

INDEX - TRANSFORMING INDIA

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Introduction - Transforming India

- Infrastructure development can be considered the key to the life of the common man. It is also crucial factor in the economic development of the nation. Therefore, infrastructure development has been the priority of the Government and it has taken numerous initiatives towards better infrastructure creation.
- Creating housing infrastructure is one of the key priorities of the Government. Government's Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana was introduced to realise the dream of roof over one's head. The PMAY aims at 'Housing for All' by 2022.
- **Electricity** - The Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) and Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana - Saubhagya schemes are transforming the lives of people in rural India.
- **Smart Cities** - The basic idea behind the Smart Cities project is not only to create cities with better civic amenities or improved infrastructure but also help create inclusive and collaborative cities, with the aim of transforming the lives of the people living there.
- Government aims at creating improved road and highway infrastructure under the Bharatmala scheme. Similarly, Government has given a big push to transformational changes in rail infrastructure as well as development of inland waterway routes. Through the UDAN scheme, the Government seeks to make air travel affordable for the common man in small cities.

Power for All - A Dream Coming True

Access to reliable and affordable energy increase the ease of living and generates employment. It powers the development of the country. It is a prerequisite to digital connectivity in rural India, thereby opening new vistas for the people hitherto unconnected to the outer world.

Government initiatives -

- The first - the primary requirement was availability. In the past four and a half years, we have added more than one lakh megawatts of new generation capacity. Energy deficit has been brought down from 4.2 percent to almost zero. India has become an exporter of electricity - exporting electricity to Nepal and Bangladesh.
- For the first time we have One Nation - One Grid - the entire network operating on one frequency. Power can be transferred seamlessly from one corner of the country to another.
- A major landmark to universal access to electricity was crossed when our country achieved 100 percent village electrification on 28th April, 2018.
- To achieve this feat, extensive infrastructure was created under DDUGJY. Special focus was on feeder separation (rural households and agricultural) and strengthening of sub-transmission and distribution infrastructure including metering

at all levels in rural areas. Hundreds of thousand kilometres of new lines were laid and lakhs of distribution transformers were installed.

- The next step was to light up every household. The Prime Minister launched the 'Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana' - Saubhagya in September 2017 with the aim to achieve universal household electrification. Achievement of this target within targeted timeline of 31st March, 2019 is the challenge.
- It has inherent features of 'Sahaj' i.e. Simple/Easy/Effortless and 'Har Ghar' i.e. inclusive universal household electrification.

Recognition -

- The International Energy Agency called India's electrification journey as one of the greatest success stories of the year 2018.
- Hardly 4 lakh odd households are now remaining and within the next few weeks, every household of the country will have an electricity connection.

Integrated Power Development Scheme -

The focus areas of the IPDS scheme are -

- Strengthening of sub-transmission and distribution network in the urban areas.
- Metering of distribution transformers/feeders/consumers in the urban areas.
- IT enablement and automation of distribution sector.

Renewable Energy -

To make electricity clean and green, we have developed a roadmap to achieve 175 GW capacity in the renewable energy sector by 2022, which includes 100 GW of solar power and 60 GW of wind power. The overall installed capacity of Renewable Energy has been more than doubled in the last four and a half years - from 34,000 MW to 75,000 MW, solar capacity increased 8 times in last 4 years.

Energy Efficiency -

- Household LED bulb distribution program UJALA and SLNP (Streetlight National Project) for replacing conventional streetlights with smart and energy efficient LED street lights have saved billions of unit electricity per year.
- Star Labeling program, Energy Conservation Building Code and energy efficiency measures through Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) are also important initiatives in the field of energy efficiency.
- The first cycle of the PAT for industry achieved savings of more than 8.6 million tonnes of oil equivalent which is almost 1.23 percent of primary energy supply of India.

Way forward -

- A new Tariff Policy is being finalised. It contains several consumer friendly provisions to ensure reliable and 24X7 power supply. This policy makes it mandatory to provide reliable and 24X7 power supply for all from 1st April, 2019. If a power outage occurs without a valid reason (e.g. for scheduled maintenance or

disruption due to natural calamity), the concerned power distribution company (DISCOM) will face penalties.

- Another futuristic area is - Smart Meters with a strategy to replace all electricity meters in the country with Smart Meters within a period of 3 years. This will revolutionise the power sector by way of reduced AT&C losses, better health of DISCOMs, incentivisation of energy conservation and ease of bill payments etc.
- Electric Vehicles - The Government has launched the National E-Mobility programme to promote electric vehicles in a big way. The Ministry of Power is creating an enabling regulatory framework for rapid expansion of charging and storage infrastructure.

Multi-Pronged Approach to Urban Transformation

India's urban population was over 31 percent in 2011 census. This is expected to rise to 40 percent by 2030 and 50 percent by 2050, i.e. it will cross 800 million.

Challenges to Urban India -

The Prime Minister saw the challenges of urbanisation. Investments in infrastructure will create jobs, improve ease of living and employ citizens to best of their abilities in the service of the nation.

Government response -

- At the first level, poverty alleviation, affordable housing and sanitation were the three challenges. Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U) and Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), implemented in all the urban local bodies (ULBs).
- At the second level, basic infrastructure like water supply, sewerage/septage projects and green parks became the focus. Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) was implemented to cover over 60 percent of urban population.
- 100 cities are being developed under Smart Cities Mission (SCM) to address the issue of ease of living by evolving new paradigms of urban governance.

What do we mean by Smart Cities?

Smart cities in common parlance are understood to be cities that use appropriate technologies for improving quality of lives of their citizens.

1. **Citizens at the core** - Citizens and the communities are at the centre of development.
2. **More from Less** - Being conscious of resource constraints, they have to generate more impact/outcomes from use of less resources - energy, finance and others.
3. **Cooperative and Competitive Federalism** - Cities are selected through competition in two stage challenges at State and Central levels;
4. **Integration, Innovation and Sustainability** - It is not merely about the use of technology, but creation of integrated infrastructure and services.

5. **Technology is the Means, and Not the Goal** - Careful selection of technologies, relevant to the context of particular cities, built around specific needs of their communities is important for the cities to work out solutions; and
6. **Inclusiveness is a Guiding Philosophy** - Cities are for the people and hence they have to be built around the principles of inclusiveness.

Broadly, Smart Cities address these core issues - Liveability, Economic-ability and Sustainability.

The major issues which confront urban areas as expressed by most citizens were - Urban mobility, affordable housing, water and waste-water management, sanitation, safety and security, health and education, and energy security.

Smart Cities Mission Strategy -

1. **Area Based Development**, which focuses on development of world class localities within cities to act as replicable models through redevelopment, retrofitting or green development; and
2. **Pan City Development**, wherein cities identify few areas of intervention with use of digital technologies to create impacts on basic infrastructure and services with an intent to improve quality of life for their citizens.

Technology as a Means, and not the End -

Every Smart City under the Mission will have a Smart City Centre (also referred to as Integrated Command and Control Centre). This is and will be the city's brain and nervous system where digital technologies are integrated to social, physical and environmental aspects of the city.

Quality of Life and Economy: Impact -

- The Mission promotes mixed land-use in area based developments as proximity and density reduce the per capita costs of providing and maintaining infrastructure and services, while creating knowledge spillovers and specialisation that hugely enhance the urban productivity.
- The primary focus of initiatives relating to local economic development is on commercial and retail activities, with a strong focus on market redevelopment projects and the new construction of offices, homes and allied institutions such as convention centres etc., as part of mixed use development.

Innovation as Key Driver -

- Recognising the role of Start-Ups, the Smart Cities Mission will work to create an innovation ecosystem in Smart Cities through SPIRIT-Smart Cities Promoting Innovation Research and Incubation in technology.
- It is an initiative in collaboration with Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and Start-up India program harnessing the strengths of three initiatives.
- This will foster creation of an ecosystem for innovations in smart-cities, enabling local area development, harnessing technology and providing boost to the economy.

Impact on Sustainability -

- Smart Cities have proposed investments to ensure assured electricity supply with at least 10 percent of the Smart City's energy requirement coming from solar energy.
- Cities have identified initiatives to strengthen their distribution systems through Smart Metering.
- Promotion of energy efficient green buildings and green transport options to reduce need for electricity are some other initiatives taken up by Smart Cities.

Key Enablers -**1. Smart Governance -**

- a. Smart Cities leverage ICT based technologies and digitalisation to make governance citizen-friendly and cost effective; bring about accountability and transparency.
- b. Smart Cities Mission aims to address barriers in data driven governance through 'Data Smart Cities', an evolving policy framework on data for smart cities, which aims to be a catalyst for the entire ecosystem comprising of people, processes and technology.
- c. Ministry has incentivised ULBs through cash incentive of Rs 13 crore for every Rs 100 crore of municipal bonds issued, equivalent of 2 percent interest subvention.

2. Capacity Building and Knowledge Management -

- a. The Ministry has launched the **Cities Investment To Innovate, Integrate and Sustain (CITIIS)** challenge in collaboration with the French Development Bank (AFD) to provide investment support of EUR100 million to selected cities in key sectors of Sustainable Mobility, Public Open Spaces, Urban Governance and ICT and Social and Organisation Innovation in Low-Income Settlements.
- b. **SmartNet** is an initiative to support the development of cities across India and to create a resource-rich ecosystem of learning, sharing and dissemination.

3. National Urban Innovation Hub -

- a. A new entity called the 'National Urban Innovation Hub' - is being proposed at the national level to consolidate existing resources and to expand the footprint of innovation development and capacity building for the urban sector.
- b. NUIH will anchor the **National Smart Cities Capacity Building Programme** to produce empowered functionaries and stronger institutions.
- c. NUIH will be powered by the **National Urban Innovation Stack (NUIS)**.
- d. NUIS is a nationally shared digital infrastructure usable by the governments, both at the Centre and States and across public and private sector.

4. Mission Progress -

- a. All 100 cities have been selected through Challenge process, all of them have established the Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) to support implementation of the Mission (in the last three years).

- b. All of them have hired Project Management Consultants (PMCs) to design and develop projects for implementation in multiple sectors covering smart roads, water supply, heritage and place making, smart IT and communication, app based citizen delivery system etc.
- c. As on 31st December 2018, total 2,503 projects worth Rs 1,02,027 crore have been tendered; out of this 1,842 projects worth about Rs 59,336 crores are under implementation.

Way forward -

- Innovative financing models like issuance of municipal bonds, developing PPP projects and formulating land value capture finance (VCF) policies are required.
- The importance of standardisation in the context of development of smart cities cannot be ignored. The Mission is closely working with Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) in an effort to come up with smart ICT infrastructure standard.

National Waterways : Integrated Transport Network

On November 12, 2018, the Prime Minister dedicated to the national, India's first riverine multimodal on river Ganga (National Waterway - 1) at Varanasi. On the same day, he also received the country's first container cargo that travelled on river Ganga (National Waterway-1) from Kolkata to Varanasi.

Background -

- 106 new national waterways were announced under the National Waterways Act, 2016.
- With the five existing National Waterways (NW), the addition of the new ones takes the total number to 111 in the country.

Jal Marg Vikas Project (National Waterway-1, River Ganga) -

- On NW-1, Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP) is being implemented for capacity augmentation on Haldia-Varanasi stretch for a distance of 1,390 km, with technical and financial assistance from the World Bank.
- NW-1, along with the proposed Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor and NH-2, constitute the Eastern Transport Corridor of India connecting the National Capital Region (NCR) with the eastern and North-Eastern states and will function as a link to Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Nepal and other east and Southeast Asian nations through the Kolkata Port and Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route.
- A developed IWT will not only augment the overall capacity of the country, but will also help correct the transport modal mix that impose huge logistics costs on the Indian economy.
- Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), the nodal agency under the Ministry of Shipping is mandated to make the National Waterways commercially navigable.
- According to a World Bank economic analysis, approximately 1.5 lakh direct and indirect employment opportunities will be created due to interventions under the Jal Marg Vikas Project.

Vessel Designs -

- In August 2018, IWAI made public 13 standardised state-of-the-art ship designs suitable for large barge haulage on river Ganga (NW-1).
- It will serve as an enabler for the domestic shipbuilding industry working on inland vessels and open huge possibilities for cargo and passenger movement on National Waterway-1.

IWAI at Social Congregations -

- IWAI has been working hard towards facilitating safe passenger movements at Kumbh-Mela, 2019.
- In the past, IWAI has provided similar facilities of ferrying pilgrims and channel marking at Ganga Sagar Mela in West Bengal and Prakash Parv at Patna.

Other National Waterways -

- **National Waterways - 2** - River Brahmaputra from Bangladesh border to Sadiya (891 km) was declared as National Waterway-2 in 1988. The waterway is being operationalised and developed with fairway, navigational aids, terminals with mechanised handling facilities for cargo vessels.
- **Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route** - This Protocol is for mutually beneficial arrangement for the use of waterways for commerce and passage of goods between two places to one country through the territory of the other. The Protocol was first signed in 1972 and is presently valid up to 05th June, 2020.

UDAN - Giving New Meaning to Air Connectivity

UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) is a fulcrum under National Civil Aviation Policy to make air travel convenient and affordable for the common man in small cities, and, through this, push regional growth.

UDAN addresses the challenges relating to the issue of lack of infrastructure and affordability by upgrading the airports and cutting down on the cost of operations by extending various incentives to airlines and thus making air tickets affordable.

Achievements -

- Since the launching of UDAN in 2017, 61 new sectors have been added till date enhancing the power of aviation network.
- More than a million passengers have travelled in these routes and the impact on the ecosystem of aviation is tremendous by bringing first time flyers to the aviation market.
- New city pairs have been established by connecting smaller cities with metros jump starting the regional market.

Salient features of RCS-UDAN -

- The Regional Connectivity Scheme - UDAN intends to enable air operations on unserved routes connecting regional areas.

- RCS-UDAN envisages providing connectivity through revival of existing airstrips and airports.
- Financial stimulus in the form of concessions from Central and State Governments and airport operators and the Viability Gap Funding to the selected airlines to kick-off operations from Unserved/Underserved airports.
- RCS-UDAN is a demand driven scheme where the interested airlines and helicopter operators are selected through competitive bidding process.
- The selected airline operator of RCS-UDAN would have to provide a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 40 RCS seats on the RCS flight for operations through fixed wing aircraft.
- The fare for one hour journey of approximately 500 km on a fixed wing aircraft or for a 30 minute journey on a helicopter would be approximately Rs 2,500.
- On RCS route, the minimum frequency would be three and maximum of seven departures per week in other than priority areas.

Challenges -

Civil aviation is highly regulated due to its sensitive nature. Licensing of airports is a tedious process.

Availability of qualified crew is also a major challenge for airlines and significant efforts are needed to create a pool of skilled professionals.

Solutions provided -

- To address these challenges, the implementation mechanism needs to be strengthened. Airport Authority of India (AAI) is providing necessary support to State Governments in developing the airports, documentation for licensing, procurement of security and fire tender equipment etc. In some Defence Airports, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been worked out in consultation with Ministry of Defence.
- A positive outcome of UDAN also includes the regulatory framework for 'no-frill' airports and 'aircraft-centric security' approach which has cut down the cost of infrastructure and operations that will help sustainability of air connectivity to smaller cities.

Bharatmala Pariyojana - The Biggest Revolution in Indian Highways

Historical Background -

- The first major policy push to widen the NHs was made in 1998 during Atal Bihari Vajpayee government by launching the National Highways Development Programme (NHDP), which had two major components of 5,846 kilometres of Golden Quadrilateral (GQ) connecting the four metro cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata and 7,142 kilometres' network connecting Srinagar to Kanyakumari and Silchar to Porbandar. These networks are known as North-South and East-West corridors.

- The second big revolutionary decision to upgrade NHs was taken in October 2017 when the Central government approved the phase-1 of Bharatmala Programme covering 24,800 kilometres with an estimated expenditure of Rs 3.85 lakh crores.

Components -

1. **Economic Corridors** - Some of these are Mumbai-Agra, Mumbai-Kolkata, Chennai-Madurai, Bilaspur-Delhi, Pune-Vijaywada, Indore-Jaipur and Amritsar-Jamnagar. The Economic Corridors are expected to carry 25 percent of freight in the coming years.
2. **Inter Corridor and Feeder Routes** - Inter Corridor routes connect two existing corridors and feeder routes to the corridor network. These roads are expected to carry around 20 percent of freight.
3. **Improvement in Efficiency of National Corridors** - Currently, the NHs including the GQ and North South and East West corridor carry nearly 35 percent of India's freight. All these stretches will be declared National Corridors. Under the Bharatmala programme, all these stretches will be widened to 6-8 lanes.
4. **Development of Border and International Connectivity Roads** - Around 2,000 kilometres of roads are required for connecting India's major highway corridor to international trade points to facilitate EXIM trade with Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar.
5. **Development of Coastal and Port Connectivity Roads** - Under Bharatmala programme, about 2,100 kilometres of coastal roads have been identified to be built along the coast. These roads would boost both tourism and industrial development of the coastal region. These will also improve connectivity to ports to facilitate EXIM trade.
6. **Development of Greenfield Expressways** - Bharatmala programme also envisages building expressways close to the National and Economic Corridors where traffic has breached the 50,000 PCUs and there are multiple choke points. About 1,900 kms of these stretches have been identified for development of greenfield expressways.

Benefits -

- Bharatmala Pariyojana once implemented, will enable improvement in efficiency of freight and passenger movement on NHs.
- The network will connect 550 districts in the country accounting for nearly 90 percent of the nation's GDP.
- Standardised wayside amenities on the corridors will come up, which will improve convenience of passenger movement significantly.
- Upgradation of 24,800 kilometres of NH network in the first phase is expected to generate roughly 10 crore man-days of employment during the construction phase and roughly 22 million permanent jobs driven by increased level of economic activities due to development of the Economic Corridor network.

Funding for Programme -

The government has estimated a total expenditure of about Rs 6.92 lakh crore including Rs 3.85 lakh crore for Bharatmala to complete all ongoing works.

Transforming Connectivity - Indian Railways on the Go

The railways maintain a gigantic network of 63,000 kms and run 22,000 trains to transport 1.5 million passengers daily. The allocation for Railways has increased to Rs 5.30 lakh crores in the past five years.

Connecting the Seven Sisters -

- In the North East, rail connectivity has come to all the Seven Sister States of Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh.
- Meghalaya came on the rail map with the flagging off of the first ever train from Guwahati to Mendipathar in Meghalaya.
- The Bogibeel Bridge, the longest Rail-cum-Road Bridge of the country running 4.94 km in length across river Brahmaputra near Dibrugarh in Assam has been commissioned, connecting Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
- India's tallest bridge with pier height of 141 m is being constructed on Irang River at Noney at Tamenglong district, Manipur as part of the Jiribam-Tupul-Imphal new line, a marvel of railways engineering. Its height will be almost equal to two Qutub Minars combined.

Capacity Augmentation -

- The Railways launched two Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFCs) projects, Eastern and Western Dedicated Freight Corridors (EDFC and WDFC), for capacity augmentation. The two projects have progressed full speed since 2014, culminating in successful trial of freight trains over Phulera-Atari section of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC) and Khurja-Bhadan section of Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC).
- The Dedicated Freight Corridors will be fully commissioned in phases by March 2020.
- As much as 14,480 kms of track doubling, and third and fourth line works were included in the recent budgets.

Speeding up Electrification -

- Currently, around two thirds of freight and more than half of passenger traffic in Indian Railways moves on electric traction. Electric traction accounts for just 37 percent of the total energy expenses of Indian Railways.
- Electrification will reduce the use of imported fossil fuels thereby improving energy security to the nation. Consumption of high speed diesel oil will be reduced by about 2.83 billion litres per annum and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- It will help railways in enhancing line capacity due to higher speed and higher haulage capacity of electric locomotives.

Ensuring Safety -

- To ensure connectivity with safety, the railways created the Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh (RRSK), a dedicated fund for safety projects during 2017-18 with a corpus of Rs 1 lakh crores over a period of five years was made which includes track renewals and safety, strengthening of bridges, elimination of unmanned level crossings, upgradation of maintenance facilities, signaling improvement and complete switchover to shock-resistant LHB coaches with greater safety features, along with retro fitment of ICF coaches.
- Safety has been accorded priority and consequential train accidents reduced to 62 percent from 118 in 2013-14 to 73 in 2017-18.
- Responding to the problem of accidents at unmanned level crossings, the Government has planned to remove or man all unmanned level crossings (UMLCs) on Broad Gauge (BG).

Offering Better Services -

- To make railways smart, for punctuality, instead of the station master recording the time, data loggers have been put at interchange points which would be computer generated.
- Indian Railways is working on putting a GPS device on every locomotive so that every train can be tracked on mobile phones knowing exactly where they are.
- Railways is improving passenger services including a complete makeover of stations by installing modern facilities including escalators, lifts, free wifi etc. while instilling local art and culture in the design.
- Catering has also been improved with compulsory printing of MRP on all food items started on more than 300 trains, and use of artificial intelligence to monitor food production in base kitchens for improving quality and hygiene.

Connected North East - Building Pan India Ties

- The North Eastern Region (NER) consists of eight states, namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. The region accounts for 3.78 percent of India's population and covers 7.98 percent of its total geographical area. Its contribution to national GDP is 2.5 percent.
- The region is strategically important for India both for its geographical location and its resources and shares about 5,437 kilometres of international boundaries with Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Myanmar and Nepal.
- Recognising the need to augment infrastructure in the region, the government of India has sanctioned about Rs 1,90,000 crores worth of projects for construction of road projects for over 12,000 kms.

Accelerating Infrastructure Development -

Special Accelerated Fund Development Programme for the North-Eastern region (SARDP-NE) - is an initiative of the government to fast-track infrastructure projects in the region.

Fast-Tracking Highway Projects -

- The government think tank NITI Aayog, advocating to develop the region by 2022-23 for enhancing trade, particularly for the export of products made in the NER, to the ASEAN region and other neighbouring countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal), has stressed the need to fast-track highway projects.
- NITI Aayog has said that projects like Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project, the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, the 5-km road stretch between the border city of Zokhawthar in Mizoram and Rih in Myanmar need to be expedited besides improving “about 4,099 kilometres in the North East”.
- Dhubri-Phulbari Bridge over Brahmaputra is a 20 km long bridge project with navigational span of 12.625 kms is being funded by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

India-Myanmar Connectivity -

- India and Myanmar has recently discussed the status of the project for upgradation of the Kalewa-Yagyi stretch of the India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) Trilateral Highway and starting of Imphal-Mandalay bus service.
- The upgradation of the Kalewa-Yagyi stretch of IMT is being executed by National Highways Authority of India. India and Myanmar are keen on bus service after operationalising the Land Border Crossing Agreement, which allows nationals from the two sides holding valid passport and visa to crossover without requiring special permission.

Bharatmala Project -

- The Government’s focus on the North East could also be understood from the fact that it plans 28 Ring Roads under Bharatmala project in the region identifying 125 Choke Points and 66 Congestion Points to reduce congestion.
- Under Bharatmala Pariyojana, road stretches aggregating to about 5,301 km in NER have been approved for improvement.
- Out of this 3,246 kms road length has been approved for development of an Economic Corridor in the North East.
- The Centre has approved a scheme named North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS), a 100 percent Central Sector Scheme to be implemented till March 2020.

India’s Longest Bridge -

- The 4.94 km long double-decker bridge over the Brahmaputra river at Bogibeel near Dibrugarh in Assam, which begins at Dibrugarh and ends at Dhemaji districts of Assam, will remove communication bottlenecks to several districts of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The road distance from Dibrugarh to Itanagar will be reduced by 150 km and the railways travel distance between these two points will shorten by 705 km due to the bridge.
- In May 2017, the Prime Minister had inaugurated the country’s longest bridge over the Lohit river in Assam - the 9.15 km-long bridge, named after Dadasaheb Phalke awardee and legendary lyricist-singer Bhupen Hazarika who hailed from Sadiya.

Conclusion -

The Prime Minister has stressed that North East's links with Southeast Asia will accelerate its progress. "In turn, a connected Northeast will be a bridge to ASEAN-India ties of our dreams", he said.

Affordable Housing - Taking Centre Stage

An estimated USD 1 trillion is being spent on infrastructure over the five years to 2017 and there is increased investment in industrial projects by the Government. The country of 1.3 billion people is set to undergo a boost in the construction sector. Infrastructure accounts for 49 percent, housing and real estate 42 percent and industrial projects 9 percent.

Population Growth & Housing -

- The phenomenon of urbanisation in today's fast-paced world is inevitable, especially in emerging economies. As we have witnessed over the last few decades, due to massive urbanisation, increasing income levels and changing demographics, there has been increasing pressure on transportation, housing, land and other urban services to accommodate future population.
- Affordable Housing has taken a centre stage in the National Agenda of the present Government. The Government's commitment to have housing for all by 2022 is the vision which presents dramatically different opportunities and requirements for the stakeholders.
- This transformational scheme of "Housing for All by 2022" was launched by Government of India on 17th June 2015 under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY).

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Housing for All 2022 -

The mission has four components -

1. **In-situ slum redevelopment (ISSR)** - This uses land as a resource. The scheme aims to provide houses to eligible slum dwellers by redeveloping the existing slums on public/private land. A grant of INR 1 lac per house is provided by the central government.
2. **Affordable housing in partnership (AHP)** - This aims to provide financial assistance to private developers to boost private participation in affordable housing projects, central assistance is provided at the rate of INR 1.5 lac per EWS house.
3. **Credit linked subsidy scheme (CLSS)** - This scheme facilitates easy institutional credit to EWS, LIG and MIG households for the purchase of homes with interest subsidy credited upfront to the borrower's account.
4. **Beneficiary led construction or enhancement (BLC)** - This scheme involves central assistance of INR 1.5 lakh per family for new construction or extension of existing houses for the EWS/LIG.

Urban Housing Initiatives -

The Government envisages building affordable pucca houses with water facility, sanitation and electricity supply round-the-clock. Under PMAY, it is proposed to build 2 crore houses for urban poor including Economically Weaker Sections and Low Income Groups in urban areas by the year 2022 through a financial assistance of Rs 2 trillion.

Other steps taken by Government -

Government of India has been taking several initiatives through the budget to provide housing for all -

1. Affordable Housing has been given Infrastructure status.
2. One crore rural houses will be created by 2019.
3. National Housing Bank to refinance Rs 20,000 crore loans.
4. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana to get Rs 23,000 crore.
5. Real estate developers to get tax relief on unsold stock.
6. Instead of Built up area of 30 and 60 sq meters, the carpet area of 30 and 60 sq meters will be applicable for affordable housing.
7. Holding period for capital gains tax for immovable property reduced from 3 years to 2 years.
8. Tax break of 1 year post receipt of the completion certificate, for the unsold stock.
9. Indira Awas Yojana will be extended to 600 districts.
10. Indexation for capital gains shifted from 1-4-81 to 1-4-2001.

Housing Finance -

- Through Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), the government has announced that an interest rate of only 4 percent would be charged on loans above Rs 9 lakh and 3 percent on amount above Rs 12 lakh.
- The government has also extended the time of completion of such projects from 3 years to 5 years.
- Thus, more projects will now be eligible for profit-linked income tax exemptions.
- Profit-linked exemption along with infrastructure status for affordable housing will push developers to undertake more affordable housing projects, thus increasing private player's participation in the sector.
- With the change in criteria from built-up area to carpet area, the purchasers get more spacious homes and the builder is able to market the property to a larger segment of buyers.
- Housing is a labour-intensive industry, with a long backward linkages tail, generating a large multiplier of economic activity in sectors while significantly aiding in job creation.

Conclusion -

Finally, with all these initiatives of the Government of India to give shelter to all by 2022, we hope there will be tremendous boost to GDP as the housing sector growth is directly linked to around 265 other ancillary industries.

Creating Adequate Infrastructure in Health Care

- Healthcare has become one of India's largest sectors - both in terms of revenue and employment. Healthcare comprises hospitals, medical devices, clinical trials, outsourcing, telemedicine, medical tourism, health insurance and medical equipment.
- Indian healthcare delivery system is categorised into two major components - public and private. The Government i.e. public healthcare system comprises limited secondary and tertiary care institutions in key cities and focuses on providing basic healthcare facilities in the form of Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs) in rural areas. The private sector provides majority of secondary, tertiary and quaternary care institutions with a major concentration in metros, tier I and tier II cities.
- India's competitive advantage lies in its large pool of well-trained medical professionals. India is also cost competitive compared to its peers in Asia and Western countries.

Towards Universal Access to Healthcare -

India's National Health Policy, 2017 envisions the goal of attaining highest possible level of health and well being for all at all ages through a preventive and promotive healthcare orientation in all development policies, and universal access to good quality healthcare services without financial hardships to the citizens.

Major Government Initiatives -

- On September 23, 2018, the Government of India launched Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Scheme (PMJAY), to provide health insurance worth Rs 5,00,000 to over 100 million families every year.
- In August, 2018, the Government of India has approved Ayushman Bharat - National Health Protection Mission as a centrally Sponsored Scheme contributed by both the Centre and State Governments at a ratio of 60:40 for all States, 90:10 for hilly North Eastern States and 60:40 for UTs with legislatures. The Centre will contribute 100 percent for UTs without legislature.

Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) -

- The Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) has the objectives of correcting regional imbalances in the availability of affordable/reliable tertiary healthcare services and also to augment facilities for quality medical education in the country.
- PMSSY has two components -
 - a. Setting up of AIIMS like institutions.
 - b. Upgradation of Government Medical College Institutions.

Ayushman Bharat, Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) -

- Launched in September 2018, PMJAY aims to address the healthcare needs of India's poorest 100 million households.
- The idea is to shift away from a decaying system of government-funded hospitals and people, towards a mix of private and government health care, governed by common principles and financed by low-cost healthcare insurance.

Kayakalp -

It is an initiative to promote sanitation and hygiene in public healthcare institutions. Facilities which outshine and exceed the set measures are awarded and incentivised under Kayakalp.

Mission Indradhanush -

It aims to achieve at least 90 percent immunisation coverage by December 2018 which will cover unvaccinated and partially vaccinated children in rural and urban areas of India.

Market Size -

The healthcare market can increase three fold to Rs 8.6 trillion by 2022. India is experiencing 22-25 percent growth in medical tourism and the industry is expected to double its size from present USD 3 billion to USD 6 billion by 2018.

Investment -

The hospital and diagnostics centres attracted FDI worth USD 5.25 billion between April 2000 and June 2018.

Achievements -

- As of September 23, 2018, the world's largest government funded healthcare scheme, Ayushman Bharat was launched.
- As of November 15, 2017, 4.45 million patients were benefited from Affordable Medicines and Reasonable Implants for Treatment (AMRIT) Pharmacies.
- As of December 15, 2017, the Government of India approved the National Medical Commission Bill, 2017. It aims to promote medical education reform.

Road ahead -

India's healthcare industry is one of the fastest growing sectors and it is expected to reach USD 280 billion by 2020.

Conclusion -

India is well poised to a better public healthcare infrastructure, facilities and services and hopefully with all the well intentioned initiatives we shall see health taking a top priority agenda in the coming years and delivering on the promises with the new and bold initiatives in the health sector.