

With strides in industrialisation, UP poised for rapid development

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At 230 million, Uttar Pradesh, if it were to be a separate country, would be the fifth most populous in the world after China, India, United States, and Indonesia.

With the population being mainly rural (with urbanization rate of 23%), UP primarily has an agrarian economy. Historically, the industrialization pattern has been skewed with the western region accounting for most of the industries.

However, a determined state government led by a dynamic and visionary Chief Minister is committed to making this long overdue correction and promoting industrialization across the state with policy, institutional and governance reforms.

With BJP making an impressive electoral victory and returning to power, it is time to declare '2022-2032 as UP's decade of rapid development' when the state will take major strides in health, education, a green revolution focused on central and eastern UP, agro-based industry to create large scale job opportunities for rural youth, and developing UP for labor-intensive manufacturing and extensive utilization of ICT tools and platforms for smart developmental interventions.

In future, agriculture will continue to be the mainstay of the economy, wherein agriculture-led growth should be the main area of focus; under which, some of the key objectives may be productivity improvements.

While western UP did benefit from green revolution technologies, central and eastern UP needs some catching up. Whether it is grain, potatoes, oilseeds, sugarcane, or pulses, eastern UP produces much less (Kg/ha) relative to western UP.

This presents a challenge as well as an opportunity for eas-



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tern UP to catch up. Increased and sustained investment is needed in agricultural research and development, to develop new technologies, management systems, and varieties designed for higher yields or resistance to disease, drought, and pests.

What is likely to be beneficial for UP's agricultural sector is to engage some of India's leading agricultural scientists to help develop HYV seeds given the soil quality, rainfall levels and temperature of central and eastern regions of UP.

BY INVITATION

Related to agriculture is the idea of promoting agro-based industries—UP's growth strategy should include substantially increased production of higher value cash crops and more food-processing that would lead to value-addition and off-farm employment.

Creating large scale jobs off the farm is key. Agro-based industries can be described as industries that add value to agricultural raw materials, both food and non-food, through their processing into marketable, usable, or edible products, while enhancing the income and profitability of producers.

Agro-based industries may be any set of production activities that involve all post-har-

vest operations of crops from farm to market, such as, cleaning, grading, packaging, storage, transportation, and marketing. It may also include processing of agricultural, horticultural, and forestry products.

The development of agro-based industries can help realize linkages or inter-relationships between industry and agriculture. If agro-based industries are promoted, it will help reduce regional imbalances, and generate employment for rural masses. Rural areas could become large platforms for milk processing units and dairy-based industries.

A new model of ICT-led development can, with the help of new IT-based tools and a solid ICT strategy, spur UP's rural development.

This is motivated by two essential facts. First, most of the poor still live in rural areas, even as the population becomes increasingly urban. Second, IT technologies are suited to offer new approaches to rural-based development.

In the years and the decade ahead, UP seems to be poised for rapid development. Undoubtedly, the scale of the challenge is immense, but so is the capacity.

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