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"ITS ALL TEAMWORK"

- Mr. Parvez Iftikhar
Head of Communication Division
Siemens Pakistan

Question: When and how did Siemens enter into Pakistan?

You will be surprised to know that Siemens entered in this region (sub-continent) back in 1870 when the company connected London with Calcutta through telegraph link. Later on, Siemens India Ltd. was established in 1922 with its branch office in Lahore. After independence Siemens formally entered into Pakistan in 1953. At that time it established a joint-venture with the Government of Pakistan called TIP (Telephone Industries of Pakistan) - the first giant venture of its time - and afterwards it established CTI (Carrier Telephone Industries) in 1972. During this period, Siemens also entered into different other domains of engineering sectors like power. It is important to note here that Siemens remained consistent during these years in both its investment and industrial development in Pakistan. Siemens Pakistan is a listed company in Karachi Stock Exchange whereas it has 64% shares of Siemens AG Germany.

Question: How do you view the telecom industry and future growth in this sector in context of ongoing telecom revolution in Pakistan? Will Pakistan remain the hot spot for technology investors in future?

If you talk about telecom revolution, it sure is a revolution as now we can see people from all walks of life benefiting from telecom services in one way or the other. No doubt the revolution is here and it will stay for a long time. The growth in voice communication, then in wireless-data communication and then in future we will see lot of development in machine to machine communication. In developed countries there is already a large

copper communication infrastructure but in Pakistan we have a network of only 5 million copper or land line subscribers. Therefore as the need for data is on the rise, more and more people are opting for wireless-data and fiber optic based solutions.

In Pakistan, we have just scratched telecommunication services and lot of opportunities and applications still need to be explored in the telecom sector. We will see in future a speedy increase in usage of ATM machines communicating through wireless links, vehicle tracking systems, remote digital metering devices and many other services which purely work on telecommunication systems. So yes! Pakistan will remain the hot spot for technology investors and you will definitely see more investment in this sector in future.

Question: How much is the total workforce of Siemens Pakistan? What incentives and growth prospects you offer to your employees?

If you talk about the total workforce, we are a family of approximately ten thousand direct and indirect employees. With around 1200 regular employees, two thousand working in our joint ventures and thousands in different third party companies working on various projects. One thing that we are proud of is that our workforce is well in demand, especially our technical workforce. Our trained engineers have been working in countries like Germany, France, Bosnia, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, the Gulf region and other countries like Afghanistan, Nepal, and Indonesia.

Our engineers are so much hard working and talented that they have been working on technologies which are not yet introduced in Pakistan. For example the cordless DECT technology which was never introduced in Pakistan because of GSM revolution. People who work at Siemens are entitled with enormous benefits including health benefits, bonuses and performance based incentives.

Question: What is the story behind silent acquisition of Carrier Telephone Industries (CTI)? Despite privatization being a hot issue in Pakistan, there was not any media hype in this regard. Why?

First of all we haven't acquired CTI silently. We won the bid after pre-qualification from the Privatization Commission with four other companies. So it was well planned at our end and we won the 500 million Rupees acquisition of PTCL shares in CTI. It was well advertised by PC in the media. So it was a transparent acquisition. We are now in the process of introducing some changes in different departments of CTI as before this it was being run on a different model and now we are bringing it under the Siemens umbrella. We are modifying the auditing, accounting and operational standards according to the international standards of Siemens.

Question: There is a desperate need for research and development in Pakistan. Is Siemens Pakistan doing something to cater this need? Do you also fund local research?

Transfer of technology is a very strong point of Siemens; having our own industries here in Pakistan is a part of it. Apart from our power related industries which even export equipment, we have trained thousands of engineers and technicians. Joint-Venture Industries that include TIP and CTI have remained the backbone of telecom infrastructure in the country. We are manufacturing exchanges, Optic Fiber Communication equipment, Microwave Radios and other telecom related equipment in these industries.

We do provide help in projects of engineering universities and also offer prizes to outstanding students in the fields of engineering. Every year we award gold medals to bright engineering students. We also visit engineering institutes for lectures and seminars; I have myself given lectures in various universities. However the real research and development takes place at central locations of Siemens.

Question: Where do you see Siemens Pakistan in coming years as new vendors are jumping into Pakistan's telecom market and the industry is becoming mature and setup cost is slashing down day by day?

Siemens has remained one of the top notch vendors in the country and we are seeing the future with high aims. Due to the telecom industry boom various new vendors jumped in, including some low-price vendors due to which the telecom market has changed a lot and price factor triggered many companies to go for low cost systems but now many user companies are realizing the quality factor and going for better solutions in terms of reliability. In this competition scenario, no company is willing to compromise the quality of service and we hold a good reputation in terms of high quality standards.

Question: Would you like to name your major buyers in the IT and telecom sector of Pakistan? Also, what is your edge over other telecom vendors?

Our technology buyers include PTCL, Telenor, Ufone, Mobilink, Wateen Telecom, WorldCall, NTC, Cybernet etc. Apart from these companies, there are many small and large scale buyers with whom we were involved in different projects at different times. So we have a big market share here and top of the line telecom operators are in our list of buyers.

There are vendors that came to the country and went back according to business environment. We on the other hand have remained here throughout these 53 years. So about the edge over other telecom vendors, it's our strong local presence, our highly skilled workforce and higher quality standards.

Question: Is Siemens also operating anywhere else like Afghanistan or Central Asian regions from Pakistan?

Not exactly, but the good thing is that our trained engineers and operational staff has been working and fulfilling the workforce demand in these and several countries, including Afghanistan.



Question: Siemens has also helped India in imparting GSM-R (GSM-Railway) system, Are you planning to offer such a system to Pakistan?

Yes we are the market leaders of GSM-R worldwide. GSM-R is a very advantageous technology as not only the safety but also the utilization of railway track is increased by using it. When you have strong control on the railway system using telecom, you can start one train after the other because of improved communication and real time tracking. We have delivered some presentations recently to higher officials of Pakistan Railways. The timing and decision on the GSM-R introduction in Pakistan depends on the priorities of Pakistan Railways. In India it helped them a lot and is proving to be very much successful.

TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY IS A VERY STRONG POINT OF SEIMENS; HAVING OUR OWN INDUSTRIES HERE IN PAKISTAN IS A PART OF IT.

Question: How is the telemetric system working in the country that Siemens has installed at different canals and rivers to monitor water flow?

I truly think that the introduction of telemetry system in Pakistan by the government is in great national interest. We have also performed our national duty by placing telemetry system at various places for monitoring the water flow as contracted to us. It has helped a lot in curbing different water related problems throughout the country. The system is working perfectly fine and is delivering accurate results.

Question: How do you see the merger of Siemens and Nokia?

Networks Business Group of Nokia and the carrier-related operations of Siemens Communications are merging into a new company, to be called Nokia Siemens Networks. The 50-50 joint venture will create a global leader with strong positions in important growth segments of fixed and mobile network infrastructure and services. The combined company is positioned

to lead the development and implementation of revenue-generating and cost-saving products and services via its scale and global reach. Nokia Siemens Networks will have one of the world's best research and development teams, with the ability to invest in next generation fixed and mobile product platforms and services. The new company will have a world-class fixed-mobile convergence capability, a complementary global base of customers, a deep presence in both developed and emerging markets, and one of the industry's largest and most experienced service organizations. So I think this merger will make us more competitive than ever.

The new company Nokia Siemens Networks is expected to start operations by January 1, 2007, subject to customary regulatory

approvals, the completion of standard closing conditions and the agreement of a number of detailed implementation steps.

Question: How do you manage such a big division of Siemens Pakistan, so many projects & such a big business model - what's the secret behind your success?

It's all teamwork. We work as a team. Everyone has tasks defined and everyone works with enthusiasm and dedication towards his or her work. In Siemens there is a wonderful system implemented where employees get performance benefits and receive appreciation upon good quality work. I therefore will not take any credit myself and give the credit to my team.

Question: Tell us something about your personal life? What do you do in your leisure time?

Frankly, I rarely have free time which I mostly spend with my family. Apart from that, I love traveling and have traveled across the globe. I also like playing golf. ■