

Distance learning to get fillip, thanks to broadband

At a recent seminar conducted by the Institution of Electronics and Telecommunications Engineers (IETE), Pune, one saw papers presented on adopting the technology in India. The "broadband policy 2004" defines the broadband connectivity as an 'Always-on' connection with minimum download speed of 256 kbps from the point of presence of the service provider. This global online interface will support business applications and services for customers.

Our present Internet access allows only 64 or 128 kbps speed. This means one needs a different set of equipment for setting up broadband networks.

Interestingly, satellites can provide reliable broadband communications; for our vast rural public, this comes as a boon since conventional communication links may take time to be set up. Presently, India has over 35,000 VSATs being used for mainly for corporate business communication.

Applications like distance learning and telemedicine can contribute to the social, economic and political development in these areas. All types of voice, video, data and multimedia services can be provided over satellite.

This means technology like digital TV, audio, web broadcasting and DTH (direct to home), e-commerce, home shopping and e-governance are just a click away. Disasters like Tsunami and floods may be indicated through satellite and people can be evacuated to safety sooner than it is possible now. The seminar introduced the audience to WiFi-Max using which one can get broadband through computer, TV or telephone depending on the kind of data, audio or video one desires. The papers also discussed other technologies to build broadband including using optical fibers for transmission.

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BSNL's broadband network goes high tech

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VIDEO on demand, television broadcast, online interactive gaming, online shopping as well as faster and hassle-free downloads is all set to become a reality with the use of cutting-edge technology by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) in building the broadband network in the country.

This was conveyed by BSNL Chief Managing Director A K Sinha while inaugurating a national seminar on the broadband communication scenario, organised by



(L to R) R V Datar, A K Sinha, M G Kulkarni, Gen Sehgal (retd) at the inauguration of Broadband seminar on Saturday — *Newsline photo by Arul Horizon*

Institution of Electronics and Telecommunication Engineers.

Sinha said that BSNL has set a target of giving

6 million broadband connections by the end of 2007 as per the norms of the broadband policy of 2004.

Broadband at a glance

■ World broad band connections - 164.4 million

■ Asia Pacific region share 42 pc

■ Global market - \$ 30 billion to grow to \$ 80 billion in the next 5 years with a compound annual growth rate of 22 pc.

■ Largest market - USA with 36.5 million broadband lines.

■ Highest broadband penetration - Korea with 25.65 pc

BSNL is all set to provide 300 Wi-Fi hot spots

(wireless broadband) in 24 cities by the end of August. It is also setting up 10 base stations of Wi-Max (wireless broadband in a large area).

BSNL plans to install 3G networks to offer wireless broadband services converting mobile phones into powerful multimedia service.

The CMD also announced that BSNL will deploy broadband services in 198 cities by using the latest cutting-edge technology. "A wide range of applications that support dramatic advances in teleworking, distance learning, e-governance, agriculture, pub-

lic safety, national security and tele-medicine will drive economic development due to advent of broadband," Sinha added.

Pointing out the obstacles which BSNL is facing in achieving a desirable growth and greater penetration of broadband, Sinha said, "Low personal computer penetration is a deterrent, which could be solved by making PCs and software more affordable." Pointing out to an alternate solution, Sinha said the use of standardised set top boxes would enable use of television sets for internet access and content services.