

# 24th GSM asia pacific conference DHAKA 2006



banglalink™

host operator:  
banglalink

Special Supplement

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**Minister**  
Ministry of Post & Telecommunications  
Government of the People's  
Republic of Bangladesh

### Message

I am delighted to know that the 24th GSM Asia Pacific meeting is being held in Dhaka and hosted by banglalink. Holding of this international event emphasizes the successful growth of the telecommunication sector of Bangladesh. The government of Bangladesh has been following a pragmatic policy which has contributed towards the development of the telecom sector, especially GSM telephone. GSM is fastest growing communications technology of all time. GSM accounts for 78% of the world's digital mobile market and 75% of the world's wireless market with more than a billion customer worldwide covering over 213 countries.

Today, GSM telephony has been made affordable for which common people can afford such modern tool of communication.

I am confident that the 24th GSM Asia Pacific meet will discuss various issues relating to further develop the GSM communication, especially for developing countries of Asia Pacific.

I wish the conference a great success.

**Barrister Aminul Hoque**

As the world's fastest growing mobile phone operator, banglalink have achieved nationwide coverage and a customer base of over 1.6 million people in less than a year. It is our pleasure to be able to host the 24th edition of the prestigious



**Chief Executive Officer**  
banglalink

GSM Asia Pacific Conference for the first time in Bangladesh. On behalf of banglalink, I would like to extend the warmest welcome to the delegates and wish the conference every success.

**Lars P. Reichelt**



**Chairman**  
GSMAP

### Message

GSMAP is a regional group of GSM Association with members from the region of East Asia, South East Asia, South Asia and Pacific Area. Its members include Japan, the most advanced mobile market in the world and China the largest emerging mobile market in the world.

In view of the fast technological development in the field of telecommunications, it is extremely important to keep abreast with the latest trends in mobile telecommunications development. However, we realize that different countries have different paces of technology development and at different times, they need to meet different objectives, such as, dealing with regulatory issues, selecting and adopting different technology standards and implementing network system upgrades, among other issues.

GSMAP can provide a platform for all mobile operators in the region on which they can share experience and latest technologies, and enhance the co-operations in international interconnecting and international roaming services among the mobile networks, to achieve mutual benefit in the industry. I believe GSMAP will endeavor to drive the industry development into a healthier state and narrow the gaps between the developed markets and the developing markets.

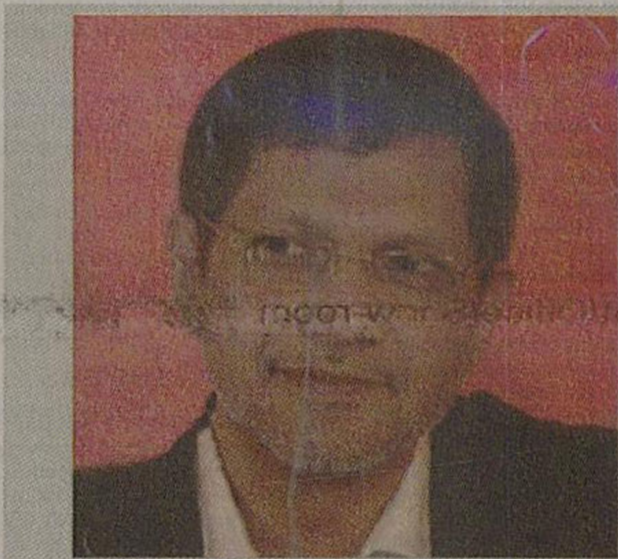
**Simon Zhang**

## GSM Asia Pacific Comes to Bangladesh

24th GSM Asia Pacific Meeting in Dhaka is truly an international event which is being hosted in South Asia for the first time in its history.

GSMAP is the Asia Pacific Interest Group of the GSM Association, the premier global body, behind the world's leading wireless communications standard. GSMAP represents 90 operators in 35 countries of Asia Pacific and currently serves over 573.7 million GSM customers which include 22.3 million connections in Japan which is using 3GSM technology.

GSM Asia Pacific is the leading representative body of the wireless industry in Asia Pacific. The mobile operator



**Deputy Chairman**  
GSMAP &  
Chief Commercial Officer  
banglalink

twice every year to discuss common issues to GSM mobile operators in this region, exchange views and ideas and share best practices. The objective of GSMAP also is to deliver the benefits of technology to the doorsteps of consumers of this region and work with local government bodies to ensure level playing fields for operators.

During the last GSM Asia Pacific Meeting#23 which was held in Beijing, China the governing body and members had expressed their confidence in banglalink to be host operator of this meeting and have selected Bangladesh as the host country.

members drive the organization and GSMAP represents their common views and key stakeholders of the Mobile Industry.

**Mehboob Chowdhury**

### Mobile is the key to bridging the digital divide

One hundred dollar laptops are being widely-touted as the way to give the developing world access to the powerful information and communication technology that has transformed the U.S, Europe and other prosperous countries. But even the eye-catching price tag of \$100 is going to be too expensive for the 2.5 billion people worldwide living on less than \$2 a day.

Thankfully, there is another high-tech tool, which is already low-cost, robust and frugal with electricity - the mobile phone. Although mobile phones don't have all the features found in a laptop, they can deliver services - voice calls, text messages and, increasingly access to email and the Internet - that meet the needs of the hundreds of millions of farmers, fishermen, stall holders and other small business people.

Just like a laptop with an Internet connection, mobile phones can quickly connect buyers and sellers, coordinate vaccinations programmes, help the unemployed find jobs, transfer electronic payments and perform all kinds of other important tasks that normally require a lengthy journey.

All that equates to substantial social and economic benefits. London Business School estimates that a 10% increase in mobile penetration in a developing country can boost that country's economic growth rate by 0.6 percentage points per annum.

In some developing countries, such as the Philippines, mobile phones



**Chairman**  
GSMA

### Message

are bringing basic financial services to people who can't afford to tap into the conventional banking sector. Thanks to the efficiency of their existing billing systems, mobile phone operators in the Philippines charge very small transaction fees for people to transfer money electronically.

Already inherently more affordable than laptops, the price of mobile phones is now falling fast. The GSM Association has led an industry-wide initiative that has successfully reduced the wholesale cost of entry-level mobile handsets from about \$100 to below \$30 within 18 months. Thanks to the falling cost of components, \$20 handsets should be available before the end of next year.

Falling prices are having a massive impact. The global mobile industry

is now connecting more than one million people a day compared with about 600,000 a day three years ago. As a result, the United Nations' target -- 50% of the world's population should have access to communications by 2015 -- will almost certainly be hit by 2010. Within a few years, the mobile industry will have more customers in the developing world than the developed. What's more, these customers are being connected without the financial support of governments or charities.

On the contrary, the policies of some governments actively work against the proliferation of mobile phones. Taxes and import duties mean even the lowest-priced handsets often cost a lot more than \$30 at retail. An erratic approach to regulation in some countries means investors in the mobile sector face

unnecessarily high risks, forcing them to either curb their capital spending or seek a faster return than they would otherwise do.

If governments really want to narrow the digital divide they should concentrate on tackling these issues. In the last three years, the Pakistani government has shown the way by establishing a clear regulatory regime and cutting import duties on handsets to zero. Mobile usage is soaring - the proportion of Pakistanis with mobile phones has jumped to over 13% from less than 1% in 2000.

But even with the aid of Governments, the GSMA believes the mobile phone, never mind the laptop, will remain too expensive for more than one billion of the poorest people worldwide for the foreseeable future. To open up telecommunications to these people, the GSMA is coordinating projects designed to encourage entrepreneurs in the developing world to set up 'mobile payphone' businesses. Equipped with a specially-adapted handset, these entrepreneurs can rent airtime to local people who need to contact someone, but lack their own phone.

Hundred dollar laptops attract a lot of headlines in rich countries accustomed to computers costing five times that figure. But, realistically, it is going to take ultra low-cost initiatives, such as mobile payphones, to actually close the digital divide.

**Craig Ehrlich**

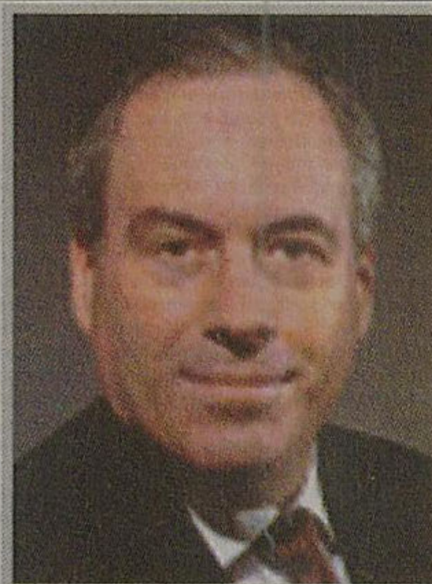
### Enhancing the value of mobile

The GSM industry continues to develop and expand at an astonishing rate. The pace of innovation is increasing and the market demands effective solutions be delivered at ever-greater speeds.

As the global body representing operators worldwide, it is essential that the GSM Association evolves with the industry in order to best facilitate market growth and enhance the industry's total value.

One of the most significant industry developments of recent times is the growth of mobile-specific multimedia applications, which has increased dramatically the range of mobile content available and the choices of access to it. To reflect this change, the GSMA is focused on fostering close ties with the content community.

Of course, convergence also brings challenges. The GSMA is therefore seeking to promote the positive, creative and responsible use of new technology and



**Chief Executive Officer**  
GSMA

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content services whilst working to facilitate international co-operation between its members, governments and regulatory stakeholders. Through its Public Policy Content Group, the GSMA is working with its member operators to address many of the current issues - including the high profile concern over mobile spam - and continues to examine the ways in which it can facilitate best practice in these areas on an international and cross industry level.

As the mobile value chain

expands, it is essential that the benefits of mobile communications are understood and available to everyone who needs them.

To this end, the 2006 3GSM World Congress in Barcelona will be the venue for the GSMA's second Annual Governments Mobile Forum (GMF). The meeting will include over 20 delegations, including 10 Communications Ministers from around the world, as well as all major International Organisations. This programme offers a unique opportunity for governments, regulators and

leaders of the mobile industry to discuss the challenges and opportunities of mobile communications.

This year's 3GSM World Congress also marks a turning point for the GSMA's role in the world's premier mobile communications events. From February 2006, the GSMA will assume overall control and responsibility of both the Barcelona event and the 3GSM World Congress Asia. This development will allow the GSMA to better serve our members and the industry through the platform offered by the two congresses. As the Barcelona and Singapore events expand, we will ensure they continue to be tightly focused on the industry's critical issues and the ecosystem we have created.

As we move forward into 2006, it is clear that the GSM industry is developing on an unprecedented scale. Our progress will ensure the GSMA remains well positioned to inform and educate those that interface with us.

**Robert Conway**