



# Of promises and visions

IMRUL KAYES CHOWDHURY

Asia's mega ICT event, e-Asia 2011, kicked off yesterday at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital.

Countdown timers were set in parts of the capital prior to its inauguration with colourful flags.

Right after the inauguration, techies swamp the venue to witness the tech event of such a scale that has never taken place in the country. Experts from across the globe have come to participate in a series of seminars, share their knowledge, display the promises of the ICT sector and its vision for future.

Exhibitors from home and abroad are showcasing their products at the event. Six country pavilions have been set up and at the far end of the exhibition hall there is a stall of Japan.

They showcased a digital travel pass, Spass, which will come out in January next year in Bangladesh.

The passes will be used in BRTC (Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation) buses. The Spass has been developed using a technology of SONY Corporation, Japan. The project was financed by JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) and organised by Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB).

The passes would be rechargeable at Tk 50-Tk 2,000 and there will be dedicated booths for the service.

Passengers will just need to hold the passes onto a machine while getting on and off the bus. Through this process the machine will get the data from source to destination and calculate the fare and deduct the amount from the card.

An official of Spass said, preliminarily it will be used on Abdullahpur-Motijheel route.

Just beside the Japan stall at the



Visitors look at different products and services a stall at the e-Asia 2011

exposition, there is Virtustream, a world leading enterprise cloud software and services provider.

Ed Franklin, executive vice president of sales of Virtustream, in a brief interview said they make a company more efficient by providing advisory services and software and evaluating the existing infrastructure of the company or enterprise.

"If you have a company that has 10 servers and is running at certain power levels for those servers, you can use our virtualisation technology, programmes and advisory services, and make five servers do the same amount of work those 10 servers were doing. That does two things; it helps by lessening power consumption and of course makes it

more efficient," Franklin said.

He said Bangladesh has a good opportunity in software development and there is also hunger for learning about these services.

Franklin said they will partner with some Bangladeshi firms and teach them how to provide these services.

After a little walk from Virtustream, you will see Ericsson's stall.

They are showcasing a 'connected tree', a tree that can recognise a passerby using its electrical impulse. It can also tweet, send SMS and change its colour.

The company is also showing 'e-wallpaper'. It is a technology that will replace the walls of your living rooms in future. Basically e-wallpaper is LCD

screen that will allow you to change pictures of your living room's wall.

At the exhibition, there is a dedicated section where all the digital initiatives by different government organisations are being displayed. Bangladesh Betar, Bangladesh Bank, Bangladesh Post Office, Dhaka Electric Supply Company Ltd, the foreign ministry, the agriculture ministry, and Bangladesh Police are among the organisations.

Bangladesh Police in its stall displayed a digital process that helps passport applicants track their applications from home.

Outside the exhibition hall, there are two pavilions and they have stalls from different private and government service providers.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Take broadband to the masses

ICT experts echo at eAsia seminar



Jerry Mobbs, CEO, Qubee speaks at the seminar

PHOTO: STAR

IT & TELECOM REPORT

ICT analysts yesterday said broadband services should be technology-neutral and medium-independent -- wired or wireless.

They spoke at a seminar on the first day of the three-day eAsia 2011 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka.

The seminar focused on how to take the broadband internet to the masses.

Sunil Kanti Bose, telecom secretary, said the government is going to adopt wireless and wired services. Third-generation (3G) licences for mobile operators will be provided by the middle of the next year, while efforts to develop fiber-optic cables are on.

It is projected that the country will have 30 percent internet penetration by 2015 and 40 percent by 2021. He also said the broadband price will go down in phases as it has been decreasing for the last few years.

Rohan Samarajiva, moderator of the seminar and chief executive officer of LIRNEasia, an ICT policy and regulation think-tank based in Sri Lanka, said the market should open up to the entrepreneurs as the population is increasing fast.

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He said everybody will be connected wireless and access to the internet should be open to all.

Per-Henrik Nielsen, managing director, Ericsson Bangladesh, said broadband can be wireless, wired or be served via satellite. A mixed solution should be deployed in the country, he said.

There should be dialogue among government, industry leaders and users to find out what they can gain from it, Nielsen said. The Digital Bangladesh vision should not go for 2021, it should be implemented by 2015, he hoped.

Jerry Mobbs, CEO of Qubee, said the company is serving 20 percent of wireless broadband users in Bangladesh through Wimax technology.

Most Asian countries have rail and road links with each other, speakers said. Now it is time to establish cross-border telecom links, they added.

It was also mentioned that the internet bandwidth price is still high in Bangladesh. Infrastructure and affordability are major challenges for the investors and internet users.

In a question-answer session, Mobbs said 1 megabits per second (Mbps) internet price is Tk 10,000 in Bangladesh but the same amount of internet bandwidth can be available in Delhi just at Tk 2730 (\$35).

## GALAXY Y to hit the market

IT & TELECOM DESK

Galaxy Y, the latest from Samsung's Galaxy series, is set to be released in the local market from this week, says a press release.

The world's leading smartphone company has designed it especially for the young generation at an affordable price.

With 3-inch QVGA display, the phone has an 832MHz processor and runs on Android's Gingerbread operating system. It supports up to 7.2 Mbps download speed.

It features Wi-Fi (b/g/n) and hosts of Android-oriented services from Google Mobile. The integrated Social Hub links all phonebook contacts to SNS, IM or email so there is complete flexibility on how one prefers to communicate.

Desired applications can also be downloaded from around 300,000 apps in Android Market.

It gives comfortable and easy grip with its compact design and rounded edges.

The Y also features easy-to-use TouchWiz, an improved user interface that provides more intuitive handling and smoother screen-to-screen transitions. It also has the Quicktype technology, where you just swap your fingers across the screen and it guesses your words and virtually writes the message for you.

It features multi-touch zoom and you can also customize the home-screen. The phone would be priced at Taka 12,990.



e-ASIA 2011 SEMINAR

## ICT can deliver low-cost healthcare services

IT & TELECOM REPORT

Local and international health experts yesterday called for using modern information and communication technology to take healthcare services to the rural people in a cost effective way.

Their observation came at a seminar styled "Healthcare Services Using ICTs: Status, Challenges and Opportunities" at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka.

The seminar is part of the three-day 'eAsia 2011', one of the Asia's premier events on ICT.

World's 80 percent doctors are urban-based, whereas a majority of the world's population still lives in rural areas, said Jeyaseelan Jayaraj, practice head, healthcare solutions unit of Cisco Systems, India.

"ICT can really transform the healthcare system from what we see today. It can help take services to the people. Now doctors can treat people from thousands of miles away," he said.

He said now many people are demanding healthcare services using ICT. "The solution has to be tailor-made for the people living in rural and urban areas."

Jayaraj said public private partnership can play a vital role in

tional director general of Directorate General of Health Services, said the government has made a lot of progress in e-healthcare since it came to power almost three years ago.

"People can avail healthcare services through mobile phones in every upazila hospital," he said. "Through the use of ICT, we have also increased the doctors' attendance to 80 percent. We are gradually moving to hospital automation."

Azad also said they also face challenges. "The cost of internet and bandwidth is high. We also need adequate supply of electricity."

AKM Nazrul Haider, a director of International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh, said the healthcare services were doctor-centric 50 years ago. "Now it is patient-centric, and will be system-centric in the future."

He however said digitisation of healthcare system is not simple.

"There are plenty of stakeholders and they have to work in a simple manner."

Jaijit Bhattacharya, a corporate director of Hewlett-Packard India, said: "We have to keep in mind that the technology is not going to solve all medical issues."



Speakers at the seminar

PHOTO: STAR

taking healthcare services to the masses.

Health Minister Prof AFM Ruhul Haque said ICT has revolutionised the world and Bangladesh is also part of it. "We have to make the best of the technology to take healthcare services to the people in rural areas."

He said that the present government has already launched eight telemedicine projects to take health services to the people.

Prof Abul Kalam Azad, addi-

Bhattacharya also said it would not be possible for Bangladesh to set up healthcare system in its every village. "So, we have to find out what works."

"Rural people who are coming to Dhaka to take medical services actually pay more than the people who live in Dhaka. We need to have doctors in place who can give them primary healthcare and refer them to right hospitals," he said. "We have to give them a low-cost solution."

## GPIT receives certifications

IT & TELECOM REPORT

GPIT, the first offshoot company of mobile operator Grameenphone, has recently been awarded two certifications by the International Organisation for Standardisation -- ISO 20000 for IT Service Management and ISO 27001 for Information Security Management System.

This was announced and handed over during a seminar on 'IT Service Management and Information Security' on

November 29 at a local hotel.

Science and ICT Minister Yeafesh Osman attended the seminar as the chief guest while Peter Anthony Dindial, CEO, GPIT delivered the introductory speech followed by guest speeches and key presentations from Sunil Mehta, CEO and director Quint Wellington Redwood, India, and Biswajit Chatterjee, zonal head (east) Det Norske Veritas.

The seminar was attended by high officials from leading banks and corporate institutions and IT experts.



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