The cloud is bright over India, says Ballmer

Microsoft CEO sees India as hub of cloud computing services

S Ronendra Singh

New Delhi

MICROSOFT'S chief executive officer Steve Ballmer on Thursday underlined the importance of India in its overall cloud computing services strategy and reiterated that India has the potential to emerge as the global competency centre for cloud services.

Ballmer, addressing the media in New Delhi as part of his Asia tour, said, "India will not only see a surge in consumption of cloud services, driving growth in domestic IT usage, but companies all over the world will look to India to support their transition to cloud computing." Institutions like NIIT, Cognizant, CDC Software and Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore (IISc) are working on developing solutions and training manpower for Microsoft's cloud services.

Ballmer said Microsoft is committed to helping businesses both in India and across the world maximise business value by leveraging the benefits that cloud computing offers. The company's cloud infrastructure supports over one billion customers and 20 million businesses globally.

Microsoft would partner with its various ecosystems in India to leverage cloud computing. India, with its powerful ecosystem of over 1,300 independent software vendors (ISVs), 1.4 million developers and more than 11,000 system integrators (SIs) and custom software development organisations, is ideally poised to address this growing opportunity, he said.

When asked about arch-rival Apple overtaking it in terms of market value,

TEAMWORK: (From left) SK Nandy, IISc, Rajendra Pawar, NIIT, Steve Ballmer, R Chandrasekaran, Cognizant, Peter Yip, CDC Software & R Venkatesan, MS India in New Delhi on Thursday

The role of Indian IT firms

NIIT would train over 100,000 students on Windows Azure over the next three years. Cognizant announced the creation of a vertically aligned set of industry frameworks and pre-built solution accelerators to enable implementation, migration and management of cloud-enabled application portfolios built on Azure for Indian as well as global clients.

Similarly, CDC Software announced the global roll-out of its flagship product 'CDC Respond' (a complaint and feedback management application for banking and government sectors) on Windows Azure, Microsoft's cloud computing paltform.

IISc is building a large-scale application on Windows Azure to study the basic resource allocation constructs and strategies required for ad-dressing enterprise needs on the cloud. Over 4,000 applications have already been built on the Windows Azure platform by India. IT majors like Wipro, Infosys, TCS, HCL Technologies and Mahindra Satyam are building applications and solutions across verticals ranging from healthcare to banking to manufacturing for both local and global markets.

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Ballmer said, "It's a long game, we have good competitors...We too are a very good competitor. We are executing very well and that is going to lead to great products and great success. How the stock market chooses to reflect on that is up to the stock market."

Microsoft also plans to launch new software for mobile phones by the end of 2010 from its entertainment division. This division makes Xbox video-game consoles, Zune music players and mobile phone software. "Fantastic things are coming with the Xbox that would change the television and entertainment land-scape," Ballmer said. The company had announced its overhauled operating system for smartphones, Windows Phone 7, in February this year. New devices with the software are expected to be out by Christmas this year, he added.

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