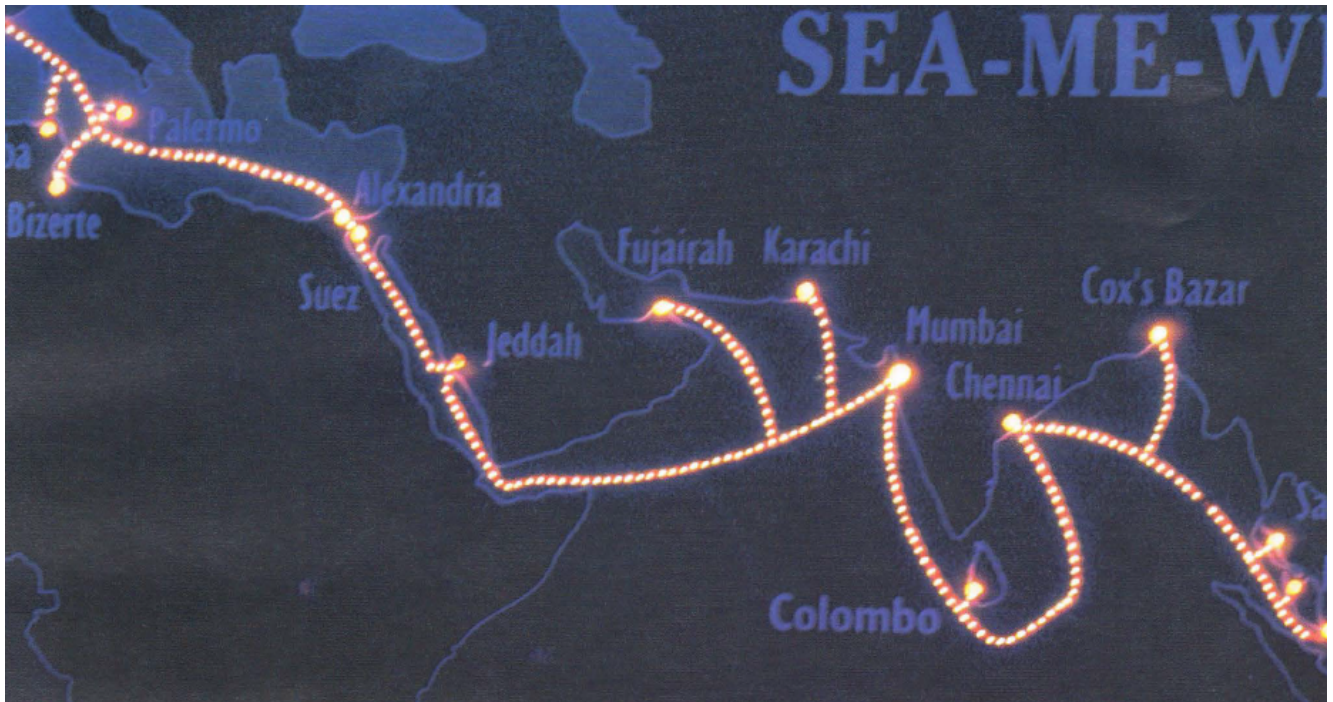


SLT inaugurates SEA-ME-WE-4 Submarine Cable System



Sri Lanka Telecom (SLT) recently held an inauguration ceremony for local operations of the South East Asia Middle East Western Europe 4 (SEA-ME-WE-4) fiber optic submarine cable project, which was attended by delegates from SLT's consortium partners many comprising of representatives from regional powerhouses.

In his opening speech, Shuhei Anan, CEO of SLT, spoke on the previous submarine cable -SEA-ME-WE-3, "two years ago SEA-ME-WE 3 cables were damaged by ships. At that time we had a really tough period to restore and also to arrange some connections for corporate businesses," he said.

After much hard work and determination from SLT and the other consortium members the new SEA-ME-WE-4 cable materialized. Emphasizing on the importance of the cable to the region and SLT, Anan says, "The cable allows Sri Lanka in particular to exploit its geographical location to provide higher bandwidth requirement in the future. As Sri Lanka is strategically located in the path of any future SEA-ME-WE cable, this has until now and will continue to allow SLT the opportunity to create substantial value addition", he said. Anan went on to add, "The country as a whole will benefit from this serendipitous cable route,

as Sri Lanka's competitiveness among global counterparts will increase at the same time as the company's access to higher connectivity, better reliability, improved security and enhanced speed."

A consortium of 16 operators representing 15 countries took part in the building and managing of the new state of the art submarine cable system. This system is a multi-regional connectivity resource milestone, spanning 20,000 kilometers, consisting of the main backbone across the Eastern and Western worlds plus extension links in various countries. The companies include Algerie Telecom (Algeria), Bharti Infotel Limited (India), BTIB (Bangladesh), CAT (Thailand), ETISALAT (UAE), France Telecom (France), MCI (UK), PTCL (Pakistan), Singtel (Singapore), Sri Lanka Telecom (Sri Lanka), STC (Saudi Arabia), Telecom Egypt (Egypt), Telecom Italia Sparkle S.p.A.(Italy), Telekom Malaysia Berhad (Malaysia) and Tunisie Telecom (Tunisia).

Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL), India A considerable increase in regional bandwidth capacity availability will become apparent for all involved telecommunication companies that were involved in this greatly financed and developmental project that was to show commitments of improving infrastructure by being completed on schedule.

As a key player in the management structure of the SEA-ME-WE consortium, SL T also stands as the Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee (F&AC), who in turn manages the project's financing. The F&AC is also responsible for the completion of this US\$ 500 million project. The project has required SL T to invest US\$ 30 million (Rs. 3 billion).

A numerous amount of benefits will be available to SL T with regard to the new connection. They include another avenue of redundancy, further securing existing connections such as SEA-ME-WE-3, the predecessor of SEA-ME-WE-4, and other on hand line-of-sight microwave links. The capacity of the existing submarine cable SEA-ME-WE-3 will also be upgraded from its current 160 Gigabits per second capacity. This in turn will lead to a further extension of the broadband capability of the IP backbone network, which will allow for greater speeds and better effectiveness of transfers between countries. SL T's existing network will also feel the effects superior reliability and greater connectivity.

When the cable is run at full capacity, it reaches a speed of 1.28 terabytes per second, this output will be the equivalent to conducting more than 15 million

telephone calls at the same time. SLT's corporate or high-capacity customers will have the advantage of experiencing more competitive IP Leased Circuit tariffs when calling other countries. Additionally, at the Sri Lankan side of the cable, subscribers will experience better connectivity resulting in added access to multimedia content and broadband services e.g., movies, music, etc. actual real-time audio and video streaming facilities will also be further enhanced.

SEA-ME-WE projects have proven that even in a competitive environment a partnership of high profile telecommunication companies is possible.



Shuhei Anan and Anil Obeyesekere inaugurated the 5EA-ME-WE-4 submarine cable system.



Representatives of the SEA-ME-WE-4 consortium including Shuhei Anan and Anil Obeyesekere of SLT