

Dream of NRIs: One district-one school

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With the firm belief that education is the backbone of any society's development, Asif Khan, a Dubai-based businessman with roots in Purvanchal, said that it was the diaspora's duty to give back to their motherland.

Khan is the director of Ivory Power Station Contracting LLC, Dubai. He was addressing a session called 'Purvanchal — the canvas of investments'. The other panellist was Vaibhav Laddha, director of LR Home. The session was moderated by Pankaj Gandhi Jaiswal, chairman of UP Development Forum and UP Diaspora Thinktank.

What Khan came up next caught the attention of all in the audience.

"I have given a proposal to the state government based on the idea of 'one district-one school'. The project envisions boarding schools for 600-700 children from rural and underprivileged backgrounds. All investment will be done by NRIs and NRIs from a particular district will be responsible for the school there," explained Khan.

A list of NRIs from various districts of UP has already been drawn up, he said. A management board to run the school will be prepared at the local level, he said. A host of NRIs based in UAE are already in the fray for the project, said Khan, prompting Jaiswal to say that "UAE was keenly looking at UP".

"This will be our way to pay back to our motherland and leave behind a legacy of good work," Khan said on an emotional note. He also said that this project took shape from thought to action only because the law and order and social situation in Purvanchal and all of UP was satisfactory. He was expecting to hear from the state government soon about the approval of his project.

Also stressing on the importance of education was Laddha, who said that anyone looking to invest in UP would look for security, seeking a safe place for their money.

Based in the US for two decades, Laddha recalled his earlier experiences when landing in Varanasi, he would have to commute on kuccha roads for about four hours before reaching his house. Now, the journey takes an hour on a smooth road to reach Mirzapur, where the Laddha family supports various education and medical causes.

Laddha also mentioned the power crisis he had seen as a child and how in summer it would be unbearable to stay here. Now, he added, there was 24-hour power supply to his hometown and the entire region.

The discussion prompted the quick-witted Jaiswal to conclude that investors need '3 Ts' to be attracted to a potential project: security, connectivity and electricity.