We Aim for Uttar Pradesh IT Industry to Grow at CAGR of 30 Per Cent Annually

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▶ Take a moment and listen

Can you share the vision of the Uttar Pradesh Government for attracting the IT and Electronics industry to the state, and how you plan to position UP as a key hub for these sectors? The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Yogi Adityanath, has articulated a clear vision to transform the state into a one trillion dollar economy, with the Information Technology (IT) and Electronics sectors serving as key pillars of this ambitious goal. We have outlined a comprehensive roadmap to achieve this, recognizing the immense potential and rapid growth of these industries. Uttar Pradesh has long been a hub for the IT and IT-enabled services (ITeS) sectors, particularly in the Delhi NCR region, where numerous IT design companies have been operating for two decades. Our objective is to build on this strong foundation and further expand these sectors.

Additionally, we are developing an Electronics Manufacturing Cluster near Jewar, adjacent to the upcoming international airport. This strategic location has already attracted considerable interest from industries, particularly those in electronics manufacturing, keen to establish a presence here. Further bolstering this initiative, the Government of India has announced the establishment of two Industrial Parks in Uttar Pradesh, located in Agra and Prayagraj, both dedicated to the Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM) industry. As a clean and sustainable sector, this initiative enjoys robust support from the central government, positioning Uttar Pradesh as a key player in the national electronics manufacturing ecosystem.

Lucknow and Noida have established themselves as strong IT hubs, with a significant presence of IT companies. There have also been discussions about developing new hubs for IT and electronics in Uttar Pradesh. Can you elaborate on these plans and the potential locations that are being considered for expanding the state's IT and electronics ecosystem?

The Government of India is now focusing on developing Tier-II and Tier-III cities to boost employment and economic growth. Along with improving the ease of living, we are committed to enhancing the ease of doing business. Uttar Pradesh has launched an online portal to provide seamless services and regularly conducts meetings to ensure smooth processes for citizens and businesses alike. This focus will help cities like Lucknow, Kanpur, Prayagraj, and Varanasi grow further.

Lucknow, in particular, has a strong foundation with several engineering colleges, including IIIT Lucknow and AKTU, along with IIT Kanpur nearby. Our Hon'ble Chief Minister envisions transforming Lucknow into an AI city, and we have already begun the process, with a Request for Proposal (RFP) underway to select a consultant and form a detailed work plan. We're also in discussions to establish a Graphics Processing Unit (GPU) data centre in Lucknow and are actively promoting AI-based start-ups.

Uttar Pradesh has developed a startup policy to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in the state. Could you elaborate on the key aspects of this policy and how it supports startups?

Uttar Pradesh is home to over 10,000 startups registered with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), many of which have also registered under the UP Startup Policy. Introduced in 2022, the UP Startup Policy has since been refined to streamline the process of providing incentives to startups. Our focus remains on fostering the growth of even more startups in the coming years.

To support this ecosystem, we have established Centres of Excellence (CoEs) across various sectors and are actively working to create additional ones, recognizing their crucial role in nurturing innovation. Currently, Uttar Pradesh hosts approximately eight CoEs, and we aim to increase this number, drawing inspiration from states like Karnataka, which has over 20 such centres. We are also in the process of reviewing several proposals for new CoEs and plan to approve them shortly. These CoEs will provide startups with the necessary support, from developing prototypes to offering sound business guidance.

Under the Digital India program, several initiatives have been launched to enhance governance across departments. Could you highlight some of the key initiatives taken by Uttar Pradesh that have contributed to this digital transformation?

One of the key initiatives in Uttar Pradesh has been the implementation of eOffice, which promotes digital work across all levels of government. Initially, many state-level officers were using eOffice, but our Hon'ble Chief Minister expanded this mandate to include district-level officers as well. Now, eOffice is operational across the state, including in all collector and divisional offices, ensuring that government processes are conducted online.

Additionally, we have the Nivesh Mitra portal, which provides over 400 online services to businesses, streamlining processes and improving ease of doing business. For citizens, we offer around 300 e-services, making essential services more accessible and efficient. These initiatives reflect the government's commitment to digital governance and improving service delivery for both citizens and businesses.

The Government of India has launched the BharatNet Project to enhance digital connectivity in Panchayats. Could you elaborate on this initiative and its significance for rural areas in Uttar Pradesh?

BharatNet, launched by the Government of India approximately ten years ago, has completed its first and second phases, resulting in nearly 90% of villages being connected. We are now in the process of implementing BharatNet Phase 3, which aims to extend cyber connectivity to the remaining villages and resolve any existing issues identified through data analysis.

As part of this initiative, around 16,000 Gram Panchayats are being equipped with fibre-to-home facilities, as well as Wi-Fi connections. Our objective is to ensure robust broadband connectivity in schools, hospitals, and other public spaces within these Gram Panchayats, thereby enhancing digital access and services for rural communities.

There has been significant emphasis on ICT in various sectors such as education, health, and agriculture. Could you highlight some key initiatives in these areas?

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has been integrated into education for an extended period, with many schools now equipped with smart classrooms. Teachers have received training in this domain, which has resulted in some improvement in student learning outcomes; however, this progress has been gradual rather than transformative.

In the medical field, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, ICT played a vital role in facilitating consultations with doctors for critically ill patients when in-person visits were not feasible. Furthermore, ICT is utilised to connect patients with esteemed specialists across India. For example, when a government district hospital lacks a specific specialist, patients can access this ICT facility to consult with leading doctors and obtain valuable medical advice.

Recently, there has been significant global attention on Global Capability Centres (GCCs). How is Uttar Pradesh positioning itself to attract these centres?

Noida is a prominent five-star city in Uttar Pradesh and part of the Delhi NCR, recognised for its high quality of life and favourable business environment. This inherent appeal attracts individuals to the region, and we aim to capitalise on this advantage.

Historically, major corporations primarily outsourced basic tasks to India; however, we have observed a significant shift in recent years, with many companies evolving their key operations within the country. India has established itself as a major hub for multinational corporations, with increasing interest in locations beyond traditional centres such as Mumbai and Bangalore.

To attract Global Capability Centers (GCCs), we are in the process of developing a dedicated GCC policy, which has already been shared with key stakeholders. We have initiated discussions with major companies and plan to finalise and launch our GCC policy within the next month or two.

Could you elaborate on the programs in Uttar Pradesh, particularly the CM Internship Program, and how they are designed to prepare students for the industry?

The Prime Minister recently announced a partnership initiative under the PM Internship Program, aimed at fostering collaboration with reputable companies. In our state, we have a complementary initiative known as the CM Internship Program, through which we collaborate with various organizations to provide internship opportunities for students.

Some of these companies are also developing specialized curricula designed to prepare students for industry demands. We are actively working on the implementation of this curriculum in close collaboration with industries and institutions such as Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Technical University (AKTU), IIIT, and IIT Kanpur. This approach aims to ensure that the education students receive aligns with industry expectations, thereby facilitating a smoother transition from academia to the workforce.

What initiatives are being undertaken to support startups and foster innovation in the field of artificial intelligence in Uttar Pradesh?

We have established a Centre of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence at IIT Kanpur, which has successfully trained approximately 200 startups, each concentrating on various problem statements. Recently, during our groundbreaking ceremony inaugurated by the Honorable Prime Minister, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with companies such as Microsoft, which will be establishing an AI centre on the Gautam Buddha University campus in Noida. This centre will not only onboard startups but will also address case studies from government entities, research institutions, and academia, developing customised solutions based on
those requirements.

What are the growth targets for the IT industry in Uttar Pradesh, and what strategies are the government implementing to achieve them?

We aim for the Information Technology (IT) industry in Uttar Pradesh to achieve a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of approximately 30% per annum. While this target is ambitious, we believe it is attainable through the establishment of a robust ecosystem that supports the IT sector and attracts talent.

The Government of Uttar Pradesh is adopting a holistic approach to this objective, concentrating on the enhancement of urban centres and the improvement of the overall quality of life, thereby making these areas more appealing to residents and businesses. We are confident that the IT sector is wellpositioned for growth in the regions surrounding Noida and Lucknow, which will attract talent from neighbouring areas such as Gorakhpur and Banaras, thereby providing substantial job opportunities in the IT field.

What is the current landscape for defencerelated companies in Uttar Pradesh?

Although defence is not our primary focus, numerous companies have already established themselves within the defence corridor, developing solutions for the Indian armed forces as well as for military clients worldwide. The majority of these companies concentrate on hardware development, and there has been limited exploration into defence electronics thus far. However, we remain open to opportunities in areas such as drone manufacturing, should interested companies come forward. At present, I do not observe significant traction in this sector.

What initiatives is Uttar Pradesh taking to develop a drone policy, and how are companies involved in establishing drone flying facilities in the state?

While we do not currently have a specific loan policy in place, we are actively in the process of developing our drone policy. Several companies have expressed interest in establishing drone flying facilities within the state, enabling them to conduct testing and development of their drone technologies. We are engaged in discussions with various industry stakeholders to further explore this initiative. We anticipate that these conversations will culminate in the implementation of our drone policy shortly, thereby facilitating enhanced drone capabilities and fostering innovation in Uttar Pradesh.

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What cities in Uttar Pradesh are being targeted for the growth of the IT industry, and what initiatives are being implemented to support this expansion?

Our current focus is on Lucknow and Kanpur as key Tier-2 cities for attracting the IT industry. Both cities provide a conducive environment for IT companies to establish operations. Additionally, Allahabad and Varanasi are significant cities with a wealth of tech talent that can be leveraged by the IT sector. Collectively, these four cities form the cornerstone of our strategy.

Moreover, we are planning to establish Software Technology Parks of India (STPIs) in Bareilly, Agra, and Gorakhpur. Construction in Agra is already complete, and both Bareilly and Gorakhpur are now open for IT operations. This expansion will not only enhance the technological infrastructure in these regions but also create additional opportunities for skilled professionals within the IT industry.