

Innovation is the core of our strategy

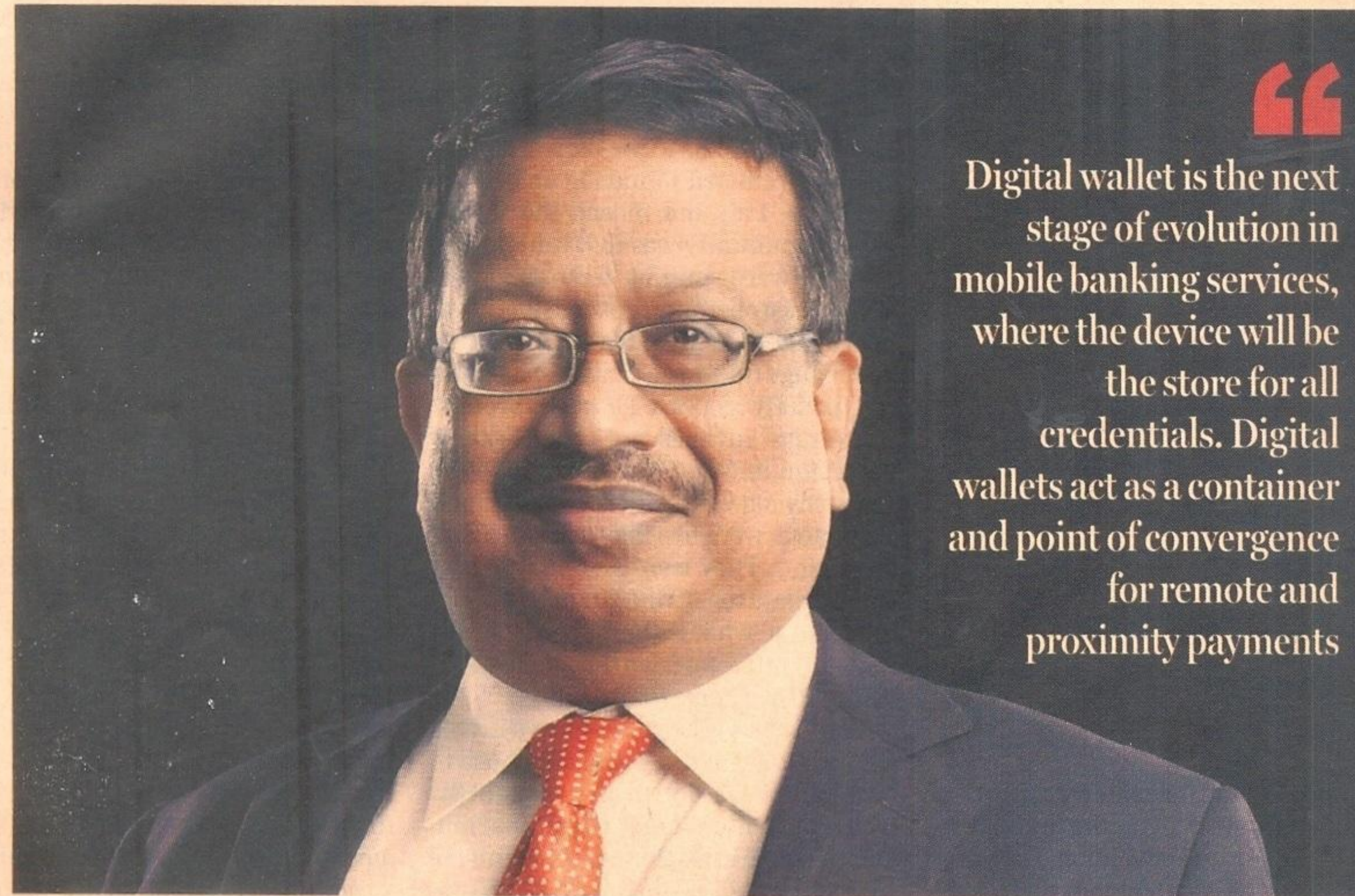
TECHNOLOGY has made a remarkable impact on almost every aspect of our lives, and our wallets are the next big thing to go digital. "Digital wallet is the next stage of evolution in mobile banking services, where the device will be the store for all credentials," says Manoranjan 'Mao' Mohapatra, CEO, Mahindra Comviva. Recently, the company launched its mobiquity Wallet digital wallet platform; it will offer security, ease of use and rich features to the customers of banks, telecom operators and retailers.

Mao's career has been dedicated to the development and deployment of innovative software communications solutions in rapidly growing markets. Prior to joining Mahindra Comviva, Mao was president and COO at Aricent, where he enjoyed a 15-year career and was instrumental in building the company from a relative start up to a globally recognised brand. Before moving to Aricent, Mao was a core member of the Centre for Development of Telematics (CDOT), where he made a significant contribution to research and development in telecom switching, and where he began his career.

In an interaction with Sudhir Chowdhary, he shares the company's growth strategies in domestic and foreign markets and its focus on new technologies. Excerpts:

How has Mahindra Comviva transformed its business—beyond being a VAS player?

Over the past decade, Mahindra Comviva has successfully transformed and evolved from predominantly a value added services (VAS) player to an entity that provides products and solutions in the areas of core network infrastructure, messaging nodes with intelligence, mobile financial solutions, among others. It has now established leadership in mobility solutions that transform lives. Our transformation story is also against the background where VAS was moving from pure entertainment services to draw in need-based services around



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education, governance, health and similar areas.

Mobile has positioned itself as a true ubiquitous solution and with the ever growing need for convergence in technology, it was apt for us to reposition ourselves from the beyond VAS to mobility solutions providers that transform lives; what we actually strive to create in this era.

Mahindra Comviva's offerings deliver mobility solutions which not only enhance customer experience but also provide cost optimisation. Our goal is to touch the lives of over a billion people through our end-to-end products and services. Today, with 25% year-on-year growth, Mahindra Comviva's strategy has been focused on providing integrated solutions which cater to the entire ecosystem. Commerce, data and content together form the key pillars which define our offerings with commerce being the latest however the

fastest growing addition.

How important is the India market for Mahindra Comviva in terms of business?

India is an important market for us as around 30% of our revenue is generated from this market. India is the innovation hub for Mahindra Comviva and innovation is the core of our strategy. We take immense pride in calling ourselves an Indian company catering to global requirements. Our R&D centre in Bangalore staffs more than 300 people who are constantly developing products which foster innovation. Our Global Network Operations Centre (GNOC) in Bangalore is the hub for automated tools and processes catering globally. GNOC facility plays a pivotal role and empowers operators to increase customer satisfaction by controlling outages.

Mahindra Comviva believes in

fostering innovation and germinating from that philosophy is our innovation cell which comprises of product managers who organise Idea Bazar in which new product ideas are collected. Within the innovation cell, we also have a start-up factory which facilitates awareness, ideation and finally collaborates if the idea suits the business needs of the company.

Mahindra Comviva recently launched a digital wallet platform. Will consumers embrace digital wallets?

Digital wallet is the next stage of evolution in mobile banking services, where the device will be the store for all credentials. Digital wallets act as a container and point of convergence for remote and proximity payments. It is also a potential revenue generator for a wide range of players across the ecosystem like

retail, mobile, and financial services. With the use of location based services and using geo-fencing as a strategy banks and retailers can push context aware and segmented offers to consumers thereby increasing the chances of having sticky consumers and ensuring the requirements of consumers are met in a more efficient way.

We believe in pre-empting our consumer's needs in order to cater to their evolving needs. Our recently launched digital wallet focuses on consumer experience and purchase journey for payments. It is based on the mobile financial platform, mobiquity. Our mobiquity Wallet is secure, easy to use and feature-rich digital wallet solution that works on multiple connected devices. It offers support for personalisation, multiple value-added services and payment methods to enrich consumers' path to purchase. It is an integrated wallet that supports technologies like NFC or QR code to make paying for transactions easier in addition to an enriched loyalty and post payments experience.

How is Mahindra Comviva working to convert mobile phone into a lifestyle companion?

Smartphones, tablets, phablets etc. have empowered users with portability and connectivity round the clock; it has revolutionised the way people ever thought about mobile phones beyond calls and messages. With upcoming faster technologies like 3G/4G users expect more from their services.

At Mahindra Comviva, we work closely to provide a content rich application which keeps the user engaged, like the infotainment product, which is powered by recommendation engine and personalisation. It enables mobile operators to deliver as well as manage a range of infotainment content like music, news, sports, games, jokes etc.

Our "Recommendation and Ana-

lytics Engine" offers to users' content based on their profile and personal preferences rather than content preferred by the crowd. Self-service apps can also be used as a service discovery tool that adds immediacy and pro-activity into a wider customer engagement. Mahindra Comviva's mobile financial solutions provide convenient cash free financial transactions, like booking a movie ticket without any hassle. Our PreTUPSTM electronic recharge solution enables consumers to, either directly top-up their prepaid account through various channels including the web, client app, kiosks, ATMs, STK and USSD, or recharge across the counter through merchants.

What technologies will play a main role in the future of communications?

Urban mobile penetration is 160% as compared to just 36% in rural India. Despite the challenges faced by the industry, India's rural segment has recorded an impressive household mobile penetration. We are already witnessing the explosion amongst smartphone and feature phone users leading to an upsurge in heavy data usage.

In the coming years, the rollout of next gen technology and expansion of mobile services in rural areas will be a catalyst for the growth in the industry. Innovation that empowers consumers and offers customisation and personalisation of the mobile content will continue to be the focus. Such innovations go beyond the realm of only communications and diverge into prominent segments like mobile finance, video, music, governance; health, education etc. would further accelerate data consumption. Operators would optimise the data usage pattern of consumers through analytics to offer the personalisation and customisation to stay ahead in the competition.