

Press Release

The mBillionth Award, Mobiles for Good Prize & South Asia Mobile & Telecom Congress 2011

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New Delhi

Ravi Ghate has been trying to change the fate of the youth in Maharashtra for the last 5 years through his innovative idea of creating SMS communities and empowering people through mobiles usage. He has now taken education issues head-on and taken oath that he would make sure that each and every rural youth who are passing 10th or 12th should get proper guidance on their mobile through customised SMS. He calls it eduVARTA. A shift from Western India to North in Rohtak in Haryana, Kamal Jeet is himself a social entrepreneur and in the last two years his passion has been to provide agriculture and commodity related information to farmers and their families through SMS and Mobile based call center. This programme uses academics and subject experts to provide each and every query that comes from the member farmers. His USP is to explore all the government schemes and KVKs of Haryana, Punjab, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and provide information to farmers free of cost. He knows his subscribers almost by name and their place of origin. Kamal calls his project Kisan Sanchar.

Both Ravi and Kamal is recipient of Rs 10 Lakh each as winners of "Vodafone Mobiles for Good" Grant Fund Prize that was announced as a part of mBillionth Award 2011. This year, mBillionth Award instituted additional special category called "Mobiles for Good" in partnership with Vodafone India Foundation so that NGO-driven Mobile innovations could be identified and supported for scaling up and showcasing how mobiles are changing the face of rural areas and people at large are getting empowered with this 21st century tool called Mobile.

The focus of the mBillionth South Asia 2011 was clear: Mobile for inclusive development. "Mobile is a God-send asset to humankind, we can use it for mass empowerment and literally overcome the literacy barrier because of which millions are suffering," said Mr Sachin Pilot, Minister of State for the Ministry of Communication & IT, on the occasion of mBillionth Award and "Mobile & Telecom Summit", where 30 major mobile and telecom initiatives were recognised, felicitated and showcased with live demos. "Mobile platforms can be used extensively and effectively to promote digital literacy for millions in India. This can be one of the best usages of this common man tool that one can realize", he added. Moving to the broader perspective Mr. Pilot said, ' On the occasion, Mr. N Ravi Shanker, Additional Secretary, DIT, Govt. of India, in this speech, stressed on the mobile platforms as effective delivery

platforms to provision digital literacy. ‘It is important and significant that the mobile platforms with appropriate content are developed to provide functional and basic literacy to millions in India,’ he said. “While the focus of the government and others have been on m-governance, deliver services and provision information access, efforts in digital literacy through mobile and other platforms will contribute to this process,” he added.

“It is amazing always to find the innovative applications and products in the mobile domain becoming relevant each day. The innovative designs, service and content delivery in the mobile sector is the next technology leap frog,” said, Mr. Ravinder Takkar, Regional Director – Asia Pacific & Middle East, Vodafone Group. “The focus has to be on relevant content and services to change lives of people towards empowerment,” he added. In his speech, Mr. Arvind Rao, CEO and Co-Founder, OnMobile, stressed on the innovations in services delivery including value added services to meet citizen demands. “Service delivery holds the key to effective use of the mobile platforms and this will determine the way we want the mobile platforms to serve our communities,” Mr. Rao said.

During the mBillionth Award 2011 processes, 250 nominations were received from all south Asian countries competing in 11 categories which included m-Infrastructure, m-Inclusion, m-Business, m-Commerce/Banking, m-Health, m-Environment, m-Travel & Tourism, m-News & Journalism, m-Governance, m-Education & Learning, m-Entertainment and m-Culture & Heritage. mBillionth Award is a 2 year old initiative to create a dedicated ecosystem for the growth of Mobile players and enable the sector to serve the masses with equitable participation from all stakeholders. So far, mBillionth has been able to create a platform that can connect stakeholders on common grounds in terms of mobile applications and services reaching out to millions towards digital inclusion.

For 2011 there were 19 finalists, 11 special mentions and 21 winners who were felicitated during the Award gala evening. During the day long programme, in 6 plenary sessions a total of around 50 presentations were made on projects and practices which included winning and non-winning projects. The winning projects included, efforts at battling counterfeit medicine with an SMS using digital mass serialization from India; MTicketig – A train ticket reservation system in Sri Lanka that allows this facility to customers by dialing a short code (365) to access M-Ticketing system; BBC Janala is an initiative to raise the language skills of 25 million people in Bangladesh by 2017. Country wise there were 4 winners from Bangladesh, and 3 finalists. India had 24 finalists and out of which had only 12 winners. Nepal had one finalist but no winners. From Pakistan it was only 2 finalists with no winners. Interestingly, Sri Lanka has 3 finalists and 3 winners.

The winning projects of the mBillionth Award South Asia 2011 have an innovation to tell. The **Etisalat App Zone**, a winner in m-Infrastructure category, is a Sri Lankan mobile platform that allows users to browse and download applications, but also creates an opportunity for the Sri-Lankan mobile application developers to create, test and sell their own unique applications. The Appzone Mobile Application Eco-System helps all of Etisalat’s subscribers, irrespective of phone type – smart, feature or basic phones - to enjoy mobile apps pertaining to- News, Sports, and Business, Games, Health and much

more. The **Benefit Distribution System**, a winner in m-Inclusion category from India, is an ICT system framework for disbursement of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) wages and social security pensions. The system utilizes state-of-the-art technologies like bio-metric (finger print), robust handheld Point of Sales/ Point of Transaction devices for use in villages, GPRS connectivity for synchronization with central server, and GPS for capturing the location of work and attendance.

PharmaSecure, a winner in the m-Health category from India, is a cost effective solution to fight the problem of counterfeit drugs using digital mass serialization that gives Indian consumers critical information like drug name, batch number, expiry date about drugs purchased by using SMS facility from their mobile phones. PharmaSecure prints unique, random codes with private virtual phone number on each packaging unit of drugs, which consumers can SMS to confirm drug expiration date and authenticity. **GamesClub**, a winner in the m-Entertainment category from India, is a first of its kind of inexpensive cross-platform gaming service, offering its users unlimited mobile gaming experience with for as less as Rs. 5 per day to just Rs. 99 per month. It has a huge bucket of more than 300 premium and non premium games to take care of user's appetite covering different genres. And the games provided are compatible with more than 2000 handsets.

BBC Janala, a winner in m-Education and Learning category, is a mobile based application which offers a cheap and convenient way of expanding and practicing English language skills in the privacy of your own home. Mobile phone users of Bangladesh can dial the short code 3000 to access the mobile voice based service. Web users can access the service by visiting www.bbcjanala.com. The IVRS (Interactive Voice Response System) based Daily Monitoring System (DMS) of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in Uttar Pradesh in India, a winner in m-Governance category, is a voice based DMS project that tracks the number of children availing the mid day meal in various schools across Uttar Pradesh, the largest state in India. The system has been conceived on the basis of an interface between computer and mobile phone. Calls are placed to all the teachers from a virtual number using PRI lines, and data is keyed in by teachers on the same day, and ensures that the teachers do not spend a single penny to deliver the data.

Kumari Mobile Cash is a revolutionary concept in Nepal, a winner in m-Business, Commerce & Banking category. Under this scheme, users can deposit and withdraw money using their cell phone. It also facilitates transfer of funds from one account to another among Kumari Bank account holders. One can also send money via Kumari Bank's branches or through its authorized agents.

The Electronic Money Transfer System software (EMTS) created by the Bangladesh Post Office, recognized as the most innovative project by the mBillionth 2011 Jury, automates the traditional money order service. People using this service can send and receive money through money orders within minutes, leaving behind the old manual system to remit money. The Jury also considered **HealthPhone** as the most promising project, an Indian application. HealthPhone has basic health information embedded on the phone, and provides families in rural villages and slums with essential health information, in their hands, when they need it, in a language they understand -- and with visual information that works for those with low literacy levels. This content is pre-loaded on popular low-cost mobile phones -- and neither signal nor downloading is required to use it.

There were no winners from m-Culture and Heritage and m-News and Journalism categories. Key outcomes were deliberated during the day long programme. One major outcome discussed was how government, industry, civil society can come together to provision effective services including digital literacy programmes in India riding high on the mobile platform route.

The mBillionth Award evening witnessed key experts from industry, media and government as guests of honour, who graced the occasion while handing over winning mementos and prizes to the winners. Experts as key guests included Mr. N. Ravi Shanker, Additional Secretary, Department of IT, Govt. of India; Dr. Ajay Kumar, Joint Secretary, Department of IT, Govt. of India; Mr. Chetan Sanghi, Secretary, Industry, Government of NCR Delhi; Mr. Savitur Prasad, Secretary, Dept of IT, Delhi NCR; Mr. Ravinder Takkar, Regional Director – Asia Pacific and Middle East, Vodafone Group; Mr. Viral Oza, Director, Marketing, Nokia; Dr. Rajendra Kumar, Director (Projects), National E-Governance Division (NeGD); Mr. Jonathan Bill, Head of Internet and Data Services, Vodafone; Ms. Laura Turkington, Head, Vodafone India Foundation; Mr. R. Sukumar, Editor, Mint; and Mr. Pradeep Gupta, Chairman, Cybermedia India Limited.

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10 presentations of Mobile innovations having social impact for cash prizes of ₹20 lac.

Award Gala 2011
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For partnership options and participation Contact: Amarendra Srivastava [amar@deindia.net]
Tele/fax: 91-11-26532786/87 Email: mBillionth@deindia.net, URL: <http://mBillionth.in>

For details of the mBillionth Award & Congress 2011 please visit <http://mBillionth.in> and <http://mBillionth.in/mobilesforgood/>. Contact: mBillionth South Asia Secretariat @ 011-26532786 / 87.