



**THE 4TH ASEAN DIGITAL MINISTERS' MEETING WITH INDIA
(4TH ADGMIN+INDIA)**

**(01:45PM- 02:30PM IST)
1 February 2024, Singapore**

“Building an Inclusive and Trusted Digital Ecosystem”

Opening Remarks.

Excellencies

Distinguished Dignitaries

Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Afternoon to all of you

It gives me immense pleasure to be part of 4th ASEAN Digital Ministers + India meeting.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to Mrs. Josephine Teo, Minister for Communications and Information and second Minister for Home Affairs, Singapore for hosting of this event and warm welcome extended to the participants of this meeting.

India is grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this dialogue, with ASEAN members.

Friends, India's relations with Southeast Asia date back a thousand years. There are many cultural, religious and people-to-people linkages between India and the ASEAN countries.

I am delighted to note how India and ASEAN are collaborating in the field of Information and Communications Technologies by leveraging complementary strengths of each other.

Technology is bringing rapid changes across the globe, with digital connectivity platforms emerging as important drivers connecting individuals communities/industries, organizations and countries across geographies.

We look forward to closely work with ASEAN member states for achievement of goal of bridging digital divide and making digital and information technology accessible to all.

India has been at the forefront of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) to make digital delivery of service for the citizens. It could be helpful for ASEAN member countries as it has got wide acceptance during G-20 summit held in India.

Thank You Excellency, for this opportunity to co-chair the meeting, and I look forward to proceed as per the agenda.

Substantial Remarks.

Thank you, Excellencies.

I am delighted to note the sustained progress made in the past conferences and appreciate the efforts to bridge the digital divide and build digital infrastructure to foster increased inclusiveness, prosperity, competitiveness, and a stronger sense of partnership.

This year the theme of ASEAN Digital Ministers' meeting is 'Building an Inclusive and Trusted Digital Ecosystem'.

Excellencies, in today's world where citizens and consumers increasingly rely on the internet to access public and commercial services, universal and meaningful digital connectivity has become the need of the hour.

Only safe and secure digital ecosystem can ensure success for businesses and full participation of individuals.

Excellencies, I am very proud to share that India is transforming rapidly into a digitally empowered society, in line with the vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Mr Narendra Modi.

India believes that, Digitalization by responsible use of emerging technologies such as AI, Cloud computing, Internet of Things (IoT), Big Data etc. is an important aspect for socio-economic development and growth.

India has taken a series of structural and policy reforms in telecom sector like Indian Telecommunications Act 2023 (Telecom Act), National Digital Communications Policy 2018, National Broadband mission 2019, National Frequency Allocation Plan 2022 etc. to further boost the growth of the telecom industry for more healthy competition, ease of doing business, enhance the penetration of broadband & digital services.

Excellencies, telecom is backbone of digital infrastructure required for Fintech, e-health, e-commerce, citizen centric services etc. Therefore, Government has created a conducive environment for industry to prosper.

Taking note of progress of Digital ecosystem in India, GSMA had conferred Government Leadership Award 2023 to India for implementing best practices in telecom policy and regulation during Mobile World Congress (MWC 2023) in Barcelona Spain.

Excellencies, India has developed an indigenous 4G/ 5G telecom technology stack as per the global standards and is being deployed in India and offered to many countries.

Strong innovation and start-up culture in the field of ICTs is being promoted by financial assistance under various Government schemes like Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF).

Further, India is attracting a lot of electronics and telecom manufacturing through Production Linked Schemes (PLI).

Excellencies, India has started work on 6G technology as per the vision of our Hon'ble PM to have our own 6G network by year 2030. India has come out with 6G Testbeds, Bharat 6G mission and Bharat 6G Alliance to boost R&D and increase IPRs in 6G technology. The 6G vision of India is based on the principles of Affordability, Sustainability and Ubiquity.

India has robust ICT infrastructure in form of 1.18 billion telecom subscribers, 1.37 billion digital identities and more than 895 million internet subscribers.

India offers one of the lowest data tariffs of 12 Cents per GB of data leading to the highest average Monthly Data Consumption of over 20GB Per Subscriber.

You will be happy to note that 46% of the world's total real-time digital transactions take place in India.

India has been thriving to provide Universal and meaningful connectivity to its people and has vast 4G/ 5G network coverage and massive broadband infra for rural and remote locations.

4G covers 98.5% of the country and to achieve 4G coverage, government is implementing the 4G saturation projects in rural and remote areas.

Excellencies, India's approach to 5G or any generational technology for that matter has always been holistic inclusion. You will be aware that India launched its 5G services slightly late in October, 2022. But, India has distinction of rolling out the fastest 5G

services deployment country in the world with over 400 thousand 5G sites deployed across more than 700 districts in such a short span.

Excellencies, I am happy to state that ITU Area Office and Innovation Centre was inaugurated by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi, in March 2023. You will be pleased to note that this innovation centre is first Global Innovation Centre of ITU.

I invite researchers, academia and other stakeholders of ASEAN Member states to collaborate with ITU through this centre for capacity building and joint activities/initiatives for bridging the Digital Divide.

India and ASEAN have long history of executing joint projects of ICT.

The latest India-ASEAN Digital Work Plan for 2024, endorsed by ADGSOM and India, supports various initiatives in the ICT sphere, including capacity building in areas such as IoT, Artificial Intelligence, Cyber Security, Sustainable Data and Transport Networks for future, 5G, Regulatory and Policy issues, Role of ICT in implementation of Digital Health, etc.

We are ready to take more projects and support ICT initiatives for ASEAN countries. Further, India can offer 4G/5G technology to ASEAN partners.

Excellencies, I believe that through ongoing and future ICT projects, India and ASEAN can elevate their collaboration to new levels.

India is willing to share its vision and experiences and also learn from the best practices and policies globally. In addition, we may explore more areas of cooperation like Fintech and Digital Public Service Delivery Infrastructure, Common Alert Protocol (CAP) for disaster management etc.

With this collaborative approach, we can work towards realizing the goal of a smart, sustainable global society and attain the Sustainable Development Goals through secure usage of next-gen technologies.

Thank you.

Closing Remarks

Thank you, Excellency, for the productive and fruitful successful meeting.

We are grateful for extending this opportunity to India by ASEAN and host country Singapore to exchange ideas and best practices, and to explore new avenues of collaboration.

The projects and initiatives discussed at this meeting demonstrate our shared commitment to build an inclusive and trusted Digital ecosystem. With the increasing role of technology in our daily lives, it is vital that we work together to address the challenges faced by humanity and seize the opportunities to make the World a better place for next generation.

I am confident that the progress made at this meeting will further strengthen the relationship between India and ASEAN in the ICT sector. And I look forward to continued engagement and collaboration towards our shared vision and goals.

Thank you all.