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'Never realised 90% immigration staff was women...' -Nishith Desai lists his takeaways from FII8 Riyadh Conference 2024 | ET Now Exclusive

In an exclusive conversation with Nikunj Dalmia, Managing Editor of ET NOW & ET NOW Swadesh, Nishith Desai spoke about his experience and views from the Future Investment Initiative (FII) Summit in Riyadh.



Nishith Desai spoke about his experience and views from the FII Summit in Riyadh. (Image: ET NOW Digital)

ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS In an exclusive conversation with Nikunj Dalmia, Managing Editor of ET NOW & ET NOW Swadesh, Nishith Desai spoke about his experience and views from the Future Investment Initiative (FII) Summit in Riyadh. The summit was an opportunity to get a global view on future investments and trends which is critical for their research on strategic, legal, tax and ethical issues. The conversation focused on the importance of the summit and the evolving role of law.

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When asked why he attended the FII, Desai said the event was diverse and forward thinking. "It resonates with the ethos of the firm, the purpose of the firm. Because apart from being the usual complex, you know, with your transactions, we also shape the future of law", he added.

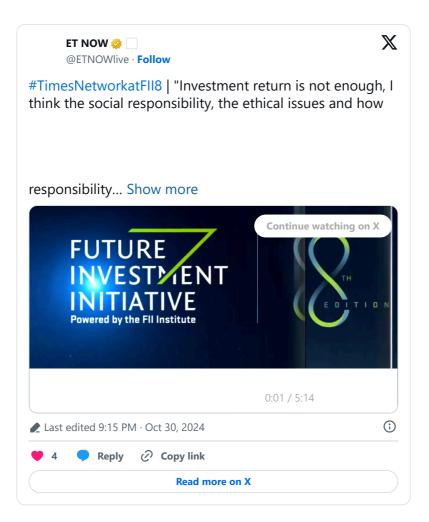
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Observations on Saudi Arabia

Desai was surprised and impressed by what he saw in Saudi Arabia, especially women in the workforce. "When I landed here, I never realized that 90% of this immigration staff was women. Our impression about Saudi is that the women are suppressed... but the amount of participation I saw of women here was amazing," he said. This was a challenge to our common perception and shows the country is moving forward.

Global Trends and Future Investments

The conversation also touched upon the global trends and the role of technology in shaping the future. Desai said, "We think India is the youngest nation in the world. African average population 19 years, and therefore, that is going to become the next big wave." He emphasized the potential of Indian technologies to contribute to Africa and the need to stay informed about global developments.



The Evolving Role of Lawyers

Desai spoke about how the law is changing with AI. "Compliance is almost automated. Next 5, 7 years, the transactions, the deal making, the even the negotiations already being done experimental level by AI," he said. He said the role of lawyers will evolve from routine transactions and compliance to crisis management, strategic thinking and addressing ethical issues arising out of new technologies.

Key Takeaways from the Summit

Desai summarized his experience at the summit, "We are so obsessed with Davos... but I think one takeaway that we need to know more about and we need to establish contacts with the people here in Saudi Arabia," he remarked. He was impressed with the hospitality and humility of the people he met and the investment and collaboration opportunities.

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