

'Investments through GIS will create 90L jobs'

'UP's Positive Image Set To Pay Dividends'

Claiming that UP is on the path of becoming 'Sarvaottam Pradesh' (best state) of India, industrial development minister **Nand Gopal Gupta Nandi** said that the proposed investment through UPGIS 2023 would create over 90 lakh employment opportunities in future. Speaking to **Shailvee Sharda** in the run up to the mega event, the minister said that the state is hosting India's biggest investor summit which will raise the bar for others. Excerpts:

Why do you call UPGIS the biggest investor summit in the country?

■ The scale at which the event is being organised is remarkable – be it in terms of the investments attracted or the kind of social impact it will create. So far, we have received over 18,500 proposals. The total worth of investments pledged to UP is over Rs 27 lakh crore which is way ahead of other states. These projects will create employment for over 90 lakh people. The kind of show being put up is grand. The summit venue sprawls around 50 acres of land while an equally big tent city has also been set up. Countries like Singapore, Japan, UAE, the Netherlands, UK, Italy and Australia have partnered with us while several international industry bodies are mobilising investments for the state.

What are the big investments promised for the state?

■ Our list has several big names like Ikea, ITC, Reliance, Adani group and Sanjeev Goenka group but the event has been able to bring about 360-degree development of the state. If the investment magnet, west UP, has attracted 45% projects, the

traditionally backward Bundelkhand has got 29% and Purvanchal has bagged 13% of the projects. For the first time, district level investment summits were also organised and places like Ghazipur (Rs 1,901 crore) and Unnao (Rs 738 crore) have been able to attract investments. The response from districts indicates that small businessmen in the state have embraced the fact that this is the time to dream big and spread wings. I can vouch for this because I am a businessman myself and understand their pulse.

Q & A

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The opposition is criticizing UP's efforts to attract investment. What is your message to them?

■ There was no dearth of potential in UP. The face of UP is changing because of the intent of our government. The predecessors believed in plundering the resources for their vested interest and to fill their coffers, while we are putting them to good use.

What has primarily worked for the state?

■ The opposition used to criticize Prime Minister Narendra Modi when he travelled to different countries and accused him of wasting public money. When we went to different countries, we leveraged the bond that our PM forged during his visits. The way Uttar Pradesh has changed under the leadership of CM Yogi Adityanath has created ripples across the world. The positive image and sentiment of UP created in the past five years is now set to pay dividends. UP has the best policy framework and is extending the most lucrative subsidies and incentives which is why we are calling UP as "New India's growth engine".

Commitments are one thing while action is another. Why do you think intent will translate into real investment?

■ There is no dearth of reason on this count. UP is witnessing an industrial revolution of sorts. We are home to the largest consumer base in the country. We cater to over 200 million people from nine neighbouring states. We offer world class connectivity – 38% of the expressways in India are in UP and we are the only state to have five international airports. There is zero tolerance to crime and policy-based governance. The process of land allotment has been fast-tracked and aligned with the GIS portal. We have the highest MSME base in UP (14.2%) while we are among the top five exporting and manufacturing states in India. Numbers also speak for us. UP decelerated at a lower rate than India and countries like Singapore and Thailand during the pandemic period. It remains an oasis of growth amid a slowing global economy. The list is long and attractive. What else would investors want?

