

More Indian telecom operators eye Bangladesh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Buoyed by India's largest mobile phone operator Bharti Airtel's acquisition of 70 percent stake in Warid Telecom, more Indian companies are eyeing the growing Bangladesh market, telecom industry officials here said.

What has enthused Indian telecom operators is that the market in Bangladesh, with one of the lowest tele-densities in the world (just 32 percent), has a lot of potential to grow, they said.

Arpita Agarwal, associate director (telecom) for PricewaterhouseCoopers, said Airtel could quickly bridge the gap between

Warid and Grameenphone, which is the leader in Bangladesh with a market share of over 45 percent.

Airtel can achieve a lot considering its experience and the fact that the market dynamics in Bangladesh is similar to India in terms of low market penetration with the pre-paid segment accounting for 98 percent of the market and low average revenue per user, she said.

Airtel Chief Executive Officer Manoj Kohli said Bangladesh with just 32 percent mobile phone penetration is among the largest markets globally in terms of growth potential.

Telecom analysts say the number of

cellphone users in Bangladesh is projected to double to 100 million by the year 2013.

Kohli said Airtel brand would be well received in Bangladesh especially since the company's brand ambassadors are Bollywood superstar Shahrukh Khan and music maestro AR Rahman who are very popular in that country.

Asked how Bharti Airtel proposed to compete with Grameenphone, Kohli said the business plan and targets would be finalised in the next four to six weeks.

He said Airtel plans to introduce new services and innovations in Bangladesh market.



Faruk Khan, commerce minister, hands over the ICAB first prize for best-published accounts and reports 2008 (public sector entities) to Syed Abu Naser Bukhtear Ahmed, managing director and chief executive officer of Agrani Bank Ltd, at a ceremony organised by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) in Dhaka recently.

Jessore sees bumper jute seed production

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) achieved bumper jute seed production through its contractual growers in three districts in greater Jessore this year.

M Rakanuzzaman, BADC Jessore regional deputy director agriculturist, said the corporation's jute seed division usually supplies quality seeds to contractual farmers and purchases new seeds from them after the harvest.

Later, BADC refines the collected seeds and sells those among the growers in packets after certification.

Rakanuzzaman said high production this year left a lot of surplus jute seeds for the next year.

This year, the seeds were produced on around 907 acres of land in Jessore zone, which comprises Jessore, Jhenidah and Magura districts.

Of the total land, 387 acres were used in Jessore, 495 acres in Jhenidah and 25 acres in Magura districts.



A total of 4,212 kilograms of jute seed were distributed among 1,761 farmers.

BADC targeted production of 268 tonnes of certified jute seeds this year, including 140 tonnes of local variety and 128 tonnes of tosha variety.

It has already procured 210 tonnes seed of local variety, which is 70 tonnes more than the target. The tosha seed is yet to be harvested that is also expected to cross the target.

As the BADC seeds are better than other varieties, those have a very good demand among growers.

But a section of unscrupulous traders purchase the seeds from the farmers at a higher price than the BADC's fixed price of Tk 90 a kg.

Then they adulterate the seed with low quality Indian ones and sell it in the market, which resulted in poor jute production.

People concerned with the jute seed production have urged the government to look into the matter and take actions to stop the malpractice.

New country manager for Haier Telecom



STAR BUSINESS DESK

Mohammad Abul Ahsan has taken over as country manager of Haier Telecom and its IT business units in Bangladesh, says the company in a statement yesterday.

Prior to this joining, he served Motorola in the senior management team for Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives and Bhutan market.

With more than twelve years experience in telecom arena, Ahsan also served Telekom Malaysia International Ltd as the head of marketing.

Mongla port offloads 714 more cars

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

MV Ocean Blue, a flag bearer of Panama, arrived at Mongla port yesterday, carrying 714 imported reconditioned cars from Japan.

This is the second time in the last seven months that reconditioned cars have been imported through Mongla seaport. Haq's Bay Automobiles based in Dhaka made both imports.

The first consignment of 255 imported reconditioned cars arrived at Mongla Port on June 3, 2009.

Port officials said that

100 cars, out of the 225 cars imported, are yet to be released from port, as customs officials have not yet given clearance.

The arrival of more than 714 imported reconditioned cars is a milestone for the port. However, problems may arise from a shortage of space in the port shed, said Md Mahbubullah, director (traffic) of Mongla Port Authority.

The import of more cars at the port in future depends on timely unloading and customs clearance.

Bottlenecks in processing the official formalities in this regard will discourage the

import of reconditioned cars through Mongla port in future, said Abdul Haq, proprietor of Haq's Bay Automobiles.

"We prefer Mongla Port as it is less expensive than Chittagong port as far as import and unloading of reconditioned cars is concerned," he said.

Meanwhile, Mongla Port authorities urged customs authorities to be more sincere in giving clearance to unload the imported cars.

Port users also demanded introduction of automation systems at Mongla port to help customs officials gear up activities.



Participants pose at a two-day training programme organised by Coats Bangladesh for its union executives and operational staff at Brac CDM in Rajendrapur recently.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Directorate General of Health Services
National TB Control Programme
Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212

Request for Open-Tender

1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOH&FW).			
2. Agency	National Tuberculosis Programme DGHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka.			
3. Procuring entity name	Director (MBDC) & Line Director (TB-Lep), National TB Control Programme, DGHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka.			
4. Procuring entity code	NA			
5. Procuring entity district	Dhaka.			
6. Invitation for	Open tender.			
7. Invitation Ref. No.	MBDC-4/TB-Lep/Printing/07/98.			
8. Date	11/01/2010.			
9. Procurement method	Contractor/tenderers/suppliers will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the guide lines of Public Procurement Regulations-2008 of the Govt of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.			
KEY INFORMATION				
10. Budget and source of fund	GOB-(2009-2010).			
11. Development partner (if applicable)	NA			
12. Project/programme code (if applicable)	NA			
13. Project/programme name (if applicable)	National TB Control Programme, DGHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka.			
14. Tender package No.	Group No.1			
15. Tender package name	Printing & Binding.			
16. Tender publication date	11/01/2010.			
17. Tender last selling date	07/02/2010 at 17.00 hrs.			
18. Tender closing date & time	09/02/2010 at 13 hrs.			
19. Tender opening date & time	09/02/2010 at 15 hrs.			
20. Name & address of the office(s)	National TB Control Programme Leprosy Institute & Hospital Compound, DGHS (TB Gate), Mohakhali, Dhaka.			
Selling tender document (principal)	Do			
-Selling tender document (others)	Do			
-Receiving tender document (others)	Do			
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
21. Eligibility of tenderer	Contractor/tenderers must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the same & may associate to enhance their qualification & as per terms & conditions attached with schedule. The contractors/tenderers should have enlisted in BG Press.			
22. Brief description of goods or works	Printing & Binding (TB-2, TB-3, TB-4, TB-5, TB-7, TB-8, TB-10, TB-11, TB-12 and Sticker) (Register and Pad).			
23. Brief description of related services	As per schedule.			
24. Tender document price 750/- Tk per group & may be collected by depositing document price in the Sonali Bank/Bangladesh Bank Vide Code No. 1-2711-0000-2366 through Treasury Challan with CTR.				
Package	Identification of package	Location	Tender security amount in Tk	Completion time weeks/months
25. Group-1	Printing & Binding	National TB Control Programme, Leprosy Institute & Hospital Compound, DGHS (TB Gate), Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212	60,000/-	15 days
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS				
26. Name of official inviting tender	Prof. Dr. Pravat Chandra Barua			
27. Designation of official inviting tender	Director (MBDC) & Line Director (TB-Lep), National TB Control Programme, DGHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka.			
28. Address of official inviting tender	National TB Control Programme, Leprosy Institute & Hospital Compound, DGHS (TB Gate), Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212			
29. Contact details of official inviting tender	Phone: 9884657 Fax: 9884657.			
30. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.				

Prof. Dr. Pravat Chandra Barua
Director MBDC & Line Director TB-Leprosy,
DGHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212

GD-206

Google case lays bare China challenge

AFP, Beijing

Google's threat to pull out of China could force a broader rethink by foreign Internet firms that made uncomfortable compromises to operate in the world's largest online market, analysts say.

The announcement that the US Internet giant might abandon China after a spate of cyber-attacks might also just be good business, as it has never matched up to its local rivals, they say.

"This is a very politically charged environment," Duncan Clark, an analyst at Beijing-based high-tech consultancy BDA, told AFP.

"Multinationals have been complaining about 'Buy China' policies, unfair restrictions and hacking... and this is going to be very damaging if there isn't a solution."

The online espionage against human-rights activists has led Google to reconsider its business operations in China, and it said it would no longer filter Internet search results in the Asian country.

The announcement was applauded by campaigners who had accused Google of trashing its unofficial motto "Don't Be Evil" when it began censoring search results in China in 2006 to appease the authorities.

Beijing tightly polices cyberspace, employing tens of thousands of people to monitor online postings, chatrooms and blogs.

It also requires companies including Google and Yahoo! to block web users from accessing information about subjects deemed politically sensitive such as Tibet and the banned Falungong sect.

When such searches are carried out, some web pages are filtered out by the companies themselves. Other content listed in the search results may be blocked by government censors and cannot be opened.

"There's a feeling that China is emboldened and that they don't need to have the same sort of dialogue (as before)," Clark said, noting Google's decision to go public could suggest the authorities were not open to further talks.

"This is the mismatch -- people here think no one can do without China, and I think now some companies are thinking no one can deal with China."

Beijing-based political analyst Russell Leigh Moses said "the closer Google got to what the Chinese government demanded, the weaker Google looked".

"It is surprising that it took the corporate leadership at Google so long to recognise that their company was no different than any other venture in a market where politics still dominates," he told AFP in an email.

Officials at Microsoft and Yahoo! did not immediately respond to requests for comment on for their own plans in China in light of Google's announcement.

The Chinese government said it was seeking more information about Google's intentions, state news agency Xinhua reported.

To get around the so-called "Great Firewall of China" erected by government censors, savvy web users use proxy servers or VPNs (virtual private networks) to access blocked websites.

Committee to streamline savings instruments

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government has formed a committee led by a deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank to cut the interest rate and the number of savings instruments.

The move came from a high-level meeting at the Finance Division, chaired by Finance Minister AMA Muhith.

The interest rate on savings instruments will be reset in line with inflation and the new rate will come into effect in the next fiscal year, the minister told reporters after the meeting.

The committee will include representatives of the National Board of Revenue and Finance Division. They have been asked to submit a report in 45 days.

"The interest rate on savings instruments is very high," Muhith said.

When savings instruments were launched, the savings rate was much lower -- the reason the interest rate was attractive, he said.

"As the savings rate has increased now, the interest rate on savings instruments should be reduced," he said.

In every country, the savings rate is fixed in line

with the inflation rate, he said.

"There are different types of savings instruments in our country. Some of them have a high interest rate while others have a lower rate," the minister said.

"The committee will recommend ways to streamline all the issues. I think it is enough to be two types of savings instruments."

Presently, there are seven types of savings instruments, including for expatriate foreign currency earners. The interest rate ranges from 6.5 percent to 12.5 percent and the tenure is from three to five years.



Visitors gather at the stall of Building Technology and Ideas (BTI) Ltd at the REHAB Fair at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel in the capital recently. At the show, BTI introduced its 13 new projects inside the capital with exclusive offers for different customer groups.