

'India known as best place to invest and manufacture in'

The National Democratic Alliance-led government's push towards Make in India over the past decade has resulted in the creation of jobs, substantial investments, and promises to make India self-reliant, Commerce and Industry Minister **PIYUSH GOYAL** tells Shreya Nandi in a telephonic interview. Edited excerpts:

What, according to you, has been the biggest achievement of the Make in India initiative?

I think India is today recognised worldwide as the best place to invest in and manufacture. We are finding that across sectors, wherever we go in the world, companies want to have a manufacturing presence in India. They want to make in India for the large domestic market and their world markets. The programme has resonated across the globe as one of the most successful initiatives of the Narendra Modi government that has resulted in the creation of massive numbers of jobs, huge amounts of investments, both domestic and international, and promises to make India self-reliant and a big exporter of goods and services.

Going ahead, do we see any more steps towards the Make in India initiative? Since we are in the process of negotiating more free-trade agreements (FTAs), what is the road ahead for protective tariffs and Make in India?

As far as India's Make in India journey is concerned, it has been full of several measures, whether it is the effort towards ease of doing business, where our improvements have been significant, whether it is our effort to promote high-quality production through the introduction of quality control orders, our effort to promote manufacturing through the PLI schemes, to reduce the compliance burden for industry and decriminalise laws that were

hindering manufacturing, offering a conducive business climate or strengthening the macroeconomic fundamentals. We have taken several steps to promote Make in India.

You recognise that the One Nation, One Tax, goods and services tax, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, the strong foreign exchange reserves, and lower interest rates, thanks to the strong macroeconomic fundamentals of the economy, have all happened only after the Modi government came to power.

These successes have led to manufacturing, creating jobs in the country, and meeting the growing demand for goods in an economy that has grown by 90 per cent in 10 years, whereas the world economy grew by only 35 per cent.

As the Prime Minister said, we will work at three times the speed and put in three times more effort for much better outcomes. We are committed to further reducing the compliance burden and making it easy to do

business in India. We will continue to keep the economic fundamentals strong, which will attract larger investments in manufacturing, and our effort to build good relations with the developed countries is in the direction of encouraging increased manufacturing in India to create jobs and economic activity.

Make in India's objective has been to promote India as the most preferred global manufacturing destination and the PLI scheme has been a



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major step. Are you satisfied with the outcome?

PLI has been a massive success in all sectors. In some sectors, you can see the results faster because they are less capital-intensive or faster to set up. Some take a longer period because of their intrinsic nature of high capital expenditure (capex) and long gestation periods. If you see the case of specialty steel, obviously it will take a longer time to invest. But if you look at white goods, for example, in the PLI scheme for air conditioners (ACs), we have seen that domestic value addition has grown to almost 50 per cent and is expected to go up to 80 per cent — faster than we had projected. ACs are now being made in India instead of being imported.

The same is true for mobile phones; we are the world's second-largest mobile phone manufacturer. The PLI scheme for food processing

and pharmaceuticals — the areas where the capex cycle is short, and results are quicker — has already shown very good success. Renewable energy equipment plants are coming up in a big way. I feel that PLI has been a big boost to manufacturing in India, and we can hope to see a lot of activity and job creation in the days to come.

Are the teething issues related to the scheme resolved?

All PLI sector firms are monitored for progress by each department and by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade. We engage with them periodically, including an engagement that I had a few months ago with all of them, and the next one, which needs to happen shortly, where all the PLI sectors and all the PLI beneficiaries are invited to share their experiences and sort out any problems that they have.