

'Good roads, expressways giving impetus to biz & development'

Termining the network of good roads as the backbone of business, cabinet minister for industries and infrastructure development, **Nand Gopal Gupta Nandi**, says that expressways will have a positive impact on UP's economy. In an interview with **Shailvee Sharda**, he said UP has emerged as the state of expressways. Excerpts:

Why do you call the road network the backbone of business?

■ I have been a businessman myself and have faced the problem first hand. If transportation is not good, the proportion of wastage goes up. It is about 30% in agriculture products and vegetables, and lesser in other things. The problem of transportation can be blamed for 8-10% of wastage.

UP has emerged as the state of expressways. Where will it take the state's economy?

■ In the last few years, the road network in the state, particularly the expressways, has improved drastically. We have six functional and seven

expressways in the making. Once all the expressways take shape, especially the Ganga Expressway, the inter- and intra-state movement will gain pace which will surely reflect on our economy. The story of change has begun in Bundelkhand and Purvanchal regions which were known for poverty, joblessness and crime. The government is not just building roads, it has visualized development. Business clusters are being developed while companies are investing in defence corridor.

The state has pledged to become a trillion dollar economy.

Opponents term the dream unrealistic.

What do you think?

■ Previous governments totally ignored the department before BJP took charge in 2017. My predecessor

streamlined a lot of things between 2017 and 2022, an industry-friendly work culture required finetuning. At times, officials of one authority hid themselves behind the other in the bigger jigsaw puzzle of 11 different units. I relied on my habit of dealing with every piece of the puzzle in isolation so that it adds value to the big picture. I resorted to reverse planning which involves keeping a time bound goal constant.

There is no dearth of sick units in the state. What is the state doing to get rid of the baggage?

■ We are dealing with this on a case-to-case basis. While some units have huge land assets, others have machines which can be revamped. Several policy changes have been made to create a land bank from sick units to trigger a churning, bail out sick units and give way to startups.

The government is set to host a global investors' summit in January next year. What is your plan to attract investment from global players?

■ The new and improvised policy framework umbrella is on the anvil. A system has been formed to fast-track infrastructure schemes cleared by the Union

government and by our development authorities. We will accelerate the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan besides building a logistics mechanism. Alongside, speed and efficiency through single window system in translating ideas into action is driving the workforce. Impetus is being given to feedback against our workflow from industry players will be used to improve service delivery. The message is that we are open to anyone willing to invest, provided the idea is workable and benefits people. To create buzz around UP, the government will hold roadshows and engage in-scale branding, besides collaborating with partner countries. Some have already come onboard.

Q & A

