

'Exports, per capita income doubled in five yrs, UP will achieve \$1 trillion goal by 2027'

UP chief minister **Yogi Adityanath** is a man on a mission to achieve a trillion dollar economy goal for UP by 2027. After identifying nine sectors to focus on, he has put a dedicated team to chase the dream. In a free-wheeling interview with **TOI's Pravin Kumar**, he shared his plans and vision...

The state's current GDP is ₹20 lakh crore (approx. 250 billion dollars) and it needs to cross ₹80 lakh crore to meet the target of USD 1 trillion by 2027. Going by the current growth rate, the government is staring at a stiff challenge. How do you propose to do this?

■ The per capita income of Uttar Pradesh has grown almost 100% in the past 5-6 years. This even though almost three years of this duration were consumed by Covid. In the previous financial year, our Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) grew by over 20%, which is a positive step towards our goal. And now that we have identified the sectors to focus on – four core and five enabling – I think we are well on target. It should be achieved in the remaining period.

Which are the sectors where UP is currently doing well?

■ We have made tremendous progress in terms of infrastructure. Roads, expressways, air and waterways, all have seen unprecedented growth in the past six years. The connectivity has pushed economic activities in a big way. UP is developing into a hub of multi-modal transport. Combined with the newly developed freight corridors, the state will establish itself as an export hub.

Besides, the agriculture and MSME sectors are doing extremely well. At present, UP is exporting agri products worth ₹19,000 crore per year. We will double it next year. We recently sent Landga mangoes and green chillies to Dubai and Doha. UP government is giving subsidy of 15% on cargo facility and the eastern region has already emerged as an agri export hub sending fresh vegetables to London via New Delhi and fresh mangoes to Dubai and London. Besides, fresh vegetables from Mirzapur, Ballia and other districts are being sent directly to Dubai, regional rice to Qatar and black rice to Australia.

The state has enormous potential. It's probably the only state in the country where 85-90% land is irrigated. Farmers are confident of the government support that they would be protected from the vagaries of weather. Over 2.61 crore farmers of the state are covered under the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, which comes as an additional help to them. It's another way of employment generation.

We have 96 lakh MSME units running in the state at present. Our One District One Product (ODOP) scheme is linked to the MSME sector, which has played a key role in over 100% growth in our overall export in the past five years. Our total export was approximately worth ₹86,000 crore, which has grown to ₹1.75 lakh crore now.

Besides, rapid urbanisation has opened new doors to investment. Service sector has seen exponential growth. The arrival of 10 crore tourists in Varanasi, and 7 crore in Mathura-Vrindavan has given a fillip to the local trade. It has been made possible only because vastly improved facilities.

AREN'T THE FREEBIES OFFERED BY THE GOVERNMENT – FREE RATION TO NEARLY 15 CRORE PEOPLE IN THE STATE, SUBSIDISED HOUSES, VARIOUS KINDS OF PENSIONS – AN IMPEDIMENT TO THE STATE'S '1 TRILLION DOLLAR' MARCH?

■ It's a misconception. These supports that the government extends to poor people help those with little resources become self-reliant. With additional money to spend, then such people take part in economic activities and drive the economy. They may not be aware of these terms, but this is what they do (*Unke paas bhasha nahin hai par bhaav hai*). We have given houses to nearly 54 lakh people, and are giving free ration to nearly 15 crore beneficiaries. So, the money that these persons would have spent on houses or ration is now being used for pursuing a business, opening a shop or even buying seeds and fertiliser.



Photos: Manoj Chhabra

WHAT CHANGES HAVE BEEN BROUGHT IN THE LABOUR LAWS?

■ Earlier, we had laws which would pit labourers against industry. But can labourers survive without industry? What will happen to them if industries get shut? A section, out of vested interest, had painted this anti-labour picture of industries. So, we changed certain laws to ensure that while on one hand interests of labourers are safe-guarded, on the other hand, reforms are not stopped. Besides, it ensures that workers have the freedom of working hours and they get benefits. All these reforms were welcomed by both industry and the workforce.

regions. Funds are being allocated for their long-term needs. Studies are being done to identify their further needs. Our action plan would be based on that.

When is the first ground-breaking ceremony scheduled to be held? You have set a target of grounding projects worth ₹10 lakh crore. Is availability of land an issue?

■ We are preparing for this. There is no shortage of land. In fact, we have identified a huge tract between Kanpur and Jhansi and are

planning to develop a new industrial development zone on the pattern of Noida. It will have smooth connectivity to other parts of the state and the country through Bundelkhand Expressway and two link expressways, and give a great impetus to development activities in the entire Bundelkhand.

What are the 25 sectoral policies that have been made or tweaked?

■ Along with broader policies for key areas, like industrial development, logistics, textile, pharmaceuticals, pharma and IT-ITES, we have developed customised policies to facilitate industries like defence and aerospace. We have single-window approval for new proposals. Apart from this, we have a policy to allow any new entrepreneur to start operations without any approval with a 1,000-day window to get all clearances.

You have schemes like ODOP, CM Fellows etc to your credit. Does the government have another pathbreaking idea up its sleeve to give the much-needed push to the economy?

■ We are going to push our PM-CM Internship Scheme in a big way. It will provide employment opportunities to over 7.5 lakh youths of the state, who will get exposure to the industry and will get a stipend for the duration of their internship in both public and private sectors. The amount would be shared by the government and the establishment concerned. Besides, our Tablet-Smartphone scheme would link over 2 crore youth to new technology and make them more employable.

Temple will be ready for January launch but is Ayodhya ready to handle the rush?

■ Development works are being carried out on a war-footing. The temple town would be ready well in time. Its international airport would be operationalised much before the inauguration of the temple.

What's the status of Noida Film City?

■ Technology is changing fast and we are working to develop a place which addresses all challenges. I have instructed officials to hold sessions with directors, producers and actors to understand their concerns and incorporate their suggestions. Once it comes up, professionals would get all facilities to make films, serials and reality shows under one roof.

UP has emerged as an 'Expressway Pradesh'. When will we have the

complete network ready?

■ Most of these, including the Ganga Expressway connecting Meerut and Prayagraj, would be ready before Kumbh 2025.

UP has witnessed unprecedented demand for power – from 11,500 MW to 28,000 MW in 10 years. How will the government meet this challenge? There are complaints of a power crisis.

■ There is no crisis. We have adequate power. Sometimes planning and distribution is an issue which we are addressing.

While many other states are following the 'Bulldozer Model' of enforcing law and order, recently a judge of Calcutta high court made this unconventional remark to borrow 'Yogi's Bulldozer' to demolish encroachment.

■ Whatever actions we have taken are as per law. We have razed constructions which were illegally raised. In none of the cases, our actions have been challenged in a court of law.

We have been hearing reports about possible expansion of your ministry which has vacancies. Will newly inducted allies be accommodated?

■ It will be known soon.

What impact will the opposition alliance INDIA have in 2024 LS polls? SP, Cong, RLD are coming together in UP.

■ They have been together in the past several elections. Nothing happened then, nothing will happen now.

Neighbouring CM Nitish Kumar is planning to contest from UP.

■ *Koi bhi aa jaye* (whosoever comes). Nothing will change.

UP has an onerous responsibility for BJP to pull it through in the 2024 LS polls. Even if the party does better in UP, what about other states? Where will the numbers come from?

■ The opposition alliance is without a leader. It's a boat without a sailor and would meet the fate such a vessel is destined to. BJP and allies have Modi ji as their leader and our PM has no parallel. When it comes to Lok Sabha elections, Modi ji is the number one choice for the entire country.

Target \$1 Trillion

JOIN UP'S TRILLION DOLLAR JOURNEY

If you have a plan or even an idea that can boost Uttar Pradesh in the quest to take its economy to the target of \$1 Trillion, mail it to us, along with your contact details at toilucknow@gmail.com

Which sectors require intervention from the government? Where do you see the most scope for improvement?

■ All the identified sectors are on the job. We are trying our best to use new technologies to produce best results. Speed is the key. We will use single-window system as far as possible to achieve it.

UP's aspirational districts have done well in the past five years. Now the same model is being replicated in 'aspirational blocks'. How does this help?

■ In 2018, NITI Aayog launched the aspirational districts programme to

monitor the growth of 112 districts of the country which had shown retarded growth on key social-economic indicators. Five broad areas – medical and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion & skill development and basic infrastructure – were identified to monitor their development and rank them on the basis of their progress. Eight UP districts made it to the list – Balrampur, Siddharthnagar, Sonbhadra, Chandauli, Fatehpur, Chitrakoot, Bahraich and Shravasti. In the beginning, all eight were below 100 out of 112 districts on socio-economic indicators. But we worked hard on these districts. For this, no extra funds were allocated, but already available funds and manpower were put to optimum use. Now in the latest ranking released by the NITI Aayog, five UP districts are in top 10 and all eight are in top 20.

The same model is being replicated in 100 blocks of UP. CM fellows have been placed in all these blocks to monitor the progress and everything is being supervised through a dashboard in Lucknow. All these efforts have raised the living standards of the people in these blocks and districts. An unprecedented number of people have come out of poverty. Recently, the NITI Aayog came out with data which showed UP had the maximum 5.5 crore people rising above multi-dimensional poverty in the past five years.

Regional imbalance has always been a nagging issue in the state. You have opened up Bundelkhand and Purvanchal for development by linking these areas with road and air connectivity. However, they still carry the weight of having been UP's most backward areas. How will you leverage these areas to meet the USD 1 trillion goal?

■ Bundelkhand and Purvanchal have an immense potential for development. We

YOU JUST ADVISED YOUR OFFICERS ABOUT VILLAGE MALLS? HOW FEASIBLE IS THE CONCEPT?

■ It will be another move to transform the village economy. We would link this concept of 'Vishwakarma Sankul' to our Vishwakarma Shram Samman, under which we provide tool-kit training to workers pursuing 17 traditional professions, like barbers, cobblers, ironsmith, goldsmith, mason, sweetmeat-maker, etc. In this 'sankul', or village mall, which could be set up in a large village or a cluster of small villages, they would be given space to open a small shop and display their products. It will not only enhance their earning but also give them a wider clientele. Recently a high-profile hair-dresser, who came to see me, told me that he gets ₹1,000 to ₹25,000 for a single haircut. Imagine, for the same work, a barber working beneath a tree gets just ₹20-30. But, if he enhances himself and sets up a small saloon, he can charge ₹100-150 or even more. Such transformations not only increase income but also free these professions from the shackles of caste. Now, you will see people from other castes taking to traditional caste-based professions. There is no dearth of employment opportunities, one only needs to know how to work hard.

have trained our special focus on these regions. Purvanchal Expressway and Bundelkhand Expressway have brought these two areas closer to the state and national capitals. We have special bodies to focus on development needs of these

