

# Niti Aayog Vice-Chairman accepts Chidambaram's 'challenge' on revised data

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Niti Aayog Vice-Chairman Rajiv Kumar on Thursday accepted the challenge of former finance minister P Chidambaram for a debate on the revised GDP data which showed economic growth during the current NDA regime was better than that in the UPA rule.

"Hon. @PChidambaram\_IN Ji, challenge accepted. Let's discuss & dissect back series data. I gave 3 hrs of detailed interview yesterday & it is somewhat disingenuous of you to say that I asked the media to not ask questions. Do give more coherent reasons for ur difficulty with new data," Kumar said in a tweet.

He was responding to Chidambaram who sought had a debate with Kumar over the new set of data.

"I wonder if Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar will agree to a debate the data than telling journalists that their questions are "undeserving of an answer," Chidambaram had tweeted.

Through more tweets, Kumar also stressed that Niti Aayog uses data extensively for making logical policy recommendations and the data is always based on assessment and quality check by eminent statisticians.

"Therefore, it was logical for @NITIAayog to provide the platform for its release. Pronab Sen would know that MOSPI & Yojana Bhavan worked closely together," he said.

Chidambaram had termed the revision of GDP data as a "hatchet job" by Niti Aayog and said it was time to windup the "utterly worthless body".

"Former Chief Statistician Pronab Sen is absolutely correct. Niti Aayog has nothing to do with tabulation of data," the former finance minister added.

Kumar, later, told PTI that at one point of time the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) was a department of the erstwhile Planning Commission.

He said Niti Aayog had provided platform to experts and statisticians to examine the GDP back-series) data.

"GDP back-series data is a technical thing, it has a huge macroeconomic impact, so we have done it in a more macroeconomic manner," the vice-chairman said and added he was deeply pained at people who politicised it for no reason at all.

On comments made by the former finance minister, Kumar said: "Chidambaram has done great disfavours to officers of CSO. CSO officials have done amazingly technically detailed exercise".