

Sweden India
AI and Digitalisation Summit
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Remarks
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Chairman AstraZeneca Mr. Leif Johansson
Our colleague Mr. Gautam Bhattacharya

Good morning everyone,

I would like to thank the Sweden India Business Council and all partners for organising this timely and topical discussion.

The pandemic has accelerated digital transformation of economies and delivery of critical services. This will only speed up further as we look at the post-pandemic recovery, and the ambitious green transition ahead of us to address global warming.

Whether it is Lifesciences or development of drugs, vaccines & other healthcare solutions, the booming FinTech or EdTech sectors, Smart Grids or Smart City solutions, Circular Economy or Energy efficiency, Manufacturing or Agriculture, or E-governance facilitating lives of hundreds of millions, AI and Digitalisation are the drivers.

This also present great opportunities for cross cutting collaboration.

India and Sweden are among the leading economies implementing this transformation.

Both are deploying digital technologies for growth and productivity that is also socially useful. For addressing societal challenges in an open, ethical and inclusive manner.

Sweden is a global leader in innovation and sustainability. IT and digital sector already accounts for 20% of its GDP, among the highest in the world.

Indian firms and professionals are deeply engaged in the ongoing digital transformation in the Swedish economy and society. India offers large scale digital competence that few other countries can offer.

India too figures high on the global rankings on AI industry development and technology adoption.

AI research, for instance on data analytics and language processing, is thriving in India. In the last five years, 4,000 patents have reportedly been filed by Indian entities. The Startup ecosystem in India is really booming.

Stanford University's Institute for Human Centred AI has ranked India as sixth on its latest Global AI Vibrancy Tool in terms of research output, economy and inclusion. India has the highest rankings on AI skill penetration rates and global gender parity in this sector.

AI and digitalisation sector is attracting substantial government funding. India is pushing the deployment of digital technologies for public goods and for an inclusive scaling up of development interventions.

Huge successes are already visible.

Whether it is the rapid creation of digital identities for the more than 1 billion population, or the enormous achievements in financial inclusion of hundreds of millions, the instant and transparent delivery of subsidies, or the massive adoption of digital payment platforms driving down costs, or the unprecedented vaccine delivery programme that is nearing 1.2 billion mark in less than 10 months.

India obviously provides Scale. That also translates into Big Data.

As Big data and AI innovation drive the transformation at scale and with speed, we know that trust and cybersecurity are crucial.

Here we can see that our values are more aligned in the sense of being primarily open and people-centric. The focus is more on 'Data empowerment' rather than mere 'data protection', public goods-driven instead of merely being platform-driven data use.

Our common values are the basis for the deep political commitment to our partnership.

India and Sweden have continued to work closely despite pandemic.

Our Prime Ministers have interacted thrice this year. Once in a bilateral summit, then during India-EU Summit and at the COP26. Our Ministers of Trade & Commerce, Defence and Science & Technology have also interacted this year.

Most recently last week, our Environment and Climate Change Ministers co-chaired the high-profile meeting of the Leadership Group on Industry Transition LeadIT in Glasgow.

Both countries are pushing for a cleaner transition for the hard-to-abate industrial sectors. This will require innovative technology solutions.

Innovation, sustainability and green transition remain the core areas of India Sweden partnership.

Together with SIBC, CII and other partners, we recently organised the 8th edition of India Sweden Innovation Day, which highlighted the range of collaborations between big corporates, startups, R&D institutions and government agencies.

The newly established India Sweden Healthcare Innovation Centre is a good example of the collaboration between governments, industry and research institutions.

A year ago, here in Gothenburg, an Indian company HCL opened its first European Cybersecurity Fusion Centre.

Swedish majors like Saab with Mahindra or the Volvo group have started Innovation and R&D Centres in India.

Earlier this year, the Swedish Institute organised an interesting Sweden India Mobility Hack to design and test ideas for safe and sustainable transportation.

A couple of months back, I visited the AI Factory at the Luleå Technical University that is coming up with solutions, for instance, for remote predictive maintenance of railway tracks or for mining industries. Again, a huge potential for collaboration.

In conclusion, I would like to say that AI and Digitalisation provide huge opportunities to intensify collaboration building upon mutual strengths, competitive advantages and shared values and open, transparent, inclusive and citizen-centric approaches.

I once again thank all partners for putting together this timely and useful platform.

The two Reports on Data Management and Skilling being prepared by the India Sweden Business Leaders Round Table will be of great interest.

Today's discussions and these Reports will provide guidance on the way forward.

We very much look forward to the insights and perspectives from Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO of Niti Aayog and other experts and business leaders guiding and driving these changes.

Thank You.