

Google announces \$10bn investment in 'digital India'

GOOGLE will invest \$10 billion (£7.93 billion) in India in the next five to seven years, the chief executive of its parent company Alphabet Inc has announced.

Sundar Pichai spoke at the annual Google for India event, held online.

The investment will be used to build products and services for India, help businesses go digital and use technology "for social good".

"This is a reflection of our confidence in the future of India and its digital economy," Pichai said.

With more than 500 million active internet users in the country, India is perhaps the biggest potential growth market for Google.

The investment will be made through the Google for India Digitisation Fund

Pichai said the fund would focus on four areas to scale up digital infrastructure in India. It would: enable "affordable access and information for every Indian in their own language"

Pichai also touted

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Digital India project which aims to overhaul the country's digital infrastructure.

Modi tweeted to say that he and Pichai had discussed "leveraging the power of technology to transform the lives of India's farmers, youngsters and entrepreneurs".

India is already a major market for all of Google's key products including Android, Search and YouTube. Nearly 245 million Indians access YouTube in India.

Growing internet use across smaller towns and villages has also led to a boom in regional language internet use which, according to one estimate, now commands a 66 percent share in overall content consumption in India, far surpassing English.

This, along with a significant uptick in the number of Indians using AI-based technologies for education, healthcare and financial services, dovetails directly with Google's ambitions to bring first-time users online.—BNC