

Savar tragedy aftermath: Better coordination using tech

M MANJUR MAHMUD

A national calamity of a very serious proportion has befallen Bangladesh. It has been more than a bolt from the blue when a high-rise building at Savar, on the outskirts of the capital, collapsed like a pack of cards.

With a view towards achieving a safe and secure society, we need to develop ICT for disaster prevention with the aim of connecting networks, transmitting information, and supporting actions even at the time of a disaster.

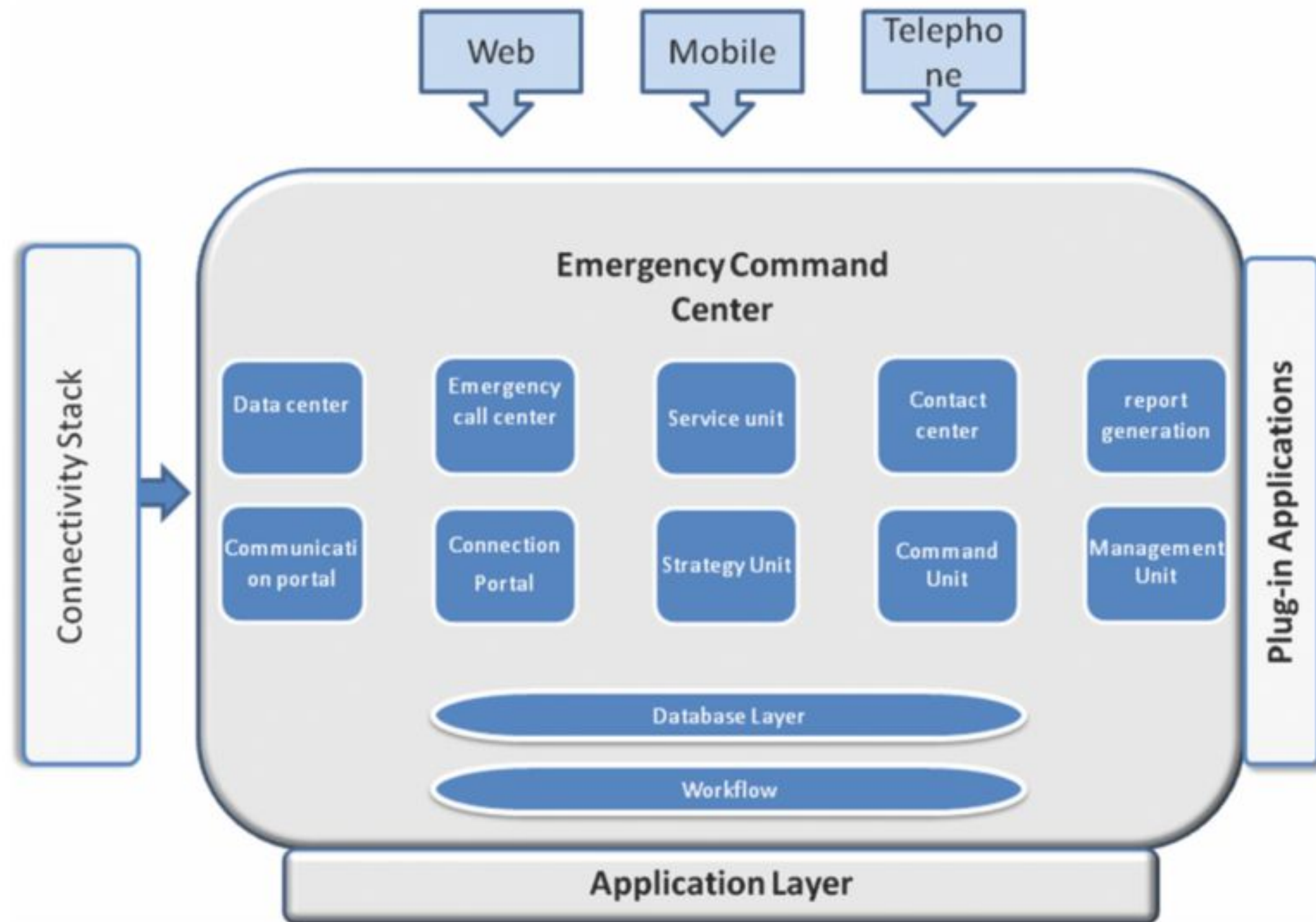
Lack of coordination: Situation like this makes us think, are we really prepare to handle this kind of disasters? Do we have any kind of rescue plan to reduce general people's misery and save valuable lives in a short period of time? Though we are short in hand and under budget but this is high time to take some steps for disaster management. We need an organised plan to handle this kind of situation effectively to maintain a flawless rescue operation.

Disaster strategic command Centre: Disaster strategic Command Centre is part of Emergency disaster control centre which consists of planning and emergency strategy management unit and information unit. It is the brain and heart of the total rescue operation.

Information unit will collect, process and give output about all disaster related information. According to the data, planning unit will come up with disaster management plan and work accordingly. It will be a mobile command centre which can be used to fight against any kind of disaster situation.

This may be packed in a mobile platform and may be placed at a convenient place.

The mobile command vehicle is designed for commanding response teams for disasters; it is the base of Disaster Management Strategic Command Centre; it will be a portable point of strategic



Technology perspective of emergency command centre is shown

development and deployment to manage disaster; and it will provide help and service for victims.

Possible support from emergency call center: Emergency call center will work as a one stop solution for emergency disaster related information with a designated short code, for example 2424, for easy connection and service.

Designated call center support executive will provide services like: missing person list; identity/information of victims; easy searching facility for victims family; emergency contact information; international co operation; task information (who is responsible for which task); support information which includes material support, requirement analysis report, collection point; people wish to help (how to donate cash, medicine, food, water etc allocation, medical

help, advisory,voluntary help)

We believe enabling cross-organisation sharing of information among multiple disaster-prevention institutions, technology for a wide area disaster-prevention platform is very much needed. For decision making, plans to develop technology for presenting work procedures and decision-making items in the event of a disaster or crisis and for presenting the information needed to draw conclusions with the aim of achieving efficient anti-disaster activities.

Lastly, by promoting technology development and business systems in collaboration, we plan to provide total risk management and disaster prevention solutions using ICT and to contribute to the realization of a safe and secure society.

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Qubee to expand its network

IMRUL KAYES CHOWDHURY

Qubee, the WiMax service provider in the country recently ran a campaign of network upgradation in Dhaka.

Feroz Ahmed, chief commercial officer of Qubee in an interview said the campaign has been a success for the Qubee.

“We got better response than our expectation,” he said.

“We upgraded the network in Dhaka because there was demand for it,” he said adding, “We felt the need for a better network to serve the current and potential demand in the market.”

He said some the customers of Qubee had left for lack of good experience.



Firoz Ahmed

Through this campaign Qubee also wanted to get back those customers.

“We planned to revive around 5,000 customers and we are going to cross this number.”

Ahmed said because of large number of users, their network was getting congested in some parts of Dhaka that include Gulshan, Banani, Dhanmondi, Mirpur, Uttara, Mohammadpur.

“Our network could not handle the demand. So, to provide quality service, we needed to increase the network capacity.”

He said this upgradation has increased the network capacity by 50 per cent.

When asked about Qubee's plan, he said “Our short-term plan is to expand our network to divisional headquarters and important district towns by the end of this year.”

At the moment Qubee has its network in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet. Besides these, it has network in Pabna, Bogra, Comilla and Feni on trial basis.

“It has become commercially important for us to cover Narayanganj, Gazipur and Savar. We will cover these areas immediately,” he said.

“By the year-end we will have a pretty decent coverage across the country.”

He also said that Qubee has started a new campaign from May 1.

“In this campaign we are providing some incentive to the users who will join Qubee. Under this campaign if anybody joins Qubee, he or she will get Tk 500 discount on monthly tariff for

two months and for next two months the user will get double volume.

“We are encouraging people to join Qubee by either cheaper price or more volume at the same price.”

Ahmed said this offer would be valid for one month. However, he said, they might extend the offer by another month.

He also informed about a change in Qubee's sales model.

Qubee in previous sales model used to sell out the modem to users. Now they are not selling the modem instead Qubee is just taking a connection charge while setting up the connection.

“And under this sales model we are providing three-year replacement warranty for the modem. In previous model we would give just 6-month warranty.”

Explaining this model he said a modem costs Tk 6,000 (Tk 4000 for modem and Tk 2000 for connectivity).

“We had to give subsidy in previous sales model. Just to create a win-win situation we took this sales model.”

Ahmed said Qubee started the business with a vision to bring high quality internet service in the country.

“We think we are yet to be there but our vision is very much there. We are on the track and we are making progress. Hopefully we will be there soon and will be able to take high quality internet where it has demand.”

Smartphone flagships missing the mark

SHAHNOOR RABBANI

The smartphone and tablet industries are the fastest growing tech industries in the world with the technology moving at a breakneck pace. What was considered a high-end product can be labelled a mid-range product within 6 months of its release. Take the Google Nexus 4, which has not even been in the market for 6 months and has already seen other phones take the lead with processing speed and screen resolution – thus now earning itself the moniker of an upper mid-range product and not an out and out flagship.

A smartphone flagship in 2013 guarantees a quad core processor and a 1080p resolution screen. Take three of the biggest players currently in the mobile phone industry –

Samsung, HTC and Sony. The Samsung Galaxy S4, HTC One and Sony XPERIA Z all are flagships for the first half of 2013 and they complete the quad core processor and 1080p screen prerequisite with aplomb.

What initially started the touchscreen smartphone revolution was the Apple iPhone, which gave users a fluid and simple UI that quite frankly worked. It did not require a 5-inch 1080p screen and a quad core processor to succeed. However, Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM's) seem to be moving at a very predictable rate of increasing hardware whilst forgetting that it is the user experience and usability that should be at the forefront.

Most applications barring some graphically intensive games cannot fully take advantage of a quad core processor in a phone while a good screen with ample brightness and sunlight legibility should do the job for all users.

Battery life remains an issue in most smartphones and that has yet to be properly addressed by most OEM's, barring perhaps Motorola with the Droid RAZR MAXX. On the other hand, size and form factor seem to be more pressing issues. Flagships these days, while getting slimmer are increasing in size.

Phones with 5-inch screens almost eliminate the thought of one handed operation. Then there is the lack of variety when it comes to form factors. There are still many users that prefer a

keypad or a QWERTY over a touchscreen. QWERTY's have not seen a flagship since the Motorola Milestone - which is considered by most as the phone that kick started the Android revolution.

Very recently gsmarena.com, one of the top cell phone websites, started a petition to make a smartphone flagship that is not as big as the ones currently in the market, proving further that the OEM's are missing a key area here.

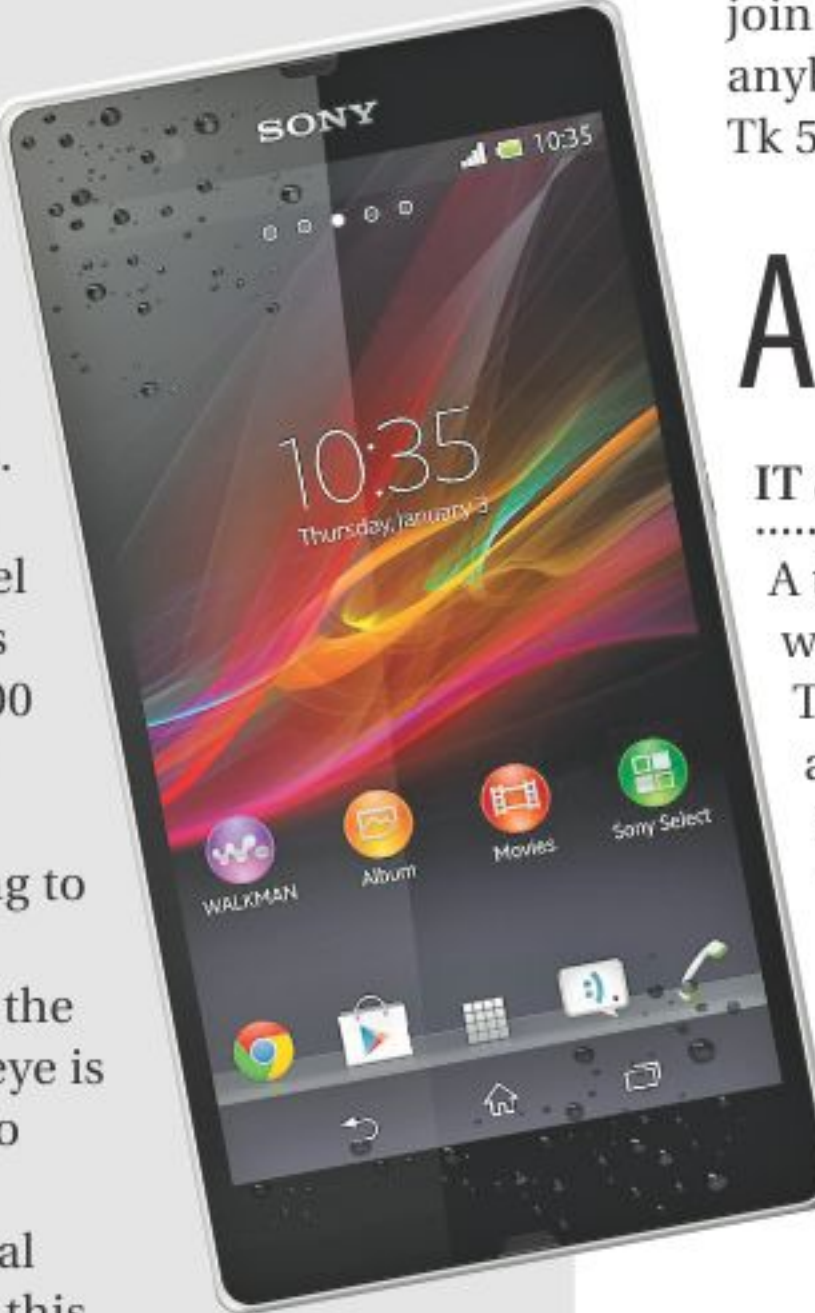
Another major issue concerning smartphone flagships are its durability. Most users are almost guaranteed to carry a protective casing or a pouch to protect their expensive phones from wear and tear and to keep its resale value high, especially at the rate at which flagships come and go these days. Sony seems to have tackled this problem well, making the XPERIA Z water and dust resistant and as a result the phone has seen market success with 4.6 million units sold in the first 40 days since its worldwide launch.

For an OEM to achieve success this sort of innovative thinking coupled with variety is required. Yes manufacturers like Samsung will give users the choice between phones with a mini version such as the Galaxy S4 mini. But that will come with dressed down hardware too. Now maybe, it will be just as fluid and intuitive as the S4 but the 'mini' moniker along with lesser capable hardware does not make it a flagship.

On the other hand, tech websites are to blame for OEM's deciding to increase hardware as benchmarks are given equal if not more priority

rather than real life performance by these websites. Screens with pixel densities under 300 ('Retina display' according to Apple because the human eye is unable to detect individual pixels at this density providing unmatched image clarity and sharpness) are often scoffed at and newer screen technologies such as AMOLED screens are made a huge deal out of because of their contrast and sunlight legibility. But in truth, a lot of LCD screens these days are very good if not better than AMOLED screens, like the one on the Nokia Lumia 920 and many screens with average pixel densities (according to these tech sites) provide the best sunlight legibility and viewing angles like the Nokia 808 PureView. More or less, all screens are usable and not extremely different from one and another, certainly not as great as some make them out to be.

So in the end OEM's have to think of better, more effective and innovative ways of making their products before calling it a flagship. The expected basics are filled but there are still some glaring blemishes that need to be improved on which OEM's are missing.



All set for Noakhali 'digital fair'

IT & TELECOM DESK

A three-day digital innovation fair is going to be held at Maijdee in Noakhali next week.

The Digital Innovation Fair 2013 would be organised by the district administration as part of the Access to Information Programme of the Prime Minister's Office.

The objective of the fair is to make people aware of the e-services provided by different government and private organisations.

Several seminars and workshops on ICT related issues would be conducted at the fair to be held on the premises of Noakhali Zilla School on May 10-12.

All the government agencies and offices of the district along with a number of private organisations will have their stalls in the fair to present their e-services before the visitors of the fair.

TECHPHOTO

Executive Technologies Limited has signed an agreement with City Bank to offer City Bank American Express Card members 'FlexiBuy' payment facility for Acer products. Under this agreement American Express Card members will enjoy installment payment facility with 0% interest during purchasing Acer products from all exclusive Acer stores in Bangladesh.

PHOTO: COURTESY