Motorola unfolds Canopy in Bangladesh

NAFID IMRAN AHMED

FINDING a hassle-free broadband connection for my office has always been one of my crucial tasks as an IT Strategist. Most broadband users face this common problem in Dhaka where almost no standard Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) service exists and the infant Non line-of-sight (NLOS) wireless infrastructure is still too costly.

After spending three years to deploy wireless broadband service in Dhaka, Pervez Sajjad, managing director of Ektoo Ltd., turned to Motorola's Canopy solution and became an Authorised Canopy Solution Provider (ACSP) in Bangladesh.

Motorola's wireless broadband access system and Wi-Fi solutions were formally launched on November 26 at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

"Key differentiating factors made my job of deciding on the Canopy products easy," said Sajjad, who spent much of his career in the IT and telecommunications industries of Southern California. "It required a very low initial investment as well as low expansion costs. Canopy's high-performance, interference resistant and outstanding range results in low megabit cost."

"Key advantages of Canopy can be summed up in three words affordability, speed (of deployment) and quality (of service)," said Benhur Mesfin, director, Wireless Broadband, Commercial, Government and Industrial Solutions Sector (CGISS) during his presentation at the launch.

"This innovative system supports additional delivery options for public networks, wireless ISPs and small-to-moderate-sized private networks," he added.

Canopy wireless broadband solutions are proved to be a cost-effective, reliable broadband solution for private networks, such as governments or enterprises and for service

providers and carriers. This easy-to-deploy system has a strong reputation for being a scalable, robust and reliable platform incorporating Motorola's extensive expertise in radio and data communications.

Canopy has already started getting positive feedback from its users in Bangladesh. So far, BRAC BDMail Network, an ISP that operates its own multi-megabit IP Metro-Area-Network (MAN) in Dhaka, has installed seven point-to-point backhaul units strategically centred in Dhaka and Sylhet in August.

Canopy's performance has made them plan for additional six access points in Dhaka that will give them coverage throughout the city.

"Customers appreciate the high availability of our service delivered via Canopy because the smallest downtime directly impacts their revenue stream," said Sajjad. People here are used to experiencing outages on an hourly and a daily basis. Motorola Canopy equipment
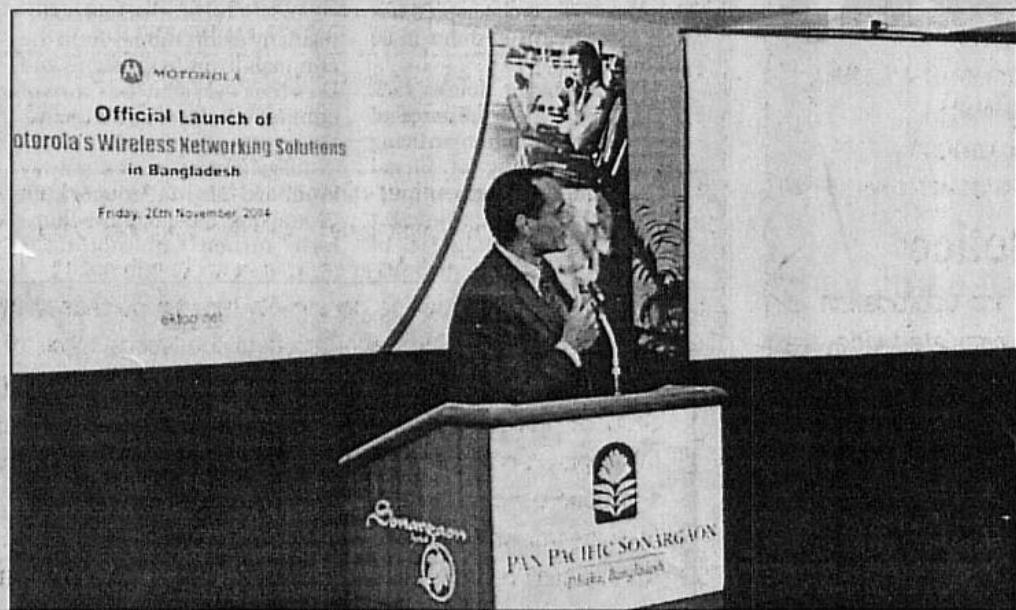
completely resolves those problems and our customers recognise that.

Bijoy Online Limited, another ISP that had been providing internet access services on a wired DSL infrastructure but had to face frequent service disruptions due to damage to the cables. Bijoy got rid of the hassle by switching to a full wireless infrastructure built on Canopy by initially installing three point-to-point backhaul units in July and added 18 more access points in September.

Wireless is the best possible alternative to the unplanned physical wiring infrastructure of the country that needs to be upgraded, mentioned Sajjad. "I spent a year and a half doing research on next-generation equipment. The more I read about it, the more the Motorola Canopy wireless equipment seemed perfect for what I wanted to do," he added.

He also described how Canopy has been successfully

delivering IT services to their clients' branch offices at remote locations in Bangladesh.

The Canopy solution offers a coverage radius of up to 16 kilometres for the point-to-multipoint system and 56 kilometres for the point-to-point system. It is ideally suited for providing high-speed Internet-Protocol (IP)-based services such as data, voice and video to locations where existing infrastructure is not available or affordable.

Canopy is currently deployed in 85 countries around the globe. Motorola's current portfolio of Wi-Fi products includes the Motorola WIAP-100 a highly secure 802.1x-based WLAN security with auto key management Wireless Access Point, Motorola WIB-60 Wireless Ethernet Bridges and the ORiNOCO Network Interface Card.

Benhur Mesfin also announced that the next generation Wi-MAX series wireless products from Motorola will be available in the middle of the next year.

Benhur Mesfin, director, Wireless Broadband, Commercial, Government and Industrial Solutions Sector (CGISS), makes his presentation at the launch of Motorola's Wireless Networking Solutions

Seminars@SOFTEXPO 2004

Experts discuss possibilities of building a tech-driven nation

RIDWAN A. KABIR and
SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

WITH the five day-long SOFTEXPO 2004 coming to an end on Monday, the nation finally caught the glimpse of the future prospects of an ICT driven Bangladesh. The exposition opened a window to explore new possibilities and probabilities through which a utopia as the theme of the expo carries, '...Towards ICT driven Bangladesh' can be given a tangible form.

Over fifty thousand visitors, mostly students from the private and public academic institutions of the capital, crowded the fair on five days.

A total of 120 companies participating in the exposition showcased a wide range of locally developed software on payroll, human resources, equipment inventory and production management system, L/C, ISP dialing and billing system.

Some of the exiting projects included Air Speed and Direction Detector, Transport Pool Management System, 3D animation, Talking Dictionary, Bangla Type Tutor, 2D and 3D animation-based software on entertainment and education.

"I personally loved the Water modeling system that was being displayed at one of the e-governance project stalls," said Margoob Chowdhury, a student of North South University.

Some stalls even gave away souvenirs, demo and free software to the visitors, which also pulled a huge crowd.

The Young IT Entrepreneurs program sponsored by SEDF was a highly motivational contest for the aspiring IT entrepreneurs of the nation.

The ICT Job fair and the Danish pavilion were also among the favorites at the fair.

Bangladesh Association of Software & Information Services (Basis) in collaboration with SEDF arranged a grand line-up of impressive seminars starting from the 2nd day of the exposition.

'Offshore phenomenon- market trends and challenges' was the first among three seminars on ICT

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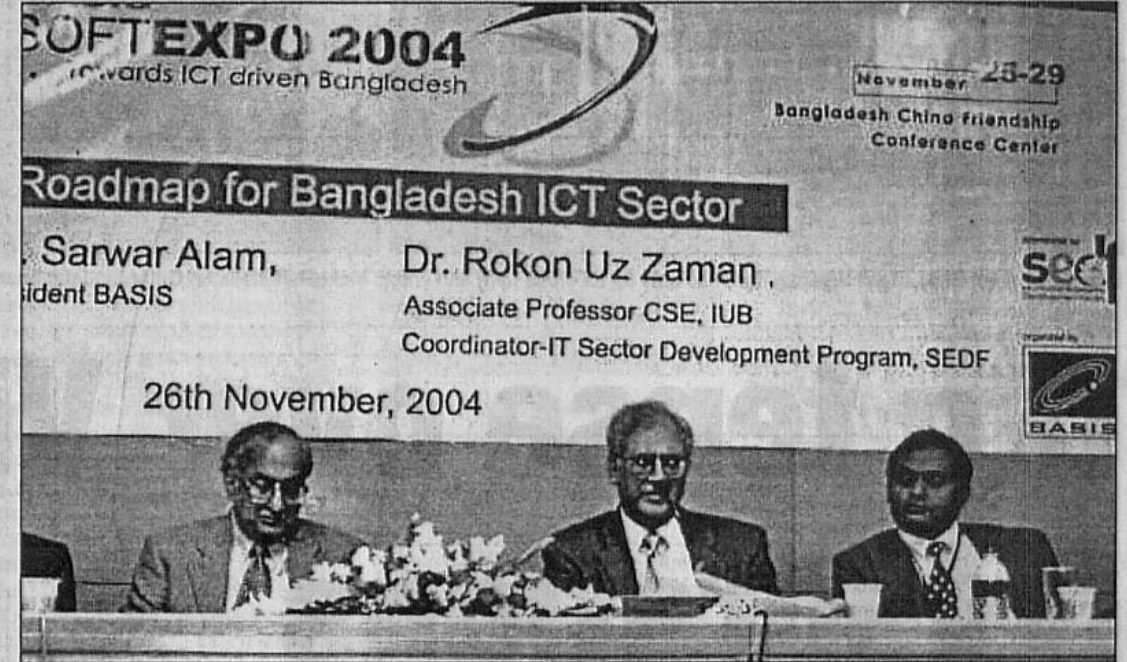
From left: Dr Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, vice chancellor, Brac University, Sarwar Alam, president, Basis and Dr Rokan Uz Zaman, associate professor, CSE, IUB, at the seminar on Strategic Roadmap For Bangladesh ICT Sector.

positive, as long as quality and international artistry is maintained. She also promised training and skill development investments from TBT to local animation developers, while stressing the importance of building a straight business plan and establishment of interactive communication with the world leaders in animation.

Basis President Sarwar Alam delivered the keynote speech at the seminar on strategic roadmap for ICT sectors of the country held later on the same day. A vibrant discussion on the export issues of ICT products followed among the panel of guests with a versatile and active participation from the audience.

"To build an ICT driven country the ICT industry needs major spending from the public sectors," mentions Sarwar Alam, while also claiming transparency in all government participation. "We must compel the government to spend 2% of the ADB revenue as promised," he added, citing development of well-trained software experts in the local industry to enhance capacity of

transparent services to citizens, businesses and so on of the nation," pointed out Satyanarayana.

The speakers hinted at the importance of the private sector's partnership with the public sector for generating an innovative and useful e-government system.

Later that day, a business advantage seminar, organised by Inpace Communications, was held on behalf of Intel and was presented by Shrikant Patil, director, APSG, Intel Asia.

Patil mentioned how the transistor industry has built what we find as technology in today's world. He also stated how a competitive pace, enabled by technology development, needs to be set by local ICT business sectors of a country in order to globalise its efforts. Referring to digital transformation of a nation, he specified technology and culture as the two driving factors, while stating how the people, process and policy of a country actually build the culture within.

"The government needs to pick up a spending habit to produce a sustainable ICT industry in due

transactions.

"Bangladesh Bank can launch a pilot project through which the technical and legal viability of e-commerce payment system can be experimented," said Dr. Raihan.

He also advised that in such a case, the government can follow the footsteps of the neighbouring nations who have excelled in such mechanisms.

Another animation seminar on 'International Standard Requirements for 2D Animation services' was held on the same day having Melanie Desclez, production manager and president of Plan Large (Canada) as the main speaker.

On the concluding day of the exposition, Wiwan Tharahirumchote, president, One Asset Management, Bangkok, mentioned the need for high investment in human capital in the initial stage. She was addressing a seminar on 'Financing issues for local software companies'.

Wiwan repeatedly emphasised professional demonstration of software while on the lookout for a financing client company. She also mentioned on how a growing IT

Radio communication to help save lives in flood-prone areas

STARTECH DESK

MOTOROLA, the global leader in wireless, broadband and automotive communications technologies, donated radio communication equipment to CARE, the international humanitarian organisation, to help improve communications in remote flood-prone areas in Bangladesh. This was announced at a ceremony on November 24 at Hotel Sheraton.

This was a part of Motorola, Inc. and CARE's new relationship to provide mission-critical technology in some of the most remote parts of the world. Motorola will work with CARE field staff and communities to install and use these high-grade, commercial quality radio communication systems.

These equipments are worth Taka 12, 170,000 (US$200,000) and include portable radios, base stations, repeaters, accessories and other necessary devices for the installation of the radio, communications equipment in the selected sites.

The radio communications system is designed to provide CARE Bangladesh with radio coverage over Kurigram one of the districts under CARE's SHOUHARDO (Strengthening Household Ability of Responding to Development Opportunities) program that commenced in October 2004. This radio equipment sponsorship will provide communications tools for CARE field workers in the Kurigram district as well as positively impact seven sub-districts, 480 villages, and almost 282,000 people living in areas affected by the annual

floods.

"When annual monsoon rains flood villages in Bangladesh, poor communities have traditionally depended on word-of-mouth to communicate their need for life-saving assistance. By the time their message gets through, it is often too late," said Steve Wallace, country director, CARE Bangladesh. "Motorola's support through the sponsorship of radio equipment will provide vital communication links for the people who need it most."

Installing these radio communication devices will help CARE field staff, communities and evacuation boat crew gain quicker access to flood information, and mobilise more quickly to save lives and reduce the effects of floods.

Until now, field staff and

remote communities have relied primarily on courier or postal services, which are inefficient and often not able to function during a natural disaster. CARE works with over 1,000 Bangladeshi communities in flood-proofing villages and roadways, and strengthening food and economic security of poor households.

Abdul Moin Khan, Science and ICT Minister said that the wide availability of radio devices in the market may not be a threat. As a matter of fact, these devices can be useful in maintaining household security. He appreciated Motorola's generous gesture, admitted that these communication devices may work as life savers.

Jack Yap, director of distribution, Commercial, Government and Industrial Solutions Sector (CGISS), South Asia handed over the radio communication devices to Steve Wallace.

"Motorola's relationship with CARE is designed to link previously isolated communities to the outside world and help save lives. This is an excellent opportunity for us to use our expertise in radio communications and make a significant contribution to the community," said Phey Teck Moh, vice president, Motorola Asia Pacific.

Motorola will be working with Skyways Techno Services, its local partner, to provide engineering services for the installation of the radio system across all seven radio sites.

Science and ICT Minister Abdul Moin Khan speaks at the official inauguration of Motorola's sponsorship of Radio equipment for CARE Bangladesh.
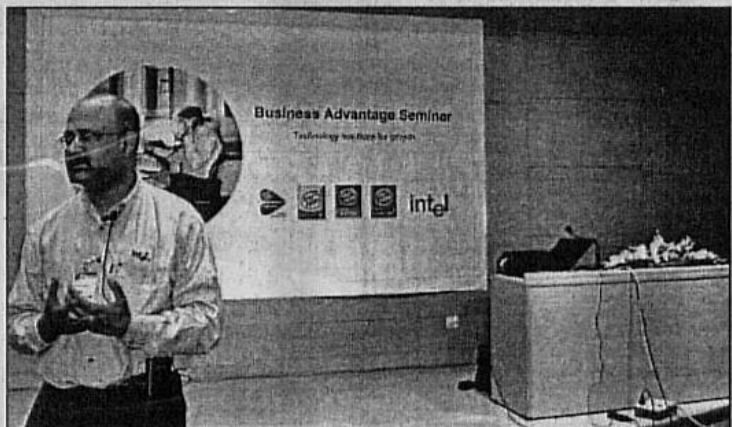
Shrikant Patil, director, Solutions Group, Intel Asia, speaks at the seminar on Business Advantage and Digital Transformation of the ICT sector at SOFTEXPO 2004

From right: Dr. Pradeep Mukherjee, managing director, NeoIT, Bangalore, makes his keynote address at the seminar on Offshore Phenomenon, while Samsud Doha of Doha Tech, Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, former commerce minister and former basis president Habibullah N Karim listen.

development of Bangladesh that took place on November 26 with Dr. Pradeep K Mukherjee, managing director, NeoIT (Bangalore, India), as the keynote speaker.

"Sustainable value can only be added to an establishment with global outsourcing," said Dr Mukherjee while discussing present day issues on offshore aspects related to Bangladesh ICT sector. He also pointed out lower production cost as one of the key factors for global outsourcing influences, while citing how capacity and quality building should be handled at the same time.

"Brand means trust and as such proper branding is necessary," he said.

Referring to IP protection as a major ingredient that international clients will seek while choosing local offshoring offers from Bangladesh, Mukherjee also mentioned how the government should amend a data security act.

'Export opportunities for animation services' followed the inaugural seminar with Joan Vogelesang, president and CEO of the Canadian Toon Boom Technologies (TBT) Inc. as the main speaker.

Mentioning how low manpower cost has been a preference by most western companies, Joan believes that Bangladesh animation will soon be in the world frontiers. She also stated that TBT will keep their interest on local animation attempts

products.

The third day of the software gala started with a seminar on 'Role of E-Governance in national productivity'. Discussions included how e-governance can boost national productivity and thus lead to enhanced economic growth.

"E-governance can be an effective tool through which most of the tedious daily government activities can be more easily handled," said Faruq Sobhan, former chairman of Bangladesh Enterprise Institution, present as a special guest at the seminar.

Anwar Chowdhury, the British High Commissioner in Dhaka, presented a speech on 'Britain's experience on e-governance' at the event.

In his keynote address, SASM Taifur Rahman, project director, Support to ICT Task Force (SICT) Programme, Ministry of Planning said, "Such a system will reduce corruption, facilitate efficiency and ensure proper usage of resources."

Another paper on 'E-government & productivity' was presented by J Satyanarayana, CEO, National Institute of Smart Government (NISG). He also presented the keynote paper on 'Public Private Partnership for E-Governance Initiatives' at another E-government seminar which followed the first one.

"E-government can be used to provide efficient, convenient and

time," Patil said.

The most important among the three seminars held on November 28 was on 'Intellectual Property Right (IPR): Enforcement Challenges' having Dr. Prabuddha Ganguly, CEO, Vision-IPR, India as the main speaker.

The main speaker pointed out the necessity of trained attorneys in software and computer related IPR, the rapid adaptability of the judicial system at handling advanced technology related to IPR issues and the efficiency of enforcement agencies to ensure IPR in the nation.

Chief guest, Barrister Moudud Ahmed, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister, informed that the formulation of such an act is on the agenda of the government.

"We will soon have a cyber law in Bangladesh, which is now at the final stage of drafting," said Moudud. He also asked for suggestions and proposals, which may be incorporated in the amendment of Copyright Act.

Dr. Ananya Raihan, senior research fellow, Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD) presented the keynote paper at the e-commerce seminar – 'Legal and Financial regulation Issues for e-commerce in Bangladesh'.

He pointed out the redundancy of the current technological infrastructure at supporting online authorisation of e-commerce

industry needs to be very careful from being fragmented, as a lot of small companies with lower costs but a thin capital will pull down the market value of any product.

"We need aggressive overseas marketing and capacity building in Bangladesh," stated Wiwan, while addressing the obstacles the industry may face in overseas establishment.

Earlier a seminar on the 'Use of ICT as a competitive tool for export oriented RMG/Knitwear sector' was arranged by BASIS.

Several private seminar sessions were also held in different time slots at the event location on a wide ranging number of topics. Two such seminars on 'Customer Relationship Management Solution' and 'Online Banking System Solution' were organised by Daffodil Computers Ltd. They were held on the third day of the SOFTEXPO where Johan Ulander, CEO, Hansa World and Khalique Kadri, managing director, PIBAS, respectively presented the keynote speakers.

Topics including 'VOIP in private sectors towards ICT driven Bangladesh', and 'Benefits of integration and automation in enterprise resource planning (ERP)' allowed keynote speakers Fazlur Rahman, director, Coordination, TIMB, and Raihan Ahmed, CEO, Seven Circle (Bangladesh) Ltd. to express their views and ideas in two separate seminars on the same date.