



CommunicaAsia

2006

The sentiment at CommunicAsia 2006 was clear; only chiselled pieces of technology are the future. **Ruchi Hajela**, in Singapore brings you the highlights

It was a fashion show with a difference. Instead of models walking down the ramp garbed in the latest designer outfits, they strutted around showcasing a plethora of uniquely crafted cellphones. Waist lines were measured and the oomph factor discussed as cellphone companies launched their range of slim and smart phones. The impressions of last year's event were prominent as 3G and IPTV secured the front seat. Another *déjà vu* factor was the absence of Nokia from the event.

Show stealer
Hearts stopped beating, pulses sky-

rocketed and ladies swooned as LG launched its show stopper cellphone rightly called the Chocolate phone, a part of the company's Black Label series. We witnessed the euphoria of this crowd as LG unwrapped this tempting beauty (more on page 12). Other candies from the company's portfolio included the KG920 – that is being touted as the world's slimmest 5 megapixel camera phone and was seen at CeBIT earlier this year, the KG810 – the second handset from the Black label series, the KG320 – a slim device also known as the Mobile Card handset.

Besides the smell of chocolate, the

crowd was also lured to the LG booth to get a hands-on experience with the KG 920's 5 megapixel camera and check out their work of art by printing it. I tried a couple of pictures and the quality was sharp enough even on a 4 x 6 size photo paper. This camera phone is expected to be available in India by the year end. Apart from the above mentioned devices, also on display was the LG U8500 that supports video telephony and DVB-H. Though already popular in the European market, people in India would have to wait for this till 3G is rolled out



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Tsunami High alert

Something like this wasn't expected but it was truly appreciated. Developed by German scientists, Professor Dr Eduard Heindl and Professor Dr Wolfram Reiners, the Tsunami-alert system promises to alert people residing on the coastal areas in case of an upcoming Tsunami. All one needs to have is a GSM mobile phone where an instant flash message alerting about the upcoming disaster could be flashed. "The Tsunami Alarm System receives earthquake and tsunami warning information from multiple seismic measuring stations and tsunami warning stations from different countries across the world and transmits it to your cellphone in case any danger is noted," explains Reiners. Users can subscribe to the system by logging on to www.tsunami-alarm-system.com/en/. The monthly and yearly subscription charges are Euro 9.95 and Euro 29.95 respectively.

in the country. Oh, I almost forgot mentioning the LG U880. This stunning baby has been designed by designer Roberto Cavelli and is unique in its own special way.

Slimmer than ever

It seems that after the unfading success of the Razr, it was inevitable that others would come out with their own versions to beat competition. Samsung launched an entire series devoted to slim phones. Christened the Ultra Edition series, the trio of handsets launched include a bar phone, a clamshell and a slider with waists measuring 6.9 mm, 9.9 mm and 12.9 mm respectively. Now that's what we call anorexic, isn't it? The phone models have been aptly named the Ultra edition 6.9 (Samsung X820), Ultra edition 9.9 (Samsung D830) and Ultra edition 12.9 (Samsung D900).

The handsets have been carved out of titanium, magnesium and fused fibre glass and according to the company these represent 'maximum minimalism'. In terms of looks and design, the devices can be termed regular. However, it is worth men-

tioning that the clamshell D900 boasts of a 3.1 megapixel camera. The Samsung E500, a designer phone meant for women also graced the stall. The Korean company also flaunted its 5, 7 and 10 megapixel camera phones – the S250, the V770 and B600 respectively. Others like the 8 GB hard drive phone, the i310 to be precise, were also seen adorning the shelves of the Samsung booth. The i320 was seen there as well. The global launch of the handset has already taken place.

Adding colour to your life

If the others were busy showcasing their slim and chic best, at Motorola, it was a colourful mix of value and style. Following up on the emerging market handset programme, the company announced its W series of mass market handsets. Including both CDMA and GSM handsets, the five handsets comprising the W series are the W2170 and W210 on the CDMA side and W208, W220 and W375 on the GSM platform. Targeted at the mass market, all these handsets include basic features like messaging and an FM radio.



Interestingly, the W375 is available in gray, silver and orange colours so affordability would no longer mean compromising on the style. The W series handsets are expected to be available in India by the second half of this year.

Also seen at the stall was the Moto Pebl U6 in its various hues and colours. The golden Razr V3 or the Dolce & Gabbana handset was worth a watch. I also laid my hands on the much awaited Moto Q. As a part of a tie-up between Motorola and Google, visitors could access Google on the Moto Q.

The A1200 or the Ming was also showcased. Motorola had tied up with Kodak for this phone and one could click a picture and take an instant printout. When I took a printout of the picture clicked from this 2 megapixel camera, the image quality looked decent enough.

On the application side, there was a live demo of Motorola's Screen 3 application. In a tie up with Singapore's M1, Motorola announced Screen 3, an app that brings mobile content like news, and promotional schemes on to the home screens of mobile phones thus allowing users to access content more easily. I feel that this app would be quite popular with the carriers aiming to boost their revenues.

Window to their world

When the others are out in full swing, how can Microsoft be left behind? The company brought to the table 31 PDA devices based on the Windows platform. Apart from displaying their range of mobile and embedded devices, the company also showcased IPTV solutions and the Xbox 360 gaming device.

Sony Ericsson didn't announce any new handsets and was content displaying its entire series of Walkman phones and the Cyber shot device K790i that boasts of a 3.2 megapixel camera. Other devices on display were the J, K and Z series of phones and cellphone accessories.

High on messaging

At CommunicAsia 2006, I also caught a glimpse of what could possibly be the next level of text messaging. Glenayre Messaging, a US-based next generation messaging solution provider company, demonstrated its Versera Active messaging service. This 3G based service offers real time interactivity to users. Also on demo was the Versera video portal that allows video dating and subscription based services. The company has set up an office in India and is already in talks with the operators to roll out their services as soon as 3G makes an arrival here ■



Other apps and devices

Apps to make you happy

We are all familiar with Chikka messaging; the Philippines based company is already popular in India for its free PC to mobile text messaging service. The company has formed an affiliation with websites like bidshot and crushcow, so you can bid and date respectively, simply by sending a text.

Cool Qool

A Singapore based company by the name Qool Labs had on display two of its Windows Mobile 5.0 based handsets called the QDA Icon and QDA Lite. While the former handset boasts of an impressive 4 megapixel camera, the latter on the other hand is Wi-Fi enabled and has a 2 megapixel camera.

