

# Dhaka low in social networking

ABDULLAH MAMUN

Dhaka is among the three South Asian cities that are at the bottom of a ranking of networked society city matrix among 25 mega cities of the world.

On the other hand, Singapore, Stockholm and Seoul are at the top of the ranking.

A joint study conducted by mobile equipment vendor Ericsson and management consultancy Arthur D Little recently released the index recently.

The two other poorly networked South Asian cities are Karachi and Delhi.

The Networked Society City Index shows that cities with a high level of ICT maturity are better able to manage issues such as environmental management, infrastructure, public security, health-care quality and education, Ericsson said in a statement.

The index also suggests actions for low-ranking cities, which are encouraged to provide digital access and ICT training for the underprivileged parts of their populations to reduce the digital divide. City mayors, local

authorities and decision makers can use the framework ranking to meet the growing urbanisation trend and enable organisational and societal success.

"Although Dhaka is among the low-ranking cities, we believe the government endeavours to adopt and encourage ICT through its Digital Bangladesh programme will bring its position higher," said Per-Henrik Nielsen, managing director of Ericsson Bangladesh Ltd.

He said, during the last five years, mobile subscribers in Bangladesh grew three folds contributing to societal development through providing better communications.

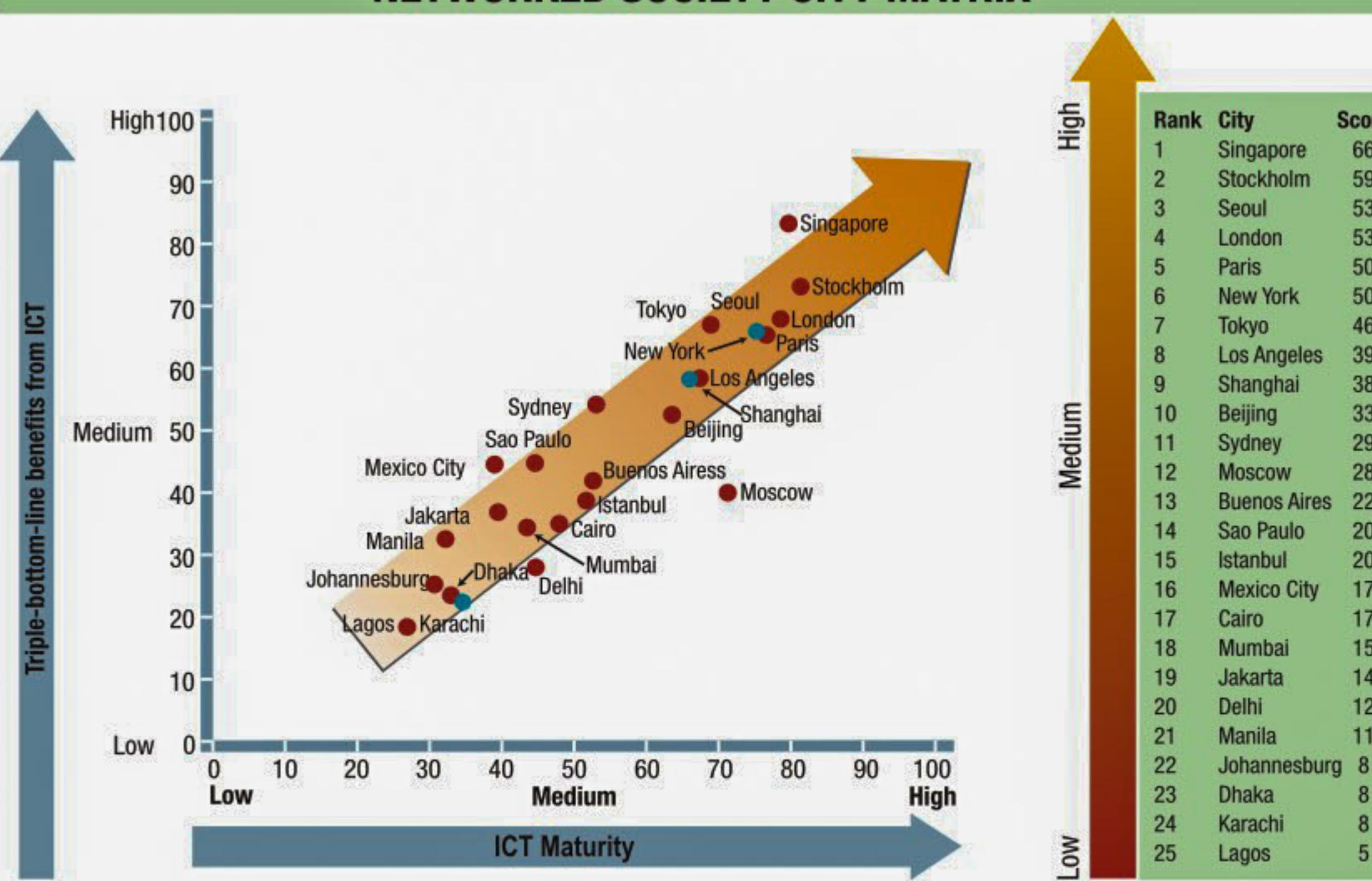
"It's great to find Dhaka among the top 25 mega cities, Nielsen added.

The study was presented at Ericsson's Business Innovation Forum in the US on May 10.

According to the study, the three best-performing cities presented in the index -- Singapore, Stockholm and Seoul -- have successfully met many social, economic and environmental targets by making extensive investments in information and communication technology.

Singapore, the study said, is aggressively driving innovation in e-health, and is a pioneer in traffic-congestion management (ICT). Stockholm sees ICT as a major

## NETWORKED SOCIETY CITY MATRIX



enabler for research collaboration and knowledge transfer, while Seoul is using ICT to realise green high-tech initiatives.

Erik Almqvist, director at Arthur D Little Nordic, said,

"Building a networked society is

one of our time's great challenges for mankind. This report can serve as inspiration for cities that do not settle for the status quo."

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Jim McCabe, chief executive officer of Standard Chartered Bank, Bangladesh, and Aziz Khan, chairman of Summit Group, sign a deal at a programme in Dhaka recently where Summit appointed StanChart as its financial adviser for two upcoming power projects, Bibiyana I and Bibiyana II (341 megawatts each). Venkataramanan Anantharaman, head of OCC, India and South Asia of StanChart, was also present.



AKM Fahim Mashroor, chief executive officer of Bdjobs.com, hands the best employer award 2010 in telecommunications category to Tore Johnsen, chief executive officer of Grameenphone, at a programme at GP House in Dhaka on May 10.

## Minister asks RMG owners to cut reliance on foreign consultants

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Textiles and Jute Minister Abdul Latif Siddiqui yesterday asked textile and garment entrepreneurs to cut dependency on foreign consultants and produce skilled manpower at home to run technical and business activities.

The industrial sector might have the problems of gas and power, but the country's workers are making the finest clothes for the customers around the world, he said.

"Still, we need to produce skilled manpower for the sector through establishing educational institutes. Our workers are highly skilled, as they are producing the finest clothes for the upscale market in the world," Siddiqui said.

The minister suggested the garment factory owners should not compete against each other in the local market, but to compete in the international market with other competitors.

He asked the factory owners to increase the facilities provided to the workers to help them maintain a decent life.

"Some NGOs are involved in the ready-made garment sector and sometimes they create troubles in the sector," he said.

His comments came at the launching ceremony of the "Better Work in Textiles and Garments (BWTG)," a project for

improving the effectiveness of the textiles and garment sectors in Bangladesh, at Hotel Sonargaon in the city.

This is a joint project of the textiles and jute ministry and the commerce ministry and funded by the EU along with Norwegian Aid agency NORAD and implemented by UNIDO.

AH Aslam Sunny, vice-president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said different associations in the sector are currently running some programmes such as enhancing productivity and social compliances to meet the demand of the buyers.

"We also need to improve the efficiency of mid-level management," he said, adding that the country's experience about trade unions is not that good.

MA Zaher, vice-president of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association, said textiles and RMG sectors are facing dearth of skilled human resources. "We need to set up new educational institutes to produce more skilled human resources for the sector."

David Yuen-Hoi Lee, project manager of BWTG-BEST, UNIDO, Vienna, said the garment sector is a success story of Bangladesh. "But you also have to think about the future safety. Bangladesh is now competing with Cambodia and Vietnam, who are working very hard to remain competitive worldwide."

## Analysts back district-wise budget

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government should prepare a district-wise budget to decentralise funds and increase people's participation in the budget making, speakers said at a discussion yesterday.

The preparation of the budget is centralised, and dominated by bureaucrats that bars effective participation of people and their representatives, the speakers said.

"Budget impacts every sphere of life. So, the government should incorporate the opinions of the masses into the national budget," said Dr Piyash Karim, who teaches economics at BRAC University. He spoke at the discussion organised by Sushasone Jonny Procharabhizan-Supro (Campaign for Good Governance) at the National Press Club.

"The role of lawmakers in budget preparation is limited. The current system does not allow lawmakers to take part in budget preparation properly," said Advocate Fazle Rabbi Mia, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on government assurance.

"We have no say in budget preparation. We just raise our hands during the budget session in parliament. So, more participation of lawmakers is needed," he added.

Supro demanded that the government prepare the budget for 2011-12 with higher allocations in education, health and agriculture.

It said the government should allocate funds separately for education and religion purposes as presently they allocate the funds for these sectors under the expenditure for the education sector.

## FBCCI calls for private investment in energy sector

PART II

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The country's apex trade body yesterday called for opening up the gas sector for private investment and making public-private partnership initiatives operational to lure investment for developing infrastructure.

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) also demanded a cut in import duty for capital machinery and basic raw materials to 1 percent.

Now, import duty for capital machinery and basic raw materials is at 3 percent and 5 percent respectively.

To encourage the growth of small and medium enterprises, the trade body in its budget proposals to the National Board of Revenue (NBR) recommended 3 percent duty on import of the intermediate goods and raw materials that are not produced in the country.

It also demanded duty-free import of machinery for establishing effluent treatment plants.

The FBCCI urged continuation of mandatory pre-shipment inspection system until the NBR capacity is fully developed.

It also proposed continuation of incentives for backward linkage and export oriented industries, special policy and fiscal support to promote recycling, reconditioning and re-engineering industries.

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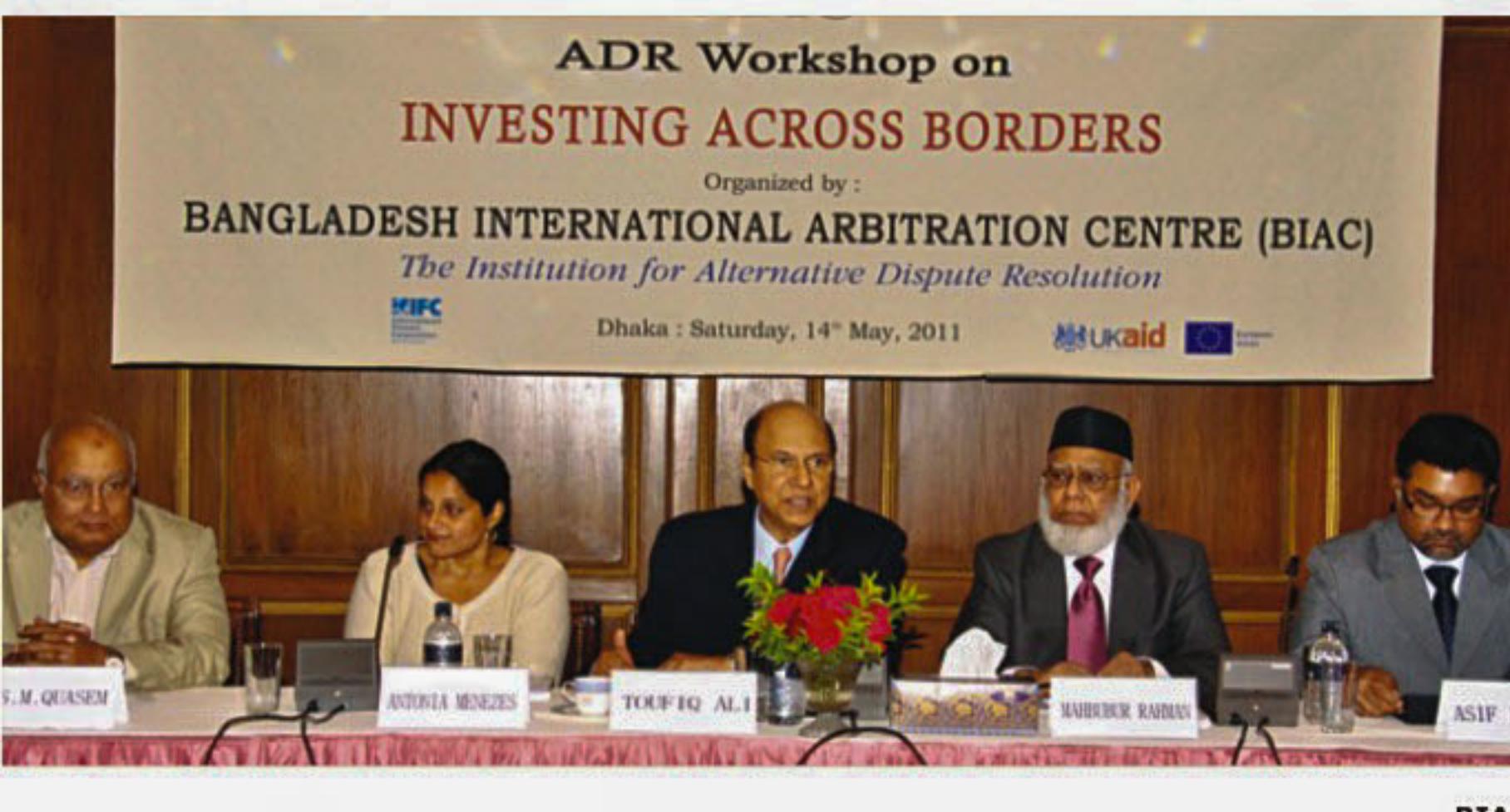
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Mahbubur Rahman, second from right, chairman of Bangladesh International Arbitration Centre (BIAC), attends an ADR workshop on investing across borders, in Dhaka on Saturday. From left, ASM Quasem, former president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI); Antonia Presciosa Menezes, a private sector development specialist of World Bank Group; Toufiq Ali, chief executive of BIAC, and Asif Ibrahim, DCCI president, are also seen in the BIAC-arranged workshop.



Samsung Mobile has launched Smartpay, an equal monthly instalment scheme at zero percent interest, for all credit cardholders of BRAC Bank, Standard Chartered Bank and City Bank. Smartpay allows the banks' VISA and AMEX cardholders to buy any Samsung mobiles priced between Tk 9,000 to Tk 20,000 with up to three equal monthly instalments.

## New top brass for BOC Bangladesh



Ayub Quadri as

Erphan Shehabul Matin

STAR BUSINESS DESK

BOC Bangladesh (BOCB) has recently elected Ayub Quadri as chairman and Erphan Shehabul Matin as managing director.

Quadri will succeed M Syeduzzaman, said BOCB, a member of the Linde Group, in a statement yesterday.

Quadri has been a director of BOCB since 2008 and also served the organisation as audit committee chairman. He was also the chairman of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation, director general of Bangladesh Rural Development Board.

Matin will replace Waliur Rahman Bhuiyan, the statement added.

Matin joined BOCB in 1980. He was the business director of the company and was responsible for sales and marketing, distribution and customer engineering services, projects and procurement.

## HSBC Bangladesh gets new head of marketing

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Talukdar Noman Anwar has joined HSBC Bangladesh as head of marketing and communications with effect from today, the bank said in a statement yesterday.

A marketing graduate from Dhaka University, he has over 15 years of professional experience including 10 years of marketing and brand management experience across diverse industries.

"It's exciting to see someone of Noman's calibre and diverse exposure joining our team. I am confident that his knowledge and experience will boost our marketing and communication plans," said Sanjay Prakash, chief executive officer of HSBC, Bangladesh.

