Dialog GSM enters the cellular phone market

by Tharuka Dissanaike

Dialog GSM is the newest arrival into the cellular phone market in Sri Lanka. Since it’s first introduction to the country last year, Dialog had been continuously enhancing their product to carve out their niche in a seemingly saturated market for mobile communication. The company, MTN Networks, is a BOI approved project which is jointly owned by Malayasian and Sri Lankan concerns. Malayasian Telecom owns 90 percent of the equity while The Maharaja Organization owns 10 percent.



Having launched a fresh advertising campaign to promote the phone by highlighting it’s technical differences from the phones available in the market, Dialog’s Chief Executive Officer in Sri Lanka, Zaini Diman said that subscribers could await expansion of service area and other value-added features by end August. “Already the necessary equipment is being airfreighted here. By August we would have coverage in the Greater Colombo area and would be expanding to Galle-Matara and Kandy-Nuwara Eliya very soon after that”, Mr. Diman said.

He added that after the installation of the new equipment, clients would be able to enjoy the Automatic International Roaming facility to countries subscribing to GSM standards and also superior fax/modem facilities. The first countries which would be accessible when the roaming facility comes into effect are Hong Kong. Singapore, Malayasia, Australia and India. Later on, the company would facilitate automatic roaming with countries like England, France. This ‘roaming’ facility will enable subscribers to instantaneously connect with other countries with GSM license.

“We are targetting this facility at a certain clientele as it comes with a price”, Mr. Diman said with a price”, “Dialog is a prime product. We never hide the fact that it’s services come at a certain cost”. But at the same time the company strives to keep the connection charges within the range of the local consumer. According to him, Dialog tariffs, are the lowest available in the market today. They play on the dissimilarities between the conventional cellular phones and Dialog in their marketing campaign.

Dialog introduced digital technology into the sphere of communication in Sri Lanka. This state- of-the-art technology affords more clarity and security to subscribers. According to Mr. Diman, Dialog phone conversation cannot be tapped with the equipment used today to listen into celluler phone conversations.

The cost of a Dialog handset varies from Rs.19,000 to 35,000. Connection charges are Rs.5,000 for a normal phone and Rs.10,000 for IDD facility. Their tariffs are very competitive. Peak time (6am to 8pm) call charges (in Rs. per minute) are 8 for outgoing and 4 for incoming. Dialog to Dialog it’s Rs.4 either way. During peak hours the company has introduced a special package whereby a subscriber would get a free minute of incoming calls for every minute he/she calls out. During off-peak hours (8pm to 6am) incoming calls are free whilst outgoing charges are Rs. 4.

Dialog GSM is in the process of establishing a dealer network whereby the actual retail sale of the phone could be handled, leaving the company free to enhance network facilities. When questioned about the ever-increasing competition among cellular networks, Mr. Diman said “Sales are gradually picking up. We are very optimistic.”