



Tech Focus

Net behind the screen

Touring Sirius Broadband's NLOS base station

SAAD BIN FAZLE HAMMADI

LAST month Sirius Broadband introduced the region's first non-line-of-sight (NLOS) wireless internet access through portable customer premises equipment (CPE).

With this newly introduced portable CPE, the country is expected to go through altogether a new experience in the technological improvisation.

A few days ago, 'Star Tech' visited the NLOS base station to sneak a quick look into the advanced technical features, such as the true plug-and-play option and smart antenna technology which eliminates the use of external antennas.

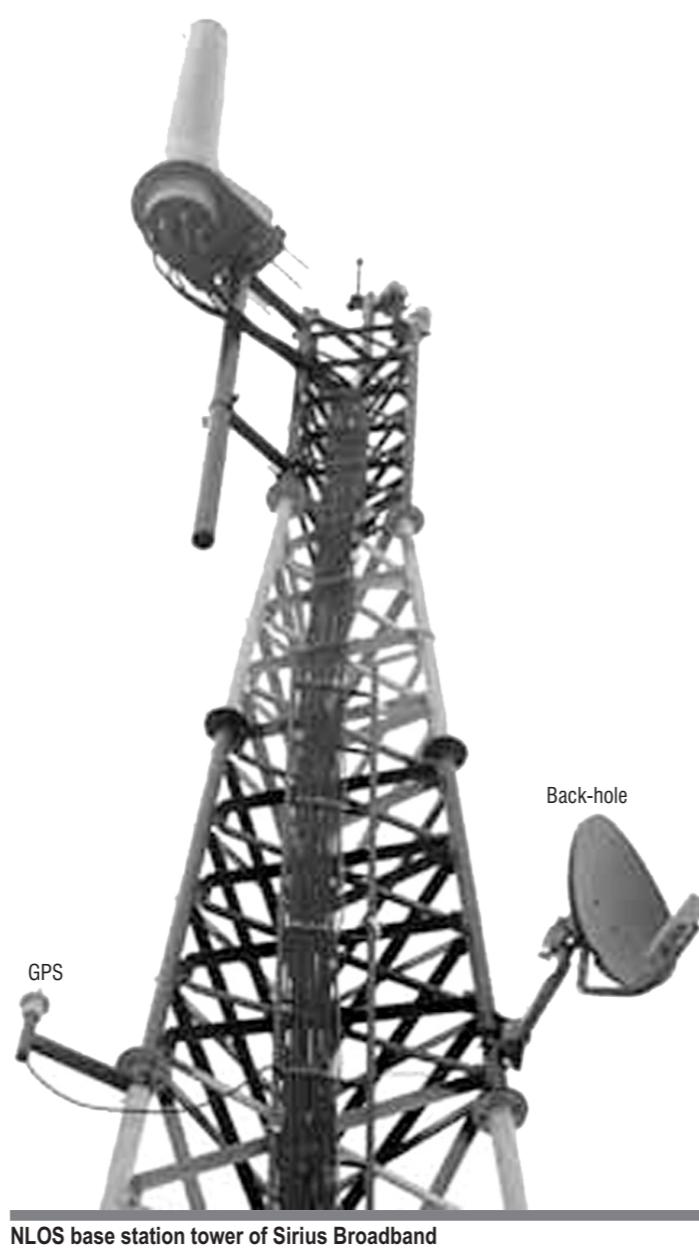
The 'Smart Antenna' is a SCDMA-based technology, which synchronises the data transfer from both ways preventing any

signal loss due to collisions.

The NLOS station includes a tower that carries the transmission activities to and from the CPE. The tower contains a back-hole to receive bandwidth broadcast from the VSATs of Sirius Broadband located at Grameen IT Park and its office at Banani.

The tower carries radio frequency (RF) elements that create an electromagnetic field and propagates through space. It also carries a Global Positioning System (GPS) that is used to synchronise the transmission of signals.

The server room of the NLOS base station contains RF Rack, IP Rack, DNS and DHCPs that contributes to the NLOS wireless



NLOS wireless internet access through portable CPE

Workman/humanoid bot



Toyota will develop a humanoid robot designed to help factory workers and provide assistance in nursing care and rescue operations. Toyota will announce details of the project in January and plans to unveil the as-yet unnamed robot at the 2005 World Exposition in Japan. Here a still from the 1926 film Metropolis.

Best 10 Websites

Category: Comics & Animated Cartoons



Looney Tunes Teach the Internet
Learn Internet basics & get web tips from your favorite Looney Tunes characters.
URL: <http://ltti.entertaindom.com/>



IceBox
Top quality original animated entertainment.
URL: <http://www.icebox.com/>



Mondo Media
Clever animated "minishows".
URL: <http://www.mondomedia.com/>



Bulbo
Join Bulbo on adventures, watch toons & movies or join the fan club.
URL: <http://www.bulbo.com/>



JoeCartoon
Cool web animation.
URL: <http://www.joecartoon.com/>



Salon Comics
Daily strips include Bizarro World.
URL: <http://www.salon.com/comics/>



Smashing Ideas
Leading edge web animators - check out the games case studies.
URL: <http://www.smashingideas.com/>



Toonland
Hundreds of mini animations.
URL: <http://www.snowcrest.net/kitty/hpages/ani1.html>



Comics.com
Over 60 different comic strips including Snoopy, Dilbert & others.
URL: <http://www.comics.com/>



Yuk Yuk
Interactive cartoons.
URL: <http://www.yukyuk.com/>

Tech Fair

City-IT 2003 takes off

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

THE long awaited fair for the tech junkies 'City-IT 2003' was inaugurated yesterday by Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, minister for commerce, at the BCS computer City, IDB Bhaban.

The inaugural ceremony was held near the venue. Sabur Khan, president, Bangladesh Computer Samity, S M Iqbal, president-elect, Bangladesh Computer Samity, and Md Akhteruzzaman Manju, president, Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh were also present.

After a quick speech by Abdul Awal Mintoo, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and

Industry (FBCCI), the chief guest delivered his speech. The minister claimed that for the last few years BCS computer-city has been 'a refreshing change' for the country. He urged the organisers and those in attendance to spread the campaign of 'IT development' as far and wide into the country as possible.

"The government will aid everyone in this campaign, to facilitate the Bangladeshi traders to grow the local market as well as the international one," he said. "I feel that a second BCS computer city should also be located at the port city of Chittagong." He also hoped that given the time and hard-work, Bangladesh would be a global

player in IT community within a few years.

Ahmad Hasan, president of the executive committee 'City IT 2003', Azim Uddin Ahmed, general secretary, Mahmudur Rahman Khan, vice president and Ishraq Mousen, joint secretary were also present at the ceremony.

The Fair started off from 12p.m. yesterday and will continue everyday from 10a.m. 8p.m. till January 10, 2004.

Besides the attractive and innovative computer products that each shop has to offer, the organisers have also arranged seminars and debate competitions on IT related topics almost every day between 4 to 5p.m. at the fair.



Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, minister for commerce checks out some new range of monitors after he inaugurated 'City IT 2003' yesterday.

Tech News

Crater may be blocking Mars probe signal

AP, London

SCIENTISTS trying to find Europe's Beagle 2 Mars probe ruled out weather problems and a faulty onboard clock for its five-day silence, but considered a new possibility Monday: a crater that may be blocking its signal.

A new, detailed picture of the area of Mars where the Beagle 2 is believed to have landed revealed a crater a little more than a half-mile wide. It is possible although unlikely that the Beagle may be unable to communicate because it landed inside, chief Beagle scientist Colin Pillinger said at a news conference.

"This would be an incredibly unlucky situation," Pillinger said.

Several attempts to contact the Beagle 2 so far have failed five days after it was to descend to Mars. NASA's Mars Odyssey orbiter has passed five times over the spot where scientists hope Beagle landed, without picking up a signal. The latest attempt was early Monday morning.

A British radio telescope at Jodrell Bank Observatory struck out again early Monday after sweeping the planet's surface for the craft's call sign, composed by

the British band Blur.

The 143-pound probe, which has a robotic arm to take soil and rock samples, was supposed to unfold its solar panels and transmit

a signal confirming its arrival within hours of landing on Christmas Day. An "analysis and recovery think tank" at Britain's space center considered several reasons for its

silence.

They discounted two possible theories. One was that the weather may have played a role, and the other was that the lander's internal clock wasn't working, mission manager Mark Sims said.

The vessel is programmed to transmit its signal when its orbiter or telescopes on earth are in position to receive it. If the clock had been damaged, the Beagle could have been "talking" and staying quiet at the wrong times.

Sims said scientists didn't believe the clock's hardware was damaged but, he said, a problem with the clock's software was still possible. The team planned to try to send the clock a reset command Wednesday.

The European Space Agency will get a better idea about the Beagle 2 when its mother ship, Mars Express, enters a lower orbit around Mars and tries to contact it on Jan. 4. Mars Express, which carried Beagle into space, is orbiting the planet as high as 117,000 miles above

its equator.

On Tuesday, European Space Agency scientists at mission control in Darmstadt, Germany, will fire Mars Express' engine to shift its orbit. They hope to move it over one of the Martian poles where it will survey the entire planet with its high-resolution camera and a radar that can look for underground water.

If the Beagle fails to transmit its call sign, Wells said a radio telescope at Stanford University in California could help determine if it survived the descent to Mars. It would scan the planet's surface for low levels of radiation emitted by the probe.

Efforts to get a lander on Mars have proven difficult. Of 34 unmanned American, Soviet and Russian missions to Mars since 1960, two-thirds have ended in failure. Beagle 2 would be only the fourth successful Mars landing if all goes well.

Tech Snaps

Workshop on Integrated Approach Towards Bridging Digital Divide

ICTDPB (ICT for Development Program, Bangladesh) organised a daylong workshop on Integrated Approach Towards Bridging Digital Divide on December 11 at Geneva, Switzerland at Geneva Palexpo (Venue for the World Summit on Information Society), says a press release.



Best Practices of developing countries in the field of ICT and development from different regions covering Asia to Africa participated at the workshop. About 20 best practices from Bangladesh and other developing countries were presented in the workshop. The ICTDPB model titled, 'Multipurpose Telecenter' and 'Alternate Connectivity Integrated Approach : The Solution for Developing Countries' were presented at the workshop with specific recommendations.

Shahid Uddin Akbar, coordinator, ICTDPB conducted the workshop and presented different Bangladeshi best practices. Akhteruzzaman Manju, President, ISP Association and S M Iqbal, president-elect, BCS participated in the workshop as panelists.

Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan, minister, Ministry of Science, Information and Communication Technology discussed the Bangladesh initiatives as chief guest. Riaz Rahman, state minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Kamal Siddique, principal secretary to the Prime Minister among many others attended the workshop as special guests. Different ICT business leaders and participants from different countries also participated in the workshop.

The Village Pay-phone and Alternate Connectivity, Bangladesh, MSSRF, India and SDNP, Pakistan were some of the models presented. The workshop enhanced the capability of Bangladesh to establish an ICT based development platform through building network and different services through the WSIS.

Gonophone launches inter-network SMS service

Gonophone Bangladesh Ltd, one of the leading Internet Service and ICT solution providers has launched a SMS gateway labeled Gonophone EasyPay, says a press release.

Gonophone EasyPay bridges the existing text messaging gap across various cellular networks. Using Gonophone EasyPay, text messages can be sent from any local GSM phone to any other GSM phone worldwide. For example customers of Grameen, Airtel, Sheba can now exchange SMS using Gonophone EasyPay gateway. It can also be used to send SMS from Web, email and from any GSM phone to any internet address worldwide. The company is currently working on unified messaging system across other cell phone standards such as CDMA, TDMA etc.

Gonophone EasyPay gateway now enables Airtel and Sheba subscribers to transmit SMS to international destinations.

This service can be availed by enrolling at <http://www.easypaybd.com>. Payment for the service can be made using Gonophone EasyPay cards available at company's 90 resellers located across the country.

Photo Tech



Tamagawa University

The world's first hybrid hydrogen and solar powered car is surrounded by crew and spectators as it arrives in Sydney on December 27, after completing the 4,084 km journey from Perth in less than nine days. Named Apollondine after mythical Greek sun and water legends, the car was built by Tamagawa University in Tokyo at a cost of USD 220,000.