

Boosting Industrial, Tourism Sectors

The industrial and tourism sectors in Jammu and Kashmir are poised for a significant boost, driven by various government initiatives and private sector involvement.

J&K, with its rich natural beauty, diverse culture, and historical significance, has the potential to be a key player in both industries. Over the years, the region has witnessed immense changes in its policy framework, aimed at promoting economic growth, infrastructure development, and fostering an environment conducive to investment.

Jammu and Kashmir has always been known for its scenic beauty, but in recent years, the region has shifted its focus to boosting its industrial sector. The government has implemented several policies to attract investment, create jobs, and provide a more robust industrial ecosystem.

One of the major steps in this direction is the Jammu and Kashmir Industrial Policy 2021, which aims to transform the region into a vibrant industrial hub. This policy includes incentives such as tax holidays, subsidies, and infrastructural support for new industries. Additionally, the establishment of the Jammu and Kashmir Industrial Development Corporation (JKIDC) has made it easier for entrepreneurs to access land and other resources. Special Industrial Zones (SIZs) are being developed across the region to facilitate manufacturing and export, particularly in sectors like handicrafts, horticulture, food processing, and textiles.

The establishment of industrial estates, and dedicated clusters for the leather and woolen industries, is a key step towards providing a more organized environment for local businesses to flourish.

The government's focus on infrastructure development is another critical factor that will boost industrial growth. Major investments in roads, power, and communication infrastructure have made the region more accessible for industries. The construction of new highways, including the Srinagar-Leh highway, is expected to reduce travel time and enhance connectivity, benefiting both industrial and tourism activities. Jammu and Kashmir's tourism industry has long been a cornerstone of its economy. The region's pristine landscapes, religious shrines, and adventure sports opportunities attract millions of domestic and international tourists every year. The sector has faced challenges over the years, including political instability and natural disasters, but it is now experiencing a strong revival. The government is actively promoting J&K as a year-round tourism destination, emphasizing not only its traditional strengths in winter tourism (skiing in Gulmarg, snow activities in Pahalgam) but also its growing potential in eco-tourism, adventure tourism, and religious tourism. New initiatives such as the Jammu and Kashmir Tourist Circuit, which connects multiple tourist spots, and the promotion of the Heritage Walks in cities like Srinagar and Jammu are being actively supported.

BJP's bumper victory in Delhi Polls

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

BJP has registered a bumper and unprecedented victory in Delhi polls and the party is armed with the essential number to form the government in Delhi. Now for the first time there will be a double engine Sarkar in the national capital and it is no ordinary thing but is most extraordinary development in which there is the benefit of Delhites.

The exile of 27 year of the BJP has ended and BJP will form the government in Delhi proving the exit polls as exact polls and 100 percent true and correct and proved AAP's claims of forming government in Delhi wrong.

The Delhi Poll results showed that there was two cornered contest in Delhi polls and no three cornered contest as Congress failed to score any seat despite its tall claims. In fact in the crucial Delhi assembly polls, the louts of BJP bloomed full trouncing AAP miserably. BJP is making comeback to Delhi throne after the good old days of Sushma Swaraj, Madan Lal Khurana and Sahib Singh Verma which were the heydays and golden days of Delhi BJP.

However BJP is staging a comeback after a long period of 27 years. People of Delhi have this time reposed their trust and confidence in Modi and his BJP and has given an emphatic win in the elections in accordance with the exit polls. The BJP has registered victory in the Delhi Assembly results, ending the AAP's 10-year reign in the national capital.

BJP won Delhi Assembly polls and defeated AAP and thus dashed to the ground tall claims of Arvind Kejriwal to again form the government third time in succession.

AAP was routed and its bigwigs such as former chief minister of Delhi Arvind Kejriwal, deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia and other big leaders were made to lick the dust as they lost the polls.

The AAP has lost Delhi Poll battle because it was battling anti-incumbency and there was internal disarray. But there are other reasons of its defeat such as clear loss of support among the capital's middle class. The BJP's "double engine" Sarkar slogan and Modi magic resulted in BJP winning a comfortable number of seats and in the crushing defeat of the AAP.

Arvind Kejriwal's AAP after winning three Assembly elections, this time lost the polls and BJP wrested back the UT for itself after 27 years. The Congress was not in the picture anywhere as it scored a big zero which is a humiliation of the grand old party. The BJP's campaign, spearheaded by the prime minister Narendra Modi, broadly ran on one message - continuation of AAP's welfare schemes, with added promise of "double engine development" and a cracking down on AAP's corruption.

It also appeared that AAP has lost the confidence of the middle class who did not benefit from the politics of welfarism, but were impacted by poor state of roads and civic amenities in Delhi.

BJP wooed the middle class assiduously through several outreach programs including RWA meetings. The icing on cake came through the massive tax cut announced by the Modi government in the Union Budget.

BJP made clear that no welfare schemes will be closed but will continue with added thrust. PM Modi made it clear that freebies will continue in Delhi and it tilted the balance in favor of BJP. Modi gave added weight to the poll freebies of AAP. Poor condition of roads and sewers was also a big factor which contributed in the downfall of AAP in Delhi. The relentless LG-AAP tussle worked wonders and it also catapulted BJP to power. Anti-incumbency of AAP also played its role in defeating AAP polls. Finally BJP swept Delhi polls and trounced its rival AAP. BJP had an emphatic and his-

toric win as it won 48 seats and AAP managed to retain only 22 seats. While BJP had won only 8 seats in 2020 Delhi assembly polls, it significantly increased its tally to 48, but AAP had won 62 assembly seats in 2020 polls and it is a worst debacle for AAP. In fact election outcome showed that BJP has extraordinary win this time and all hopes of AAP of coming to power for the consecutive third term did not materialize and instead BJP is all set to form government in Delhi. AAP which was eyeing a third straight full term in Delhi failed to retain Delhi and instead it is saffron party which won from different corners of Delhi and the louts bloomed from different parts of Delhi. Congress which had ruled for 15 years, failed to open account as it got zero seats. AAP also got a big setback as it did not even get the magic number of 36 seats this election but had to contend with merely 22 assembly seats which is 14 seats short of the magic figure. Thus BJP is now armed with a thumping mandate to form a stable, strong and frictionless government which will work with all seriousness to come up to the expectations of the people. Prime minister Narendra Modi who was the star campaigner of the BJP in assembly elections was successful in turning the tide in favor of the saffron party. It is no exaggeration to state that the people of Delhi voted in favor of Modi and his developmental model and good governance mantra. Modi said that the two decade rule of AAP - Da has come to an end and Delhi has freed itself from the misrule of AAP. People of Delhi both middle class and the poor sections of the people as well as many Muslims have voted in favor of BJP. Congress has been decimated in Delhi polls as it for the third consecutive time won zero seats. Now there was a saffron surge and Hindutva wave in Delhi and all this coupled with the development politics helped BJP to win a significant number of

48 seats. Now that the people of Delhi have voted in favor of the BJP, it should try to come up to the expectation of the Delhites so that their issues and problems are solved and misrule has led to the debacle of AAP and due to this reason coupled with anti-incumbency and AAP's neglect of the middle class paved the way for the significant win of the BJP in these elections. One fact needs to be stressed that Delhi is mini India as the people from all corners of India reside in Delhi for earning their livelihood and also for pursuing education, technical education and as a result of urbanization and better prospects are attracted towards Delhi and it is mini-India and the thumping majority to the BJP will be reciprocated and replicated in Bihar assembly polls in November and in fact in all elections including in UP polls which are somewhat far away, but still the echo of the success of BJP in Delhi assembly elections will greatly influence the polls in UP. To put a long story short, it can be said that BJP had a clean sweep in these elections and now it will be the responsibility of BJP government to alleviate the sufferings of the people in Delhi. After assuming power, the BJP's government should focus on curbing pollution, cleaning Yamuna, giving clean drinking water and improving civic amenities for the people of Delhi. The task of governance is gigantic and challenging and with the peoples cooperation it will minimize the hardships of the people of Delhi and remove mismanagement in Delhi. The astounding win of BJP is not only a big setback to AAP, it also strikes at the very survival of that party. Only time will tell how much BJP government will come to the rescue of Delhites. One thing is certain that BJP has a bumper win in Delhi polls and it is the turn of BJP government to redress the sufferings of Delhites.

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Who Benefits From RBI's Rate Cut?

■ SAJJAD BAZAZ

With the monetary policy committee of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cutting the repo rate by 25 basis points, various categories of economic and financial analysts have engaged themselves in pitching their calculations showing softening of interest rates on loans. Even as their calculations are technically sound, the transmission of this percentage of repo rate cut bears a question mark. Most of the time, as is revealed through past experience, the banks either pass only a portion of this rate cut relief to borrowers or totally ignore it. There is also a situation when banks passed on the interest rate cut benefit to borrowers, but simultaneously carved out innovative ways to levy some kind of recurring fee/charges on the borrowers to lessen their repo rate cut relief.

So, in view of the previous experience, there won't be an impact to reduce the cost of borrowing for consumers of bank credit on the lines our financial experts are calculating right now. Ask any common borrower about his/her paying less Equated Monthly Installments (EMIs) after any rate cut, he/she will say a big 'No'.

It's not the percentage of interest rate alone that decides the cost of loan to a borrower, but there are other recurring costs that the borrower is made to pay during the currency of the loan. Most of the borrowers are not aware of the nature of these charges and don't even bother to question their banks about levying of such charges. Even, those who ask their lenders about the

charges, prefer to fall in line with the demand of the bank as the banks do everything to justify their action.

Unsecured Personal Loans: Over a period of time, the RBI is uncomfortable with the escalating volume of unsecured personal loans despite making it mandatory for the banks and other regulated entities to maintain the risk weight of 125% on consumer credit instead of 100% mandated as earlier. By virtue of this direction, the banks have been forced to set aside a higher amount as loan provisioning. This situation left the banks and other regulated entities with no option but to raise the interest on loans even when the repo rate was kept unchanged for the period of 57 months (since May 2020).

Technically speaking, unchanged repo rate means the rate of interest on loans vulnerable to this policy rate such as personal, vehicle, housing, gold loans etc. were supposed not to change, with no impact on the Equated Monthly Installments (EMIs) of the borrowers. But banks flirted with interest rates and raised it while defying unchanged repo rate during the aforesaid period mentioned above.

Repo Rate, The Policy Tool: Notably, the Repo Rate (repurchase rate) is the rate at which banks borrow funds from the RBI against any kind of collateral like treasury bills, gold, and bond papers. Whenever banks are short on money, they borrow it from the RBI. When the RBI lends money to banks, it charges banks interest on the principal amount of the loan. For example, if the repo rate is



6.5%, and the bank takes a loan of Rs.1,000 from RBI, then the bank will pay interest of Rs.65 to the RBI.

Actually, the repo rate is one of the crucial financial handles which drives the country's economy. Its percentage is a benchmark rate used by banks to fix the rate of interest on loans across various sectors of the economy. The change in repo rate not only impacts rate of interest on loans, but the deposits also see changes in the percentage of interest.

Notably, several aspects of the economy are sensitive to changes in the repo rate, including inflation, currency exchange rates, and overall economic growth. Even as the repo rate is key to keep inflation under control, it affects the cost of borrow-

ing and also acts as a money supply management tool. When inflation is to be curbed, the RBI raises the repo rate. This raises the cost of borrowing as banks have no alternative but to hike interest rates on loans to keep their cost of funds within their range. The high interest rates discourage borrowers to avail loans and as a result, banks witness drop in their lending activities. Ultimately, the overall money supply in the economy decreases as consumer spending declines. While impacting the demand side in the market, the inflation starts cooling down.

However, if inflation is low, then it means that there is less demand for goods and services. To promote spending and increase demand, RBI decreases the repo and reverse repo rates. As interest rates decrease for

the banks, banks start to offer loans at a lower rate. Thereby people start borrowing the money and start to spend.

Watchful Borrowers: Interestingly, with more and more common households banking upon loans to keep their domestic affairs afloat, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) actions vis-a-vis rate of interest on loans are being closely monitored at common mass level. Be it employees in government and private sector, people engaged in big or small businesses, students, pensioners or street vendors, the RBI's monetary policy stance announced at regular intervals has become their most concerning affair. Today, the most technical terms in financial matters such as cash reserve ratio, statutory liquidity ratio, bank rate, repo rate, reverse repo rate etc. are no more hard nuts to crack for a common man. They understand that any flirting by the RBI with these policy rates has direct bearing on their household budgets. It's the repo rate which is very closely monitored by common consumers. This rate decides the cost of borrowing for them.

Higher Risk Weights: Now coming to the risk weights on unsecured consumer loans. It was on November 16, 2023, the RBI advised banks and other regulated entities to stick to 125% risk weight on unsecured loans. Even as the impact of the upward revision of the risk weights could vary among individual lenders depending on their exposure to unsecured loans, the move has led to higher interest rates on loans.

Bottomline: There are various market factors other than the repo rate factor which trigger change in interest rates. Here, the borrowers have to act smart. They have to understand that the changed repo rate is no guarantee of a stable interest rate on their loans. A borrower must focus on his financial health to maintain it stable in all situations. While opting for loans, it is always advisable to look beyond the initial years and calculate the potential impact that EMI payments will have on your future financial life. Ensure total EMI of your loans remains below 40 percent of your take home salary. Examples galore which suggest that anything outside this range puts a borrower into a debt trap. Don't get lured to small/affordable EMIs. Always remember that your monthly budget and cash flow position is always changeable under the circumstances of repaying a bank loan. Check your net income (inflow) and expenditure (outflow) and the difference between the two will give you the quantum of your cash reserve. This cash reserve figure is the actual empowerment you possess to decide the amount of loan you can obtain and repay without any default.

To conclude, the power of a bank loan has two sides. It can either bring prosperity to you or leave you in a debt trap. It is just a matter of good financial planning. As far as repo rate cut is concerned, banks take the most advantage of it, while as borrowers are left less privileged.

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National Deworming Day-Healthy Children for Healthy Nation

■ ER. PRABHAT KISHORE

Children are the future of any nation. But a large chunk of children suffer from worm infections, which impacts their health, education and overall well-being. To tackle this burning issue, National Deworming Day is organized as a nationwide campaign to address the prevalence of worm infection among children. This significant public health initiative ensures a healthy future for the younger generation.

Children in the age group 1 to 19 years are more susceptible to worm infections due to their lifestyle and environment. Nationwide planned interventions are necessary to break the cycle of Parasitic worm infections, particularly Soil Transmitted Helminths (STH). Soil-transmitted helminths (STH) worms interfere with nutrient absorption and cause physical discomfort, resulting in anemia, malnutrition and impaired mental and physical cognitive development, which severely impacts children's educational performance as well as quality of life.

Deworming significantly reduces the prevalence of worms in children, thereby improving their physical health and nutritional status and eliminating the detrimental impact of worms on the brain,

leading to improved learning ability and academic performance. Improved health leads to improved school attendance, and education level.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), 241 million children aged 1 to 14 years in Bharat are at risk of parasitic intestinal worms. Regular deworming protects at-risk populations. The public should be aware of the symptoms of worm infection, so that good health can be ensured by getting it treated on time. Initially in case of few worms, no noticeable signs may be experienced, but as the worm infection progresses, various digestive discomfort like Diarrhea, Abdominal pain, weakness and fatigue, loss of appetite, nutritional deficiencies, skin problems start occurring.

The prevalence of parasitic worm infections is a significant public health concern and can also be reduced by certain common community measures, such as avoiding open defecation, not moving barefoot, washing fruits/vegetables before use, cooking meat/vegetables properly, avoiding raw uncooked street food, cleaning the kitchen, drinking treated/boiled water, cleaning nails, washing hand after contact of soil while playing/gardening etc.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare,

Government of India launched National Deworming Day (NDD) on 10th February 2015. The Day is observed bi-annually on 10th February and 10th August to intensify nationwide effective approach for training of healthcare professionals, distribution of deworming Albendazole tablets to school going children and its proper monitoring & evaluation.

The objective of National Deworming Day is to deworm all pre-school and school-age children (enrolled and unenrolled) in the age group 1-19 years through Anganwadi Kendras and schools to improve their overall health, nutritional status, access to education and quality of life. Albendazole tablets are not provided to children who are allergic to it, critically ill children, pregnant women, lactating women etc.

National Deworming Day is an ample day to protect school going children from parasitic worm infections by serving the albendazole tablets and training and guidance to school functionaries for its regular use by children. This will ensure a bright and healthy future for the children of the country and the nation will step forward towards an "Anemia Mukta Bharat".

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Delhi Polls 2025: A Tight Slap on Opportunistic Politics

■ MANMOHAN DHAR

Voters of Delhi reject Political Gimmicks, rhetoric and opportunism and Choose Stability and Vision. The results of the 2025 Delhi Assembly elections have sent a strong message to political parties-opportunistic alliances and last-minute coalitions are no match for credibility and long-term vision. As the final votes were counted, it became evident that Delhi's electorate had decisively rejected parties and leaders who indulged in political opportunism, prioritizing power over principles.

This massive verdict in favour of BJP is a clear mandate for Governance and not for political Gimmicks and deceit.

Delhi, known for its politically aware and discerning voters, has once again proven that it cannot be swayed by hollow promises and shifting loy-

alties. In the months leading up to the elections, several parties attempted to form last-minute coalitions, hoping to secure votes through convenience rather than conviction. However, the electorate saw through these tactics, punishing leaders who abandoned ideology for short-term gains.

A major takeaway from these elections is that voters prioritized governance, policies, and proven leadership over mere rhetoric. The party that secured a majority did so not by making populist promises but by presenting a clear roadmap for Delhi's future-focusing on infrastructure, healthcare, education, and environment.

One of the biggest casualties of these elections has been the credibility of parties that engaged in opportunistic alliances. Some leaders, who previ-

ously criticized each other vehemently, were seen joining hands just before the elections, expecting voters to overlook their past contradictions. However, the electorate responded with a resounding rejection, demonstrating that political convenience cannot replace trust and consistency.

Delhi's voters have shown that they value integrity in politics. The electorate refused to support parties that indulged in sudden ideological shifts, defections, or last-minute mergers, proving that loyalty and accountability matter more than political arithmetic.

The Role of Development in the Verdict is going to be the key factor in fulfilment of the promises made by the BJP. Unlike previous elections, where campaign narratives often centered around freebies and emotional appeals, this election saw a shift towards substantive discussions on development. Parties that focused on governance, policy reforms, and realistic solutions to Delhi's pressing issues emerged victorious, while those relying on polarization or theatrics found themselves struggling.

The election results reflect a matured political consciousness where voters are unwilling to be manipulated by short-term promises. Issues like pollution control, better public transport, and sustainable urban planning played a crucial role in shaping the mandate.

The 2025 Delhi elections will serve as an eye opener for political parties across the country. The message is loud and clear. You fool the people they will throw you out. You deliver they will own you. Time for BJP to deliver.