

Maintaining excellent connections

By **VIKRAM SINHA**

MANAGING DIRECTOR, AIRTEL SEYCHELLES



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holds an MBA from the International Institute of Management and attended the Future Business Leaders and Business Managers Program in Hyderabad and Ahmedabad, India as well as the Advanced HR Program of the Michigan Ross School of Business in Ann Arbor, USA. Prior to joining Airtel Seychelles in 2012 he worked in numerous functions including sales, distribution, marketing, human resources and customer care with Airtel, Coca Cola and STAR TV in India. He is a twice recipient of Airtel's People Manager Award and also serves as a board member of Seychelles Cable Systems.

Airtel Seychelles is the smallest company out of the others in 20 countries across Asia and Africa which form part of Bharti Airtel Limited, a leading global telecommunications company which now ranks amongst the top 4 mobile service providers globally in terms of subscribers.

Entering its sixteenth year doing business in Seychelles in 2014, Airtel Seychelles was Bharti's first foray into the international market. The market was a small one, but opportunities abounded and still do.

Airtel has always brought new and innovative products to the Seychelles' market. Over the years, Airtel brought many firsts to the Seychelles, including being the first telecoms operator to bring Prepaid and HSPA/EDGE and 3G services to the country, as well as a host of value added services.

It is very interesting to note that over 60 per cent of Airtel Seychelles subscribers are equipped with smart phones, a positive pointer which shows how technically savvy the Seychelles environment has become.

Being in the middle of the Indian Ocean does not mean being isolated from civilisation. On the 27th May 2012, Seychelles added a milestone in the country's proud history as an independent nation in the global communication village when the first fibre optic cable landed on its shores. With this,

About Bharti Airtel

Bharti Airtel Limited is a leading global telecommunications company with operations in 20 countries across Asia and Africa. Headquartered in New Delhi, the company ranks amongst the top 4 mobile service providers globally in terms of subscribers. In India, the company's product offering includes 2G, 3G and 4G wireless services, mobile commerce, fixed line services, high speed DSL broadband, IPTV, DTH, enterprise services including national and international long distance services to carriers. In the rest of the geographies, it offers 2G, 3G wireless services and mobile commerce. Bharti Airtel had over 283 million customers across its operations at the end of November 2013. ■

Seychelles Cable Systems Ltd (SCS), a private – public partnership, made history. Airtel Seychelles being one of the proud partners is appreciative to the government to have been offered the chance to participate in such an exciting venture.

The fibre optic project, which has been described as a striking example of successful public-private sector partnership and a model for sound economic development, has had a significant impact in the Seychelles economy. In the 2012 edition of Measuring Information Society, an annual report produced by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) based in Geneva, Switzerland, Seychelles was ranked first in Africa on the ICT development index. This development has improved the quality and performance of internet services especially in terms of speed and bandwidth. It is imperative that telecom operators continue to cater for what has become an increasingly demanding market despite its size. Airtel is proactively upgrading its plans to offer new and existing investors to Seychelles a world class service in the telecom sector. Because of the Bharti Airtel group synergy (the company has fibres going all over the world), we can help Airtel Seychelles provide multinational corporates with global connectivity.

Working closely with the Central Bank of Seychelles and the Ministry of Finance as well as the banking sector, the Airtel Money project is entering the final phase of completion and will be available to the populace in the near future.

Airtel Seychelles also follows in the footsteps of its parent company in responding to the challenges of Corporate Social Responsibility. Benefitting from the progress of the nation it is important that businesses participate in social projects with the government. Airtel Seychelles firmly believes in the aspirations of the youth and its CSR programmes target this group in society. Airtel Seychelles has for the past 13 years been sponsoring the Airtel Football Cup and in 2013 launched the Airtel Rising Stars programme in partnership with Manchester United Football Club.

On the educational side, since 2008, Airtel Seychelles has been working with the Vocational Unit of the National Council for the Disabled providing educational, material, financial and volunteering support. ■