

Speech by H.E. Mr. Vinod K Jacob, Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Bahrain at the Inauguration of the event titled, “Digital Transformation” organized by the Bahrain Chamber of Chartered Accountants of India [BCICAI] on 26 September 2024

H.E. Shaikh Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, Auditor General of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Mr. Vivek Gupta, President of BCIAI and the ExCom of BCICAI, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to attend today’s event on the theme “Digital Transformation” organized by BCIAI. I wish the event all success and appreciate the efforts put towards this endeavour by Mr. Vivek Gupta and his team.

This event is timely and the theme topical as it takes place within a few days of the adoption of the Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations at the Summit of the Future held at New York at the UN Headquarters.

The international community has called for an inclusive, open, sustainable, fair, safe and secure digital future for all based on five objectives, namely (a) closing all digital divides and accelerate progress across the Sustainable Development Goals; (b) expanding inclusion in and benefits from the digital economy for all; (c) fostering an inclusive, open, safe and secure digital space that respects, protects and promote human rights; (d) advancing responsible, equitable and interoperable data governance approaches; and (e) enhancing international governance of artificial intelligence for the benefit of humanity.

India's priorities at the Summit of the Future were inclusive and equitable sustainable development as well as South-South cooperation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi outlined India’s approach. He said that there is a need for balanced regulation for the safe and responsible use of Technology. Prime Minister added, “We need global digital governance, which ensures that national sovereignty and integrity are upheld. Digital Public Infrastructure should be a Bridge, not a Barrier! For Global Good, India is ready to share its digital public infrastructure with the entire world.”

My Embassy here in friendly Bahrain has also encouraged and pursued digital services for the benefit of both Bahraini friends and Indian nationals. Three instances are worth mentioning in this regard.

The first is the revamped consular service appointment application 'EoIBh CONNECT' which enables service seekers to book appointments for various consular services being provided through Embassy premises as well as through Outsourced Service Provider at Dana Mall. This has been successfully used for the past one year.

The second is the introduction in February this year of the new digital fee collection kiosk at the Indian Embassy premises in Seef. The introduction of this kiosk which was a collaborative effort of ICICI Bank and Sadad has not only streamlined the fee collection process but also paved the way for a digital-centric approach towards all transactions.

The third include initiatives like DEKHO APNA DESH and "Focus State/Union Territory" initiative which facilitates public participation through digital platforms for promoting two-way tourism as well as promotion of "One District, One Product" campaign. Use of digital platforms serve to build bridges between the people of India and Bahrain.

Before concluding, let me congratulate the leap by the Kingdom of Bahrain of 36 positions to the 18th place in the UN E-Government Survey 2024. This places the Kingdom among the global leaders in e-government services. The ease of living and doing business that such advanced digital services provides has benefited the large Indian Diaspora that is residing in Bahrain.

I thank you all.