Embassy of India
Yerevan
*****

Opening Remarks at Armenia – Engineering Week 2025

[Yerevan, 03 October 2025]

- H.E. Mr. Mkhitar Hayrapetyan, Minister of High-Tech Industry of Armenia,
- First Deputy Minister of High-Tech Industry, Mr. Gevorg Mantashyan,
- Excellencies,
- Engineers,
- Ladies & Gentlemen,

Namaskar! Barev dzez! A very good morning to you all! I would like to thank the organizers of Armenia–Engineering Week 2025 for giving me this opportunity to attend this prestigious tech event and to deliver my opening remarks. Before I proceed to speak about the probable subject of deliberations over the next three days, let me say that the collaboration between India and Armenia in the high-tech sector started quite early on. The Governments of our two countries set up the India–Armenia Centre of Excellence in ICT (AICT) in Yerevan in March 2015 with India donating the PARAM super computer to the Centre. We are currently working to upgrade the AICT. We also computerized 50 schools in the Vayots Dzor region in April 2017. Computer labs were established in 72 schools in the Tavush region in November 2013. The Embassy is now working towards the next phase of these projects.

2. As far as the Engineering Week is concerned, we can all expect and in line with the times, the deliberations over the next three days

would be revolving around AI and if countries are doing enough to address the challenge and leverage the opportunities.

3. I would briefly like to mention India's trajectory here with a little background as to what transpired in the past which is why it is a catch-up game for us now. Very early on, in 1976, India set up a Public Sector Company called Semiconductor Complex Limited (SCL) in Chandigarh to build indigenous Indian chips. SCL began production in 1984 and was manufacturing 5000-nanometre (nm) chips, just one generation behind global standards at the time. Despite being a state-owned enterprise, SCL had made impressive strides. It was also engaged in R&D, working on more advanced semiconductors. However, under mysterious circumstances, on 7th February 1989, an unexplained fire at the SCL complex destroyed the facility's main production line. More importantly, that fire scorched the vision of self-sufficiency in chip production for India for decades. The cause of the fire was never officially determined, but theories abound. Some attribute it to an accident, while others suspect sabotage. A key finding - that the fire had ignited at multiple points simultaneously - lent weight to the sabotage theory. The blaze caused losses estimated at Rs. 750 million (or $8.46 million) in 1989. But the true cost that India would pay would be known decades later. Our dependence on the outside world for semiconductors was complete. In 2024, India imported semiconductor chips worth $20 billion, with imports which were rising 18% annually. However, the Government recognized the scale of the problem and we started work in earnest. In 2022, India's quest for mass-produced, indigenous chips finally gained momentum with the launch of the India Semiconductor Mission. By August 2025, the Government of India had approved 10 projects with investments worth Rs 1.60 lakh crore (USD 18.04 bn) across six States. Last month, on 2nd September 2025, India launched its first indigenously

designed and manufactured microchip, the 32-bit Vikram processor, at the Semicon India 2025 conference. Developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)'s Semiconductor Laboratory, this space-qualified chip represents a significant step towards India's goal of semiconductor self-reliance, with potential applications in aerospace, defence, and other high-reliability sectors. This process will accelerate in the months and years ahead.

4. India is also now working on a mission mode when it comes to AI in general. India's AI Mission, launched in March 2024, is to position India as a global leader in AI by fostering an indigenous ecosystem, democratizing access to computing resources and data, developing AI talent, supporting AI startups with risk capital, promoting socially impactful AI projects, and ensuring ethical development and usage. The mission's pillars include the IndiaAI Compute Capacity, IndiaAI Innovation Centre, IndiaAI Datasets Platform, IndiaAI Application Development, IndiaAI FutureSkills, IndiaAI Startup Financing, and Safe & Trusted AI.

5. It's a 360° effort. India's *"push for rare earth minerals"* involves a multi-pronged strategy to achieve self-sufficiency, driven by the need to secure critical resources for its clean energy and defence sectors and to reduce dependence on other countries. Key elements of this strategy include: domestic resource exploration, establishing manufacturing capabilities for rare earth permanent magnets, securing global supply chains through diplomatic engagements (engaging in strategic partnerships to secure alternative sources from countries like Brazil, Argentina, and Australia), multilateral partnerships, and implementing policy support like incentives and duty reductions.

6. I have attempted to give an overview of how the challenge of AI is being tackled in India. We will, of course, have more opportunity to discuss some of these issues during the panel discussion. I am also delighted to see my compatriot, Mr. Pranjal Sharma, deliver the Keynote Address on *"Developing the High-Tech Manufacturing Cluster – the India Experience"*. Also, I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that India will be hosting the AI Impact Summit from 19-20 February 2026 in New Delhi.

7. Wishing you all very productive discussions and fruitful sessions during the Armenia Engineering Week!

Thank you!
Namaskar!