

National Strategy for New India - NITI Aayog

Why in news?

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The NITI Aayog recently unveiled its comprehensive national Strategy for New India, which defines clear objectives for 2022-23.

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What does it contain?

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- It is a detailed exposition across 41 crucial areas, that recognizes the progress already made, identifies binding constraints, and suggests the way forward for achieving the clearly stated objectives.

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- The strategic document will be followed by a vision document in future, which will spell out the 15-year growth trajectory India needs to follow.

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- The overarching focus of the Strategy document is to propel India towards a USD 5 trillion economy by 2030.

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- This is to be done by improving the policy environment in which private investors and other stakeholders can contribute their fullest towards achieving the goals set out for New India 2022.

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What are the recommendations?

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- **On Drivers** - The acceleration in economic growth must be inclusive, sustained, 'clean' and formalised.

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- The economy has to be steadily accelerated to achieve a GDP growth rate of about 8% on average during 2018-23.

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- This will raise the economy's size in real terms from USD 2.7 trillion in 2017-18 to nearly USD 4 trillion by 2022-23.
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- The investment rate (gross fixed capital formation) should be raised from the present 29% of GDP to 36% by 2022-23, of which half must come from public investment.
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- India should aim to increase its tax-GDP ratio to at least 22% of GDP by 2022-23 to enhance public investment.
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- To ease the tax compliance burden, direct interface between taxpayers and tax officials has to be eliminated using technology.
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- Regarding agriculture, the emphasis has to be shifted towards converting farmers to 'agripreneurs'.
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- This could be done by further expanding e-NAM and replacing the APMC act with the Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing Act.
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- The creation of a unified national market, a freer export regime and abolition of the Essential Commodities Act are essential for boosting agricultural growth.
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- A strong push has to be given towards 'Zero Budget Natural Farming' techniques that reduce costs, improve land quality and increase farmers' incomes.
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- This has emerged as a tested method for putting environment carbon back into the land.
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- Also, the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana needs to include weather-based insurance into its current mode of implementation.
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- To ensure maximum employment creation, complete codification of labour laws and a massive effort must be made to upscale and expand apprenticeships.
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- A mission named "Explore in India" has to be launched to revamp minerals exploration and licensing policy.
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- **On Infrastructure** - The establishment of the Rail Development Authority (RDA), which is already approved, has to be expedited.
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- RDA will advise or make informed decisions on an integrated, transparent

and dynamic pricing mechanism for the railways.

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- The share of freight transported by coastal shipping and inland waterways has to be doubled.

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- Also, viability gap funding will be provided for these modes of transport until the infrastructure is fully developed.

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- An IT-enabled platform for integrating different modes of transport and promoting multi-modal and digitized mobility has to be developed.

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- Regarding connectivity, all the 2.5 lakh gram panchayats will be digitally connected with the completion of the Bharat Net programme in 2019.

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- Hence, the government should aim to deliver all government services at the state, district, and gram panchayat level digitally by 2022-23.

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- These infrastructural measures are crucial to enhance the competitiveness of Indian business as also ensure the citizens' ease of living.

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- **On Inclusion** - Regarding health, the Ayushman Bharat programme has to be implemented successfully including the establishment of 150,000 health and wellness centres across the country.

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- A focal point for public health has to be created at the central level along with their state counterparts, through which an integrative medicine curriculum can be promoted.

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- Regarding education, the quality of the school education system has to be upgraded by creating a new innovation ecosystem at the ground level by establishing at least 10,000 Atal Tinkering Labs by 2020.

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- An electronic national educational registry could be conceptualized for tracking each child's learning outcomes.

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- Regarding housing, focus must be laid upon affordable housing in urban areas to improve workers' living conditions and ensure equity while providing a strong impetus to economic growth.

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- **On Governance** - The recommendations of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission have to be implemented before appointing a successor for it.

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- The backlog of pending cases in the courts can be addressed by shifting part

of workload out of regular court system.

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- A new autonomous body, namely the Arbitration Council of India, has to be set up to grade arbitral institutions and accredit arbitrators.

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- This will make the arbitration process cost effective and speedy, and will preempt the need for court intervention.

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- Regarding disinvestment, the government has to offload its stake from non-strategic public sector enterprises (PSEs).

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- This will attract private investment and contribute to the exchequer, enabling higher public investment in other sectors.

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- Regarding the Swachh Bharat Mission, the scope has to be expanded to cover initiatives for landfills, plastic waste and municipal waste and generating wealth from waste.

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- The expenditure on bio-toilets/bio-digesters may be considered for concession from GST to encourage its large-scale adoption.

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- Higher monetary compensation and social security to rag pickers and small sanitation workers has to be given for segregating waste.

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- This will help waste-to-energy plants as well as projects related to dry waste management and help reduce the burden on landfills.

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- Also, Solid and liquid waste management projects should be covered under priority sector lending.

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Source: The Hindu, Business Standard, PIB

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