



Indian Chamber of Commerce

Press Release

**Exclusive Interactive Session
With
Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad
Hon'ble Union Minister of Electronics & IT and Law & Justice and**

Kolkata, 18th July 2017: "Digital delivery of services is the only way to empower people in the country"

In an Exclusive Interactive Session organized by the Indian Chamber of Commerce in Kolkata today, **Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad, Hon'ble Union Minister of Electronics & IT and Law & Justice** said that the vision of 'Digital India' programme is to transform the nation into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. He also added that the motto of his ministry is to bring digital inclusion in the country. He further informed the gathering that his government has already laid down Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) covering 2.10 lacs km. to digitally connect all Gram Panchayats in the country by December 2018 under BharatNet project. This project will be done by using an optimal mix of underground fibre, fibre overpower lines, radio and satellite media, for providing broadband connectivity by all categories of service providers on non-discriminatory basis.

He mentioned that IT and ITes industry should help India build a USD 1 trillion digital economy within four years (2022) by creating affordable technology and an inclusive environment. He also highlighted multi-billion dollar opportunities that exist in areas like IT e-commerce, e-education, e-health, electronics manufacturing, digital payments and cyber security. He also said that government of India has also developed e-agri-market, e-government procurement services to ensure better pricing and more transparency in the system.

He also mentioned that India is the 3rd biggest startup movement in the world and through digital India initiative government is encouraging more innovative startups to come up especially in areas such as e-health, e-education and agri business. He further informed that A 'Digi Gaon' initiative has been launched to provide telemedicine, education and skills through digital technology. Also, the government will offer financial incentives to companies that set up call centres in tier-II and tier-III cities under a new BPO scheme that's expected to create huge employment.

He ended his speech saying that the world has enough capital however required talent and skill are the challenges. Therefore, the need of the hour is to empower people digitally to take full advantage of the emerging business opportunities.

Mr. Shashwat Goenka, President, ICC in his opening remark mentioned that over the years, significant reforms have been undertaken across both the “IT and electronics”, and “Law and Justice” segments that have contributed significantly in positioning India to where it is now in the international dais. Speaking of the IT and Electronics sector, he said the rapidly expanding socio-economic infrastructure in India has not only enabled the growth of the IT and Electronics industry in India, but also increased its competitiveness in the global market. If we look at the contribution of the IT sector in India’s GDP, we see a huge jump from 1.2% in FY98 to 9.5% in FY15. Indian IT and electronics sector has the potential to contribute as much as 25% to India’s GDP in the next five to seven years. He further added that, in the areas such as healthcare, education and agriculture, GOI has undertaken initiatives such as laying optical fibre, connecting gram panchayats, scaling up the common service centers and so on.

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