

# IN RWANDA, A PHONE TEXT CAN SAVE A BABY

**NYARUKOMBE, Rwanda:** Using an old mobile phone, health worker Floride Uwinkesha logs the latest local pregnancy, part of efforts in Rwanda to boost maternal health through a monitoring program in isolated rural areas. The scheme has already helped slash infant and maternal mortality rates. Marceline Mwubahamana, three months pregnant at 31, doesn't even have to leave home to have her details logged into a national database at the health ministry.

Uwinkesha, the community officer in charge of maternal health in the rural Nyarukombe district of eastern Rwanda, sends through simple codes on a basic mobile phone. The database known as RapidSMS, was set up in 2009 with the backing of the UN children's agency Unicef and underpins a medical monitoring program for pregnancies and babies aged up to two years. Uwinkesha is one of 45,000 community volunteers helping track health across the remotest parts of the rolling hills of Rwanda. They are elected by the people of their village and given basic training by the government.

"PRE," she taps, giving a code that means that the pregnancy was confirmed by a health center. "NP," she adds, meaning "no problem". Once Mwubahamana's details are recorded in the database, the software automatically generates a date for her next prenatal visit.

### 'Red Alert'

"I also send basic information, such as their identity number, if this is her first pregnancy or not and if there are any problems," Uwinkesha said. She will

receive a reminder text message ahead of the next appointment. This pregnancy is going well, but should there be health concerns or an emergency, the health worker can notify the nearest medical facility via a "red alert" text message.

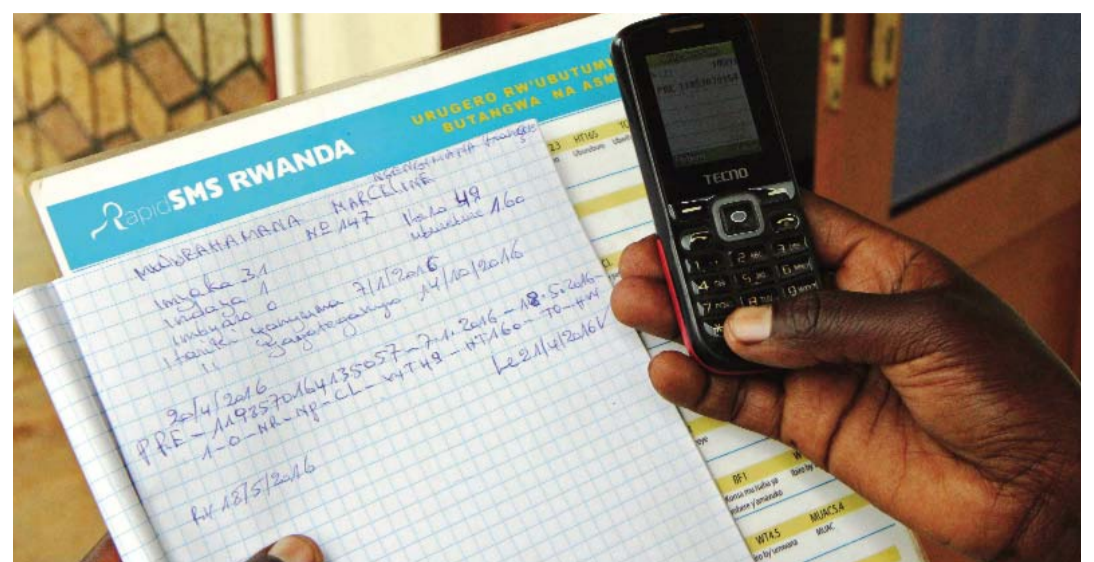
Once logged into the system, alerts help to flag up women who may be in danger. "We can easily find the names of women who have high-risk pregnancies, like those who have had repeated miscarriages or have had gynaecological surgery," said Francois Hakizimana, who runs the Murambi medical centre, a short drive outside the capital Kigali.

Typing on his computer, Hakizimana demonstrates how the system works, scrolling down the screen to show dozens of names of pregnant women living in villages. "We can tell them to go to the nearest health facility as soon as we see that there is any problem," Hakizimana said. Those involved in the text message program say it has helped save many lives since its launch, but no exact figures are available since measuring the precise impact is tough.

In any event, Rwanda has registered huge progress in maternal health, according to World Bank data. The infant mortality ratio for babies aged under one year was 31 deaths per thousand births in 2015, just below the world average of 31.7 - a significant advance from 2009, when the rate stood at 47 per thousand.

### Death Rates Cut

Over the same period, the maternal mortality rate was cut by almost a third, from 411 to 290



**NYARUKOMBE, Rwanda:** A pregnant woman records her information by SMS on the country's "RapidSMS" health system on April 27, 2016. — AFP

deaths per 100,000 births. Uwinkesha will keep checking on Mwubahamana and her baby for up to 28 days after birth. After that, a health worker specialized in infant care will take over. Two carers are trained per village, often one man and a woman, who will perform at least three home visits in two years to verify the health of the child and record data such as its weight and normal breathing rate.

"The main risks at birth are infections, malnutri-

tion, diarrhoea and respiratory diseases," said Joseph Nkinzingabo, who coordinates 1,422 health workers spread over an area comprising 14 health centers. Nkinzingabo just received a "red alert": a woman who is about to give birth at home. Calling the mobile phone of her health worker, he checks that all is well. The mother was able to reach a health center and delivered safely. "No need to send an ambulance," he said. — AFP



## CANON SIGNS 100TH MPS DEAL IN UAE

**DUBAI:** Canon Emirates (CE), a subsidiary of Canon Middle East, celebrated the signing of its 100th Managed Print Service (MPS) contract in the UAE. A gala event was held at Palazzo Versace to mark the occasion and to launch Canon Business Services, a consulting arm of Canon that will offer a wide range of value-driven solutions for continuous process improvements across various sectors.

With more than 500 customers and 3,000 employees across 18 countries in EMEA, Canon Business Services aims to build long-term relationships in the UAE. This is led by a focus on innovation and enhancing document efficiencies from managing print to mail room and print room services. The division also aims to provide services that enhance the use of information and document handling to transform the way enterprises engage with their customers and manage business processes.

The signing of its 100th MPS cus-

tomers illustrates Canon's market strength and on-going commitment to support its customers while embedding sustainability into its business DNA. Shadi Bakhour, General Manager, Canon Emirates, said: "We are committed to our customers and thank them for their trust and support. We also believe that MPS is more than just print outsourcing, it is a journey. By working and consulting with our customers we have a positive impact on reducing energy and paper consumption. "Moreover, signing our 100th MPS customer is a milestone for us and by celebrating it with our partners we are strengthening our relationships and leveraging our offerings. We are also highlighting new business solutions that will help our customers to achieve transformational growth through content management and workflow practices." The event was attended by around 250 current Canon Emirates MPS customers' across the UAE.

# APPLE, GOOGLE LOCKED IN BATTLE FOR SUPREMACY

**SAN FRANCISCO:** At the top of the corporate world, Apple and Google are in a back-and-forth battle to be number one. It's not clear which of the two Silicon Valley giants will emerge on top in a contest which highlights the contrast of very different business models. For a brief time early this year, Google parent Alphabet overtook Apple as the world's largest company by market value. Apple then regained, lost and recovered the leader position in May in a battle that appears set to continue for some time. At the close Friday, Apple was worth some \$522 billion, to \$496 billion for Alphabet.

The two companies have both been hugely profitable in recent years, for different reasons. Apple has delivered a line of must-have iPhones and other gadgets that have set trends around the world but now "appears to be a little bit immobile," says Roger Kay, analyst at Endpoint Technologies Associates. Apple shares have slumped some 30 percent over the past 12 months over concerns that its stunning growth pace is slowing and that the iPhone won't be able to rake in profits as it has up to now.

### Finding Next Thing

Kay said Apple may be losing the position of innovation leader it achieved after the iPhone, with no new major hit products coming. "They haven't really changed the nature of the game," Kay said. "The (Apple) Watch came in, it was kind of interesting, people liked it...but developers

are still searching for exactly how to use it." Google, meanwhile, been evolving from a pure search engine to a leader in mobile with its Android operating system.

And it has at the same time been investing in "moonshots" - grand ventures that may have potential such as self-driving cars, fiber networks and Internet balloons. Google "has positioned itself well, through organic investments and acquisitions, for most of the major trends in consumer Internet: mobile, video, local," said RBC Capital Markets analyst Mark Mahaney in a research note.

Kay said the Android system which powers some 80 percent of mobile handsets is a valuable franchise that helps Google's mobile advertising efforts. "The narrative that has boosted Google is the one about technology innovation and being at the wellhead of various important technologies," Kay said. "That may or may not finally pay off. But they're looking. They're using their money to try to find innovative things to make the next big thing, whatever it is."

For Apple, a key moment will come later this year with the expected unveiling of its iPhone 7, a test on whether it can keep up its innovation and entice consumers to trade up. The two companies have a virtual duopoly on the smartphone market, but Apple makes its own hardware and software while Google provides only the free Android software for handsets, including many made by low-cost manufacturers.

### Showing Intelligence

Google has been taking pains to show off its software and artificial intelligence. At its just-concluded developer conference, Google unveiled a virtual home assistant as well as an upgraded messaging platform. Google claims it is ahead of its rivals in artificial intelligence, and cites as proof its victory in the ancient game of Go by its supercomputer AlphaGo. And Google also has shown its interest in virtual reality, adapting its upcoming version of Android to deliver more lifelike images, which could help in its battle against Apple.

But few are ready to count out Apple, which is known for keeping its research efforts secret, and which has a massive cash stockpile of some \$233 billion. Apple is widely believed to be working on some automobile project, and recently announced a \$1 billion investment in Chinese ride hailing app Didi Chuxing, the bitter rival of US-based Uber.

Apple also moved to expand its global footprint by announcing plans for a development office in Hyderabad, India and a new app design center in Bangalore. Even with Apple's share price in a slump, billionaire Warren Buffett disclosed he had taken a \$1 billion stake, suggesting the shrewd investor sees Apple as undervalued. The research firm Trefis said the latest Apple investment in Didi "signals that the company could get more creative" in using its vast financial resources. — AFP

## EHDF ENHANCES ONLINE SELF-SERVICE CLOUD PORTAL

**DUBAI:** eHosting DataFort (eHDF), the region's leading managed hosting and cloud infrastructure services provider, announced that they have further enhanced their Public Cloud portal to include advanced features and customizable packages, and improve the overall cloud experience of their customers.

eHDF's unique Public Cloud platform consists of an easy-to-use, fully automated self-service online provisioning portal, which provides scalability options for customers' dynamic IT infrastructure needs. The offering includes an online store that allows users to customize and purchase Public Cloud servers based on their requirements in less than 15 minutes. The new portal offers a user friendly control panel, making it easier for users to control their virtual machines and other related configurations. Furthermore, the feature-rich portal allows users to set firewall rules, load balancing, thresholds, auto-scale, notifications and schedule automatic snapshots, etc.

The platform is highly flexible and comes with the convenience of choosing payment plans based on various types of

configurations. This includes monthly, half yearly as well as annual plans with the additional advantage of the introductory reduced rates. Besides, the technological advancements support a wide range of the latest available operating system (OS) templates and deploys servers much quicker.

The eHDF public cloud enables small and medium businesses to buy locally-hosted cloud infrastructure services which are ideal for hosting websites and other web-based business applications. The payment plans for the cloud packages start at AED 116 per month and users can easily scale the virtual machines with the option to increase memory, CPU, storage etc.

Yasser Zeineldin, CEO, eHosting DataFort, said, "Public Cloud has gained worldwide momentum and we have seen an increased

uptake of Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS). By helping firms shift their capital expenses into operational, pay-as-you-go costs, Public Cloud offers reliable and elastic IT infrastructure and superior utilization of hardware and software resources.



**Yasser Zeineldin, CEO - eHosting DataFort**



**DAYTON, Ohio:** Swiss founders and pilots Bertrand Piccard (left) and Andre Borschberg are seen with the experimental Solar Impulse 2 solar-powered aircraft after landing on Saturday. — AFP

## SOLAR IMPULSE 2 PLANE LANDS IN DAYTON

**WASHINGTON:** A solar-powered plane landed in Dayton, Ohio Saturday on the latest leg of a record-breaking trip to circle the globe without consuming a drop of fuel. Solar Impulse 2, piloted by Swiss businessman Andre Borschberg, arrived at 9:56 pm (0156 GMT Sunday) at Dayton International Airport after a flight from Tulsa, Oklahoma that lasted a 16 hours and 34 minutes, a live video feed showed. "Amazing to have landed in #Dayton after being in the sky for 17 hours!" Borschberg tweeted.

The slow-moving, single-seat plane with the wingspan of a Boeing 747 cuts a flimsy figure, but it has traversed much of the globe in stages since taking off March 9, 2015 from Abu Dhabi. The project aims to promote renewable energy. The aircraft - clad in thousands of solar cells, the sole source of energy for the flight - reached its destination more than an hour ahead of schedule.

Still, traveling at average speeds of only 48 km per hour, it took Solar Impulse 2 longer to reach Dayton than a car - the typical road trip from Tulsa is around 12 hours. The flight to Dayton was the 12th leg of Solar Impulse's projected 16-leg east-west circumnavigation, with

Borschberg and Bertrand Piccard alternating as pilots. Piccard, a Swiss psychiatrist and balloonist, initiated the project.

"The flight is part of the attempt to achieve the first ever Round-The-World Solar Flight, the goal of which is to demonstrate how modern clean technologies can achieve the impossible," Piccard and Borschberg said in a statement. Dayton is significant to aviation buffs because it is the home of Orville and Wilbur Wright, brothers who developed the world's first successful powered aircraft heavier than air.

Solar Impulse 2 departed from Tulsa International Airport at 4:22 am (0922 GMT). It may next fly to Pennsylvania as early as tomorrow, the team said. Its final destination in the United States is New York. Thanks to an inflatable mobile hangar, which can be packed up quickly and transported, the plane can be sheltered at a variety of locations. The aircraft was grounded in July when its batteries were damaged halfway through its 35,000-km circumnavigation of the globe.

The crew took several months to repair the damage caused by high tropical temperatures during a 4,000-mile flight between Nagoya,

Japan and Hawaii. The plane was flown on that stage by Borschberg, whose 118-hour journey smashed the previous record of 76 hours and 45 minutes set by US adventurer Steve Fossett in 2006. He took 20-minute catnaps to maintain control of the pioneering plane during the flight from Japan, in what his team described as "difficult" conditions.

### How it Works

The Solar Impulse 2, which weighs roughly the same as a family car, contains 17,000 solar cells that power the aircraft's propellers and charge batteries. At night, it runs on stored energy. The plane's typical flight speed can increase to double that when exposed to full sunlight. After crossing the United States, the pilots are set to make a transatlantic flight to Europe, from where they plan to make their way back to their point of departure in Abu Dhabi. Piccard, a doctor by training, completed the first non-stop balloon flight around the world in 1999. His teammate Borschberg is no stranger to adventure - 15 years ago he narrowly escaped an avalanche, and in 2013 he survived a helicopter crash with just minor injuries. — AFP