

# 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 M das 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.

"To leapfrog to the next genera-

tion, dominant operators must allow other operators access to its telephone exchanges -- so-called local loop unbundling," Roa said.

"The local loop is the crucial link between telephone exchanges and homes," he said.

Unbundling the local loop or sharing the copper wire allows other operators to plug their equipment into the telephone exchange and offer faster services.

Holding back the development of broadband in Sri Lanka, for instance, is the fact that the country only allows the dominant operator, state-run Sri Lanka Telecom, to lay copper.

There are just under 40,000 broadband customers among Sri Lanka's 19.5 million inhabitants, according to Sri Lanka Telecom.

Figures for broadband users in other South Asian countries were not available but officials at the conference said penetration was low.

"Right now, many people don't have much of a choice when it comes to broadband" as the monopoly on laying wire to homes and offices remains with Sri Lanka Telecom, said Rohan Samarajiva, LIRNEasia's executive director.

## 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 Raful 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	TT/OD	BC	CURRENCY	Buy		
				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 ringgit
40.36	60.61	113.37	32.00	5.6408	0.7127	3.48

## 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(B6ic)	Sing	Mhs	R/A	--	614
J/4	Xuan Cheng	Gi	Xang	Cosco	10/9	17/9	1922
J/5	Sunvaz	Urea(B6ic)	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	Seacom	14/9	18/9	219
J/9	Yong Jiang	Gi	Inch	Cosco	10/9	19/9	1019
J/10	Santa Sura	C. Clink	Krabi	Asil	3/9	17/9	2715
J/11	Sumida	Cont	Col	Seacom	12/9	17/9	406
J/12	Kota Tegap	Cont	Sing	Pil(Bd)	12/9	16/9	74
J/13	Banga Borak	Cont	Sing	Bandh	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	Summon	Urea	--
Tina	19/9	Chin	Mhs	Scraping	--
Sona	16/9	Chin	Rsship	C. Clink	--
Maritime Chiangmai	17/9	Indo	Bsl	Bashund	--
Vinalines Pacific	18/9	Kohsi	Pil(Bd)	C. Clink	--
Eagle Pioneer	17/9	P.Kel	Ct	Cont	Sing
Merkur Bridge	17/9	Sing	Apl	Cont	Sing
Banga Biloj	17/9	Col	Baridh	Cont	Cbo
Cel Singapore	18/9	--	Pssi	Cont	Sing
Josco View	18/9	Pkl	Rsl	Cont	Sing
Banga Borti	17/9	P.Kel	Baridh	Cont	P.Kel
Dubai Crown	19/9	--	Rainbow	Aosoya	--
Eagle Pride	18/9	Pkl	Qcsl	Cont	Sing

### Tanker due

Jag Vraj	16/9	Viza	Mbl	Ammonia
Siteman Panther	16/9	Sing	Rainbow	Cdso
Al Kuwaith	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)

### 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
Dongtai Fortune	Cont	Sing	Seacom	16/9

### Vessels not ready

Sunny Falcon	Urea(B6ic)	Sing	Litmond	7/9
Cielodi Salerno	Cdso	P.Luis	Usl	8/9