

The Network that Moves with You: Airtel, Powering your Digital-First Life



Investing in India's Ascent: A Future Forged in Digital

India is likely to sustain its stable economic performance, even amid global uncertainties heightened by escalating trade tensions and ongoing conflicts. Global macroeconomic growth has been subdued, diverging sharply across regions and requiring coordinated action to ensure sustainable momentum.

The Indian economy demonstrated resilience in FY 2024-25, retaining its position as one of the world's fastest growing large economies, with an estimated GDP growth of 6.5%. Political stability and a robust policy push across key sectors, including infrastructure, logistics and supply chains, are creating a conducive investment climate and rapidly advancing the nation's ambitions of becoming a manufacturing hub for the world.

At the same time, India's digital economy has surged ahead with double-digit growth, propelled by unprecedented digital engagement from individuals, enterprises and governments. Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi delivered an inspiring address at the India Mobile Congress 2024, outlining key priorities to sustain – and indeed surpass – India's own digital revolution, including ubiquity of data, omnipresence of digital connectivity and establishing Digital First as a national goal.

Your Company's history is punctuated with its contributions as a determined collaborator in furthering our national aspirations. Whether it was ringing in the telecom revolution of the early '90s or providing the foundations for a Digital India in the last decade, Airtel has always steered its investments to lead digital innovation in the country and support the multiplier effect of digital economic growth. We will continue to engage with various stakeholders now, to pursue the objectives of India's Digital First vision.

Dear Shareholders,

FY 2024-25 was a landmark year for your Company, marked by robust operating performance, lifetime-high market share, sustained operational excellence and significant deleveraging of the balance sheet. Bharti Airtel is focused on delivering brilliant customer experience, fostering digital innovation and building scalable digital platforms that will shape the future. Over the last five years, Airtel has made meaningful investments of over ₹1.6 trillion in expanding its digital infrastructure. With a solid foundation and clear vision, Airtel is turbo-charged to lead the next wave of digital innovation and serve as a catalyst for India's growing digital economy.

Further, your Company bears a track record of having driven tectonic changes in the telecom industry, rooted in its customer obsession, propensity to anticipate change and move decisively. Responding to the distress of millions of customers troubled by a pervasive spam menace, we launched India's first network-integrated, AI-powered spam detection solution, setting new benchmarks for customer safety.

As an active stakeholder in India's continued economic progress, Airtel plays a significant role, with its growing contributions in the form of direct and indirect taxes, License Fee (LF) and Spectrum Usage Charges (SUC) to the State Exchequer. In FY 2024-25, Airtel paid over ₹373 billion in LF, SUC, and other taxes. Additionally, your Company paid ₹289 billion towards spectrum obligations, including annual and prepayment of past spectrum dues. Over the last five years, Airtel's contribution to the Exchequer is nearly ₹2.5 trillion, reflecting our commitment to national development.

Airtel has continued to future-proof its network through strategic investments aimed at expanding rural coverage, 5G deployment, scaling fiber deployment across the country, strengthening the undersea cable network and building data centres. With customer obsession at the heart of everything we do, your Company augmented data capacity and purchased additional spectrum in select circles. Airtel's portfolio diversification received further impetus during the year, with Indus Towers becoming a subsidiary of your Company.

Digital innovation is fundamental to Airtel's strategic vision. The deployment of cutting-edge digital tools, such as ACS, VISION, ASON and many others, which give the Company end-to-end control, have made our networks smarter and simplified complexities. Through increased digitalisation, Airtel is improving operational efficiency and helping embed sustainability at the core of network planning.

Your Company has stayed firm on its priorities, keeping the strategy simple – driving operational excellence, disciplined capex spending and fortifying financial strength. It is this disciplined approach that has propelled Airtel's industry-leading performance and helped it create meaningful value for its stakeholders.

At the heart of our journey is a culture anchored in integrity, strong governance and transparency. As we scale new heights, we remain committed to our values, high standards of governance, transparency and building a sustainable, future-ready Airtel.

During the year, the Board approved a meticulously planned leadership succession. Mr. Gopal Vittal will assume the role of Vice Chairman and Shashwat Sharma will take over as CEO and MD of Airtel. Gopal's visionary leadership has been instrumental in driving the Company's strong growth, performance excellence and strategic clarity. In his new role, he will continue to be pivotal in guiding the India business, fostering synergies across the Group and focusing on leadership development.

Mobile Services

Airtel has further solidified its position in this segment, achieving a record-high revenue market share of ~40%. Your Company maintained its growth trajectory with industry-leading ARPU and winning quality customers, as reflected in the strong postpaid and 4G/5G customer net adds. We expanded our network footprint and deepened rural coverage. Over the past two years, our rural expansion program has provided internet access to over 85 million people across >90 thousand villages. Airtel's 5G Plus network continues to set industry benchmarks for superior customer experience, with the lowest Total Cost of Ownership (TCO). Our 5G network has over 135 million customers, vis-à-vis 72 million last year, reflecting rapid adoption and network expansion.

Homes and Enterprise Business

Your Company is strategically capitalising on industry tailwinds through accelerated investments. During the year, we added over 7 million fiber home passes and launched the Fixed Wireless Access offering to expand our addressable market. Our Digital TV business achieved record market share despite macro challenges faced by the industry. The launch of IPTV will augment Digital TV offerings and advance your Company's convergence strategy by providing enhanced convenience, paired with an even more sophisticated experience to our customers.

To address evolving customer needs for more secure and resilient networks, digital services suite and sharper delivery and execution, we are investing in flapless fiber networks, data centres and in building and fortifying digital services. This year, your Company further sharpened its focus on Global Business, re-tooling the portfolio to win with quality revenues and sustainable growth. Domestic Business and Data Centres have delivered steady revenue growth, supported by an improved go-to-market strategy, a recalibrated portfolio, along with scaled digital solutions and enhanced delivery and assurance.

Message from the Chairman

Digital

Digital transformation is built into our strategic vision. We are leveraging digital tools and unified platforms, creating synergies across the Group and unlocking growth opportunities. At the core of Airtel's digital transformation is a relentless focus on customer-centric innovation, powered by unified platforms and AI-driven solutions that enhance both accessibility and personalisation. Ultimately, the goal is to deliver secure, hyper-personalised and industry-leading experiences by putting customers first, always. Our digital capabilities are designed to unlock business value and scale digital assets.

Future-Proofing Airtel

By leveraging data science and AI/ML platforms, Airtel is successfully gathering granular, real-time data insights on increasingly complex next-generation networks, thus enabling greater network efficiency, sustainability and energy efficiency at scale. The deployment of cutting-edge digital tools is helping us automate network planning and its optimisation.

Our coverage across the country further expanded in FY 2024-25, with the deployment of ~20K network sites and >44K Rkm of fiber.

I am also pleased to share that your Company is fully ready to transition to a standalone 5G network. This will happen when 5G becomes the mainstay wireless technology, while we continue to conduct pilot testing. Until such a transition, Airtel will maintain its excellent service to customer needs through the non-standalone 5G architecture. Our 5G network has consistently earned top honours from crowd-sourced platforms, underscoring its superior performance and reliability.

Airtel's procurement strategy is closely aligned with India's ambitions for indigenisation and self-reliance. Nearly all its Home and Digital TV devices are sourced from its own JV, Dixon Electro Appliances Private Limited and other domestic partners. The contribution of locally procured active network equipment has shown a steady and significant rise over the years, underscoring our focus on strengthening the country's manufacturing ecosystem while embedding agility into our value chains.

At Airtel, integrity, transparency, culture, and solid governance are integral to all our functions, roles and activities. These principles are deeply embedded in our strategic roadmap, guiding key business decisions and long-term value creation.

Partnerships

Airtel has consistently enhanced its strategic alliances with leading global partners, including Cisco, Ericsson, Nokia, Qualcomm, Samsung, Google, Apple, IBM, Meta, Microsoft, Eutelsat OneWeb, SpaceX and many more, which have enabled it to deliver innovative and superior products and services that have sharpened its competitive edge and sustained value creation.

Africa

Amidst a challenging macroeconomic environment in FY 2024-25, Airtel Africa delivered a resilient and strong performance. The business continued its steady growth momentum, recording underlying constant currency revenue growth of 21% and EBITDA growth of 18%. Airtel Money registered yet another year of impressive performance with 30% revenue growth and 32% EBITDA growth.

Airtel Africa's balance sheet remains healthy, with comfortable leverage. The majority of debt is now denominated in local currencies, effectively mitigating exposure to forex volatility. In December 2024, the company announced its second share buyback, underscoring the Board's confidence in long-term growth prospects and commitment to creating shareholder value.

Balance Sheet

Your Company took a bold, calculated decision to deploy non-standalone 5G network architecture, resulting in significant savings in capex and network opex, enabling Airtel to deliver 5G services at the lowest TCO.

Moreover, the War on Waste program is a way of life for your Company, through which we have eliminated over ₹100 billion in wasteful expenditure over the last four years.

Our disciplined cost management, along with industry-leading revenue growth, translated into ₹553 billion in operating free cashflow in FY 2024-25. During the year, Airtel prepaid ₹260 billion of high-cost spectrum debt to the Department of Telecommunications, Government of India, while fulfilling other debt obligations. As a result, our net debt-to-EBITDAaL improved to 1.7x, reinforcing the strength of our balance sheet. With a solid financial foundation, Airtel is well-positioned to capitalise on emerging opportunities with confidence and agility.

Corporate Social Responsibility

This year, Bharti Airtel Foundation deepened its commitment to technology enablement in education with a strategic focus on teachers' professional development. Our flagship initiative, TheTeacherApp — an innovative platform aligned with the National Education Policy, 2020 — is enabling access to high-quality digital courses, leadership modules and pedagogical resources for teachers. In parallel, the Foundation has continued to nurture a growing community of Bharti Scholars through its wide-ranging scholarship programs across institutions such as Plaksha University, J.C. Bose University and Satya Bharti Schools.

During the year, we further scaled our efforts with the launch of the Bharti Airtel Scholarship – a fully funded national program that will support meritorious students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds to pursue undergraduate technology courses. Notably, 51% of all Bharti Scholars supported so far are women, a reflection of our commitment to gender equality in education. The Foundation has strategic partnerships with IITs, ISB, and Anant National University, driving impactful collaborations. The Quality Support Program and its State-level partnerships have helped the Foundation expand its efforts to transform Government schools. Across all the initiatives, the Foundation has maintained its focus on bringing systemic change by empowering educators, scaling inclusive education models and nurturing youth talent in the fields of technology, innovation, and design.

In line with our commitment to being responsible corporate citizens wherever we operate, I am especially happy to share, that this year saw the launch of the Airtel Africa Foundation. The Foundation will further our philanthropic efforts to making quality education accessible, in the 14 African geographies where we operate.

Sustainability and Governance

At Airtel, integrity, transparency, culture, and solid governance are integral to all our functions, roles and activities. These principles are deeply embedded in our strategic roadmap, guiding key business decisions and long-term value creation. We are leveraging digital tools to minimise our environmental footprint and accelerate the transition toward a greener network. Our efforts are reflected in the rising number of green sites, solarisation of network and reduction in diesel consumption. Your Company took further steps to enhance transparency for its stakeholders by proactively reporting EBITDAaL, reflecting the true picture of our operating performance. Airtel continues to be consistently recognised for its strong corporate governance framework by various independent agencies.

Vote of Thanks

This year, we thank Mr. Rakesh Bharti Mittal for his contributions to the Board from 2016 to 2024. I also welcome Mr. Rajan Bharti Mittal to the Airtel Board of Directors.

None of the growth and achievements we witnessed through the year would have been possible without our Board of Directors, management, dedicated and resilient employees, esteemed customers, partners, suppliers, the entire distribution network and our valued shareholders.

I thank you all for your consistent support and confidence.

Sunil Bharti Mittal
Chairman

