



Move to amend the ILDTs Policy

First Mobile Congress Bangladesh to be hosted

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Editorial



The Bangladesh mobile market is one of the top competitive markets that offer almost the lowest global tariffs for both voice and data services. The services are regularly monitored by the regulator. According to a recent drive test by BTRC in the Dhaka division, 97% customers enjoy standard voice and data services. Thanks to the mobile network operators that bring the services to the customers palm with its fullest effort with lots of challenges. However, the regulator and the government bodies are supporting in extending the services.

In a recent event organised by AMTOB and a local partner BIGF, the government declared that it would review policy and simplify the connectivity layers of the telecom ecosystem. The hefty telecom tax policy was also discussed at the event.

In this newsletter, both the events on telecom ecosystem and taxation have been covered along with other regular items including CEOs' interviews and other activities of the association members.

Brig Gen S M Farhad (Retd.)
Secretary General, AMTOB



AMTOB President's Message



The telecom industry continues demonstrating its firm commitment to the country amid emerging national and global challenges. In recent times, we have shown that apart from being a major catalyst for the country's development, the industry can support it to overcome adversities like natural calamities.

During the recent floods, all the operators responded promptly and ramped up their efforts. Our network team worked day and night in critical conditions in the affected areas to keep our networks up and running. We also made emergency numbers toll-free, considering the importance of connectivity as a fundamental human need. This initiative supported the rescue works in those areas to a great extent. We are grateful to all the Government agencies that helped us in this endeavor. Our efforts reflect how challenges of any magnitude can be tackled through collaboration and resilience.

Speaking of the collective resilience of the nation, I must mention a recent achievement that embodies it aptly. On behalf of our industry, I convey my heartiest congratulations to The Government for inaugurating the Padma Multipurpose Bridge, which also represents the rising aspirations of this ambitious nation. Creating new avenues of economic development, this mega project will open a new chapter in Bangladesh's history. As a trusted partner of the Government, the telecom industry celebrates this landmark achievement and reiterates its pledge to support every step it takes towards prosperity.

Erik Aas
President, AMTOB

>> AMTOB Board

Erik Aas
Chief Executive Officer
Banglalink Digital Communications Limited

Yasir Azman
Chief Executive Officer
Grameenphone Limited

M Riyaaz Rasheed
CEO (Acting) and
Chief Financial Officer
Robi Axiata Limited

Md. Shahab Uddin
Managing Director
Teletalk Bangladesh Limited

Mehboob Chowdhury
Chief Executive Officer
Pacific Bangladesh Telecom Limited
(Citycell)

Brig Gen S M Farhad (Retd.)
Secretary General, AMTOB

>> About AMTOB

Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh (AMTOB) is a national trade body representing all mobile telecom operators in Bangladesh. AMTOB has emerged as the official voice for the Bangladesh mobile Industry for interacting with relevant government agencies, regulators, financial institutions, civil society, technical bodies, media and other national and international organizations. It provides a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas between the stakeholders and industry actors for the development of mobile telecom industry through public private dialogue. AMTOB facilitates an environment which is conducive for its members and industry stakeholders with a view to establish a world class cellular infrastructure for delivering benefits of affordable mobile telephony services to the people of Bangladesh to eliminate digital divide.



Move to amend the ILDTS Policy

The licensing mechanism allows a large number of operators to operate within the network as intermediaries frequently leads to interrupted service quality, increases the cost of doing business and makes Bangladesh's telecom ecosystem unusual. The mobile industry has advocated for the operational process's simplification in order to improve service quality and benefit the end consumers. The regulator and the policymakers recently convened, and they said that the government has already started working to change the present policy.

Government will amend the International Long Distance Telecommunication Services (ILDTS) Policy to enact unified licensing regime and reduce the middle layers from the telecom ecosystem. Recently the telecom policymakers said it at a discussion on telecom ecosystem of Bangladesh, jointly organized by BIGF and AMTOB at a city hotel.

Regarding the middle layers in the telecom ecosystem including the gateways and interconnection exchanges, PTD minister Mustafa Jabbar said, there should not be any services which increases the cost of the consumers. The government is planning to revise the ILDTS Policy. He said that the government is thinking to introduce the active sharing policy for the telecom operators which will increase the service quality and reduce the service cost. However, he added, every policy will be prepared after discussing with all the stakeholders.



Mustafa Jabbar
PTD Minister



Hasanul Haq Inu, MP
BIGF Chairperson



Shyam Sunder Sikder
BTRC Chairman



Khalilur Hahman
PTD Secretary

The event discussion was presided over by Hasanul Haq Inu MP, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Information and broadcasting and Chairperson of BIGF. He said that cost effective approach and joint collaboration in the mobile ecosystem can reduce the cost of service of the mobile carriers to take the service to the end customers. He suggested the telecom policymakers to review the policies within the shortest possible time, otherwise it will not be able to follow the cost-effective approach. He added that the carriers expend 17% of their service cost for the infrastructure related institutions which affects the overall service cost. So, if the cost can be reduced would be helpful to the customers.

Special guest Shyam Sunder Sikder, Chairman, BTRC, said that the Government is working to introduce unified licensing regime, according to the initial plan and will offer three kinds of licenses—Infrastructure, wireless & non-wireless services, and miscellaneous.

“According to the plan, we'll first offer three kinds of licences—infrastructure, wireless & non-wireless services, and miscellaneous. We'll reduce the layers from the ecosystem. Some of the licences will not be renewed once their tenures expire. The regulator will have a stakeholder consultation before giving the final shape to the ILDTS policy.”





We will reduce the layers from the ecosystem, he added, some of the licenses would not be renewed once their current tenure is ended. We make decisions after consulting with the operators. So, the regulator will consult with all the market players before formulating the new ILDTS policy.

Khalilur Rahman, PTD Secretary, another special guest, said that the government will be very keen to help the industry to grow. Sharing his personal experiences, he said that already we are using various services in the home using 4G which seems very impressive, from ensuring door security to remotely using fans or lights. However, there are issues that laying fiber has become a challenge; excessive use of jammers is disrupting the network. There is a misconception about mobile tower radiation which needs to be addressed, even the academics are spreading wrong messages.

In the Bangladesh context, we've a higher number of ecosystem players to coordinate and evolve together, like the regulators, MNO, NTTN, TowerCos, gateway providers, academia and app development community, and many others.

A keynote was presented by Abdus Salam, Ericsson's Malaysia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka's Head of Network Solutions and Ericsson Bangladesh's Country Manager. He said, "Network capabilities are evolving, services are being developed and adopted in our lifestyle and across the industries. Automation, Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning capabilities allow us to orchestrate the end-to-end service creation with ease. In the Bangladesh context, we have a higher number of ecosystem players to coordinate and evolve together, like the regulators, MNO, NTTN, TowerCos, gateway providers, academia and app development community, and many others. Our industry cannot evolve without the involvement of a single ecosystem partner. Govt can facilitate the industry discussion on details of the ecosystem of future networks and services. So, the ecosystem can be more effective and simpler to evolve in Bangladesh".

Brig. Gen. Mohammad Moniruzzaman Jewel, Director General of Spectrum Division of BTRC, said, if we want to take the benefit of 5G, we have to follow an integrated approach and a synergistic effort. The business case for 5G will be more focused on the enterprises rather than the general customers. We have to understand how all the partners in the ecosystem are evolving and complimenting each other and this is the space where we need to focus on.

M. Riyaaz Rasheed, Acting Chief Executive Officer and CFO of Robi, said that the more players there are in the market, the lower the work efficiency of the operators. In other markets telcos are allowed to have other services, but in Bangladesh market, multiple players are working. And in the end, it will have an impact on customers because it will increase the cost of providing services. He urged the government to allow telcos to be part of other services. Efficiency and competition will come in, he said. Of course, he added, there are services where telcos won't fit in, such as

handset manufacturing. He requested the policymakers to pay attention to the issue.

Taimur Rahman, Chief Corporate and Regulatory Affairs Officer, Banglalink, emphasized on the success of the industry that very effectively introduced the biometric SIM verification system. Regarding the telecom ecosystem, he said that our main effort is how to reduce the cost of the end consumers. Currently there are dozens of licensees of IGW, ICX and IIG. He said quality of service drops due to dependencies on various players in the sector. If the government revise the ILDTS policy, it will help to provide better service.

Hossain Sadat, Senior Director and Head of Public and Regulatory Affairs, Grameenphone, said, we have dependencies in the industry and have to collaborate each other to grow. The mobile operators will use the recent purchased spectrum for 4G services and use the same for the test and



Abdus Salam

trial for 5G. However, when the test and trial will take place, dependency on the other infrastructure companies will even get higher. So, if coordination between the mobile carriers and the fiber service providers are made properly, it will help to offload the 5G service in the country in the near future.

Sumon Ahmed Sabir,



Hossain Sadat, Taimur Rahman and Shahed Alam

If we want to take the benefit of 5G, we've to follow an integrated approach and a synergistic effort. The business case for 5G will be more focused on the enterprises rather than the general customers. We've to understand how all the partners in the ecosystem are evolving and complimenting each other and this is the space where we need to focus on.

Chief Technology Officer of Fiber @ Home, said, over a period of time multiple licenses were offered in Bangladesh which should be revisited now so that the cost of services of the consumers can be considered. Telecom is such a service that all other systems are part of it. If all the government bodies can use the maximum potentials of the telecom services, they will be able to provide their services more efficiently. So, when the ILDTS policy will be revised we need to consider all other service providers in our mind. He thinks that all other sectors are unable to get the maximum output from the digital services due to their failure to understand the technology. For example, he said, if the traffic controlling system would use the technology with proper planning, it is possible to reduce the traffic-jam at least 30% in the capital city.

AMTOB Secretary General Brig Gen SM Farhad (Retd.) expressed his gratitude to everybody for making the event successful.



The Mobile Industry Demands for Tax Rationalisation

The Bangladesh mobile industry has been struggling due to the irrational and high taxation that hit profitability or loss or inadequate return of investment. It has long been demanding that the taxation policy be rationalised for the industry's faster growth and the betterment of the country's economy. The irony is that despite being country's one of the largest taxpayers with the enormous potential to contribute more, the sector's corporate tax and minimum tax is one of the global tops. To address the issue, BIGF and AMTOB organised a dialogue attended by the top policy makers, lawmakers, telecom regulators and representatives from the industry. The event took place at a hotel in the capital in April 2022.



Posts and Telecommunications Minister Mustafa Jabbar was present as the chief guest at the dialogue presided over by Bangladesh chapter of International Governance Forum- BIGF Chairperson and Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Hasanul Haq Inu, MP.

High officials from the BTRC and the senior executives from the mobile phone sector spoke at the dialogue. Robi Axiata Chief Corporate and Regulatory Officer Shahed Alam presented a keynote on the telecom tax. AMTOB Secretary General SM Farhad (Retd) delivered the vote of thanks.

Telecom Minister Mustafa Jabbar said, "I agree that higher taxes have been a long-standing concern. I think we failed to convince NBR about the negative impact of high taxes on telecoms. We need to think about the digital civilisation that requires rational taxation."

About the telecom and internet services, he said the services, which are one of the key means of communications, called the fundamental right and help the country's economic growth, cannot be overburdened with taxes. Rather, they should get all sorts of supports to grow further.

The minister said, "We're entering the 5G service where the mobile phone operators and other infrastructure companies will invest to create an information highway. If we don't back them up with special consideration to create the highway, the nation will not benefit from it. I don't think that 5G will be a consumer product overnight and this

service will be simultaneously provided along with 2G and 4G. 3G service will not be available in the near future."

BIGF Chairperson and Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Hasanul Haq Inu, MP stated that levies on Bangladesh's telecom industry are extremely high, especially the corporate tax and minimum turnover tax. He questioned, "Why are they being punished when they give so much money to the state coffers?"

Reducing taxes has no negative consequences for the government because it boosts revenue indirectly. The mobile industry's corporate tax and minimum turnover tax should be decreased and made compatible with other industries, he suggested.

Inu further said, "The turnover tax imposed on harmful sectors like the tobacco is 1%. It is 2% on the mobile industry. This is ill-judged and needs to be brought down to less than 1%. He recommended decreasing the corporate

tax rate at least 10% for the mobile phone industry.

To build a Digital Bangladesh, the VAT on the internet needs to be lifted, he said. "How much does the government earn from this sector? Information is one of the most important issues in modern life, and the mobile phone sector is the driving force for all kinds of economic activities."

BTRC Chairman Shyam Sunder Sikder said, "Several sectors are highly dependent on the internet services offered by the mobile phone operators. So, the tax regime needs to be reformed. As soon as new technologies evolve,

The turnover tax imposed on harmful sectors like the tobacco is 1%. It is 2% on the mobile industry. This is ill-judged and needs to be brought down to less than 1%.

mobile phone operators need to change their equipment. The telecom operators need to buy spectrum from the government on a regular basis and on top of it, additionally they are to invest to procure solutions. As the telcos say that the telecom taxation in Bangladesh is comparatively higher than other countries, the government should consider the matter.”

Robi Acting Chief Executive Officer and CFO M. Riyaaz Rasheed said, “The telecom today was not the telecom what it was ten years ago, and the telecom today will not be the telecom five years down the line. We need to focus on how the digital economy of Bangladesh turns into a smart economy.”

Robi Chief Corporate and Regulatory Officer Shahed Alam said, “Comparing to the neighboring nations, the tax on Bangladesh’s mobile sector is considerably higher. But the operators’ return on investment is insufficient. On the one hand, the operators’ average income per user is lower, while the cost of mobile voice and mobile internet is one of the lowest in the world. We offer a variety of new forms of low-cost services.”

“Taxes, on the other hand, make it harder for service providers to sustain. In this industry, we seek a logical tax rate. We must bear in mind that despite having access to the network, 45% of the country’s population has no access to mobile phones.”

Banglalink Chief Corporate & Regulatory Affairs Officer Taimur Rahman said, “Telecom operators are among the major contributors to turn the government’s ‘Digital Bangladesh’ vision into reality. We’ve been serving millions of customers despite carrying a heavy tax burden and facing

many other challenges. However, we’re proud to be the Government’s partner in its successful vaccine and biometric registration drives. There is still a long way to go.”

Grameenphone Senior Director and Head of Public and Regulatory Affairs Hossain Sadat said, “Mobile is a CAPEX intensive industry. Every year it needs to invest to ensure connectivity. Last year, collectively the sector invested around BDT 5,000 crore and recently has procured radio spectrum with BDT 11,000 crore. This is the indication of how much the telecom sector invests.”

He said the telecom sector has been contributing significantly to both digital inclusion and economic inclusion as it shares around its 50% revenue with the government. It pays 40% in corporate tax while the tobacco or luxury sector pays 22.5% in corporate tax. To address the disparity, he said, “We’ve tried to draw the attention of policymakers.

Shahed Alam

To achieve the goal 2041 Bangladesh, the taxation system in the telecom sector must be rearranged.”

Ericsson’s Malaysia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka’s Head of Network Solutions and Ericsson Bangladesh’s Country Manager Abdus Salam said, “Bangladesh is one of the global tops in terms of tax imposition on the telecom sector. Considering this as a ‘veloVolant’ sector, the growth of telecom impacts positively to all other sectors. If the government considers the industry from that perspective, we need to intensify this sector; even if it is conditional intensive, overall positive results will be huge.”

He shared his own experience and said, “In Malaysia, the government gives conditional intensive treatment to the telecom service providers for specific goals, which can be followed in Bangladesh.”



M. Riyaaz Rasheed and Brig. Gen. Mohammad Moniruzzaman Jewel



Tamjid Shiraj, Hossain Sadat and Taimur Rahman



Interview

**GP CEO
Yasir Azman’s
interview**

The main challenge to 5G will be fiber connectivity



Country’s tech service leader Grameenphone started its journey on March 26, 1997, with the mission to empower rural women and marginalized communities with the power of connectivity and eradicating the digital divide. Within 25 years of its journey, Grameenphone has contributed significantly to the advancement of not only the telecommunication sector but also Digital Bangladesh. Yasir Azman, Chief Executive Officer of Grameenphone, has recently shared and reflected on various issues related to the country’s telecommunication sector and how it has been doing its bit to achieve the goals of Digital Bangladesh and connect people to what matters most to them.

Yasir Azman reminisced, “Bangladesh Govt. led by Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had taken the initiative to democratize ‘mobile services for all’ back in 1996. That is when the seed was sowed and Grameenphone’s journey to empower society by enabling people started. From our first-ever customer Laily Begum to our current base of 83.7 million users, Grameenphone has taken great strides harnessing the power of technology. Grameenphone’s journey has continued to realize the vision of Digital Bangladesh and today, we are gearing up for Smart Bangladesh vision by 2041 through connected technology & capabilities to take advantage of the upcoming 4IR era.”

He continued, “With our DNA of constantly striving to accelerate digitalization through innovation and impacting people’s life for the good, undoubtedly, Grameenphone aligned themselves completely with this vision as we were always fixated on reducing the digital divide. Since the time we began our

journey, we wanted to make sure that connectivity reaches all – from someone in the city to someone living in the remote rural backwater. As a result, within a few years of the commencement of the Digital Bangladesh dream, Grameenphone was the first operator to launch 3G in 2013 and 4G in 2016, for mobile phone users countrywide. Now, we all wonder about the progress Bangladesh has made in the journey of digital lifestyle and economy, whereas only 1 out of 1000 citizens in Bangladesh had access to telephone services in 1997. Now, around 184.23 million use mobile phones. We now stand on the verge of 5G network rollout for industrialized solutions. Now, not only voice calls but the mobile internet has become much more important, and the drive for digital transformation has been renewed owing to the fact that we have been introduced to new realities after the pandemic.”

“During the pandemic, advanced network and improved digital services have become more

important than ever for everyone. As people's digital needs evolved and more and more people adapted to a digital lifestyle, Grameenphone, as the tech service leader, came up with simplified solutions on the go so that people can reap benefits of digitalization and feel empowered."

About the preparedness of 5G, he said, "Actually, for individuals we need strong 4G network at this time of our digitalization journey in Bangladesh and the use of 5G is more pertinent primarily in the enterprise and industrial sectors to drive efficiency and growth through automation bundled with intelligence. In the meantime, it is also true that smartphone penetration stands at approximately 50% in Bangladesh, smartphone must have faster adoption.

However, Grameenphone's parent company Telenor Group has already launched 5G in several countries. Considering that, Grameenphone already has the technical know-how and uses cases for several markets around the globe based on their respective market needs. We can use the knowledge and capabilities to tailor innovative solutions that cater to the needs of the transforming digital society and economy of Bangladesh. But the main challenge for 5G will be the fiber connectivity to expand further by removing the challenges.

When asked about Grameenphone's overall contributions, he added, "Grameenphone began its journey to make the dream of a connected Bangladesh a reality where access to connectivity is democratized. Today, we have minimized the digital divide and connected millions of people in the country, from urban to remote areas, empowering them digitally, arming more than 83 million people with the power of connectivity. This has enabled people to reap the benefits of digital services and simplified solutions, unleash their full potential and make things possible. As a responsible corporate citizen and the country's top taxpayer (Large Taxpayer unit - LTU) for six consecutive years, we strive to always stand beside the nation and become a role model for responsible business operations. In Grameenphone's memorable journey of 25 years as a partner in the progress of Digital Bangladesh, with the power of connectivity, we have aimed to connect people with what matters most to them, actively playing a part in building the ecosystem for a smart Bangladesh. From connecting the unconnected fishermen communities while out at sea, training our customer's agents to serve the deaf and hard of hearing customers through Sign line, empowering the boom of e-commerce and supporting SMEs with innovative digital services, catering to evolving customer needs with through self-service app, MyGP and ensuring our high-speed internet facilitates online education to the students in the deep rural communities, - we have come a long way."

"As Bangladesh embraces the 4th Industrial Revolution and set out to

“Actually, there is no ‘use case’ for 5G in Bangladesh. Because the 5G use cases are mainly for the enterprises to improve collaboration and productivity. And the most urgent for the general users is the advanced 4G.”

become a knowledge-based high-income country by 2041, we need to collectively support our youth to build future-ready skills. Grameenphone's industry-first initiatives such as Future Nation, GP Explorer and GP Accelerator contribute to transforming the immense potential of youth dividend into future drivers of economic progress. For instance, Future Nation in partnership with UNDP, aims to enhance the skills and potential of youth by identifying opportunities for development, employment, entrepreneurship, and investment in the post-pandemic situation, providing digital upskilling to realise the full potential of youth for a demographic dividend. As GP's 4G internet facilitates the spread of knowledge in every corner of the country, awareness on online safety is also crucial, and we are working closely with educational institutes, partnering with organizations such as PLAN International and UNICEF, and utilizing our social media reach to educate the youth on staying safe online. This drive of upskilling-reskilling is emphasized in our workplace culture to promote human resources development and enable gender diversity in leadership."

"With the continued economic progress of Bangladesh in the coming days, we will put in our dedicated efforts to play an imperative role in democratizing high-speed internet and facilitating digital inclusion for all, empowering people. We have witnessed the transformation of lives across all socio-economic demographics, and together with our partners, we look forward to cocreating the ecosystem, towards building a digitally connected society and fulfilling million more dreams.

With 5G on the horizon, tomorrow holds limitless opportunities; let us find our purpose and make dreams a reality. TIME IS NOW!" Yasir Azman concluded.



Nokia's efforts to drive digitalization and 5G solutions in Bangladesh, Riad Hossain, Country Head

Over the years, Bangladesh has projected an impressive track record for overall advancement and indisputably technology has played a major role in further accelerating the pace of development. At Nokia, we are proud to be a part of this process toward building 'Digital Bangladesh', said Riad Hossain, Country Head, Nokia Solutions and Network Bangladesh.

The mobile market in Bangladesh has expanded at a steady pace in the last decade, with an increase of over 90% in unique subscribers. As indicated by the latest GSMA report for Bangladesh, mobile is the primary channel for accessing the internet. By providing connectivity, the mobile/ICT sector enables life-enhancing benefits such as access to educational resources, and access to connected businesses and financial services via mobile money. Significantly impacting sectors like finance, education, agriculture, healthcare, skill development and employment.

With the advent of 5G technology in the mobile sector, it is a pivotal time for global economies to imply a transformation throughout the entire telecommunications system to enable the 4th industrial revolution. Industry 4.0 technologies such as Industrial IoT, edge computing, deep analytics, AR/VR and digital twin, among others maturing as they bring together physical and digital economies.

5G is all set extensively change our way of living - starting from electricity to waste management, from food safety to communication. All networks we are relying on will be controlled via the underlying telecommunication networks - basically becoming the 'nervous system' of our society. Therefore, the primary sectors that require immediate digital transformation are agriculture, mining, factories, and transportation. Our solutions spanning over Smart Agriculture and Resources Management, Smart Mining, Smart Factories and Ports that help in creating a greener, more innovative, thriving communities that benefit all the citizens.

When it comes to smart agriculture, Nokia has teamed up with industry leaders to offer an out-of-the-box approach with its Smart Agriculture as a Service. This approach assists farmers to take advantage of the opportunities cost-effectively presented by IoT with 5G and edge capabilities.

Apart from agriculture, Nokia also provides high-performance networks using 4G that enable mining companies to use digital technologies to adapt to fluctuating demand, control operational costs and address growing safety and environmental concerns. Therefore, streamlining operations through automation, robotics, digitally enhanced equipment, sensor data, predictive analytics and machine learning.



Interview

NOKIA



In addition to that, more businesses are seeking to boost the productivity at factories and flexibility of their production or provision of services while securing a safer workplace. For manufacturing-based industries, 5G can facilitate more machine-type communications, real-time control of machines, robot-human interactions and edge cloud analytics to create "smart factories". From creating 'Digital Twin' to simulate changes to operations using VR, manufacturing is on the cusp of transformation.

Furthermore, 5G can help foster the creation of "connected ports", one where humans can interact with and share real-time information with devices and machines. For instance, with lower latency, loading and unloading operations can be made more efficient via the automated remote control of unmanned ground vehicles.

In order to keep the telecom industry growing, Spectrum is the lifeblood of mobile communications. Spectrum-related policies, including spectrum management, are critical for the future development of networks, including the evolution to 5G. To enable adoption, operators must be assured that a sufficient and affordable spectrum is available promptly. This is required to support the growing mix of data traffic that will be generated by the increasing number of humans and machines that will access (future) networks. We also believe that stimulating and innovative services are crucial for modernizing regulation in key national sectors such as health, energy, transport and agriculture by including online/ICT regulation components.

Erik Aas takes over as President and Yasir Azman becomes Sr. Vice President at AMTOB



The Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh (AMTOB) has elected Erik Aas as its president for the next two years at an Annual General Meeting held (AGM).

The board also elected Grameenphone CEO Yasir Azman as its sr. vice president at the AGM held at one of its members' offices in Gulshan, Dhaka on March 19, 2022.

Respected leaders from the AMTOB's members and associated members, including Erik Aas, CEO of Banglalink Digital Communications, Yasir Azman, CEO of Grameenphone Limited, Abdus Salam, Country Manager of L M Ericsson Bangladesh, Zhang Zhengjun, CEO of Huawei Technologies (Bangladesh), and Riad Hossain, Country Head of Nokia Solutions and Network Bangladesh, were present during the meeting and gave speeches. Robi Axiata's CFO and acting managing director, M. Riyaaz Rasheed, joined the meeting virtually.

AMTOB Secretary General Brig Gen S M Farhad (Retd.) moderated the meeting and gave an overview of the association's operations and accomplishments.

AMTOB is a national trade association representing all mobile telecom operators in Bangladesh including Banglalink, Citycell, Grameenphone, Robi and Teletalk as members and network solution

providers Ericsson, Huawei and Nokia as associate members.

AMTOB has emerged as the official voice of the Bangladesh mobile telecom industry to interact with relevant government agencies, regulators financial institutions, civil society, technical bodies, media and other national and international organizations. It provides a forum to discuss and exchange ideas between the stakeholders and industry actors for the development of mobile telecom industry through public private dialogue.

The Association, on behalf of the mobile telecom sector, has been playing a lead role in partnering with the government in realizing Digital Bangladesh objectives.

AMTOB has been at the forefront in upholding the image of the industry among its stakeholders and consumers. It regularly communicates with policy makers and industry think-tanks on the contribution of the sector for socio-economic development of the country. The Association also plays a key role in enabling the inflow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the sector.

Mobile telecom industry is one of the largest employers of the country. The sector is also the biggest source of government's tax revenue.



First Mobile Congress Bangladesh to be hosted

The first ever Mobile Congress Bangladesh (MCB) will be held at the International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB) in the city from September 29 to October 1, this year. The Mobile Congress Bangladesh will highlight the recent development and broaden the future scope of Bangladesh's mobile and telecommunication industry.

The event is designed with exhibition, seminar, conference, forum, and award show, said a media release.

The Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh (AMTOB) and RedCarpet365 Ltd will jointly organise the MCB. Brigadier General SM Farhad (retired), secretary general of AMTOB and Ahmed Imtiaz, chief executive officer of Redcarpet365 Ltd, signed a strategic alliance agreement recently.

According to a press release, S M Farhad said that with over 183.38 million (April 2022) mobile phone

subscribers and 113.21 million (April 2022) mobile internet users, Bangladesh was showing perfect examples of being digital.

He said that the growth drivers were indicating that by 2023 the market size would be \$5.08 billion. 'So, this is the time to grab the opportunity to highlight the strength of these industries to the world and Mobile Congress Bangladesh (MCB) will be the perfect platform for that.'

Ahmed Imtiaz said Bangladesh's mobile handset and telecommunication industry was moving ahead. 'To keep in competition with the rest of the world we need to promote 'MADE IN BANGLADESH' campaign.

He said leading international mobile brands Samsung, Nokia, Vivo, Xiaomi and Oppo had already set up factories in the country. "We believe Mobile Congress Bangladesh (MCB) will play an important role for Bangladesh to attain about \$12 billion investment by 2023."



Banglalink provides free talk-time and data in the flood-affected Sylhet region. Each prepaid customer to get 10 minutes talk-time and 100 MB for free.



Grameenphone and Northern Education Group (NEG), country partner of Kotler Impact and Asiatic Mindshare Bangladesh, recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to launch a special textbook titled "Essentials of Modern Marketing" (EOMM). The book, by Prof Philip Kotler and his associates, is to be written and published in 2022. It will illustrate Grameenphone's success in Bangladesh.



Banglalink has inaugurated a digitally equipped advanced Learning Centre for its employees at its Head Office, Dhaka. It will provide the learners with enhanced learning experiences through both hybrid and traditional learning facilities.



Grameenphone employees have observed 'Grameenphone Green Week 2022' from May 16 to 19, 2022 with the sincere objective to accept the 'Green Pledge' and address environmental sustainability through every possible course of action in daily lives through the Three Rs - Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.



Robi has recently distributed emergency relief among flood affected people in Bishombhopur and Dirai Upazilla under Sunamganj district. Sylhet Runners' Community has worked as the distribution partner in this initiative. Robi is also working with Sylhet Runners' Community, Mastul and Nandonik Foundation to rehabilitate people who have lost their homes to the flood.



Teletalk recently provided emergency goods to the flood-affected people in the north-east regions of the country. In the image, PTD Minister Mustafa Jabbar, PTD Secretary Khalilur Rahman, and Teletalk Managing Director MD Shahab Uddin are seen along with other officials.



Robi extends its hand to the victims of the tragic fire accident at the BM Container Depot in Sitakunda. The operator is committed to being with Chittagong Medical College Hospital for all needs, including the supply of necessary medicines.



To answer questions from clients, Teletalk Managing Director MD Shahab Uddin joined a Facebook Live on June 15, 2022.



All employees of Ericsson Bangladesh had a meeting on June 05, 2022.



Nordic@50 event recently took place in the city.



Huawei on March 23, 2022 has established an ICT Academy to equip young learners with industry-fit skills and develop an ICT talent ecosystem, in collaboration with BUET. This ICT Academy has been established as a non-profit education program where the participants will be given a chance to communicate with more than 3,000 instructors from around the world. There will be 83 certification programs on 19 different subjects as per current plan.



Huawei on June 15, 2022 inaugurated three new competitions namely ICT Incubator, App Developer and Tech Woman to nurture the local startups and ICT talents of Bangladesh. All these three programs are designed for the new startup and idea on developing mobile apps. Winners of the competitions will receive up to BDT 500,000 prize money, a chance to meet successful startup at abroad & up to USD 125k Huawei Cloud credit.



Hon'ble Minister Mustafa Jabbar, Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications & Information Technology visited Nokia Booth during MWC Event in 2022.



On May 29, 2022, at a city hotel, officials from the nation's telecom industry, including policymakers, regulators, and service providers, pose for a photo on the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day.



Hon'ble Minister of State for Information and Communication Technology Zunaïd Ahmed Palak held a meeting with Nokia Senior Executives to discuss about Nokia Product and Solutions.



On May 19, 2022, AMTOB hosted a one-day workshop on the country's telecom industry with the top journalists from the media at a resort in Gazipur. The discussions were led by senior officials from the regulator and the mobile carriers.



Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh

Congratulations Bangladesh



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