

# India on the Digital Highway

The Second Digital India Dialogue identifies some key issues that need to be tackled



**ASHOK CHAWLA,**  
Chairperson,  
Competition  
Commission of India

Three issues that Digital India needs to consider include responsibility of big companies, evolving a policy framework in terms of digital electronics and platforms by the government, and a focus on local manufacturing"



**ANANT GOENKA,**  
Wholtime Director &  
Head—New Media,  
The Express Group

We welcome this government's focus on digital and believe that technology improves the efficiency of governance and the transparency of government"



**VICTORIA A ESPINEL,**  
President & CEO, BSA Group

We in the software industry are very excited about Digital India and the promise that it brings. We also believe that it will bring in transparency, accountability and that it will poise India to play a greater part in the global digital economy"



Ashok Chawla speaking with Vandana Nanda, managing director, CRIS



The panel discussion at the Digital India Dialogue

## Spectrum availability key to Digital India success

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's focus on Digital India is all set to change the country. As mobile phone companies roll-out 4G services and prices of smartphones keep falling it is possible for the average Indian to connect digitally via voice, data and video services. But for Digital India to take-off, the government needs to quickly address issues relating to spectrum availability and building a robust infrastructure backbone.

These were at the centre stage of the discussions at The Express

Group's Digital India Dialogue in New Delhi on October 8. The almost two-hour long discussion also focused on privacy and security of data, building better connectivity in the country and the challenges ahead. Data privacy and security has become more important ever since the European Court of Justice recently struck down a global agreement that allowed companies to move digital data including web searches and social media posts between the European Union and the United States.

The discussion was flagged off by chief guest Ashok Chawla,

chairperson, Competition Commission of India who stated that concerns on the digital path will be different and be nuanced for different countries. He said the three issues that Digital India needs to consider are the responsibility of big companies, evolving a policy framework in terms of digital electronics platforms and local manufacturing. Aruna Sundararajan, additional secretary, DeitY pointed out that the government has auctioned spectrum released by defence forces. The Indian Army on its part is all set to launch cloud services, which should lead to overall oper-

ational efficiency.

The biggest challenge before the country is to create employment opportunities for the 10 million people being added to the workforce pool every year, stressed Shankar Aggarwal, secretary, ministry of labour & employment. On the software side, Victoria A Espinel, President & CEO, BSA Group pointed out that the success of the Digital India programme depends to a large extent on policies that will allow the digital economy to flourish. The two obvious themes according to her were education and skill training & science and technolo-

gy development.

The discussion included Arvind Gupta, Head IT Cell, BJP; Dr Govind, CEO, NIXI; Lt Gen Nitin Kumar Kohli, AVSM, VSM, Signal Officer in Chief, Indian Army; John E Matheson, associate general counsel, Intel Technology Asia; Praveer Sinha, CEO & managing director, Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited; Mahesh Uppal, director, Com First India; former finance secretary R Gopalan; Shailesh Pathak, executive director, Bhartiya Group; and Deepak Maheswari, head, government affairs, Symantec among others.

**JOHN E MATHESON,**  
Associate General Counsel, Intel Tech

We got this magic opportunity with the Internet of Things which is not an expensive platform. It needs sensors and silicon bolted together to gather data and then you have big data analytics. This is an area where India has an advantage as the mathematical capability in this country is outstanding"



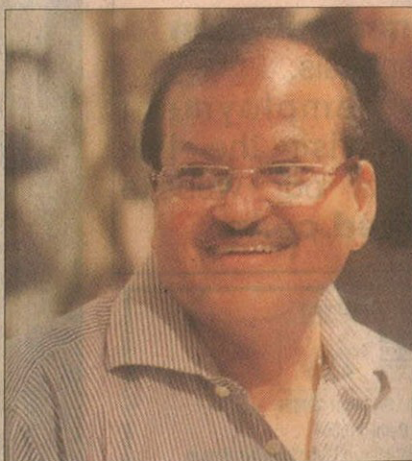
**ARUNA SUNDARARAJAN,**  
Additional Secretary, DeitY

Are these digital platforms going to deepen democracy or are they going to make sure that some people get on a fast lane and some people stay behind"



**SHANKAR AGGARWAL,**  
Secretary,  
Ministry of Labour & Employment

Today things have changed due to the introduction of ICT. We are replacing 44 Central labour laws with 4 labour courts—on wages, industrial relations, security and safety of labour and social security"



**DR GOVIND,**  
CEO, NIXI

What we need in the country along with the digital economy is the development of standards, whether it is in cybersecurity or the weapons which are coming up"



**MAHESH UPPAL,**  
Director, Com First India

Our digital network is predominantly wireless. Roughly 65% of our data goes on wireless networks. So by definition they have a limitation on capacity. As we are soon going to face a capacity crunch, we need to manage spectrum far, far better"



**SHAILESH PATHAK,**  
Executive Director, Bhartiya Group

We employ 6,000 people in our fashion business in Chennai and Bengaluru. There is a high probability that 4,000 of those jobs will move to Vietnam in 12 months. It is not due to any digital thing but due to the Trans Pacific Partnership"



**LT GEN NITIN KUMAR KOHLI,**  
AVSM, VSM, Signal Officer in Chief, Indian Army

The army is going to launch cloud services. Whatever information we get should be translated into enhanced efficiency. In the case of the Army, it should give me enhanced combat effectiveness"