



NEWS

AFS CEO: Bahrain's cashless society goal will take 'at least two years'

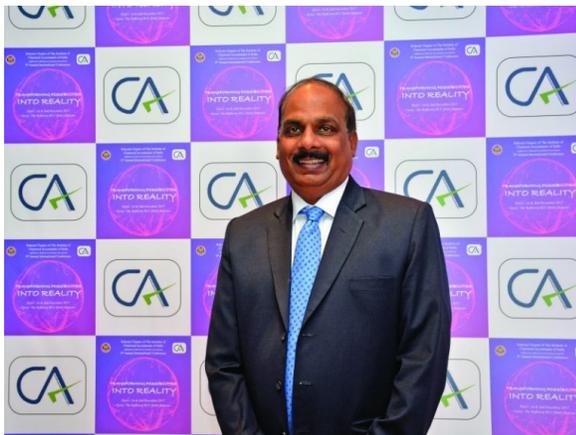


GLESNI HOLLAND

5 DAYS AGO

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Bahrain's digital economy and near-cashless society could be a reality within the next two years, according to Arab Financial Services CEO, B. Chandrasekhar.



For Bahrain to own its digital economy and become cashless, "we need a proper

ecosystem that will have a network with end-to-end digitisation,” said B. Chandrasekhar.

Speaking at the BCICAI Conference earlier this week, Chandrasekhar told delegates that the Kingdom is making every effort to make e-salaries mandatory and legal across all levels. However, he said that the next 12 months will be crucial if financial institutions wish to complete the eKYC procedures to ensure security of the system.

“For Bahrain to own its digital economy, we need a proper ecosystem that will have a network with end-to-end digitisation – from Central Bank to local banks to telcos, money transfer entities and merchants all the way to consumers. I think that will take at least two years more for Bahrain, even though we have a robust beginning,” he said.

Chandrasekhar added the CBB had started the process of starting a digital economy in Bahrain with the creation of a ‘regulatory sandbox’, which provides an opportunity for fintech businesses around the world to expand and thrive in the Gulf, and strengthens Bahrain’s position as a fintech and financial services hub in the GCC.

The framework provides a virtual space for companies to test their technology-based innovative solutions, and is open to

existing CBB licensees and other local and foreign firms. The testing duration is nine months, with a maximum extension of three months.

“The biggest challenge would be to get everybody into the financial system,” said Chandrasekhar. “There are already 1000 outlets ranging from supermarkets to petrol stations in Bahrain which accept digital payment via mobile phones.”

The two-day conference concluded on Saturday, and “was very well attended” according to BCICAI chairperson CA Uday Shanbhag. “It was also an important step towards making chartered accountants in Bahrain stay in touch with the swiftly changing professional climate in both the Kingdom and India,” he added.



#Arab Financial Services #B. Chandrasekhar
#bahrain #banking and finance
#BCICAI Conference #CA Uday Shanbhag
#cashless #CBB #digital payments
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