

'A renaissance of economic development in UP'

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Uttar Pradesh is witnessing a renaissance of economic development, said industry experts as they shared the vision for the way forward at TOI Dialogues.

Opening the session 'Investing in Uttar Pradesh: A new era of economic opportunities', chairperson CII, and director and chief finance officer of PTC industries, Smita Agarwal, said any development process has some cornerstones and UP has been able to build this base over the past few years. "A robust policy framework comprising primary industrial development policy along with a rich palate of sectoral policies is the first pillar. The recent addition of FDI policy has taken the vision to the next level," she said.

Adding that infrastructure development in the form of roads, expressways, airports has served as the second pillar, she said: "As the third pillar, the state was already rich in demographic dividend which provides the necessary human resource for the development story. The fourth pillar came in the form of safety through control over law and order situation."

On the way forward, she said:



DESTINATION UP: (From left) Prof Devashish Das Gupta, Smita Agarwal, Ankit Sahni & Brig (retd) Vinod Bajjiya

"The next level of leg up would come only with skill building. In fact, with hardware in place now is the time to work on software which means focus on industry specific skill building and soft skill development in the workforce."

Another panellist, Prof Devashish Das Gupta, faculty at the Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow, said: "Employability and skill consciousness would help the state leverage maximum advantage of the development. The coming of industries creates job but those with the right kind of skills will be able to make the most of the opportunity."

He also underscored the need to create a platform where industry players could have an interface with

the academics so that senior secondary and higher education scenarios can be shaped to meet the demands of the industry. "It is time that the state thinks about multi-stakeholder knowledge management and industry-driven skill development commission to sustain UP's growth story so that the structure remains robust and updated," he said.

Brig (retd) Vinod Bajjiya, executive director, Banas Dairy (Amul), agreed that UP has immense potential. "There cannot be a better example than us... we have come from Gujarat to UP to leverage its potential," he said. He added that setting up a single dairy plant requires an investment of at least Rs 600 crore.

"The fact that we are in the pro-

cess to open our fourth plant in UP speaks for gov't's role as an enabler and our faith in Brand UP. We are happy to be a part of the UP growth story and empower the rural people of the state, especially women."

The Hazelnut Factory founder Ankit Sahni spoke about UP's potential in the food and beverages sector and presented his startup as a case in point.

"I braved all the criticism for being a UPite in other places where I studied. But today, I can counter them. My greatest observation is the ability of people of UP to work hard and adapt to embrace changes for the better is commendable. And this energy has served as a great catalyst so far," he said.