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India

Nokia Siemens builds railway GSM system

Nokia Siemens Networks has implemented India's first GSM Railways (GSM-R) communications solution under the Mobile Train Radio Communication (MTRC) project for North Central Railways.

The system replaces earlier communication methods with a single digital radio system carrying signalling and operational information between the train driver, guard and train controller. Nokia Siemens claims this enables higher speeds, and greater traffic density with improved safety, security and reliability.

Nokia Siemens Networks supplied an end-to-end GSM-R radio solution including switching, base stations and controllers, cab radios and handheld devices. Its Railway@Vantage intelligent network software allows the train controller and the driver/guard to contact each other even without knowing mobile numbers or location of the locomotive.

Nokia Siemens Networks will also provide network design, installation and commissioning, project management, training, operations and maintenance, network integration and management of the network for one year.

The system has to date been deployed on a 270 kilometre stretch between Mathura and Jhansi under North Central Railways, and was inaugurated by Railways board chairman, KC Jena, in Agra. "By 2012, Railways is likely to handle double the traffic volumes currently handled. Indian Railways has chalked out a well-planned strategy to remove bottlenecks and augment capacity to match the requirement," Jena said.

Nokia Siemens Networks claims to have been one of the inventors of GSM-R technology, with Siemens researching and creating the GSM-R standard starting in the early 1990s. To date Nokia Siemens Networks has deployed 22 GSM-R networks in 15 countries serving 50,000 km of railways, making it the world's number one GSM-R vendor. In India, Nokia Siemens Networks is currently implementing GSM-R solution for the Northern Railway, North Frontier Railway and East Central Railway.

Reliance borrows \$US750m for massive GSM rollout

Reliance Communications has received a \$US750 million loan from China Development Bank that it intends to use to build a nationwide GSM network.

According to India's *Business Standard* newspaper, Reliance has received the 10 year loan at 80 basis points above the Libor rate and has received the Reserve Bank of India approvals for the loan. The paper said that Reliance plans to launch nationwide GSM services by the end of this financial year using equipment from Huawei Technologies and has announced a capital expenditure of \$1 billion for active GSM infrastructure. It has been awarded spectrum licences to launch GSM services in 14 service areas under a controversial new crossover technology policy.

According to *Business Standard*, "This will be the country's largest order for telecom equipment and one of the world's biggest. The installed production capacity of GSM electronics worldwide is 250-300 million lines annually, suggesting that the order could account for more than 10 percent of global production over the next three years."

However the report contradicted itself saying " The company would use a large part of the loan to purchase GSM electronic equipment from Taiwanese (sic) electronic major Huawei." And later that Reliance had "begun discussions with leading equipment manufacturers such as Huawei, Alcatel Lucent, ZTE, Ericsson, Motorola and Nokia, amongst others.

China

OKI takes control of Chinese telecom subsidiary

OKI has bought out its partner's share of Changzhou OKI-GEG Telecoms Ltd, making it a wholly-owned subsidiary.

Changzhou OKI-GEG Telecoms was established in 1997 by OKI and Jiangsu Guoguang Electronic Information Technology Co. It has been renamed OKI Telecommunications Technology (Changzhou) Co Ltd. (OTTC). OKI says that it will use the company to establish a consolidated structure for its telecommunication hardware equipment business covering design and production through to sales.

OKI says that, by consolidating its resources in system integration, customer support and sales, which had been dispersed among various companies, It will provide total solutions, including intellectual assets, to its customers.

"In 2002 at the same location as OTTC, OKI established OKI Software Technology Co, a subsidiary to offer telecommunication equipment software. Now with the two wholly-owned subsidiaries in Changzhou, OKI has established a consolidated structure to develop, manufacture and sell telecommunication equipment hardware and software," said Masashi Tsuboi, general manager of Global Business Division at OKI. "With this new structure, by 2010 we aim to double our sales at OTTC compared to our last fiscal year ending March 2008."

Indonesia

iFORTE uses Firetide WiFi mesh for broadband access

iFORTE, an Indonesian service provider and IT integrator, and Firetide, a provider of wireless mesh networks have rolled out a WiFi mesh network in the Jakarta business district.

It extends the reach of the fibre backbone installed by iFORTE along the dedicated bus lines of the Trans-Jakarta transit system. The deployment uses an enterprise-focused business model to deliver Internet access to business customers and residential complexes through a combination of fibre and wireless connectivity.

Although the deployment has an access component, no public Wi-Fi access is planned at this time. The first phase of the fibre build out - to deploy a 200km fibre optic network backbone - will conclude in June 2008. Covering 300 square miles, it includes 10 corridors of the Trans-Jakarta transit system in metropolitan Jakarta's business districts, including most of the first and second tier main streets.

"The Firetide wireless infrastructure allows us to extend service coverage wherever there is demand without having to install additional fibre optic connections as the last mile," said Andrie Tjioe, director of iFORTE. "The unique ability of Firetide mesh to act as a redundant backhaul, should the fibre be damaged, increases the reliability of our service and enables us to stand by our advertised service levels."

In the current phase of the deployment, iFORTE has deployed 95 Firetide HotPort wireless mesh nodes and 72 Firetide HotPoint access points along a 40km stretch running through Jakarta's business districts in two corridors of the Trans-Jakarta bus system. The wireless mesh nodes tap into the fibre backbone and distribute bandwidth to other mesh nodes deployed on surrounding buildings, or to access points installed on bus stops.

The wireless access points deliver the broadband signal to Firetide HotClient customer premises equipment installed in offices, shops, banks and residential complexes. The end-to-end Firetide wireless infrastructure is claimed to enable reliable delivery of guaranteed bandwidth to subscribers at up to 4Mbps.

iFORTE was founded in March 2002, and began offering VSAT services under a national licence. At the end of 2002, iFORTE acquired PowerLan Indonesia, a subsidiary of PowerLan Australia. This acquisition added Microsoft Axapta (now called Microsoft Dynamics) and Invensys Protean teams to iFORTE.

Singapore

SingTel launches mobile TV

SingTel has launched its Mobile TV service using Nokia Siemens Networks' Mobile TV streaming solution, complementing its mio TV service.

Nokia Siemens Networks' mobile TV streaming deployment, including a mobile client application, is one of its first in Asia Pacific and SingTel will be the first mobile operator to launch this service in Singapore. It is also Nokia Siemens Networks' first Singapore deal with SingTel.

According to Nokia Siemens Networks, "a particular highlight of the new service is the excellent user experience it offers by providing live TV channels with electronic program guide (EPG) information and video-on-demand (VoD)."

SingTel has chosen Nokia Siemens Networks' Media Delivery Solution (MDS) 3.5. The phone application is based on Adobe's Flash Lite technology. NSN says it can be extended to support various standards including video streaming (unicast), and future technologies.

Singapore to get Salesforce.com's first non-US data centre

Hosted CRM software specialist, Salesforce.com, is to open its first international data centre in Singapore.

The data centre, which is expected to go live before the end of year, will service the company's growing international customer base. Salesforce.com also announced plans to establish a network operations centre in Singapore to implement 24x7, follow-the-sun monitoring of its data centres in North America and Singapore. To support this it is investing in additional facilities and headcount at its Asia Pacific headquarters.

"The decision to build our first data centre outside of the US is clear evidence that companies globally are abandoning the failed client-server software model and are looking for a new model that allows them to focus on innovation as opposed to infrastructure," said Marc Benioff, chairman and CEO, salesforce.com.

He added: "The explosive growth that we are experiencing in Asia Pacific, combined with a highly technically literate and multi-lingual talent pool, make Singapore the perfect location for our first data centre outside of the US."

Salesforce.com claims that its Asia Pacific customer base doubled over the last 12 months. Strategic customers include AAPT, Acer, Amcor, CGU Insurance, Challenger Financial Services, Datacraft, Flight Centre, Hang Seng Bank, Mizuho Private Wealth Management, Ottagi, Ramco, SPH Search, VSNL and Telecom New Zealand.

South Korea

Electronic Arts to buy Hands-On Mobile Korea

Electronic Arts - which claims to be the world's leading interactive entertainment software company - is to acquire the assets of Hands-On Mobile Korea, - claimed to be the world's leading developer of connected games and applications, best known for its mobile role-playing game, Heroes Lore.

On completion, the former Hands-On Mobile Korea team will become EA Mobile Korea and will play a strategic role in the EA Mobile Asia development and publishing growth plans. Hands-On Mobile Korea is a subsidiary of parent company Hands-On Mobile, based in the United States.

"This acquisition is a major milestone in growing our mobile business in Asia," said Barry Cottle, senior vice president and general manager EA Mobile. "Hands-On Mobile Korea brings us a great leadership team, proven studio talent, and outstanding carrier and OEM handset manufacturer relationships."

Following completion of the acquisition, Hands-On Mobile Korea will continue to be managed by Gilbert Kim as head of the EA Mobile, Korea division. The studio will remain in Korea with growth planned for both the development and publishing teams, and will work within the management structure of the EA Mobile Asia Publishing organisation. Financial terms of the acquisition were not disclosed.

Malaysia

Intel & Green Packet plan Malaysia-wide mobile WiMAX network
Intel Capital has invested RM50 million in Green Packet, a provider of next-generation network solutions and services and Intel will work with Green Packet's subsidiary, Packet One Networks (Malaysia) to deploy Malaysia's first nationwide 802.16e WiMAX network, targeted to be commercially available from June 2008.

According to Intel, the announcement is a significant milestone for Malaysia and for WiMAX because it represents the first large-scale commercial deployment of mobile WiMAX in Southeast Asia, and the first large-scale deployment of an 802.16e 2.3GHz WiMAX network outside Korea.

"Intel is committed to the deployment of WiMAX globally and momentum for WiMAX is strong, with more than 280 fixed and mobile WiMAX trials and commercial deployments in 110 countries," said Arvind Sodhani, president of Intel Capital and executive vice president, Intel Corporation.

"Intel's investment is aimed at accelerating the proliferation of standards-based, high-speed wireless broadband globally. Packet One's intention to deploy a commercial WiMAX network represents a significant acceleration of WiMAX momentum in Asia Pacific."

Puan Chan Cheong, Group managing director and CEO of Green Packet, said: "Packet One intends to be the market leader in high-speed wireless broadband access for both consumers and businesses, We will capitalise on our first-mover advantage to execute a rapid roll-out of WiMAX in Malaysia, commencing in June 2008."

- **Intel WiMAX laptop module coming**

Later this year in the US, Intel expects to offer an optional integrated WiMAX/Wi-Fi/module for notebooks based on its next-generation Intel Centrino 2 processor technology. The company plans to make its optional WiMAX capability available more broadly as WiMAX networks continue to build out around the world.

Maxis picks Acision to enhance SMS

Malaysian mobile operator, Maxis Communication has selected Acision's Message Plus solution to give its customers greater control over SMS.

Subscribers can now block unsolicited SMS, or SMS spam, set up automatic replies and automatically copy messages to another mobile number - all from their handset.

Malaysia has mobile penetration rate of 85 percent and is the world's sixth largest text messaging market. According to Dr Nikolai Dobberstein, head of strategy and

new businesses for Maxis, "Maxis is the first in Malaysia and amongst the first three in the region to offer this integrated SMS-management service. In fact, the Acision's Message Plus platform has allowed Maxis to be the first mobile operator globally to enable a customer-activated anti-spam solution. For Maxis, this blacklist feature complements our ongoing efforts in combating spam.

"We are confident that Message Plus will become one of our most popular services within our current range of innovative application-to-peer SMS services."

Firefly Airlines to deliver passenger info via SMS

Firefly, Malaysia's first community airline and subsidiary of Malaysia Airlines, has selected Sybase 365 to enable it to send mobile flight information to its passengers, regardless of country of origin or mobile operator.

Firefly's mobile flight information service is delivered using Sybase 365 Application Manager platform, designed to handle high volume outgoing SMS traffic. It is also claimed to provide Firefly with "a cost-effective and efficient channel to communicate with their passengers, dramatically reducing airport waiting times and leading to high customer satisfaction."

SMS updates advising passengers of flight schedule changes, cancellations, pre-flight reminders, and weather forecasts are sent to passengers' mobile phone. Firefly currently flies from Penang and Subang to Kuantan, Kota Bahru, Kuala Terengganu and Langkawi in Malaysia, and to Phuket and Koh Samui in Thailand. The airline was launched in April 2007.

Taiwan

ITRI picks Agilent mobile WiMAX test gear

Taiwan's Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI) will use Agilent Technologies' E6474A wireless network test platform for its M-Taiwan WiMAX Applications Lab (MTWAL).

The six operators in Taiwan that won WiMAX operating licenses last year are expected to roll out their networks and provide commercial services in the second half of 2008. ITRI will use Agilent's WiMAX test systems to enable this rollout of networks and services.

New Zealand

Cellular competition in NZ about to heat up

US venture capitalist, Trilogy International Partners which specialises in mobile networks, has acquired 24.9 percent of New Zealand Communications Limited, which is building New Zealand's third mobile phone network.

Trilogy has purchased its stake for an undisclosed sum from several New Zealand Communications investors, including South Africa-based Econet Wireless, which co-founded NZ Communications with the Maori-controlled Hautaki Trust. Trilogy says that, following regulatory approvals, it will increase its ownership to 26 percent and appoint two directors to the company's eight member board.

NZ Communications holds 2G and 3G spectrum licenses. It is completing a GSM network and expects to announce its market launch date later this year. According to Trilogy "the market is 100 percent penetrated, but NZ Communications and Trilogy see opportunities for a new entrant because rates are high, subscriber usage is relatively low, and data services are not yet widely used."

Trilogy International Partners LLC is a privately held company which owns and operates wireless networks outside the US. It was founded in 2005 by John Stanton and other former senior executives of Western Wireless Corporation, shortly after Western Wireless merged with Alltel. Trilogy's strategy is to build or acquire wireless enterprises where it perceives unmet demand for telecommunication services and which, under proper capitalisation and management, present opportunities for significant growth. In addition to its investment in New Zealand, Trilogy currently operates mobile communications companies in Bolivia, Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Incumbents relinquish spectrum for new entrant

Earlier this month NZ communications minister, David Cunliffe announced that NZ Communications had gained access to spectrum as a result of a deal struck between the government and Telecom NZ and Vodafone NZ. These two operators had earlier accepted offers for the renewal of their cellular spectrum licences in the 800MHz and 900MHz bands on the condition that they relinquish some of it to a new entrant to the mobile market. Cunliffe said that companies had now completed the sale of this spectrum to NZ Communications, for a total price of \$NZ106 million. According to Cunliffe, a case-by-case review of the 800MHz and 900MHz bands identified that Telecom and Vodafone had sufficient spectrum and were not fully or efficiently utilising their allocations.

"This is good news for New Zealanders. Not only does acceptance of the offers mean that New Zealanders will have cellular services for years to come but the sale of spectrum to a third company will help to launch a third network player in New Zealand," said Cunliffe. "A new mobile player will give consumers more choice and provide more competition in the market. It also gives cellular operators greater certainty to invest in new infrastructure and bring the latest mobile technology to the market,"

Technology

OECD warns on Internet address shortage

The OECD has added its voice to a growing chorus warning of the consequences that will flow from the diminishing pool of IPv4 addresses, unless there is widespread adoption of IPv6.

The OECD says governments and businesses must "work together more effectively and urgently to meet the growing demand for Internet addresses and secure the future of the Internet economy." The Internet address space available under IPv4 will run out in 2011 according to the OECD, and the only long term solution is to transition to IPv6 which has sufficient address capacity to give every device on the planet its own unique address, many times over.

The OECD has just issued a report *Economic Considerations in the Management of IPv4 and the Transition to IPv6*, available at no charge from <http://www.oecd.org>, in which it claims that only 16 percent of the total IPv4 address space remained unallocated in early 2008. It says: "This situation is critical for the future of the Internet economy because all new users connecting to the Internet, and all businesses that require IP addresses for their growth, will be affected by the change from the current status of ready availability of unallocated IPv4 addresses."

The report has been issued as input to the forthcoming OECD Ministerial Meeting on the Future of the Internet Economy, to be held in Seoul in mid June <http://www.oecd.org/FutureInternet>. It calls on Governments and business to "raise awareness of the need to start preparing now for the move to from IPv4 to IPv6 and explain to Internet service providers and IT professionals that the move is a

commercial and social opportunity, not a financial burden." And it suggests that "Governments could play a role as a large user of Internet services by stimulating demand for IPv6 through their own procurement policies and through public-private partnerships in IPv6 research and development."

The consequences for governments of further procrastination are spelt out in grim detail:

- Unplanned and uncontrolled implementation of IPv6 equipment into government networks could result in failures and loss of service delivery capability;
- The skills shortage in the ICT arena and in particular, the IPv6 field becomes so great that governments will not be able to compete with the private sector for IPv6 skilled technical and administrative staff;
- The cost of moving to IPv6 when industry and suppliers are driving the market will be significantly greater than if the planning and transition stages are undertaken in an environment of controlled progress.

IPv6 adoption is not inevitable

Meanwhile, Australian Internet Guru, Geoff Huston (a contributor the OECD report) wrote in a submission to the Australian Government's Innovation Review, warning of serious threats to the future of the Internet, two of the most critical being "IPv4 address space exhaustion and the proliferation of IP middleware; [and] the lack of significant IPv6 rollout raising serious doubts about the operational future of IPv6."

He said that while the technical specification IPv6 had been completed a decade ago, the level of industry interest in IPv6 deployment was scant. "To date the common approach to address scarcity in commercial Internets has concentrated in the deployment of various forms of middleware in the form of network address translators and application level gateways."

Such approaches, Huston said: "break the fundamental end-to-end architecture of the Internet, and compromise efforts to create a secure and coherent network that is neutral with respect to the communications models and application behaviours that are placed above this infrastructure, and also seriously compromise the scaling capability of the network."

However, according to Huston, despite the importance of IPv6 its universal deployment is far from certain. "Strangely enough, this is not seen as a high priority item by many major ISPs in today's Internet, and there is still no particular certainty that industry will adopt IPv6."

Failure to widely adopt IPv6 could seriously compromise the universal nature of the Internet, Huston says. "If the Internet heads in a direction of realm-based local addressing how do applications and services operate across the entire network in a fashion that still permits coherence and integrity of operation? What parts of the conventional Internet architecture still apply in such an environment, and what aspects of the network necessarily change? To what extent do we understand the broader implications of this particular challenge in terms of the longer term outcomes of the cost and utility of communications infrastructure and the activities and services that rely on such infrastructure?"

Pan Asia

Intel teams with Grameen to bring ICT to the world's poor

Intel Capital and Grameen Trust are to form a business venture dedicated to social and economic development.

The joint venture, announced by Intel chairman Craig Barrett in an address to the World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) 2008 in Kuala Lumpur, aims to

bring about self-sustaining solutions based on information and communications technology (ICT) to help empower the world's impoverished citizens.

The initiative, which will be launched in Bangladesh, is based on the 'social business' model created by Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr Muhammad Yunus, who founded Grameen Bank in 1976 to promote microfinancing and community development.

"Technology offers the means for scaling up our efforts toward global change and progress," said Barrett, who also chairs the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development (UN GAID). "By creating new business models based on ICT, as Intel is doing today with Grameen, we can bring people the tools they need to improve their future."

Yunus added: "I believe technology-based services will provide the 'hand up' that people need to discover their full potential. Once we show that this business model works in Bangladesh, we hope the successes we achieve there can be applied to the rest of the developing world."

The Grameen-Intel joint venture will combine Intel's technology and Grameen's experience in creating economic development and income-generation opportunities at the village level. The new company will use a private sector-based approach to address social and economic problems such as poverty, health care and education in developing countries.

Intel and Grameen foresee a number of ICT-based services and entrepreneurship opportunities growing out of such a business model. Examples cited include remote villagers receiving medical attention through Internet connectivity, rural communities being able to order medicine locally instead of having to walk several kilometres to a hospital, and families being notified of monies received from relatives abroad.

- **Intel & NetHope team for IT solutions**

Also, Intel has teamed up with NetHope, a new-generation collaborative consortium made up of chief information officers, senior program managers and technical experts from 22 of the largest international NGOs, to develop ICT solutions in support of the member NGOs' health care, economic development, and disaster relief programs. The ICT solutions deployed will include the Intel-powered Aid Station PC demonstrated at WCIT 2008. The Aid Station is "a rugged, purpose-built, low-cost technology platform suitable for use in harsh, remote locations."

Intel has signed an agreement with Racing the Planet, an organiser of sports events in extreme conditions, to test the Aid Station device during athletic contests in some of the driest, hottest, coldest and windiest locations on Earth.

Extreme Networks names new VP sales for AP & Japan

Ethernet equipment maker Extreme Networks has appointed Paul Rath vice president of sales for Asia-Pacific and Japan.

He previously served as vice president in Asia-Pacific for storage networks vendor McAfee and before that was managing director for EMC Asia. He will be based in Singapore.