

# Manifesto: NDA

**AN AGENDA FOR DEVELOPMENT,  
GOOD GOVERNANCE AND PEACE**

**Elections to the 14th Lok Sabha  
April-May 2004**



## Introduction

The first National Democratic Alliance Government was elected to office in 1998. It was re-elected in 1999. Under Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visionary leadership, the NDA is seeking a renewed mandate, in the 2004 General Election, to serve the nation for another five years.

The NDA had promised to end political instability created by the Congress party's dangerous destabilizing tactics. We have done so by giving India a stable and purposive government under an able leader.

Adhering to the canons of 'Coalition Dharma' mutual trust, regular consultation, consensus building, and acceptance of a common approach, the NDA has shown how a coalition can work unitedly to fulfill the people's aspirations.

We have lived up to our 1999 manifesto declaration: 'The NDA is a representative of both national interests and regional aspirations. The NDA is ... the mirror-image of our nation's unity in multifaceted diversity, rich pluralism, and federalism.'

The NDA Government has taken India forward on all fronts during the past five years. Our common manifesto in the 1999 elections was called, 'An Agenda For a Proud, Prosperous India'. Today, India is more prosperous than ever before. There is greater pride, hope, and self-confidence among Indians than ever earlier. Today, India stands tall on the international stage, with greater prestige and recognition.

In five years, our country has demonstrated its ability to overcome the legacy of past problems and to embrace the opportunities of the 21st century. There is peace on the Indo-Pak border, entirely due to the Government's firm but bold efforts to

enable bilateral relations to move from seemingly never-ending enmity to amity. An atmosphere has been created for resolving all outstanding issues through dialogue. This positive development is pregnant with possibilities not only for India and Pakistan, but also for the future of South Asia.

Jammu & Kashmir basks again in the sunshine of regained peace, well set now on the road to development. The holding of free and fair elections in 2002, and the commitment to a dialogue process, has generated new hope in the State. Troubled parts of the North-East are seeing fruits of the NDA Government's consistent pursuit of peace and conflict-resolution through dialogue. The NDA Government is now resolving the problems left in these regions as legacies of long Congress misrule.

We have finally left behind our years of stagnation and slow economic growth that marked most of the first fifty years of our independence. A GDP growth rate of 8%, which our opponents had cynically derided as 'Mungeri Lal ke haseen sapne', has become real and will be exceeded, despite the country having faced a string of natural calamities. Last year, our efficient and effective management, of severe drought situation in fourteen States, was without precedent. Prices of essential commodities remain under control.

Agricultural production will surpass all previous records. Our forex reserves exceed the \$110 billion mark.

Many areas of India's manufacturing sector, earlier written off by critics, have now attained global competitiveness. The past five years have not only brought pride to the 'Made in India' label, but have also made 'Served from India' the first choice of global companies. This sunrise sector has generated new employment. This new offshoot of the Knowledge Economy complements India's globally recognized strengths in software exports, which have grown more than five times in the last five years to cross Rs. 48,000 crore.

Poor and inadequate infrastructure, which was the debilitating legacy of the Congress years, has been replaced by a world-class infrastructure for India, built by Indians, in India. We have set in motion what the Prime Minister has aptly termed as a 'Connectivity Revolution'. Telecom connectivity, Internet connectivity, highway connectivity, and rural roads connectivity are just the initial, visible

successes of this revolution. We are determined to replicate these successes in other critical areas of infrastructure power, railways, airports, ports, irrigation, etc. where bottlenecks have severely constrained economic growth and employment generation.

The past five years has seen a huge boom in housing construction. We have over-fulfilled our promise, made in 1999, of facilitating construction of twenty lakh new houses each year. We take pride in the fact that the Vajpayee Government built more houses for the rural poor under the Indira Awaas Yojana in the last five years than the Congress or Congress-supported governments did in the previous fourteen years since the inception of the scheme.

Creating one crore additional employment opportunities a year was an important promise contained in our 1999 manifesto. We have substantially fulfilled that promise. Between 2000-2003, 82 lakh employment and self-employment opportunities were created on average each year. The Rs. 1,000-crore Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana, started by our Government, is the biggest food-for-work program since Independence.

Our Government launched some of the biggest-ever social development initiatives in the world. These include the Antyodaya Anna Yojana and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The coverage of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), which is the world's largest early childcare program, was greatly expanded. Major initiatives, such as establishment of a separate ministry for tribal affairs, were taken to promote the cause of social justice.

We now seek a renewed term to carry forward our agenda. Responding to the aspirations and expectations of the people, the NDA has made 'Development', 'Good Governance', and 'Peace', as the main issues for Election 2004. Our commitment to these issues is further affirmed in this Manifesto.

India is prosperous, and developing. Millions of Indians have got employment, bought houses, use cell phones, and are getting better education for their children. Yet, millions more still await their chance of benefiting from and contributing to the Great Indian Dream. Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's advocacy of 'Antyodaya', the NDA Government is committed to reaching the fruits of development to all; for we believe that the deprived and the denied have the first call on the resources and the attention of

the Indian State.

## **Our vision**

### **India as a Developed Nation**

Our Goal: 8 to 10% GDP growth rate on a sustainable basis over the next five years, with eradication of poverty by 2015. Clear five-yearly milestones for economic growth and social development will be set for each State and district.

Our Guiding Principle: Faster growth with employment, equity, social justice, reduction in regional imbalances, and the urban-rural divide.

The NDA believes that GDP growth, at an annual rate of 8 to 10% on a sustainable basis, is achievable. This will realize our strategic vision of making India a Developed Nation. We have full faith in the capacity of our hardworking kisans and workers, enterprising businessmen and traders, innovative managers, professionals, talented scientists, and dedicated administrators to achieve this goal.

The NDA is committed to making India an economic superpower through a seven-pronged strategy of:

1. India as the food factory of the world.
2. India as the global manufacturing hub.
3. India as the service provider to the world.
4. India as the centre of the knowledge economy.
5. India as the global tourism destination.
6. India as the global healthcare destination.
7. India as the global higher education destination.

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# Agriculture

The NDA Government gives highest priority to agriculture, since it is the mainstay of India's overall development. Our main objectives are:

1. Bring vibrancy to the rural economy.
2. Make agriculture remunerative even to small and marginal farmers by doubling the income of kisans by 2010, reducing the cost of cultivation, enhancing yields, and increasing prices receivable by farmers. We have, for the first time since Independence, set up a National Kisan Commission to address these imperatives.
3. Double the rate of growth of public and private investment in agriculture.
4. Make India's eastern States, which have fertile land and plenty of water, a new food basket of India.
5. Increase the access of our farmers to markets, to competitive sources of finance, and to knowledge that allows them to compete in a global economy.
6. Increase value addition and reduce wastage at every stage in the food chain linking the kisan to the consumer, so that both benefit.
7. Make India the 'Food Factory' of the world by producing high quality processed foods for global markets.

For achieving these objectives, the Prime Minister will formally launch the Second Green Revolution on August 15, 2004. Since agriculture is a state subject, the NDA will make efforts to secure the participation of States in implementing the following tasks under the Second Green Revolution, which will lead to an 'Ever Green' Revolution.

## **Land, Water, and Power**

1. Work will commence on the River-Linking Project, whose principal beneficiaries will be our farmers in water-scarce areas.
2. Completion of all the ongoing irrigation projects (major, medium, and minor) within five years to create irrigation for an additional 35 million hectares of land.
3. A Master Plan for ground water recharge will be implemented throughout the nation.
4. Mandatory community participation in planning, execution, and maintenance of irrigation projects through mechanisms such as Water Users' Associations.
5. Every district will draw up a comprehensive water management and soil enrichment strategy.
6. A campaign will be launched to encourage drip irrigation, sprinkler irrigation and greenhouse technology. Land under these water-efficient systems will be increased five-fold in five years. Our slogan for this campaign would be 'More Crop per Drop'.
7. A National Mission for Rainfed Agriculture will be launched to benefit two-thirds of India's cropped area, and 80% of small and marginal farmers who are dependent on rains. It will focus on the watershed approach, use of better seeds, dissemination of relevant farm technologies, soil enrichment, and commercialization of everything that grows on arid lands, including weeds and wild plants.
8. Adequate supply of quality power will be ensured to all farmers by 2009.
9. Wasteland development for agriculture, horticulture, afforestation, bio-mass production, cultivation of bamboo and bio-fuels, and other productive uses will be taken up on a mission mode. All programs, currently under different ministries, will be brought under a single agency. The National Wasteland Development Board will be reactivated to put at least 25 million hectares of wasteland to productive use by 2009 that is, by doubling the rate of coverage under all the existing programs. The Centre will draw up a model law for better management



of land and other natural resources through community participation, private investments, corporate-cooperative collaboration, and by making landless labourers, small farmers, ex-servicemen, and unemployed youth partners in every initiative for wasteland development. The model law will be commended to State Governments to pass similar legislations and set up suitably empowered authorities to implement this important mission.

10. Organic farming will be promoted to reverse soil degradation produce 'natural' foods that are becoming popular the world over. Fiscal and other forms of support will be given for production of bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides.
11. Leasing in and leasing out of lands within farmers would be permitted through enabling legislation.
12. With the cooperation of the State governments, all revenue records and land transfer systems will be computerized and linked to a Geographical Information System.

### **Finance and Insurance**

1. Greater Plan Funds shall be earmarked for agriculture, irrigation, rural development and allied areas.
2. A Task Force will be set up to recommend, within the first six months, policy and institutional measures to promote private sector investment in agriculture, especially in small and medium-scale irrigation projects, farm R&D, human resource development, post-harvest management, and marketing. Public and private investments, as well as investments by farmers themselves, will be synergized through partnerships. It needs to be underscored that private investment in agriculture does not mean corporate farming.
3. Timely and adequate farm credit to kisans is as important as timely and adequate water for his crops. Therefore, steps will be taken to ensure enhanced credit flow to the sector, make credit affordable at interests lower than prime lending rates (PLR), eliminate procedural delays, and introduce greater competition in credit delivery. The

process of giving all eligible farmers a Kisan Credit Card will be completed before August 15, 2004. Card-holders will be able to use ATM facility wherever it exists. Our aim will be to create a well-developed farm credit system, which will end the need for farmers to go to money lenders.

4. Projects under the newly announced Loknayak Jaiprakash Narayan Fund of Rs. 50,000 crore for agriculture infrastructure and credit will be given fast-track clearance.
5. The Government will give priority attention to strengthening cooperative banks and other cooperative credit institutions. The Rs. 15,000-crore fund announced for this purpose in the interim budget will be made operational. Necessary steps will be taken to ensure that cooperative institutions are run on professional and sound commercial lines, while retaining their democratic character.
6. All States will be encouraged to bring their cooperative laws in conformity with the Multi-State Cooperative Act passed by the Centre.
7. Full support will be provided for setting up cold storages, godowns, grain banks, and fodder banks. Kisans keeping their produce in accredited godowns/grain banks will be entitled to avail bank credit with the introduction of Negotiable Warehouse Receipts.
8. The comprehensive crop insurance scheme and the newly launched farm income insurance scheme will be more intensively and efficiently implemented.

### **Technology, Training, and Extension Services**

1. Launch of a national program to use bio-technology for evolving plants that consume less water, are drought-resistant, contain more nutrition, give higher yield, and are environmentally safe.
2. Resources for agricultural R&D will be trebled in the next five years. Its focus on new yield-enhancing and cost-reducing agriculture practices, new seeds, etc. To close the gap between 'Lab to Land', multiple kinds of partnerships will be established between the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR), Krishi Vigyan Kendras,

agriculture universities, agri-business companies, and farmers' organizations.

3. Agriculture extension and consultancy services will be made a thrust area, with private sector participation. Necessary bank credit and institutional support will be made available for the establishment of at least one 'Krishi Seva Kendra' in every village. The 'Kisan Call Centre' service (which uses a nationwide toll-free telephone number 1551. will be made operational nationwide and in all local languages. Besides benefiting farmers, these agri-consultancy services will create employment and income-enhancing opportunities for over five lakh educated youth and local agriculture experts.
4. Opportunities for education and training in agriculture and allied activities will be vastly expanded. Our aim will be to ensure that every farmer undergoes some training or participates in some farm-education program every year.
5. A comprehensive, countrywide program will be launched for the technological improvement of farm machinery, implements, and tools.

### **Agricultural Markets**

1. States will be given incentives to amend the Agricultural Produce and Marketing Committee (APMC) Act and abolish mandi taxes. This will enable farmers to access competitive markets, sell their produce directly to processing industries and to consumers, thus realizing better prices.
2. All the remaining restrictions on the free movement of agricultural goods across any part of the country will be removed within one year. The Essential Commodities Act will be revised.
3. A Rs. 1,000 crore Mandi Development Fund will be created to support modernization of agriculture markets.
4. Commodity exchanges will be encouraged to reach futures trading services to all farmers through smaller contract sizes and by covering a wider range of crops. This will lessen the dependence on Minimum Support Prices.

5. The present system of setting Minimum Support Prices by the Commission on Agricultural Costs and Prices will be reviewed to further benefit all kisans.
6. The present system of procurement through the Food Corporation of India will be revamped to make it cheaper to buy, store, transport, and export food grains.
7. A chain of farmers' haats (markets), on the pattern of 'Ryuthu Bazaar' in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, will be established throughout the country, where farmers can sell directly to customers.

### **Food Processing**

1. The NDA believes that the food processing industry can make our rural economy vibrant in the same manner that IT has made our national economy prosper. Currently, we process only 2% of the value of our agricultural produce. A Task Force shall come up with an action plan to raise this to 10% in five years. It will comprehensively address the main problems facing India's food processing industry: size, fragmentation, inefficiency, low value-addition, low quality standards, and inadequate logistical support. It will enable the industry to meet the needs of Indian consumers both at the low end and the high end. It will enable industry to access agriculture produce directly from farmers, and suggest ways to step up exports, including to organized retail outlets abroad.
2. Tariff and investment support for setting up food processing industries, especially in backward regions, will be stepped up.
3. The foremost task in food processing in India is to reduce the distance between production and processing. Therefore, every rural branch of a bank will be required to identify agro-processing potential in its region and finance such enterprises. Local administration will be required to provide necessary infrastructure support. We shall set up a chain of Primary Processing Centres close to the farmers. These will sort, grade, process, store, and pack agricultural and horticultural produce for shipment to markets and

further value-addition.

4. A Unified Food Law, the lack of which is a critical impediment in the faster development of food-processing industries, will be enacted within the first six months.
5. An independent Food Regulatory Authority will be set up within six months. This shall be responsible for setting and enforcing standards for all food products.
6. A Task Force will be set up, within first three months, to recommend short-term and long-term measures to address the problems faced by sugarcane growers and sugar mills, and to enable Indian sugar industry to become a major player in global markets. Production of ethanol and power through co-generation plants will be stepped up.
7. India is the largest milk producer in the world. Yet, less than 5% of milk production is processed. A Dairy Industry Development Plan will be drawn up, within the first six months, with the principal aim of enhancing rural incomes and employment generation. It will provide increased fiscal and investment support for dairy units, especially in northern and eastern States. The focus of this plan will be doubling capacity in five years, technology upgradation, expansion of the domestic market, and realization of the industry's full export potential. It will also address the downstream side of the – industry better species, fodder, veterinary services, credit needs of kisans, etc.
8. Major thrust will be given to the poultry industry to double egg production, quadruple poultry meat production, and increase exports from Rs. 250 crore to Rs. 1,000 crore. This is expected to increase employment in poultry from the current 20 lakh to 50 lakh in five years. Poultry farming will be recognized as an agricultural activity and all benefits applicable to agriculture will be extended to it.
9. An experts' committee will be set up, within thirty days, to recommend measures to minimize wastage and damages along the food chain.

## **Crops**

1. An action plan for massive crop diversification, multi-cropping, and doubling per-acre yields of all crops will be prepared. Every village will be encouraged to set its own yearly targets. Successful farmers will be suitably recognized.
2. Efforts will be intensified to achieve self-sufficiency in pulses and oil-seeds in five years.
3. Horticulture and floriculture production will be doubled in five years. Vegetable cultivation and mushroom farming, especially near towns and cities will be promoted.
4. Additional measures will be initiated for addressing the problems faced by growers of plantation crops – tea, coffee, coconut, areca nut, rubber, cashew and spices, for enabling India to retain its leadership position in these crops.
5. The national missions for development of bio-fuels and bamboo, which were launched last year, will be made operational. Cultivation of medicinal plants and aromatic plants, which have considerable export potential, will be further promoted.
6. A Technology Mission for improving jute production and value-addition will be launched.

## **Animal husbandry and Fisheries**

1. Animal husbandry, which provides full and partial employment to over two crore Indians, will be fully promoted to achieve the ends of rural prosperity and social justice. A National Cattle Development Board will be set up with adequate budgetary support. Among other things, it will prepare a program for improvement of livestock breeds, with a major thrust on genetic improvement of indigenous cattle, buffalo, and other animals linked to the rural economy. Establishment of Goshalas and Pinjrapoles will be encouraged. Efforts will be made to evolve consensus for passing a Central legislation for protection of cow and her progeny. Recommendations of the newly-established National Cattle Commission will be implemented.

2. A National Commission for Fisheries and Aquaculture will be set up for promoting all-round development of marine and inland fisheries, and speedy socio-economic progress of fishermen. Deep sea fishing industry will be developed to take advantage of India's long coastline and its exclusive economic zone. Fishermen's cooperatives will be helped to modernize their trawlers, set up cold storages and processing plants, and establish direct linkages with domestic and foreign markets.
3. India is the second largest wool producer in the world. However, our wool industry is by and large at a low level of quality and value realization. An action plan will be prepared for its modernization and expansion. The newly established Development and Finance Corporation for the Shepherd Community will be made operational.

### **Agricultural Workers**

Effective steps will be taken to ensure sustainable year-long employment, with minimum wages for agricultural workers. They will be brought under the social security scheme for unorganized workers and the proposed Antyodaya Swasthya Yojana. They will be given priority in rural housing. Training programs for raising their productivity and skills will be encouraged.

### **Other issues**

1. Women play a major, albeit unrecognized, role in Indian agriculture. A special scheme will be launched to empower women in kisan families, enrich their capabilities, and augment their incomes.
2. An extensive campaign will be launched to educate Indian kisans about the WTO Agreement on Agriculture, the challenges and opportunities in global trade in agriculture after the removal of Quantitative Restrictions, and how a partnership between the government, businesses, cooperatives, and kisans can help the country meet the challenges and capture the opportunities.

The 'Second Green Revolution' will follow a strategy distinctly

different from the one that defined the First Green Revolution. The latter focused mostly on the popularization of high-yielding crop varieties to overcome food shortage. In contrast, the Second Green Revolution will embrace the entire Agro-Economy, from the farmer to the consumer. It will harness a bouquet of new technologies, space, IT, BT. It will also focus on water-efficient irrigation systems, environment-friendly pesticides, precision agriculture, agriculture markets, food processing, rural infrastructure, etc.

Many of the activities mentioned above are looked after by different Departments and Ministries. For better coordination, a Cabinet Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development will be set up.

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## Rural Development

The Government's main thrust in the coming five years will be to bridge the rural-urban divide through implementation of the PURA (Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas) program. Under this program, to be implemented in ten thousand rural clusters across the country in five years, every cluster will be provided with four types of connectivities:

- (a) physical connectivity, which includes good roads and power supply;
- (b) digital connectivity, which includes modern telecom and IT services;
- (c) knowledge connectivity, which includes good schools and vocational training centers; and
- (d) market connectivity, which includes good market infrastructure.

### Specifically,

- Village electrification will be completed by 2007 through an accelerated implementation of the program to cover 1 crore households and 1 lakh villages.
- All villages will have primary health centers within the village, dispensaries within five to eight kilometers, and referral hospitals within twenty kilometers.

PURA will be launched before August 15, 2004.

### Rural Sanitation

Lack of safe drinking water and sanitation is the cause of 80% of all diseases and ailments. 67% of India's rural population and 22% of our urban population has no access to toilets. This is a source of

embarrassment and discontent among the youth, especially young women. The NDA is committed to changing this sad reality.

The Total Sanitation Campaign, launched by the NDA Government in 1999, has been a remarkable success. Necessary funds will be mobilized to ensure that all the TSC projects will be fully implemented in five years, ensuring that all the 8.4 crore uncovered rural households will have access to basic sanitation either their own or community-owned. There shall be no Anganwadi centre or rural/urban school without water and toilet facilities by 2005. Priority will be given to girls' schools and schools in tribal and remote areas.

### **Drinking water**

More than Rs. 40,000 crore have been invested in the rural water supply sector during the last five decades by the Central and State Governments. However, the results have not been commensurate with this investment, primarily because the schemes did not have an in-built mechanism for people's participation, panchayat ownership, and bureaucratic accountability. The NDA Government removed this shortcoming by launching the 'Swajaldhara' program in December 2002. Under this, 90% of funds on capital cost would be given by the Centre directly to Panchayats. The remaining 10% of the capital cost and full Operation and Maintenance (O&M) responsibility will be borne by the community.

All the existing rural drinking water supply schemes would be brought under the reforms agenda of 'Swajaldhara' – making them 'demand-driven' rather than 'supply-driven' to ensure their long-term sustainability. Adequate funds will be mobilized for its enlarged implementation with the following commitments:

- (a) Every rural habitation in the country, including those that have slipped back into the Partially Covered or Non-Covered status, will be provided an assured source of drinking water supply by 2007;
- (b) A community-based program for water quality monitoring would be initiated;
- (c) Water supply departments and nigams of State Governments would be reformed;

- (d) Panchayats would be given incentives for rainwater harvesting, raising ground-water levels, and augmentation and cleaning up of water sources such as village ponds, wells, rivulets, etc.



# Infrastructure

The Connectivity Revolution, which was launched by the NDA Government, and has already yielded visible results in several sectors, will be further accelerated. Specifically, our Government will do the following in the coming five years:

## Roads

1. Timely completion of the National Highway Development Project (nearly 15,000 km): Phase 1 (Golden Quadrilateral) by 2005; Phase 2 (East-West and North-South Corridors) by 2008; Pradhan Mantri Bharat Jodo Pariyojana (additional 10,000 km, linking all those State capitals not covered by NHDP, as well as important commercial centers in all the States, to NHDP with 4/6 lane highways) by 2009.
2. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana: Linking all rural habitations with a population above 1,000 by 2005; linking all rural habitations with a population above 500 by 2007.
3. Private investment in public transport systems will be encouraged. States will be given incentives to speed up restructuring of their road transport corporations. At least five thousand new buses will be added to their fleets every year through a special fund. A separate fund for improvement of all the Inter-State Bus Terminals and District Bus Stations will also be set up.
4. In addition to road construction, a program for creation of road services like parking facilities, hotels, shops, medical facilities, business centers, food kiosks, etc. in a well-planned manner, will be taken up.
5. Road safety has not received adequate attention in India. As many as 78,000 people die in road accidents each year.

The Government will start a National Road Safety Mission, with necessary legal, regulatory, technology and mass awareness measures.

### **‘Sampoorna Sadak Connectivity’**

A new program called the ‘Pradhan Mantri Pradesh Sadak Yojana’ (PMPSY) will be launched to improve all the State Highways and district roads in the country. These are the weak link in our road network that includes world-class national highways on one end and rapidly improving rural roads on the other end. The blueprint of this program, including its funding and monitoring, will be prepared after detailed consultation with State Governments. Reform of State PWDs and participation of the private sector will be the highlights of this new project. PMPSY will provide the missing link in the comprehensive road connectivity revolution, to be called the ‘Sampoorna Sadak Connectivity’ initiative, whose other three links are already being implemented by our Government namely, National Highways Development Program (NHDP), Pradhan Mantri Bharat Jodo Pariyojana (PMBJP), and the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).

### **Railways**

Railways are the lifeline of our nation. They are also the most important logistical support system for the Indian economy. Unprecedented expansion and modernization of India’s railway infrastructure over the next five years will be our commitment.

1. Implementation of works under the Rs. 15,000-crore National Rail Vikas Yojana, launched in December 2002, will be completed in time.
2. Implementation of the Rs. 20,000-crore Remote Area Rail Sampark Yojana, which was announced in the interim railway budget in January 2004, will start this year. Under this ambitious new initiative, all incomplete railway projects in remote and backward areas of our country, whose completion by the earlier ‘Congress speed of implementation’ would take 20 to 25 years, will be completed within the next 5 years.
3. We shall complete the rail connectivity from Kanyakumari

to Kashmir, to complement the completion of the four-lane highway connectivity from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, by speedily implementing the Udhampur-Katra-Baramulla railway line. The first ever train will roll into Kashmir Valley before August 15, 2007, carrying the Prime Minister as its first passenger.

4. Implementation of works under the Rs. 17,000-crore Special Railway Safety Fund, set up by the NDA Government in 2002, will be completed in time. The Technology Mission for Railway Safety will be made operational in 2004. Our aim will be to reach standards of railway safety in advanced countries by 2008.
5. Speed of goods trains on important lines will be increased to over 100 kmph.
6. The Railway Design and Standards Organization (RDSO) will be completely overhauled to make it a world-class R&D organization, with strong external linkages, capable of infusing new technology, which our railway network requires.
7. Operation Cleanliness will be completed by 2007 to give a new image to Indian Railways.
8. Metro rail projects will be started in many more cities. The 'Skybus' system shall be promoted on a pilot basis.
9. At least one bullet train project will be initiated.
10. A Rs. 5,000-crore Railway Station Improvement Fund shall be set up to improve passenger amenities in all important railway stations over five years. The fund will be raised from railway users and augmented by public-private partnerships.

## **Railway Reforms**

Long-overdue reforms in the structure and functioning of Indian Railways, its finances, tariff fixation, investment plans, and project implementation will be speedily implemented. All non-core activities will be corporatized with their own effective board management. Critical projects will be re-designed to attract non-budgetary and private investments. The huge value hidden in the assets of Indian Railways, and in its under-utilized capacities,

will be realized. Devolution of powers to zonal and lower levels will be effected. An independent Rail Tariff Regulatory Authority will be set up on the lines of the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission.

### **Ports and Shipping**

1. 'Sagar Mala', conceived by the NDA Government in 2003, is the most ambitious ever program for development and modernization of India's ports, shipping, shipyards, and inland navigation. Its aim is to make India a major maritime nation in the world, harnessing the long coastline that our country is blessed with. To be completed in ten years, it envisages new investments of over Rs. 100,000 crore, coming mostly from private and foreign investors. 'Sagar Mala' will be launched before August 15, 2005.
2. The operational efficiency of all major Indian ports will be raised to global standards within five years. Towards this end, the Government will effect complete overhaul in the management of Indian ports, including corporatizing each port and bringing private investment and management skills.
3. Sethusamudram project in Tamil Nadu will be speedily completed.
4. Rail and road connectivity to ports will be further improved.
5. The value of unused and under-used land and production assets in ports will be realized.
6. Major boost will be given to global shipping under the Indian flag.
7. Employment potential in seafaring will be fully harnessed through a National Maritime University of India with associated training colleges.

### **Airports and Civil Aviation**

1. The proposed new 'Open Skies' Civil Aviation Policy will be adopted within the first thirty days.
2. Ten Indian cities, designated to be developed as Global Cities, will have world-class airports.
3. Planned fleet acquisition program of Indian Airlines and

- Air India will be completed before the end of 2004. Air India will be promoted as India's proud national carrier.
4. All airports in the country will be brought under the framework of public-private partnerships.
  5. Air connectivity to remote areas, such as in the North-Eastern States, will be further strengthened.
  6. New international airport projects for Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Hyderabad will be completed within the next three to four years and the Prime Minister will inaugurate them before August 15, 2008.
  7. One hundred small airstrips across the country will be activated for daylight flying of small passenger and cargo planes. This will bring air connectivity to many district centers in remote and backward areas.

### **Telecom and IT infrastructure**

1. Further accelerating the revolution in telecom connectivity, which began in 1999, the number of telephones will be increased from 7 crore at present to more than 30 crore by 2009. This will ensure that, on average, every alternate Indian family will have a telephone.
2. No Indian village will be without telecom services after 2007. Rural teledensity will be increased more than five-fold in five years.
3. The number of Internet connections will be increased five-fold from 40 lakhs at present to 2 crore.
4. PCOs will be encouraged to become multi-purpose IT kiosks and serve as the e-interface between citizens and providers of services, including government services. These will create several lakh new employment opportunities.
5. Broadband communication can revolutionize all sectors of the Indian economy. It can also bring about a paradigm change in the content and delivery of education and entertainment. Therefore, a comprehensive policy will soon be formulated to promote affordable broadband connectivity. This will embrace all the landline and wireless phone users, cable TV homes, and cinema halls. Promotion of state-of-the-art wireless technologies will be a key part



of this policy.

6. India's economy, government and education will be IT-enabled at all levels. Implementation of a national E-Governance strategy will begin before August 15, 2004. E-Seva will be made the common platform for citizens to pay bills for electricity, telephone, water, etc., register property, procure and submit government forms, etc. We will drastically reduce the need for citizens to go to a government office for services which can be rendered electronically.
7. IT in Indian languages, including in the area of content creation, will be given special thrust.
8. Postal services will be revamped, modernized, and IT-enabled to provide a range of commercial and governmental services to the people.
9. Every high school and every college in the country will be given access to a high-speed Internet connection with access to rich educational content in local languages.

### **Meeting The Challenge Of Water**

1. The River-Linking Project will be launched before August 15, 2004. An initial set of identified schemes will be implemented, with public participation, by 2015. An effective rehabilitation package for the project-affected persons shall be finalized and implemented.
2. Massive encouragement and legislative backing for local and micro initiatives such as watershed management, rainwater harvesting, drip irrigation, de-silting of tanks, lakes and reservoirs, restoration of wells, recycling of water, etc.
3. Cleaning up of rivers and traditional water bodies, with community participation, will be supported.
4. Desalination plants will be set up in coastal towns.
5. An independent Water Tariff Authority will be set up in each State to decide the water tariffs for industrial, commercial, residential, and agricultural usage.
6. A campaign will be launched to make people aware of the need to conserve every drop of water.

In view of the utmost importance and urgency of this issue, a 'National Drinking Water Program' will be launched within the first thirty days. The Ministry of Finance will be directed to provide all required resources to implement this program in a time-bound manner. A Task Force will be set up to work out the modalities of this program, including innovative ways of financing it.

## **Power**

In 1998, the NDA Government inherited not only an extremely difficult power situation, but also a defective power policy and a flawed sector reform program. We took immediate steps to change the direction of reform and reorient the policies and programs with a view to setting right the situation. Priority was given to reforms in distribution by providing Rs. 20,000 crore for improving the distribution network and another Rs. 20,000 crore for giving SEBs incentives to reduce their losses. By enacting the Electricity Act, 2003, the NDA Government gave a big push to power sector reforms. Our future commitments in this critical sector will be:

1. Elimination of electricity shortages by 2012; significant reduction by 2009.
2. At least 50,000 MW of additional generation capacity will be created over the next five years. Work on projects with a combined capacity of 12,000 MW (of which 8,000 MW in the private sector) will start before the end of 2004.
3. Robust National Grid - 25,000 MW of power transfer capability by 2009.
4. SEB losses to be reduced to less than Rs. 5,000 crore by 2009 from the current figure of Rs. 24,000 crore.
5. T&D losses shall be significantly reduced.
6. Power sector reforms, envisaged in the Electricity Act, will be completed before end of 2004.
7. Every consumer of electricity in India, including farmers, would be connected through digital, tamper-proof meters in the next three years.
8. Implementation of the 50,000 MW Hydroelectric Initiative.
9. Implementation of the 100,000 MW Thermal Power Initiative.
10. A major push for harnessing non-conventional energy

sources. A National Program for biomass-based decentralized power generation in rural areas will be started.

11. Energy conservation campaign will be intensified by promoting energy saving technologies.

We promise that the above tasks, when accomplished, will create not only a vibrant and healthy power sector, but the country will experience the benefit of power sector reforms, in the same manner as is being experienced in the Telecom Sector.



# Industry

1. An action plan will be drawn up, within six months, to make India a global manufacturing hub in areas where we have established our competitive strengths: pharmaceuticals, automobiles, auto-components, engineering goods. New industries, especially in hi-tech areas, will be identified for development of such strengths.
2. In view of the good results achieved by industrial units that restructured themselves in recent years, this process will be further facilitated to cover all the remaining units. Our aim will be to eliminate all idle or grossly underutilized capacities in Indian industry in five years.
3. Indian capital goods industry, automobile industry, pharmaceutical industry, chemicals and petrochemicals industry, gems and jewelry industry will be encouraged to move up the technology ladder and value chain and to become global players.
4. Restructuring PSUs will be speeded up to enhance their profitability. Public sector executives will be empowered to have greater operational freedom and flexibility. Effective measures will be taken to stop losses incurred by ailing government undertakings. The process of disinvestment, which yielded good results this year, will be continued primarily to enhance and realize the hidden wealth in PSUs.
5. Out of the 461 projects being monitored by the Department of Programme Implementation, 100 will be taken up for fast-track completion in two years.
6. The Centre will facilitate the creation of a world-class

industrial park in every State that is ready to lend necessary support.

7. We shall facilitate the creation of world-class Indian multinationals.

## **Coal**

1. New coal mining projects will be started in 2004 to enhance existing capacity by 50 million tonnes. Focus will be on coking coal required for steel plants, and on coal for thermal power stations.
2. Necessary legislation will be introduced for encouraging private initiatives in the coal sector.
3. Restructuring of coal PSUs to make them more efficient and profitable.

## **Oil & Natural Gas**

1. Enhanced oil production through increased exploitation of own resources as well as purchase of ownership in oil fields overseas.
2. Dependence on fossil fuels to be lessened through a concerted drive for harnessing non-conventional energy sources.
3. Competition in the oil and natural gas sector will be promoted through introduction of multiple players in the supply of products.
4. Commercial exploitation of discovered gas fields will begin by 2005.
5. Gas grid quadrilateral covering the entire country will be completed by 2007.
6. The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Bill will be enacted.

## **Steel & Aluminum**

1. Policy and fiscal support will be provided for doubling steel production capacity in five years.
2. Improvement in technology for production of special and high-value steels.
3. Aluminium plants will be encouraged to become global

players.

## Mines

1. Policy will be reoriented, within three months, to encourage private investment in the mines sector.
2. Single-window clearance for harnessing of mineral resources such as iron ore, limestone, bauxite, and precious metals in an environmentally sustainable manner.
3. A raw material use policy will be unveiled in the mines sector.

## Textiles

1. The government will launch a new initiative, to be called the Kabir Integrated Handloom Development Project, with an initial allocation of Rs. 1,000 crore. To be implemented in all the nearly two hundred plus handloom clusters in the country, it will have five growth objectives:
  - (a) to sustain and further increase the domestic market for handloom products.
  - (b) to boost handloom exports from the current Rs. 3,000 crores to Rs. 10,000 crore in five years.
  - (c) to lift every handloom weaver's family above poverty level.
  - (d) to create sustainable employment for at least 10 lakh more people in the handloom sector.
  - (e) to help handlooms move up the value chain. Necessary fiscal and other support will be given to achieve the above objectives.
2. The end of the Multi-Fibre Agreement and the quota regime in 2005 presents an opportunity to India's textile industry. The Government will assist the industry to reap this opportunity. Specifically,
  - (a) The powerloom industry will be helped to move up the value chain by upgrading technology, adopting shuttleless looms and becoming integrated textile units.
  - (b) Units in the mill sector will be enabled to become total textile solution providers. Consolidation and

- aggregation will be encouraged.
- (c) India's strength in being the largest producer of yarn will be innovatively harnessed.
  - (d) Cotton growers' problems will be comprehensively addressed.
3. A Task Force for Garment Industry will be set up to catalyze a ten-fold increase in investment in making garments for both the domestic and export market. Globally, stitching garments is the fastest way to create medium-skilled jobs, especially jobs for women. India, which is among the most efficient suppliers of yarn, will be made the biggest garment maker in the world by 2009.

### **Small & Medium Enterprises**

1. The focus of our effort will be to facilitate SMEs becoming thriving businesses in a sustainable way, with a strong presence in global markets. Towards this end, we shall enact a SME Development Act and back this up with other regulatory reforms.
2. The Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme will be restructured by lowering its fees to 1% and by increasing the limit to Rs. 50 lakh.
3. A Rs. 1,000 crore Infrastructure Incubation Development Fund will be set up for incubating technocratic entrepreneurs in the SME sector.
4. Strong measures will be initiated, within six months, to put an end to the tyranny of the Inspector Raj, which breeds, corruption, drains the growth potential and demotivates our entrepreneurs in this sector. The cost of complying with regulation, and the time that SSI entrepreneurs have to spend in dealing with government authorities will be reduced to the barest minimum.

### **Cottage Industries**

1. A National Policy on Cottage Industries will be unveiled before the end of 2004. Its focus will be to ensure that this sector, which is crucial from the point of view of poverty alleviation, employment generation and social justice,

is placed on a sustainable high-growth path in the fast-changing external environment. Provision of necessary infrastructure and credit support, strong linkages with domestic and export markets, product innovation to meet customer demand, technological upgradation, training and professional management will be comprehensively considered in the new policy.

2. Khadi & Village Industries Commission (KVIC) and its affiliate bodies, which have done remarkable work in the past five years, will be given greater support. Specifically, the large network of KVI outlets across the country will be innovatively leveraged to strengthen this sector.
3. In particular, KVIC's Rural Employment Generation Program (REGP) will be fully supported to realize its target of creating 25 lakh additional employment and self-employment opportunities in the next five years.
4. It will be made obligatory for government offices, undertakings and government-supported business establishments to procure a certain percentage of products from the KVIC sector.
5. The 'Khadi' brand will be repositioned domestically and popularized globally, in view of the recent success of KVIC's products bearing this name.
6. A 'Vishwakarma Initiative' will be launched for craftspersons and rural artisans to preserve their traditional skills and knowledge, upgrade them, and adapt to new challenges. It will especially support the youth in artisan families to bring new technology and management practices to age-old family skills.

### **Knowledge Economy**

The NDA is committed to making India as the Centre of the Knowledge Economy.

1. India's IT industry would be fully supported to reach the goal of \$50 billion exports by 2008 by consistently moving up the value chain. Advanced IT applications will be encouraged.
2. India has a unique opportunity to become the 'back office'



service provider to the world. India's opportunity in the Call Centre business and BPO enterprises will be fully harnessed. Comprehensive measures will be taken to rapidly expand employment potential in these IT-enabled services, especially in high-value services that can be rendered by our talented professionals, teachers, doctors, lawyers, managers, accountants, consultants, scientists, etc.

3. Fiscal and policy support will be given to enable India to become a major manufacturer of telecom, IT hardware, and consumer electronics products both for domestic and export markets. Foreign companies will be encouraged to set up fabrication facilities for chips.
4. Government will strengthen support for the biotech industry through a variety of measures, including greater funding for development of world-class R&D capabilities. Besides supporting private R&D projects, greater public-private partnership between industry and academic institutions will be encouraged. The patent regime will be strengthened.
5. Licensing procedure for biotechnology industries will be streamlined and delays in clearances will be eliminated by completely overhauling existing regulatory agencies. There will be a single-point clearance for biotech products, to be issued within sixty days.
6. An action plan will be prepared to make India a global platform for research, design, and development. The Government will give incentives foreign companies that spend huge amounts on R&D to set up their R&D centers here. Our target is to see that at least 50% of the 'Fortune 500' companies have a sizeable part of their R&D facility located in India.
7. The NDA Government is proud that a reversal of 'brain drain' - 'brain gain' - has started in recent years, for the first time in Independent India. We will convert this 'trickle' into a 'torrent' by creating attractive conditions for the best Indian talent abroad to return to India or to participate in collaborative work. We will also encourage foreign scientists and professionals to come and work here

in big numbers. The time has come to declare India as the land of opportunity for top-order talent in diverse fields.

### Science & Technology

The NDA believes that science and technology have a vital role in the success of almost every initiative that figures in this Agenda—from the Second Green Revolution to raising India’s social development profile. We are proud that our Government not only checked declining support to India’s science and technology establishment, but placed spending on S&T on an upward curve.

1. Our focus in the coming five years will be three-pronged:
  - (a) further encourage public and private spending on S&T.
  - (b) further improve the outcome and output of this spending to match global standards.
  - (c) further integrate the activities and goals of our S&T institutions with India’s overarching goal of becoming a Developed Nation by 2020.
2. The Science and Technology Policy will be vigorously implemented.
3. Space research, peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and civilian applications of defense research will be further promoted, building on India’s self-reliant strides in these areas. Partnership between CSIR, DRDO, ICAR, ICMR, ISRO, BARC, IITs, universities, and other government-supported research institutions with Indian industry will be speedily expanded.
4. ISRO’s ambitious ‘Chandrayan’ program’, which aims to send India’s first space mission to the moon before 2008, will be fully supported.
5. Further steps will be taken to remove bureaucratism in the functioning of our S&T institutions. Each of them will be encouraged to develop a bold vision for their future growth to achieve dominance internationally.
6. Fundamental research in diverse fields will be promoted.
7. Recent efforts to preserve, catalogue, and develop India’s indigenous traditions in science and technology will be further encouraged.
8. Efforts at creating a scientific temperament in society, raising

popular awareness about science, and promoting the spirit of innovation will be both recognized and supported.

## **Trade & Commerce**

1. Big changes have come about in the global trade environment in the past decade or so. Simultaneously, India's ambition to become a major player in global trade is being matched by growing domestic capability. In response to these two trends, a separate Ministry for International Trade will be created to deal with the challenges and to capture opportunities in global trade in a focused way.
2. Special Economic Zones will be promoted as vehicles for overall growth. An SEZ Promotion Council, with wide industry participation, will be created in the Ministry of Commerce as an apex body.
3. Multi-commodity exchanges – both in the private sector and through-public-private partnerships will be promoted. Our focus here will be to secure for India leading positions in global trade in agricultural commodities, metals, and a wide range of other commodities.
4. Organized retail trade on the international pattern will be promoted as a new engine of growth for trade and employment through appropriate legal and fiscal measures. 26% FDI in retailing will be allowed. Sourcing of Indian products by foreign retail chains will be encouraged.
5. India's vast market has potential for generating high growth and thereby reducing poverty and economic inequalities. Internal trade barriers hamper growth. They will be identified and removed.
6. EXIM Bank's capital base will be strengthened to enable it to lend more to exporters.

## **'Behtar Bazaar Plan'**

Bazaar has always been at the center of India's social life and played a crucial role in driving the economy. Removing inefficiencies in our markets from the village haat to wholesale markets in cities and introducing new efficiencies into them will be our priority. The Centre will work closely with State Governments on a time-bound

plan of action, to be called 'Behtar Bazaar Action Plan', which will include the following initiatives:

- (a) Every city and tehsil town in the country will draw up its own 'Behtar Bazaar Action Plans', with people's participation, identifying problems and solutions thereof.
- (b) Strengthening the connectivity to markets and provision of adequate infrastructure facilities power, water, telecom and IT services, parking lots, etc. and redevelopment/relocation where necessary, will be at the core of these action plans.
- (c) HUDCO and commercial banks will be encouraged to fund this initiative, to be implemented through public-private partnerships. For markets that mainly support agriculture and the rural economy, this will be considered priority sector lending.
- (d) Traditional trading communities in Indian society, who have a wealth of knowledge and experience in this field, will be suitably encouraged.

## **Globalization**

1. The NDA Government will continue to defend India's interests, especially the interests of our kisans, at the World Trade Organization. Along with other developing countries, we shall work towards restraining developed nations from securing unfair advantages in global trade, investments, agriculture, and services.
2. The NDA Government will prepare India to take advantage of the big shift that is currently taking place in the global economy. This shift favors a low-cost economy like India's, which has developed sufficient competitive strengths in cost, quality and technology, over high-cost economies in manufacturing and services. Our Government will enlarge these strengths by further reforming our economy, modernizing our infrastructure, enriching India's human resources, and augmenting our capabilities in science and technology.

## Housing

The NDA Government remains committed to the goal of 'Housing for All by 2010'.

1. Encouraged by the success of our program to facilitate construction of twenty lakh additional houses each year, we propose to raise the target to thirty lakh each year. The additional one million houses will be meant exclusively for weaker sections of society.
2. Banks will be encouraged to extend housing loans with low interest rates to rural populations.
3. A new national program will be launched to enable people with kutchha houses in rural areas to upgrade them into pucca houses.
4. Cities will be encouraged to take up large-scale mass housing projects for the poor and middle classes.
5. States will be encouraged to repeal the Urban Land Ceiling Act, amend the Rent Control Act, and reduce stamp duty on property transactions and lease agreements.
6. The stock of rented houses will be vastly increased and renting a house will be made easier by providing a strong, but simple legal framework that protects the interests of both landlords and tenants.
7. Incentives will be given for investments in repairing dilapidated buildings.

## Urban Renewal

The Government will launch a major national program for slum improvement and rehabilitation, based on a progressive national policy that harmonizes the basic living and livelihood rights of the urban poor with the imperative of planned urban development. Towards this end, the Valmiki Ambedkar Aawas Yojana (VAMBAY), which has met with enthusiastic response, will be redesigned and its scope will be widened to cover integral development of slum habitations. Innovative ways will be evolved for raising finances, maximizing people's participation, and strengthening the commitment of municipal bodies for the success of this initiative. The long-term aim of this initiative is to make Indian cities slum-free by 2020.

1. Municipal governance will be strengthened.
2. A model central law will be enacted to stop illegal encroachments. States will be encouraged to pass similar legislation.
3. HUDCO's lending for urban renewal projects will be further enhanced. Municipal bodies will be enabled to raise resources from the bond market for their urban renewable needs.
4. The size of the City Challenge Fund will be raised from the present Rs. 500 crore.
5. At least ten Indian cities will be developed as Global Cities, with world-class airports, efficient mass transportation systems, high quality of social infrastructure, vibrant cultural life and a dynamic environment for economic growth with strong global linkages.
6. The infrastructure and other urban renewal needs of Mumbai, the country's commercial capital, will be addressed.
7. We recognize that municipal bodies have become the weakest link in our system of governance. Also, the problems and needs of big cities have become too complex to be handled in old ways. Therefore, the NDA proposes to elevate municipal corporations in the ten proposed Global Cities to the level of City Governments, within their respective States. These would be vested with requisite financial, judicial, planning, and law-enforcement powers. After evolving a political consensus on this issue, necessary legislative and administrative changes will be introduced.
8. At least twenty new cities and satellite towns will be developed on completely futuristic lines.
9. An Urban Road Development Fund on the lines of the fund for NHDP will be set up. This will fund two hundred flyovers a year in smaller cities and big towns, as well as pedestrian subways and widening of roads.
10. We shall create a state-facilitated, but privately funded and implemented program of urban mass housing for lower and middle classes.
11. The 'Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan' program will be redesigned

with enlarged scope and enhanced resources to make our cities cleaner. It will be turned into a people's campaign with strong government support at all levels. Adequate number of community toilets, run on the pay-and-use principle, will be constructed within three years in every city. Efficient collection and productive utilization of garbage will be made mandatory. Cities and neighbourhoods that demonstrate success stories will be suitably recognized.

### **Informal Sector**

A National Policy for promotion of the Informal Sector will be unveiled before the end of 2004. It will provide livelihood protection to millions of people engaged in this sector, by freeing them from the scourge of extortion and harassment. Legal recognition will be accorded to entrepreneurs and self-employed people in the informal sector and their assets, so that they can enter into contracts, avail bank loans, benefit from various government schemes, and get better market access for their products and services. These and other measures will help them thrive in their myriad occupations, and create more employment opportunities.

### **Self-help Groups**

Self-Help Groups in India are already a big success story. Over 15 lakh SHGs have been formed so far, providing bank-supported micro-finance to their members. Women's SHGs, under the 'Swashakti' program, have been particularly successful in increasing family incomes of the rural and urban poor and in advancing the cause of women's economic empowerment. They also have the best record in repaying bank loans.

Building on the experience so far, our Government will prepare an action plan to promote SHGs as a people's movement for participatory economic development. Innovative partnerships between SHGs, NGOs, banks, and markets will be created. The private sector will be involved in a big way. Special incentives will be provided for women's SHGs to be formed in every neighborhood. This is possible in a wide variety of occupations such as SHGs of handloom weavers that enable them to access yarn, improve

designs, and bypass market intermediaries to get better value for their products; or women's marketing co-operatives in vegetables, fish and other agro-products. Northern States, and in other areas where SHGs are still weak and fewer in number, will be specially targeted.

We will give a formal, legal framework to SHGs. A suitable law, enabling micro-credit operations and nurturing them to be scaled up, will be enacted.

## **Tourism**

An action plan will be prepared within the first six months for developing India as a major tourism destination in the world. One of its important milestones would be to increase foreign tourist arrivals from 30 lakh now to 1 crore by 2009, and 2 crore tourists by 2015. Its other features would be:

1. A strategic marketing plan (such as the 'Incredible India!' campaign) with adequate funding will be implemented to achieve a strong India tourism brand.
2. Higher earnings from tourism from US \$3 billion at present to US \$10 billion by 2009.
3. Creation of 1 crore additional employment by 2009, and 2.5 crore by 2015, based on the multiplier effect of tourism on various economic activities.
4. Establishment of five world-class Indian Institutes of Travel and Tourism on the lines of IIMs, with private investment.
5. Visa on arrival; common tourist visa for SAARC countries; simplify visa requirements; reduce visa fees and grant visas within 24 hours.
6. Integrated development of India's 6,000 km-long coastline through cruise and beach tourism.
7. The Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) provisions will be relaxed for tourism and critical urban development projects.
8. Rationalization and simplification of taxes; Tax holidays on large capital investments in tourism.
9. Creation of at least two world-class theme parks based on India's civilizational and spiritual heritage.
10. The North-East will be promoted in a special way to create new tourism destinations for foreign tourists.



## **Domestic Tourism**

A similar focused approach will be adopted for promoting domestic tourism. Every district will be encouraged to prepare a District Tourism Development Plan, harnessing its own unique attractions, setting targets, and offering good infrastructure and affordable amenities. A new thrust will be given to developing adventure tourism and rural tourism. A Pilgrimage Tourism Development Fund will be created to improve infrastructure, amenities, and cleanliness standards at 100 important centers of pilgrimage across the country in five years. Substantial contribution to the fund will come from pilgrims themselves, through a user charge mechanism.

## **Media and Entertainment**

1. The entertainment industry occupies an important place in the cultural and social life of our nation. Its size, reach, recognition, and influence have grown remarkably in recent decades – both nationally and internationally. The decisions taken by our Government have greatly helped India's film and TV industry in recent years. Both have a huge potential for further growth, including in the area of employment generation. A National Policy for India's Entertainment Industry will be prepared, within six months, to realize its growth potential.
2. A broad-based committee will be set up to formulate a National Media Policy that would comprehensively address all the complex issues that have emerged in recent years.

## **Labour**

1. The NDA Government has recently unveiled a progressive social security scheme for 37 crore people in the unorganized sector, the first of its kind since Independence. Its speedy and effective implementation will be our priority.
2. We recognize that in a labor-rich society like India, our strategy for achieving 8 to 10% GDP growth rate will have to rest primarily on boosting labor productivity. Therefore, a nationwide program will be launched to

raise labor productivity by increasing the percentage of trained manpower in India's workforce from less than 10% at present to at least 50% by 2020 with five-yearly milestones.

3. The working of Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) will be reviewed and necessary steps will be taken for its improvement.
4. Recommendations of the Second Labor Commission will be implemented with necessary modifications to further strengthen welfare, training, and employment creation provisions.

### **Environment Protection**

The NDA views the depletion of India's precious environmental assets with great concern. We believe that sustainable development is possible with the effective protection of all our environmental assets. We shall:

1. Building on the recent achievement in increasing India's forest cover, further measures will be taken to promote afforestation, social forestry and agro forestry. States where depletion has reached critical levels will receive greater attention. Joint Forest Management, which institutionalizes community partnership, will be further strengthened.
2. Vehicular pollution will be controlled by stringent standards on all motor vehicles at the manufacturing stage itself and by promoting the use of clean fuels.
3. Environment impact assessment of for development projects and industrial clusters will be strengthened.
4. Development of 'Green' technologies will be further encouraged.
5. Regulation of pollution control norms will be decentralized to States and local self-government bodies so that the people suffering from pollution have a say in the mitigation process.



## Employment Generation

The NDA is committed to the goal of eradicating unemployment. Our Government will continue to follow a strategy of accelerated economic growth, which is capable of generating gainful employment for all those who can work. An essential aspect of this strategy is the recognition that the nature of employment generation in India, in line with trends in many other countries, has changed with the changing nature of our economy. Employment generation in government offices and in the capital-intensive segment of industry has a reduced role in this strategy. However, employment and self-employment opportunities are coming up on a large scale in services and in the unorganized sector whose relative weightage in the Indian economy is steadily growing.

This new trend of employment generation is already visible in many parts of India. Many young people are finding jobs and self-employment in different service sectors in not just big cities but also in small towns. These are not jobs in the traditional sense, but they offer opportunities and new challenges for personal growth. Our Government will fully support this trend through necessary policy and institutional measures, including through provision of social security to people in the unorganized sector.

In the NDA's common manifesto in 1999, we had promised to create one crore additional employment and self-employment opportunities each year. This commitment shall continue. We will follow a three-pronged strategy to fulfill this promise:

- (a) Sustaining a high GDP growth rate of 8 to 10% yearly; a fast growing economy will create more employment and self-employment opportunities;
- (b) Raising the employment-elasticity of the economy by focusing the growth in the employment-generating sectors of the economy;
- (c) Enlarging the scope of government schemes that create employment, such as the food-for-work Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana. Such schemes will receive greater budgetary support in 100 backward districts.

As has been indicated in this document, our Government will continue to promote many initiatives that have considerable

potential for employment generation for different sections of our society. In rural areas these are: agriculture and agro-processing, wasteland development, agro-forestry, social forestry, dairy, poultry, animal husbandry, agriculture extension services, cottage industries, self-help groups, housing and road construction, transportation, etc.

In urban areas, we will promote employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in retail trade, housing and construction, food, transportation, tourism, services in the informal sector, telecom and IT, manufacturing, garments, entertainment, financial services, education and training, etc.

Enhancing the employability of employment-seeking youth, in line with the changing needs and opportunities in the economy will be made a priority. Employment is fundamentally linked with education. Therefore, we have affirmed our commitment to carry out a major overhaul of our school and college education. Training in skills will begin in secondary schools. When a student matriculates, she/he will have acquired some job-oriented skills. The University Grants Commission is redesigning college curriculum to enable students to have greater flexibility in the choice of subjects and pursue multiple job-oriented diploma courses simultaneously. Colleges will be encouraged to offer – singly or collaboratively – a variety of subjects and courses in areas that need skilled manpower.

There are as many as 2,800 diverse trades in India, each requiring a sound domain knowledge and good skills. Knowledge and skills in these can be upgraded in a scalable fashion through IT-based distance learning, television, and broadband internet connectivity. Our Government will promote these new technologies in affordable ways. We will encourage creation of educational content in local languages to be used on these platforms. We will also promote new well-regulated certification mechanisms. We will

give incentives to the private sector to participate in job-oriented education and training in a big way – both in urban as well as in rural areas. There would be no age barriers to admissions for pursuing these courses. We are confident that all these new initiatives would touch the lives of millions of our young women and men, raise their skills and productivity, provide them with fulfilling employment opportunities and improve the quality of products and services in India beyond recognition.

### **Balanced Development**

1. A Monitoring Committee for Elimination of Regional Disparities will be set up to focus on developmental imbalances between and within States.
2. Accelerating economic growth and all-round social development in the northern and eastern States, where a majority of India's population lives, will be our priority in the coming years.
3. Additional, dedicated budgetary resources will be provided for faster development of backward areas in each state.

### **Social Justice And Empowerment**

1. A Monitoring Committee for Elimination of Social Disparities will be set up to focus on social and economic justice for SCs, STs, OBCs, denotified and nomadic tribes, and the poor among forward classes and minorities. States will be encouraged to set up similar committees.
2. A National Tribal Policy will be enunciated for the all-round socio-economic development of our vanvasi brethren.
3. Regularization of land rights of tribals living on forest land and promotion of their livelihood activities based on forest produce, if necessary by suitable amendments in the forest laws.
4. Provisions of the policy on reservations will be strictly implemented. A major drive will be launched for filling up all backlogs in jobs and promotions for SCs and STs. Private sector enterprises will be given incentives for creating more educational, training, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for SCs and STs.

5. Functioning of various Commissions and Finance Corporations for the development of SCs and STs will be improved.
6. Laws to check atrocities against SCs, STs, and other weaker sections will be strictly enforced.
7. The newly announced Commission for Nomadic and Denotified Tribes will be made operational.
8. Reservations for the poor among 'Forward Classes' will be introduced after receiving recommendations of the Commission set up for this purpose.
9. Special encouragement will be given for preservation of the artistic and cultural traditions of SCs and STs, and for honoring their heroes.

### **Minorities**

1. A Minorities Development Agenda will be unveiled within the first six months to focus on a 3-E program: Education, Economic upliftment, and Empowerment.
2. The Agenda will especially address the needs of those belonging to poor and backward families, ensuring that they get an equitable share in government-supported schemes in education, housing, etc.
3. The working of the Minorities Commission will be reoriented to address their developmental and welfare issues.
4. The NDA Government gave unprecedented encouragement to the promotion of Urdu language and to the modernization of Madarasa education. This will continue.
5. A concerted effort will be made to increase minorities' representation in administration and public bodies.

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## Economic Reforms

1. The tax to GDP ratio will be improved through further widening and deepening of the tax base.
2. Rationalization and simplification of tariffs and removal of most exemptions within two years.
3. States will be given incentives to switch over to VAT. The Centre will ensure a hassle-free transition to the new tax regime, especially for small traders and businesses.
4. Tax evasion and corruption will be reduced through administrative measures and end-to-end computerization of the entire tax system. All shops and commercial establishments will be encouraged, through appropriate incentives, to make their transactions computer-based in three years.
5. There shall be a single destination to electronically pay all taxes and regulatory charges – whether Central, State, or local – for all classes of business.
6. Pension reforms will be speeded up. The Pension Regulator shall be mandated to come up with a scheme that creates an individual but portable pension-fund account for all workers, whether in the private sector or in the public sector, in the organized or in the unorganized sector.

## Financial Sector Reforms

1. All currently proposed financial sector reforms in banking, insurance, foreign investment, and capital markets will be completed within the next six months.
2. The principal aim of reforms in the banking sector will be to bring efficient banking services to the doorstep of every customer. To achieve this, greater competition will be created by extending the reach of PSU banks and expanding the activities of private banks.
3. Consolidation of PSU banks will be encouraged.
4. Indian banks will be encouraged to enlarge their footprint overseas.
5. The role of development banks and financial institutions will be enlarged to provide necessary funds for projects.

6. The reach of insurance will be considerably enhanced in the next five years.
7. FDI limit in insurance will be revisited to further widen India's insurance sector, and to strengthen its global linkages.
8. We will take steps to make it easy for smaller firms to raise moneys from the stock markets as well as for small investors, especially from smaller towns to invest in the stock market. We shall double the number of individuals who own shares in the next five years.

### **State Finances**

1. Restructuring of debts by State governments will be further encouraged and pursued.
2. States will be encouraged to carry out fiscal reforms and to reduce revenue deficit in every State to zero by 2006.
3. Political consensus will be evolved to reduce unproductive expenditure and enhance States' own resource mobilization.

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## Social Development

Our goal in Social Development will be to bring about all-sided improvement in the quality of life of all Indians by fulfilling the basic needs of every citizen in education, healthcare, nutrition, drinking water, housing, sanitation, and cultural development.

To achieve this overarching objective, and to reverse the previous trend of inadequate investment in this sector, the Government will create a special 'Social Development Fund' of Rs. 100,000 crore to be invested over five years.

### Education for All

1. Total spending on education will be raised to 6% of the GDP in five years, with enlarged public-private partnership at every level of the educational pyramid.
2. Literacy rate of 85% will be achieved in five years. Our vision is to see that Indian society becomes fully literate by 2015. For this, we will launch a multi-pronged campaign to ensure that every child goes to school, every school is made accountable to the community, and every village and town is made accountable for its quality education status. Appropriate resources both from Government and non-government sources will be mobilized to match our ambitious goals. Innovative tools like computer-based and TV-promoted functional literacy will be employed. The 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' will be made into a people's movement.
3. Spread of education among SCs, STs, OBCs, and minorities, and activities aimed at removing gender disparities in education at all levels, will receive increased support.
4. A special fund of Rs. 1,000 crore a year will be created, partially through a cess on all non-needy students, to improve all primary school buildings in rural areas in five years.
5. 'Akshaya Patra', as a national mid-day meal program, will be made operational.
6. The entire school and college education system will be overhauled and made employment-oriented. Opportunities

for skill development and vocational training will be maximized.

7. A Standards Improvement Campaign, to be named after Dr. Syama Prasad Mookherjee (who became the youngest ever vice-chancellor of the prestigious Calcutta University), will be launched to raise the quality of education in colleges and universities. Institutions that perform well will be suitably recognized.
8. No student would be deprived of access to higher education for lack of resources. Scholarships and soft loans would be made widely available to all needy students. A National Education Development Fund will be established for this purpose.
9. While encouraging private investment, effective steps will be taken to curb commercialization of education.
10. The focus on Indian culture, heritage, and ethical values in syllabi will be strengthened. Character-building and all-round development of the student's personality will be emphasized. Sports, physical training, and social service will be mainstreamed into the educational system.
11. The growing de-emphasis of Bharatiya languages in school and college education will be checked. Teaching in the mother tongue will be encouraged.
12. Efforts will be intensified for the propagation of Sanskrit.
13. Establishment of hostels, especially for women's education, will be encouraged.
14. Administration of our educational institutions will be freed of bureaucratism. Community participation in managing their activities and monitoring their performance will be encouraged.

15. Centers of excellence in higher education are India's pride. They will have requisite autonomy to become the best in the world.
16. Five new IITs will be established before 2005.
17. Our vision is to make India a global hub for higher education and regain the glory of the Nalanda era. For this, an action plan will be prepared to elevate at least 25 Indian universities and 100 colleges to international standards in every respect. All our IITs, NITs, IIMs, IISc, AIIMS-like medical institutes, and other reputed higher educational institutions (both existing and proposed) will be further supported. Public-private participation will be fully activated to realize the above vision, which would not only raise India's stature globally but also enable our country to earn significant foreign exchange.

### **Health for All**

For the NDA, 'Health For All' is not a mere slogan. It is our avowed objective, a cherished goal; indeed, a commitment to our people, which we will strive to fulfill. Access to affordable healthcare is a basic need, which must be provided for.

1. Total public spending on healthcare at present is 2% of the GDP. This figure will be doubled in the next five years. Our Government has already taken an important step in this direction by setting up the National Commission on Macroeconomics and Health, which is co-chaired by the Finance Minister and the Minister of Health and Family Welfare. Investment by the private sector, including by NRIs, for providing healthcare in India will be encouraged. Public-private partnerships will be enhanced.
2. We will implement in a time-bound manner the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana under which six new hospitals on the pattern of All – India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi are being set up in six under-served states and six existing hospitals in other states are being upgraded to the level of AIIMS. This is a part of our commitment to provide affordable super-specialty healthcare to the needy in different parts of the country,

within or near their own states.

3. An insurance-based health security scheme, called Antyodaya Swasthya Yojana, will be started to cover two crore poorest among the BPL families, who are currently beneficiaries of the Antyodaya Anna Yojana.
4. We will strive towards zero incidence of polio by the end of 2004 and for keeping this zero status for the next three years, so that India can be certified polio free by 2007.
5. The National TB Control Program will cover the entire population by the end of next year. Sufficient funds will be allocated for this purpose.
6. All efforts will be made for the eradication of filariasis within five years.
7. We will revitalize the existing Primary Healthcare system in coordination with the state governments. Linkages between safe drinking water, sanitation, nutrition, family welfare services, women and child services, and primary education will be strengthened through appropriate coordination mechanisms at the Central, State, and village levels.
8. The Government will set up a Rs. 1,000 crore fund, through public-private partnerships, to improve the infrastructure of primary healthcare centers in backward areas.
9. Infant and maternal mortality levels will be reduced by half. The newly launched 'Vande Mataram' scheme of gynecologists in private practice for care of pregnant women will be strengthened. The 'Janani Suraksha Yojana,' already envisaged by us, will be implemented with the aim of establishing linkages between a health center and the mother-to-be. To meet the expectation of the nutrition of the mother, a sum of Rs. 500 will be given to her after the birth of a baby boy and Rs. 1,000 for a baby girl.
10. The 'Save the Girl Child' campaign will be further popularized.
11. The spread of HIV/AIDS will be checked on a war footing. Care and support for AIDS patients will be undertaken hand-in-hand with efforts for the prevention of the disease.
12. We are committed towards strengthening the National Programs on malaria, blindness, leprosy, and mental

- health.
13. The ageing population needs special care. The government hospitals will have special facilities for healthcare of senior citizens.
  14. We will promote our traditional systems of medicine, namely Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Yoga, and Naturopathy, as also homeopathy. Different systems will be synergized in the delivery of healthcare and in medical education.
  15. We will encourage the production and exports of pharmaceutical products from India, including Ayurvedic and herbal products.
  16. The nearly six lakh providers of traditional medical services in villages have remained unrecognized and unsupported, in spite of catering to the needs of those sections of our population, which are underserved by the formal system. They will be suitably assisted to play a bigger and more effective role in improving the health profile of the rural poor.
  17. Working of regulatory bodies, which oversee medical education in the country, will be reviewed to improve standards.
  18. We shall make India a preferred global destination for healthcare. Our large reservoirs of skilled doctors, nurses, and other paramedical staff along with the state-of-the-art facilities in our hospitals have a huge potential, which will be nurtured and realized in the next five years. Simultaneously, steps will be taken to improve the standards of excellence in medical education, nursing, and other areas. An Action Plan will be drawn up before end of 2004 to pursue this goal, with suitable encouragement to the private sector.
  19. The menace of spurious drugs shall be controlled.
  20. A mass movement will be launched for increasing awareness about health issues and making citizens take good care of themselves by cultivating healthy habits and lifestyles; towards this end, a strong physical and sports culture will be promoted among people of all age-groups.

## **Food Security**

1. Coverage of the 'Antyodaya Anna Yojana' (which provides wheat at Rs. 2 a kg and rice at Rs. 3 a kg) will be increased from 2 crore to 5 crore poorest families in five years. Its implementation will be decentralized.
2. All beneficiaries under this scheme will be given an 'Antyodaya Card' that would also entitle them to Health Security, Social Security, Shelter Security, Educational Guarantee, and priority attention in government offices and police stations.
3. A well-run supply chain involving the private traders, community, and Panchayats will be established to ensure food availability in normal times as well as during natural calamities.
4. The public distribution system would be revamped with people's participation to make it efficient and accountable. It would also be used to deliver other goods and services.

## **Women's Empowerment**

1. A National Policy on Women's Economic Empowerment will be unveiled before end of 2004. It will aim at ensuring that every woman has some means of livelihood and, additionally, at enhancing the incomes of all categories of working women. It will propose strategies to enable women in balancing work and family by introducing a national childcare plan, workplace flexibility, greater career opportunities, hostels for working women in every town, and removal of gender disparities in education, wages, and property rights.
2. Support for programs like 'Swavalamban' and STEP (Support to Training and Employment Program for Women), which promote self-employment and entrepreneurship for needy women, will be greatly enhanced. Technical and management services for those engaged in handicrafts, food processing, handloom, garments, etc., will be strengthened. Added focus will be provided for implementing these programs in the North East, J&K, and areas affected by left-wing extremism.

3. Enterprises promoted by women, or employing a large number of women, will be given 'fast track' facilitation.
4. Laws to check female foeticide, dowry, child marriage, trafficking, rape and family violence will be strictly enforced. Societal efforts to curb these ills will be encouraged.
5. Support for the Swadhaar program and Women Helplines for abandoned widows, victims of trafficking, mentally challenged women, and victims of calamities will be greatly expanded with private and philanthropic participation.
6. The Bill for 33% reservation for women in Parliament and State Legislatures will be introduced in the very first session of Parliament. The NDA will work for speedy passage of this progressive legislation based on a consensus.

### **Care of the Disabled**

Disabled people constitute about 5% of India's population. Years of neglect have delayed their large-scale integration into the social mainstream. Their welfare and rehabilitation is integral to our vision of a caring society and a responsive government. The newly-established Commission for the Disabled will draw up a Charter for the Disabled, which will have the following points:

1. Ensure and implement the right for education and vocational training for the disabled.
2. Ensure disabled-friendly access to public utilities, public buildings, and transports.
3. Ensure maximum economic independence of the disabled by creating more income generation models for the disabled.
4. Facilitate establishment of an Institute of Vocational Training for the Disabled in every district with public-private partnership.
5. Provide special incentive for the adoption of a disabled child.
6. Voluntary organizations working for the care of the disabled will be fully supported.

### **Children**

The NDA is committed to securing a bright future for India's children. A National Commission for Children will be set up to

comprehensively address the issues of education, healthcare, nutrition, recreation, removal of gender disparities, elimination of child labor, integrated care and rehabilitation of orphans and street children, etc. It will put the aspirations and rights of children at the heart of our development agenda.

The Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), the world's largest early childcare programme, will be further strengthened. Its implementation will be communitised.

## **Youth**

India, an ancient civilization, has become a young nation demographically. 65% of our population is below 35 years. These young men and women have soaring aspirations for themselves and a burning desire to see India emerge as a strong and prosperous country. The NDA commits itself to helping our youth realize their dreams.

1. We shall strive for 'Education for All' and 'Employment for All'.
2. We shall strive to create an environment in which young Indians find many avenues to contribute to nation-building and to their own all-round development.
3. The National Cadet Corps shall be strengthened. The National Service Scheme shall be made more innovative to nurture the spirit of voluntary service among the youth. Encouragement for talented youth in arts and other cultural pursuits will be stepped up.
4. We will promote the Youth Hostel movement by facilitating the construction of new youth hostels in major cities and tourist centers, with private sector participation.
5. Recommendations of the National Youth Commission will be given serious consideration.

## **Sports**

The NDA Government aims to make India a major sports power in the world.

1. Towards this end, the Prime Minister's Ten-Point Program for the Development of Sports will be vigorously implemented.



2. A National Sports Development Fund will be set up with a yearly allocation of Rs. 500 crore. Citizens and business houses will be encouraged to contribute to it.
3. A Rashtriya Khel Rozgar Yojana will be launched to encourage talented sportspersons to set up sports clubs, gymnasiums, and training centres, thereby creating employment and self-employment opportunities.
4. Greater support will be provided for the promotion of traditional Indian sports and rural transports.

### **Senior Citizens**

Respect for elders has always been at the center of India's social traditions and cultural ethos. Being repositories of knowledge and experience, they are a precious asset to society. However, they have been facing many problems with rapid urbanization and changes in the traditional joint families. Our Government will set up a National Commission for Senior Citizens to comprehensively address their needs, problems and potential to further contribute to the nation's development.

### **Population Control**

1. A people's movement will be launched to realize the goals and targets set in the National Population Policy. It will particularly focus on those States that are lagging behind.
2. The Government will introduce a set of non-coercive disincentives for a two-child norm, and incentives for a girl child. The two-child norm will be made a qualification, on a prospective basis, for contesting any election.



## **Governance Reforms**

The NDA Government will unveil, before the end of 2004, comprehensive Good Governance Reforms, which will focus on:

1. Administrative reforms to check corruption, promote transparency and accountability, remove delays in decision-making; and to make government employees treat the people as their masters.
2. Electoral reforms to check the unhealthy influence of money power and prevent criminalization of politics.
3. Judicial reforms for speedy and affordable justice.
4. Political reforms to raise the standards and efficacy of Parliament, State Legislatures, and other elected bodies.
5. Reform of ministries to speed up decision making and develop better capabilities for policy formulation and implementation.
6. Good Corporate Governance reforms to ensure lawful and ethical business practices, protection of shareholders' interests, and consumer protection.

### **Judicial Reforms**

1. A Rs. 1,000-crore Fund for Modernization of Courts will be set up to improve the physical and operational infrastructure of courts. This will receive partial contribution from the legal community. Judicial officers will be empowered to involve the community in improving the facilities in a transparent manner.
2. The number of courts and the number of judges will be doubled in five years for quicker judicial process.
3. A separate class of courts will be set up for cases involving specified commercial laws such as the Contract Act, Negotiable Instruments Act, and other business laws. These would deliver quicker justice to aggrieved businesses, and would be partly funded by charging both litigants a 'Fast Track' fee.
4. Reform of the criminal justice system to make dispensation of justice simpler, quicker, and more effective.
5. Courts all over the country will be computerized and

networked for improving their efficiency.

6. Extension of Fast-Track Courts to all layers of the judiciary.
7. Expansion of alternative dispute redressal mechanisms through Lok Adalats and Tribunals.
8. Setting up a National Judicial Commission for appointment of judges and ensuring judicial ethics.
9. A Judicial Procedural Reforms Committee will suggest, within six months, how to halve the time taken to conduct every trial, civil or criminal. The aim would be to ensure that three-fourths of all court cases are completed in twelve months.
10. The number of cases in which the Government is a litigant will be halved in the next three years.

### **Administrative, Police, Civil Service and other Reforms**

1. An Administrative Procedural Reforms Committee will suggest, within six months, how to eliminate unnecessary procedures and simplify others. Efficiency, accountability, responsiveness, and a pro-poor attitude will be the hallmark of the administrative system in the years to come.
2. The Civil Service, the steel frame of India's administrative system, would be reformed and strengthened. New cadre system and modern service code will be adopted to enable professionalism at all levels of administration. Senior officers will be suitably empowered to take timely and bold decisions. Responsibility and accountability will be fixed for fulfillment of goals and targets. Officers will be allowed to work in the private sector. Similarly, lateral entry of talented professionals from the private sector at senior levels will be encouraged.

3. Discretionary powers vested with public authorities will be reduced. Objective criteria will be laid down for the exercise of such powers.
4. Delays in environmental clearance for development projects will be removed. It will be mandatory for authorities to clear or reject a proposal within 45 days.
5. A Fund for Modernization of District and Sub-District Administration will be set up for better office amenities and public interface; computerization, communication, and networking; better grievance redressal mechanism; and mobility to enable improved outreach to the public. Administration will be empowered to raise resources from the local community and to involve it in improving the amenities in a transparent manner.
6. The Planning Commission will be reformed and reorganized in light of the changing developmental needs of our country.
7. In order to improve efficiency of budgetary resources and public assets, we will work towards convergence of Centrally sponsored schemes, transfer of certain schemes to States based on suitability.

### **Electoral Reforms**

1. Consensus will be evolved to prevent entry of criminal elements into politics.
2. In cooperation with all political parties, the NDA will work towards raising the standards of Parliament and State Legislatures.
3. A National Institute for Training Elected Representatives will be established.

### **India to be ruled by Indians**

Legislation will be introduced to ensure that important offices of the Indian State can be occupied only by those who are India's natural citizens by their Indian origin.

## Centre-State Relations

The NDA Government's achievement in this regard can be judged by the fact that Centre-State relations are no longer a subject of political debate. They are marked by harmony and cooperation, which were sadly missing in previous decades. Our Government has not discriminated against any State on political grounds. This shall continue to be our approach in the coming five years. On the issue of Article 356 of the Constitution, we remain committed to the consensus reached at the Inter-State Council meeting in Srinagar in 2003.

## Empowerment of Panchayats

1. The NDA Government will work for effective financial and administrative empowerment of Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies in respect of three Fs: 'Funds', 'Functions', and 'Functionaries'. Suitable judicial, executive, financial, and geographical layout planning powers will be devolved to these bodies. The Constitution would be amended for this purpose.
2. The institution of the Gram Sabha will be strengthened to discuss every developmental work, scrutinize the allocation and spending of funds, and evaluate the performance of panchayat and government functionaries.

## Cultural and Spiritual Heritage

1. Ours was the first government to launch national missions for the preservation of manuscripts, monuments, and other facets of India's cultural, artistic and spiritual heritage. States will be encouraged to set up similar missions. Every town will prepare a heritage conservation mission. These will be effectively implemented, with extensive participation of communities, business houses, professional bodies, and NGOs.
2. Support for expanding India's cultural relations with all countries in the world will be considerably enhanced, with private participation.
3. A National Commission for promotion of Bharatiya languages will be established. It will make a comprehensive

study of the challenges before our Bharatiya languages in the modern era and recommend tasks for their consistent development.

4. Upkeep of places of spiritual importance.

### **Civil Society Empowerment**

1. The NDA recognizes that maximizing people's participation in the implementation of all policies and programs of the government is the key to India's rapid and all-round development. Towards this end, a National Council of Voluntary Organizations will be set up. States will be encouraged to establish similar Councils.
2. Involvement of religious establishments of all denominations, which are active in the social field, will be encouraged in areas like mass-feeding for the poor, care of orphans and destitutes, campaign against social evils like female foeticide, environmental protection, etc.
3. Civil Society will be suitably empowered to help in achieving dispute resolution ranging from local disputes over minor issues to major ones over contentious issues outside the realm of the judiciary and government. Its cooperation will be sought in strengthening civic discipline, adherence to law, tax compliance, and care for public property.

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## National Security

The NDA Government took historic initiatives in the last six years to strengthen India's defense capability and preparedness. We pledge to carry forward this imperative. Our priorities will be:

1. Speedy implementation of all the current programs for modernization, acquisition, and capability enhancement;
2. Making operational the Rs. 25,000-crore Defense Modernization Fund, which was announced in the Interim Budget;
3. Minimizing delays and procedural bottlenecks, which push up costs and cause obsolescence;
4. Achieving greater efficiency in defense spending; giving a further boost to indigenization of defense production and encouragement to private sector participation; and making defense exports a thrust area.
5. In addition, the Government will continue to further augment welfare measures for ex-servicemen and war widows. We shall create adequate opportunities for retired officers to contribute to development activities where they can put their skills and training to productive use. Necessary measures will be taken to make service in the Armed Forces an attractive career option for the educated Indian youth.

### Internal Security

1. Cross-border terrorism will be eliminated.
2. There has been a significant reduction of communal and caste violence in the past five years. Our government shall further strengthen and stabilize this trend, and work towards realizing our vision of a riot-free India.
3. Ongoing programs for modernization of our police and paramilitary forces will be intensified.
4. We will build political consensus to enact a Central law, and constitute a federal agency to deal with federal crimes.
5. The multi-pronged strategy to eliminate the growing menace of left-wing extremism, which extends from the Nepal border to Andhra Pradesh, will be more effectively implemented. The Government will encourage

the misguided youth who have joined various naxal organizations to give up the path of violence. Development activities in affected areas will be intensified, with people's participation.

6. The long pending police reforms will be taken up to synchronize with the ongoing scheme for modernization of state police forces. Investigation functions would be separated from law & order functions. Number of police stations will be doubled over the next five years. Mobile police stations, better communications, community friendly approach, highway police stations, better public interface and independence of police will be established through necessary legal and executive means. Partnership between police and community will be institutionalized. Police and security forces will be made more people-friendly, and more sensitive towards the grievances of the poor, weaker sections of society, and women.

## **Jammu & Kashmir**

Building on the positive turnaround in the situation in Jammu & Kashmir, the NDA Government will continue its efforts to eliminate terrorism and further strengthen the Centre's cooperation with the State government to consolidate peace, normalcy and development in the State.

Together with the State Government, efforts will be made to ensure early return of Kashmiri Pandits and other displaced people to their native places.

The NDA Government will work for balanced development of all the three regions of the State – Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. To ensure this, steps will be taken, based on consensus, for:



1. Autonomous Regional Councils for Jammu and Ladakh with adequate financial and administrative powers;
2. Protection of the original demographic identity of the three regions.
3. Equitable distribution of funds from the Centre.

### **North-East**

The NDA Government has given unprecedented attention to the development of the North-Eastern States in the last five years. These gains will be consolidated and placed on a stable footing. Our priorities in the coming five years would be:

1. Restoration of peace and normalcy in all the disturbed regions by dialogue with all groups who are willing to give up the path of violence, and by firmly dealing with those who continue on this path.
2. Ensuring that the ethnic identities of all the people in the North-East are protected.
3. Repeal of the IMDT Act for putting an end to infiltration from Bangladesh.
4. Accelerating economic development that provides growth opportunities to all.
5. Development of the communication infrastructure to overcome the constraints of physical distance.
6. Making all Indians more aware of the rich history and cultural heritage of our North-Eastern States, including Sikkim.
7. Expanding regional economic cooperation with countries in our eastern neighborhood and in South-East Asia.

### **Other Commitments**

1. The NDA Government shall continue to strengthen the ideal of secularism enshrined in India's Constitution.
2. The NDA believes that an early and amicable resolution of the Ayodhya issue will strengthen national integration. We continue to hold that the judiciary's verdict in this matter should be accepted by all. At the same time, efforts should be intensified for dialogue and a negotiated settlement in an atmosphere of mutual trust and goodwill.

3. Our Government will create a 'National Integration Quota' of 2% for students from Jammu & Kashmir, North-East, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshwadeep Islands in educational institutions across the country.
4. A National Disaster Prevention and Management Authority will be set up, with a fund of Rs. 1,000 crore. States will be encouraged to set up similar authorities.
5. The Government will implement decisions taken at the last meeting of the Island Development Authority, and will continue to attend to the needs of the people of Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshwadeep Islands.
6. Consumer protection movement will be further strengthened.
7. The NDA government is committed to giving corruption-free governance at all levels.

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## India and the World

India's aim in foreign policy has always been to secure for itself a steadily broadening role in international affairs, so that we can contribute meaningfully to the global community's collective ability to deal with the challenges of today and tomorrow. The NDA Government is proud of its foreign policy achievements in the last five years. We will build on these successes to focus on the following objectives in the coming five years.

1. Continue the dialogue process with Pakistan for a lasting solution to all the outstanding issues, including Jammu & Kashmir, on the basis of the Joint Statement issued in Islamabad in February 2004.
2. Further strengthen the SAARC process; implement free-trade in South Asia; and work towards realizing the vision for a South Asian Economic Union with a common currency for the region.
3. Further strengthen our Look-East Policy to deepen the India-ASEAN relationship; initiate the BIMST-EC process; activate the Mekong-Ganga cooperation initiative; deepen our economic cooperation with Koreas; and enrich our strategic partnership with Japan.
4. Further consolidate our strategic partnership with Russia, with a stronger underpinning of economic cooperation.
5. Broaden and deepen our multi-dimensional relations with USA.
6. Expand our economic cooperation with China. Continue the dialogue process with China to achieve a mutually satisfactory resolution of the boundary issue, which is an objective of strategic interest for us.
7. Intensify our cooperation with the European Union.
8. Rejuvenate our traditional bonds with countries in West Asia;
9. Reestablish our age-old ties with countries in Central Asia;
10. Develop extensive relations with all countries in Africa, Central America, Latin America, and Pacific Ocean countries like Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, etc.

Energy security will continue to be a key objective of our

foreign policy. Therefore, we will intensify our efforts to establish suitable alliances to secure access to new energy sources around the world.

The NDA Government envisions a future that rests on a cooperative multipolar world order, with India as one of the poles.

We will continue our efforts to secure permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

The NDA is proud of the shining achievements of NRIs and PIOs around the world. We attach great strategic importance to strengthening India's multi-dimensional links with the Diaspora Community. Our Government took many historic initiatives in this direction in the last five years for example, granting dual citizenship to PIOs from a select group of countries. Our commitment to this deeply cherished cause will continue.

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## Conclusion

In our common Agenda for elections in 1999, we had said, 'The NDA came into being because of an historic need and realization amongst us that our young democracy cannot bear the fits and tremors of frequent elections, which will undermine the people's faith in the democratic process.' That phase of instability is now history. The NDA has taken India into a new orbit of accelerated development, coupled with peace on our borders and harmony within.

As we seek a renewed and bigger mandate in 2004, we ask to be judged by our performance in the last five years as well as by the vision and programme that we have laid out in this Agenda. We are proud to have raised the bar of performance higher, and are keenly aware that the Indian voter now expects more.

We believe in the principle of accountability. We promise to give a six-monthly report on the status of implementation of the commitments made in this Agenda.

Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee has placed an energizing vision of India as a Developed Nation. The NDA rededicates itself to realizing this vision in partnership with the people of India.

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