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Talking exclusively to BT, top bureaucrats of the UP government open up on the government's robust plans to make the state into an economic powerhouse, from focus on IT/ITES to electronics manufacturing, to many more.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath along with UP Deputy Chief Ministers K.P. Maurya & Brajesh Pathak, and UP BJP President Swatantra Dev Singh.

Yogi Adityanath, the chief minister of India's most populous state of Uttar Pradesh, has completed over 100 days of being at the helm. With the world battling economic uncertainty and unpredictability, UP's policymakers, however, are busy charting out the way for the state to cross the milestone of having an economy worth \$1 trillion. Currently, the state's economy is of \$0.254 trillion, with agriculture constituting 20-22 per cent share of the pie, industry having 18-20 per cent share, and services sector garnering a neat 45-50 per cent share.

However, taking the state to a \$1 trillion dollar economy is no simple feat. According to experts and economists, investments, which is the key focus area of the government, alone is not going to make any difference in the state. Instead, they argue that every sector and every sphere of the economy has to be given equal attention. One economist pointed out that to reach the target of \$1 trillion, the state needs to have an annual growth rate of over 30 per cent, which is a Herculean task to achieve in the face of economic slowdown. But the state is confident of achieving this goal, riding on the back of reforms and policy initiatives taken by the government.

Arvind Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary, Infrastructure & Industrial Development, who is steering the crucial task of attracting investment and industries in UP, in an exclusive conversation with Business Today, said, "In [the] last 100 days, a lot has been done to stride on the path of achieving \$1 trillion dream, 1406 projects worth Rs 80,224 crore are in the pipeline and that will be [a] massive investment in the state."

Similarly, Alok Kumar, planning secretary, has been allocated the task to steer the state towards its \$1 trillion economy dream. Kumar told BT that the state is revisiting all old policies and is, in fact, trying to focus on the state's inherent strength.

"We are revisiting all policies of the past and are focusing on the inherent strength of the state. For example, textile is one the potential sectors and the state has inherent strength in it, so we are coming up with textile policy very soon."

Arvind Kumar, while talking about the progress of work in the last 100 days, points out: "We are going very big on infrastructure development, some examples are 296 km long Bundelkhand Expressway, which is completed and is going to be inaugurated by PM in second week of July, and which connects Chitrakoot, Banda, Mahoba, Jalaun, Oraiya, etc. The work of Ganga Expressway is also going on at a rapid speed."

Clarifying the objective, Arvind Kumar said, "We are focusing on the development of industrial cluster along with expressways, and for this we have hired consultants. Through these expressways, we are looking for regional growth of Purvanchal and Bundelkhand region and harness potential of these areas."

To give a push to investment in several sectors, the parks are being developed at a break-neck speed.

"Apparel Park, Toy Park, Medical Devices Park, are [all] being built under the Yamuna Expressway Investment Development Authority." Adding more to this, Arvind Kumar said, "Infrastructure work has been speeded up, the parks will start taking shape and as construction has commenced, very soon we will be able to allot land."

The state is also looking seriously at the issue of digitisation. The government has distributed over 11 lakh smartphone and tablets, Arvind Kumar pointed out. He also said that one of the big achievements of the government has been its focus in making UP into a data centre hub.

"Under the data centre policy, we have issued four letters of comforts with investment of Rs 16,147 crore coming into the state. Now these are big names, one is [a] Japanese company, also, Hiranandani is setting up data centre with investment of Rs 9000 crore, Adani is also making huge investment in this space and a smaller company Webworks India is investing Rs 197 crore for establishing data centre in the state. This kind of investment has a potential to generate over 4000 jobs. We have brought the first data centre policy and now UP is a data centre hub," Arvind Kumar added.

Currently, Uttar Pradesh is the state where 45 per cent of total mobile manufacturing is occurs. In a bid to provide fresh impetus to electronics manufacturing in the state, the cabinet approval has been given to setting up of 8 units, which is worth Rs 7325 crore.

"In Artificial Intelligence and machine language, a centre of excellence in IIT Kanpur is completed and ready for inauguration," Arvind Kumar said.

The top bureaucrat is of the opinion that in order for the government to achieve its dream of becoming an economy worth \$1 trillion, the state has chosen areas like electronic manufacturing, IT and ITES, along with the defense and the aerospace sector as key focus areas for the state to grow by leaps and bounds.

Moreover, as Alok Kumar explains, the state's policy now is trying to simplify all statutory regulations related to labour.

"Particularly, every process and policy related to labour laws or other statutory regulations is being simplified. We have already floated the tender for hiring the consultant who will prepare roadmap and will handhold us for achieving this \$1 trillion dream. 7 bidders have participated in it, [and] some of them are very big names. We have taken presentations and the roadmap should be ready by the end of year."

He added further that the government is targeting 10-12 per cent growth in the agriculture and allied sectors. Also, in tertiary and secondary sectors, the government is targeting a growth of 30-40 per cent.

"The state government has also appointed a nodal officer for every sector which will help in identifying potential, and formulating policy and strategy," Alok Kumar said.