>



Gamasutra
Top hub for game designers, artists, developers & producers.
URL: <http://www.gamasutra.com/>



Gamers Central
Explore the world of gaming.
URL: <http://www.gamerscentral.net/>



GameSpy
Fun fun fun.
URL: <http://www.gamespy.com/>



Gamers.com
Gamers resources, news & boards.
URL: <http://www.gamers.com/>



SGI
Freeware games from SGI.
URL: <http://www.sgi.com/fun/freeware/games.html>



FlipSide
Movie games, card games, party games, board games & more - in four languages.
URL: <http://www.flipside.com/>