

South Asia slow to hop on broadband bandwagon

AFP, Colombo

Home to some 1.5 billion people, South Asia is paying a high price to access the Internet as service providers have been slow to deliver cheaper broadband connections, analysts say.

The region has embraced telephones, mobile phones and computers and India has a flourishing software and outsourcing industry, noted industry watchers at the first South Asia Broadband Congress here earlier this month.

But South Asia has lagged behind in hopping onto the broadband bandwagon, observed Sanjay Gupta of India's Midas Communication Technology.

"There's not enough local language content and affordable connections. Currently, broadband penetration is very low -- estimated to be less than three percent in the region -- and it boils down to cost," Gupta said.

Home users in Pakistan pay the most in the region, with annual broadband prices of 2,660 dollars, followed by Bangladesh at 2,066 dollars, according to Colombo-based LIRNEasia, a regional telecom think-tank.

The same service costs 242 dollars in Sri Lanka, 223 dollars in India and 112 dollars in Maldives, said researchers at LIRNEasia, who are studying reasons for poor broadband penetration in South Asia.

In March, India logged 40 million Internet subscribers, which included 2.3 million broadband users, according to India's Department of Telecommunications.

"India needs to target 100 million broadband users by 2015 to connect homes in remote villages. To do that, operators must bring down prices," said Professor Ashok Jhunjhunwala of the Indian Institute of Technology.

"Rural broadband expansion throughout South Asia will help in education, provide remote healthcare and promote call centres in villages so computer literate people will not be forced to migrate to urban areas," he said.

However, telecommunications operators need to cooperate to make broadband economically viable in developing countries, said Mallikarjun Rao, a director at Canadian telecoms giant Nortel Ltd.

"To leapfrog to the next genera-

StanChart to set up utility bill collection centres

Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) will establish one-point collection centres in the premises of Desa at strategic locations to collect all kinds of utility bills under one-roof including Desa's electricity bills.

The bank has recently signed an agreement with Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (Desa) to this effect, says a press release.

Mirza Aminur Rahman, director & head of Transaction Banking of SCB, and Md Rafiul Alam, company secretary of Desa, signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organisations.

Desa Chairman Brig Gen Md Nazrul Hasan and SCB Director & Head of Client Relationships Ahmed A Shah were also present.

Private sector employs 120m people in China

ANN/ CHINA DAILY

China's private enterprises employed 120 million people by September this year, up 9.5 percent from the same month a year ago, said a senior official on Saturday.

"The private sector of the economy is a main avenue of employment and re-employment in China," said Zhong Youping, deputy minister of the State Administration for Industry and Commerce.

Zhang made the remarks at a forum on Chinese and Japanese small and medium-sized enterprises held in Guangzhou of South China's Guangdong Province.

Developing the private sector would help increase job opportunities and enable economic growth and employment to boost each other, said Zhang. Labor-intensive firms and the service sector could absorb a lot of laid-off workers and college graduates, he added.

Last year China's industrial and commercial authorities helped 2.54 million unemployed people find jobs in the private sector and nearly half of the country's new graduates entered private firms.



PHOTO: ONE BANK

Khan M Ibrahim, executive director of Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority, recently inaugurates the toll collection booth of One Bank Ltd at Western Toll Plaza of the bridge. ONE Bank Ltd Managing Director Farman R Chowdhury is also seen.



PHOTO: CRAB

Credit Rating Agency of Bangladesh (CRAB) Managing Director Masihur Rahman and Bangladesh National Insurance Ltd Managing Director SM Abdul Mannan exchange documents after signing an agreement in Dhaka recently. Under the deal, CRAB will offer credit rating services to the insurance company. Other officials are also seen.

CURRENCY

Following is Sunday's (September 16, 2007) forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank						
Sell		CURRENCY	Buy			
TT/OD	BC		TT/CLEAN	OD SIGHT/DOC	OD TRANSFER	
69.1700	69.2000	USD	68.2000	68.1773	68.1318	
97.6265	97.6689	EUR	93.1203	93.0892	93.0272	
140.3598	140.4206	GBP	135.2542	135.2092	135.1190	
59.4309	59.4566	AUD	56.4150	56.3962	56.3586	
0.6121	0.6123	JPY	0.5864	0.5862	0.5858	
58.6634	58.6888	CHF	56.7813	56.7624	56.7245	
10.3464	10.3509	SEK	9.5916	9.5884	9.5820	
67.7805	67.8099	CAD	65.4197	65.3979	65.3542	
8.8919	8.8957	HKD	8.7473	8.7444	8.7385	
46.2552	46.2752	SGD	44.8861	44.8712	44.8413	
18.9902	18.9985	AED	18.4230	18.4168	18.4045	
8.5916	18.5997	SAR	18.0414	18.0354	18.0233	
13.5148	13.5206	DKK	12.1480	12.1439	12.1358	
242.6460	242.7534	KWD	240.3938	240.3938	240.3938	
Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar						
Indian rupee	Pak rupee	Lankan rupee	Thai baht	Nor. kroner	NZ dollar	Malaysian ringit
40.36	60.61	113.37	32.00	5.6408	0.7127	3.48



PHOTO: STANCHART

Mirza Aminur Rahman, director & head of Transaction Banking of Standard Chartered Bank (SCB), and Md Rafiul Alam, company secretary of Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (Desa), sign an agreement in Dhaka recently. Under the deal, the bank will set up one-point bill collection centres in Desa premises. Desa Chairman Brig Gen Md Nazrul Hasan and SCB Director & Head of Client Relationships Ahmed A Shah were also present.

SHIPPING

Chittagong Port

Berthing position and performance of vessels as on 16/9/2007

Berth No.	Name of vessels	Cargo	L. Port call	Local agent	Dt of arrival	Leaving	Import disch
J/2	Asrar-A-Mostafa	Rice(G)	Kaki	Cla	1/9	--	1006
J/3	Butet	Urea(Bdic)	Sing	Mhsl	R/A	--	614
J/4	Xuan Cheng	Gi	Xang	Cosco	10/9	17/9	1922
J/5	Sunvazs	Urea(Bdic)	Sing	Seacom	2/9	18/9	1460
J/6	Eid-A-Mostafa	Rice(G)	Kaki	Cla	9/9	19/9	658
J/7	Hunjiang	Gi	Thai	Cosco	5/9	17/9	1594
J/8	Xpress Manaslu	Cont	Col	Seacon	14/9	18/9	219
J/9	Yong-Jiang	Gi	Inch	Cosco	10/9	19/9	1019
J/10	Santa Suria	C. Clink	Krabi	Asll	3/9	17/9	2715
J/11	Sumida	Cont	Col	Seacon	12/9	17/9	406
J/12	Kota Tegap	Cont	Sing	Pil(Bd)	12/9	16/9	74
J/13	Banga Borak	Cont	Sing	Bandhi	13/9	18/9	174

Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. Port call	Local agent	Type of cargo	Loading ports
Id Commander	17/9	Sing	H&SI	Gi(St.C)	1 Unit
Eagle Progress	16/9	P.Kel	Everbest	Cont	Sing
Maria	16/9	Viza	Summoon	Slag	--
Tina	19/9	Chin	Mhsl	Urea	--
Sona	16/9	Chin	Rsship	Scraping	--
Maritime Chiangmai	17/9	Indo	Bsl	C. Clink	--
Vinalines Pacific	18/9	Kohsi	Bashund	C. Clink	--
Eagle Pioneer	17/9	P.Kel	Ct	Cont	Sing
Merkur Bridge	17/9	Sing	Apl	Cont	Sing
Banga Bijoy	17/9	Col	Baridhi	Cont	Cbo
Oel Singapore	18/9	--	Pssl	Cont	Sing
Josco View	18/9	Pki	Rsl	Cont	Sing
Banga Borti	17/9	P.Kel	Baridhi	Cont	P.Kel
Dubai Crown	19/9	Sing	Rainbow	Aosoya	--
Eagle Pride	18/9	Pki	Ocsll	Cont	Sing

Tanker due

Jag Vraji	16/9	Viza	Mbl	Ammonia	K/A
Siteam Panther	16/9	Sing	Rainbow	Cdso	Rm/3
Al Kuwaitiah	19/9	Kuwa	Mstpl	Hsd/Jp-1	--

Vessels at Kutubdia

Name of vessels	Cargo call	Last Port	Local agent	Date of arrival
Wira Keris	--	--	Ibsa	R/A(8/9)

Outside port limit

Wira Keris	--	--	Ibsa	R/A(8/9)
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Vessels at outer anchorage

Vessels ready					
Phu Tan	Cont	Sing	Bsca	13/9	
Blue Sky	Gi(Hrc)	Thai	Barwil	14/9	
Titan-7	Gi(Log)	Yang	Pml	15/9	
Champion Star	Cdso	Braz	Usl	9/9	
Donglai Fortune	Cont	Sing	Seacon	16/9	

Vessels not ready

Sunny Falcon	Urea(Bdic)	Sing	Litmond	7/9	
Cielodi Salerno	Cdso	P. Luis	Usl	8/9	

Vessels awaiting employment / instruction

Borak	--	--	Fsa	R/A(4/8)	
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Vessels not entering

Ataduru	Wheat(P)	Novo	Angelic	23/8	
Sarim	C. Clink	Krabi	Litmond	28/8	
Krymchakhlar	Wheat(P)	Tuap	Unique	29/8	
Asraar-E-Mostafa	C. Clink	Kohsi	Poi	9/9	
Orienter-2	Wheat(P)	Sing	Mutual	9/9	
K.S. Glory	C. Clink	Sing	Asll	9/9	

The following is the shipping position and performance of vessels of Chittagong Port as per berthing sheet of CPA supplied by Family, Dhaka.

STOCK