

Uttar Pradesh undergoing massive Infrastructural Transformation

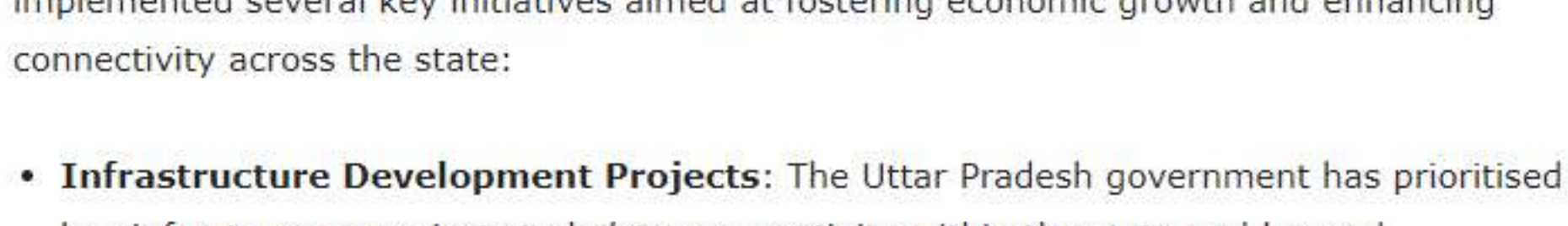
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UP government has placed a premium on enhancing infrastructure to amplify connectivity across the state and beyond. Noteworthy achievements such as the Purvanchal and Bundelkhand Expressways have ignited economic vitality in their respective areas. The recent budget also underscores the state's steadfast dedication to fostering infrastructure and driving economic advancement, shares **Anil Kumar Sagar, IAS**, Principal Secretary, Infrastructure and Industrial Development Department, Government of Uttar Pradesh in an exclusive interaction with **Ritika Srivastava and Abhineet Kumar of Elets News Network (ENN)**. Edited excerpts:

Given the recent emphasis on infrastructure development in Uttar Pradesh, could you outline the key initiatives undertaken by the Infrastructure and Industrial Development Department under your leadership to foster economic growth and enhance connectivity across the state?



The Infrastructure and Industrial Development Department in Uttar Pradesh has implemented several key initiatives aimed at fostering economic growth and enhancing connectivity across the state:

- Infrastructure Development Projects:** The Uttar Pradesh government has prioritised key infrastructure projects to bolster connectivity within the state and beyond. Significant developments include the completion of the Purvanchal Expressway and Bundelkhand Expressway, fostering economic growth in their respective regions. In the latest budget (2024-25), the government has allocated funds for vital projects: Rs 2057 crore for the Ganga Expressway, Rs 100 crore for Ayodhya's overall development, Rs 150 crore for the expansion of Maharishi Valmiki International Airport, and Rs 1750 crore for road development to religious sites. Additionally, allocations include Rs 500 crore for the Link Expressway, Rs 346 crore for the Agra Metro, Rs 400 crore for the Atal Industrial Infrastructure Mission, and a proposed Rs 1,150 crore for the Noida International Airport. These investments underscore the state's commitment to infrastructure enhancement and economic progress.
- Industrial Corridor Development:** Uttar Pradesh has been actively promoting industrial corridors such as the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) and the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC). These corridors serve as catalysts for industrial growth, attracting investments, and generating employment opportunities.
- Investment Promotion Initiatives:** The department has launched various policies and initiatives to attract domestic and foreign investments in key sectors such as manufacturing, IT, and renewable energy. The Ease of Doing Business reforms and single-window clearance mechanisms have streamlined bureaucratic processes, making Uttar Pradesh a more attractive destination for investors. Invest UP and Global Investors Summit.
- Smart Cities Mission:** Uttar Pradesh is actively participating in the Smart Cities Mission, which aims to develop modern infrastructure and improve the quality of life in urban areas. Several cities in the state are undergoing transformational projects in areas such as urban transportation, sanitation, and digital infrastructure. At India Smart Cities Conclave held in Indore last year, Uttar Pradesh bagged 10 awards, including the third prize in the "best state category". While Agra got the third position in the 'National Smart City Award' category, Varanasi secured first position in the 'City Awards' category among smart cities with a population of over 10 lakh in the North Zone.
- Industrial Parks and Clusters:** The department has been instrumental in the development of industrial parks and clusters across Uttar Pradesh, providing state-of-the-art infrastructure and amenities to businesses. These parks serve as hubs for manufacturing, research, and innovation, contributing to job creation and economic development.
- Focus on Renewable Energy:** Recognizing the importance of sustainable development, the department has encouraged the adoption of renewable energy technologies such as solar and wind power. Schemes like 'Har Ghar Solar' and 'Solar Cities' have helped in expansion of renewable adoption in the state. Uttar Pradesh has witnessed significant investments in renewable energy projects, which not only contribute to environmental conservation but also create new avenues for economic growth.
- Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** To leverage private sector expertise and resources, the department has actively promoted PPP models for infrastructure development. Collaborations with private entities have enabled the implementation of projects in a timely and cost-effective manner, while also ensuring quality and efficiency.

Uttar Pradesh has witnessed significant industrial growth in recent years. How does your department plan to address challenges such as infrastructure bottlenecks, land acquisition issues, and regulatory hurdles to ensure a conducive environment for industrial expansion and investment?

Uttar Pradesh has indeed experienced significant industrial growth in recent years, and addressing challenges such as infrastructure bottlenecks, land acquisition issues, and regulatory hurdles is paramount to sustaining this growth momentum.

To tackle infrastructure bottlenecks, our department is working diligently on upgrading and expanding transportation networks, including roads, highways, railways, and airports. We are investing in the development of industrial corridors and logistics parks to facilitate smooth movement of goods and services, thereby reducing transportation costs and enhancing connectivity.

Regarding land acquisition issues, we are implementing transparent and efficient processes to streamline land acquisition for industrial purposes. We are leveraging digital platforms to simplify land acquisition procedures, minimise bureaucratic delays, and ensure fair compensation to landowners.

Furthermore, we recognize the importance of addressing regulatory hurdles to foster a business-friendly environment. Our department is actively engaging with stakeholders to identify regulatory bottlenecks and streamline procedures. We are committed to simplifying regulatory frameworks, reducing bureaucratic red tape, and promoting ease of doing business in Uttar Pradesh.

In addition, we are proactively engaging with investors, both domestic and international, to understand their concerns and requirements. We are offering incentives and concessions to attract investments across various sectors, including manufacturing, technology, and infrastructure.

Moreover, we are focusing on skill development initiatives to equip the workforce with the necessary skills required by industries. Through vocational training programs and collaboration with educational institutions, we aim to create a skilled workforce that meets the demands of the evolving industrial landscape.

With the introduction of policies like the Uttar Pradesh Industrial Investment and Employment Promotion Policy, how do you envision attracting both domestic and foreign investments to the state, and what measures are being taken to promote ease of doing business and ensure timely approvals for industrial projects?

The Uttar Pradesh Industrial Investment and Employment Promotion Policy plays a pivotal role in attracting both domestic and foreign investments to the state by providing a conducive environment for business growth. Through this policy, Uttar Pradesh aims to capitalise on its vast potential, abundant resources, and strategic location to become a preferred investment destination.

To attract domestic investments, the Uttar Pradesh government has been focusing on various sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, infrastructure, and services. Recent initiatives like the establishment of industrial parks, investment summits, and sector-specific policies have been instrumental in encouraging domestic investors to set up businesses in the state.

Furthermore, the government has been actively engaging with foreign investors through roadshows, seminars, and trade delegations to showcase the investment opportunities available in Uttar Pradesh. The state's proactive approach in reaching out to international investors and addressing their concerns has helped in building confidence and attracting foreign capital.

In terms of promoting ease of doing business, Uttar Pradesh has implemented several reforms to streamline bureaucratic processes, reduce regulatory burdens, and enhance transparency. Initiatives such as single-window clearances, online application systems, and dedicated support teams for investors have been introduced to simplify procedures and facilitate faster approvals for industrial projects.

Additionally, the government has established specialised agencies and task forces to address investment-related issues promptly and ensure timely resolution of grievances. By promoting a business-friendly environment and fostering a culture of entrepreneurship, Uttar Pradesh aims to unleash its economic potential and drive sustainable growth in the years to come.

In light of the government's focus on sustainable development and environmental conservation, what strategies does your department employ to balance the need for industrial expansion with environmental protection, particularly in ecologically sensitive regions of Uttar Pradesh?

In Uttar Pradesh, the government has implemented a series of strategies to balance industrial expansion with environmental protection, especially in ecologically sensitive regions. Here are some of the key approaches:

- Promotion of Green Industries:** The Uttar Pradesh government has been actively promoting green industries that prioritise sustainable practices and minimise environmental impact. Through incentives, subsidies, and regulatory support, the government encourages industries to adopt ecofriendly technologies and practices.
- Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs):** Before granting approval for industrial projects, the government mandates comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessments to evaluate the potential environmental consequences. This process helps identify risks and ensures that necessary mitigation measures are incorporated into project plans.
- Strict Enforcement of Environmental Regulations:** Uttar Pradesh has strengthened its enforcement of environmental regulations to hold industries accountable for compliance with pollution control norms and emission standards. Regular inspections and monitoring mechanisms help prevent environmental degradation and ensure that industries operate responsibly.
- Promotion of Clean Technologies:** The government encourages the adoption of clean and renewable technologies across industries to reduce carbon emissions and minimise ecological footprint. Initiatives such as promoting solar power, energyefficient manufacturing processes, and waste recycling contribute to sustainable industrial growth.
- Conservation of Ecologically Sensitive Areas:** Uttar Pradesh prioritises the conservation of ecologically sensitive regions by implementing strict zoning regulations and protected area management policies. This includes safeguarding forests, wetlands, and biodiversity-rich areas from industrial encroachment and unsustainable development practices.
- Community Engagement and Awareness:** The government actively engages local communities and stakeholders in decision-making processes related to industrial development and environmental conservation. Through awareness campaigns, education programs, and public consultations, efforts are made to foster environmental stewardship and ensure that community concerns are addressed.
- Investment in Green Infrastructure:** Uttar Pradesh is investing in green infrastructure projects such as urban parks, green belts, and water conservation initiatives to enhance environmental resilience and mitigate the impacts of industrialization on ecosystems and natural resources.

Data suggests that UP faces significant challenges in terms of infrastructure quality, particularly in the rural areas. How does your department plan to bridge the urban-rural infrastructure divide and ensure equitable access to essential services such as electricity, water supply, and transportation?

The Uttar Pradesh government has recognized the critical need to bridge the urban-rural infrastructure gap and ensure equitable access to essential services across the state. To address these challenges, several key initiatives and policies have been implemented:

- Integrated Infrastructure Development Programs:** The government has initiated integrated infrastructure development programs specifically tailored to rural areas. These programs aim to improve the quality of roads, electricity, water supply, and transportation networks in rural regions.
- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY):** Under PMAY, the Uttar Pradesh government is committed to providing affordable housing to all citizens, including those in rural areas. This initiative not only addresses housing needs but also contributes to overall infrastructure development in rural communities.
- Rural Electrification:** The state government has been actively working on rural electrification projects to ensure that every household has access to electricity. Schemes like the "Saubhagya Yojana" aim to provide electricity connections to all rural households, thus improving the overall quality of life and fostering economic development.
- Water Supply and Sanitation:** The government has launched various water supply and sanitation projects aimed at improving access to clean drinking water and sanitation facilities in rural areas. Initiatives like the Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) are instrumental in promoting cleanliness and hygiene in villages.

Our multi-faceted approach to infrastructure development underscores our commitment to ensuring equitable access to essential services in rural areas.