



G 20 Digital Ministers' Meet on Digital Economy Better International Cooperation Needed to Check Cyber Crimes and Cyber Terrorism - Ravi Shankar Prasad

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India supports better international cooperation in cyber security to fight against growing cybercrime and cyber terrorism. Ravi Shankar Prasad, Hon'ble Union Minister for Electronics & IT and Law and Justice expressed these views at the bilateral meeting held in Germany during G20 Digital Ministers meeting on Digital Economy. He also offered to share India's experience in carrying out digital India initiatives with other digital economies. He said that India is also of the view that multi stakeholders model is the best option for the spread of digitalization and added that border should not be an impediment in the way of mobility of professionals and information. Bilateral engagements were held with representatives of Russian federation, Indonesia, Germany, United Kingdom, Argentina, Singapore, China, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and International Telecommunication Union ITU)

The **G20 Digital Ministerial Meeting** was held in **Dusseldorf, Germany**. G20 cooperation on the Digital Economy has become a special priority, subsequent to the adoption of Digital Economy Development and Cooperation Initiative in the 2016 Hangzhou Summit, under the Chinese Presidency. The German Presidency has carried this forward, and, realizing the potential of digital technologies and its wide impact on the overall economy, has elevated the Digital Economy Task Force to the Ministerial level.

The G20 Ministers expressed their warm appreciation for the accomplishments of the Digital India programme. They noted how Digital India is provisioning a unique digital identity – cheaply, securely, and with privacy – to 1.1 billion citizens via Aadhaar. They appreciated India's historic digital payment push through innovative and indigenous solutions like UPI, DBT, BHIM and AADHAR enabled payment systems, based on easily accessible mobile platforms. They observed how India has leveraged 250,000 Common Service Centres to drive digital inclusion, entrepreneurship, digital services, and productivity across rural India's grassroots, empowering India's less privileged citizens. The G20 Ministers particularly noted how Digital India's digital literacy mission is transforming digital accessibility for 60 million households. OECD, as an invitee, made a special mention of how India has emerged as one of the world's most vibrant e-commerce environments and startup nations.

The Hon'ble Minister, in his interventions, highlighted how India – as the world's fastest growing major economy – was harnessing digital technology as a major inclusion and growth mechanism. He emphasized how Digital India is bringing a transformative change through various schemes, harnessing the potential of a young Indian demography, and so driving a successful Digital Economy. He explained the Government's driving motivation in advancing the Digital India programme, *"Digital technologies and the internet, which represents some of the finest creations of the human mind are today a 'global common good'; which we can harness for bridging the digital divide, empowering and improving the quality of life for our citizens."*

The Hon'ble Minister also highlighted Digital India's unprecedented effort to drive affordability in digital technologies, including creation of low cost digital identity infrastructure called AADHAR, laying down an optical fibre infrastructure to reach all Gram Panchayats under BharatNet, developing Apps and solutions for digital payments, ensuring participative Governance through MyGov and using these digital technologies while ensuring privacy and security through a robust cyber infrastructure.

The Hon'ble Minister emphasized how India is advancing in the knowledge economy by catalyzing innovation. He said: *"We believe that innovation is key to our success as a digital economy. India today has one of the most vibrant startup ecosystems with over 4000 startups every year working in emerging technology areas including IoT, data analytics, Block Chains and machine learning. Many of these startups are also in the forefront of developing solutions to many of our grand challenges in areas such as health and education."*

The Hon'ble Minister particularly emphasised that India, as a leading supplier of IT/ITeS services and skilled technology manpower to the world, would be happy to share its experience and knowledge with its partners across the developing world. He noted that the Digital India model – engaging, as it does, issues of digital inclusion and divide that are experienced across the developing world – may offer insight and input to emerging nations' digital programmes.

Noting the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi's description "that cyber attacks are akin to a bloodless war", Hon'ble Minister called for G20 countries to actively cooperate in combating cyber crimes and cyber terrorism.

India's interests have been effectively conveyed to the G20 forum, and suitably reflected in the Ministerial Declaration and Roadmap. This includes unleashing the potential of Digital Economy to drive digital inclusion and reducing digital divide, improved connectivity, digital literacy and skills. India's essential interests in a strong digital economy, open and secure internet with localized content, free flow of information and mobility of professionals across borders have also been highlighted.

NNK/MD

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