

'We have achieved more than 100% of the target'

One of the top performers in the first 100 days of the Yogi 2.0 government, cabinet minister for industries and infrastructure department, **Nand Gopal Gupta, Nandi** feels proud to be hosting Prime Minister Narendra Modi twice in less than eight weeks. He spoke to **Shailvee Sharda** at length on the journey so far...

The industries and infrastructure department is driving UP's dream to become a \$1 trillion economy. What were the key challenges when you started?

■ Previous governments had totally ignored the department before BJP took charge of the state in 2017. While my predecessor streamlined a lot of things, an industry-friendly work culture required further fine-tuning. At times, officials of one authority hid themselves behind the other in the larger jig-saw puzzle of the department which is a complex structure of 1 different units. I relied on my old habit of seeing and dealing with every piece of the puzzle in isolation so that it adds value to the big picture. To make them work, I resorted to reverse planning which involves keeping a time-bound goal and then planning to achieve it.

What are some key achievements of your department?

■ The biggest achievement is that PM Narendra Modi came to UP for my department's event (the third ground breaking ceremony) in June and he is coming once again on July 16 (the launch of Bundelkhand Expressway). His presence speaks for the kind of work our department and its team has done. In terms of the goals set, we have been able to achieve more than 100% of what was listed.

Bundelkhand Expressway is set for launch. Which UPEIDA projects are coming up next?

■ As on date, seven expressway projects are in different stages of work. UP is home to 38% of the expressways (in terms of kilometres) in the country. However, the 594-kilometre Ganga Expressway promises to be a game-changer. So, that tops the priority chart. We have already got clearance from the Union ministry of environment and forest.

UP's new industrial development policy is on the anvil? What are some of the salient features?

■ Feedback from the investors in different sectors and our learnings over the past five years have been put together to eliminate the loopholes that existed in the previous draft. For example, in some cases, availing incentives and subsidies was impossible. The loose ends have been tightened. The state is now looking forward to developing industrial clusters along the expressways and arrangements to attract investment in a systematic way are being made. Inputs from policy documents of states like Telangana, Gujarat and even some foreign countries have also been taken. But the bottom line is that UP means business and 100% efforts the moment any investor shows interest.

The state is also coming up with sector-specific policies? What possible advantages will it bring?

■ After consultation with experts and entrepreneurs, the department is looking at solving their problems through a proper policy framework. It aims to deliver ease of doing

business. For instance, we have come up with a new sub-divisional policy for UP State Industrial Development Authority. The previously existing 25-year-old format has been scrapped and provisions for re-using the land asset for industrial development has been allowed in a restricted way. This will help old sick units come out of the debt-rule and pave way for starting of new industrial projects which will fuel the MSME sector which is the largest employer in UP after agriculture. Likewise, UP has a proper data centre policy in place, the market of which is growing faster than we can anticipate.

UP is eying the top slot in ease of doing business rankings. What is the progress on this count?

■ Ease of doing business rankings cannot be seen in isolation. It is a cumulative outcome of scores of steps taken. Of the 189 parameters identified for improvement, 21 have already been complied with. The remaining will be achieved well before the deadline of October 31, 2022.

