

Govt to set up 12 industrial smart cities in 10 states

PM-led CCEA earmarks ₹28,602 crore for projects

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The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has greenlit the development of 12 industrial smart cities across six major industrial corridors in 10 states, with an estimated investment of ₹28,602 crore.

These projects are designed to attract substantial investments, with expectations of approximately ₹1.52 trillion from both large anchor industries and MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises). This initiative is projected to generate 1 million direct and 3 million indirect jobs.

These smart industrial cities, part of the government's broader strategy to attract foreign investment, boost domestic manufacturing, and drive employment, will be strategically located in key regions, including Khurpia in Uttarakhand, Rajpura-Patiala in Punjab, Dighi in Maharashtra, Palakkad in Kerala, Agra and Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh, Gaya in Bihar, Zaheerabad in Telangana, Orvakal and Koppaarthi in Andhra Pradesh, and Jodhpur-Pali in Rajasthan. The name of one city has not been revealed as the Model Code of Conduct is in force in poll-bound states.

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THE PROJECTS

▶ 5 along Amritsar-Kolkata industrial corridor

- Rajpura-Patiala (Punjab)
- Khurpia (Uttarakhand)
- Agra (Uttar Pradesh)
- Prayagraj (Uttar Pradesh)
- Gaya (Bihar)

▶ 2 along Delhi-Mumbai industrial corridor

- Jodhpur-Pali (Rajasthan)
- Dighi (Maharashtra)

▶ 1 each along industrial corridors of Vizag-Chennai; Hyderabad-Bengaluru; Hyderabad-Nagpur; and Chennai-Bengaluru

- Koppaarthi (Andhra Pradesh)
- Orvakal (Andhra Pradesh)
- Zaheerabad (Telangana)
- Palakkad (Kerala)

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Govt internship scheme a 'great intention'

"My generation should have been wiped out in 1991 (after economic reforms) as we learned no economics, and there was no need and I had a physics degree. Since we had no clue and the economy was closed and there were no ripples, we never really learned any of that stuff that we needed to know after 1991. How did a lot of people who were that set of generations actually survive? I suspect because they were taught how to learn so that they learned for the rest of their lives," she said at the gathering of top HR professionals.

"I don't think very smart people, left by themselves generations after generations, can make transitions. So since we cannot ensure the stability of the world, I think we can only ensure adaptability, learnability, the ability to think from first principles, and the fundamental foundations of business. We should collectively sort of raise the bar and not play up to students' beliefs that life begins and ends with placement," she said.

Citing an example of the pressure students face, she mentioned that one student shared how friends in college would say, "Don't come back without that multi-crore job,"

as they said their goodbyes. "But you have to understand that this is the end of the beginning, and it's not even the beginning of the end. It's gonna take a long time. As we say in brands, I think also with people, we say brands don't belong in the quadrangle of the marketplace. They belong in the canvas of life," she said.

Explaining further Bijapurkar said that when it was time to create entrepreneurs, big businesses, big CEOs or social entrepreneurs, "we created them". "So they will pick what the environment they sense actually does. But I think what we need to do is also to say that you belong in the canvas of life, not in that little quadrangle of placement," she said.

Bijapurkar said currently there is a diversion between what students in the classroom want and what the workplace demands. "I am often struck when we start looking at CEO recruitments, we suddenly want something that is completely missing from the vocabulary of the recruiting stage. Not that we're recruiting CEOs at business schools. But if the intellectual part to shape direction is an important thing, then look for it," she said.

Bijapurkar said the HR knows very well

the importance of skills and shared values and culture in the whole strategy. "What we teach in terms of customer centricity, is applicable to you as well. We say that a business is a value delivery system. So you choose the value, and organise yourself to deliver and signal that value," she said. In many ways we seem to miss the trick of organising to deliver the value and not organising per se with practices and principles and so on and so forth, she added.

On the rush of digital transformation and data, Bijapurkar said every corporate board is talking about digital transformations but frictions among the teams need to be managed.

"We're all talking about data and data skills and have data scientists. The data scientists are fighting with the consumer teams. The guys in the field are saying you don't get it. Data scientists believe that data will get them customers, while customers believe that they are providing the data. So there is a lot of friction, how do you sort it out?," she said.

In one of the two panel discussions at conclave, experts said the success of this new internship scheme announced by Finance Minister Nirmala

Sitharaman in the Budget would lie in the way it is executed.

The panel discussion, titled "Career and Jobs: Current Environment and What's Required", included prominent names in the field of HR — Amit Kumar Das, senior director-people & organisation and board member, Novo Nordisk India; Suryanarayanan G Iyer, head, human capital management, cloud solution engineering team, Oracle India; Ruhie Pande, group chief HR officer, Sterlite Power; and Hema Bajaj, head, faculty, MBA-HR, Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies.

Terming the internship scheme a "great intention" on the part of the government, Das said "mandate always works better in India" than voluntary action. This programme is more of a "build model" of talent development rather than the "buy model" of talent development, he said.

"While the government mandate is a great idea, the government should be monitoring this to see how the performance of the students have been, and organisations too need to create meaningful projects for the students to participate so

that they learn skills which they can apply in future. Contingent to these, this mandate is a great initiative," Pande said.

The experts felt that the duration of the internships should be 6-8 weeks. "When students go for an internship, we ensure through the design of our curriculum that they are equipped with certain skills before they go for their internship so that they are able to maximise their time over there," she explained.

On the panel discussion on "Opportunities for HR Development and Strategic Focus Areas", experts said fast changing technology landscape and hiring trends are nudging industry executives to take a fresh look at how they hire.

"Flexibility is no more a benefit, but now a commodity. The workforce aspirations are changing. It's our mind-set, it is not that employee work is not happening if you don't see it," said Rajkamal Vempati, head of human resources at Axis Bank, which operates its workforce on a hybrid model, championing remote work for non-consumer-facing roles

D P Nambiar, vice-president-HR, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), said the need to assimilate new hires with the company's ethos and culture is what's driving TCS' work-from-office approach. "There wasn't any effect on productivity, efficiency. Where we believe there is a concern is that people, especially people who joined us during the course of the pandemic, may not have a good enough appreciation of what the organisation is all about -- the values and ethos of this organisation, and what does this organisation stand for."

Saba Adil, chief human resources officer at Edelweiss Life Insurance, noted that while the process of hiring remains the same, "what we look for in people at the time of hiring has definitely changed". "Now, what we look for in terms of the outflow to jobs is the resilience they (people) bring into the organisation, the learnability that people carry on," Adil said.

Ramesh Mitrage, group executive president of Aditya Birla Group, said technology adoption decisions have to be value-driven.

"Just because my competitors are using something, I shouldn't be rushing it. There is an opportunity for the organisation to multiply what it does: Productivity increases, not just in size. The issue is that new roles emerge for what you do with it."

**Smart
HR CONCLAVE**

