

INDIA POISED FOR DOUBLE-DIGIT GROWTH: FINANCE MINISTER PIYUSH GOYAL

'Govt to meet fiscal deficit target of 3.3%'

With 7.7% growth rate in fourth quarter of FY18, India firmly the fastest growing global economy, says Arun Jaitley

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THE GOVERNMENT will contain the fiscal deficit at 3.3 per cent, the Budgeted level for 2018-19 financial year, without any expenditure cuts and despite it being an election year, Finance Minister Piyush Goyal said on Monday. Goyal also said that the country is poised for double digit growth and it could happen by the fourth quarter of the current financial year.

"Fiscal digit this year will be down to 3.3 per cent and I can assure you that we are monitoring and working to ensure that fiscal deficit will be contained at 3.3 per cent despite this being an election year, despite this being a year traditionally, and I will urge you to look at history be it 2013-14, be it 2007-08 or 2008-09, where fiscal deficits, macroeconomic stability, good governance — all were thrown to the wind for political exigencies," Goyal said at the 'The Growth Net' Summit organised by CII.

Separately, in a blog, Union Minister Arun Jaitley said that the 7.7 per cent growth rate in fourth quarter of 2017-18 has

established India firmly as the fastest growing global economy and as per experts, the trend is likely to continue for the next few years. He said an analysis of the data shows that the construction sector is expanding by double digits and investments, both domestic and foreign (in form of foreign direct investment), are also increasing.

On the impact of rise in oil prices on the fiscal deficit, Goyal said this government has been very responsible, both in the management in the economy and management of prices. "We have factored in what would be the increased oil price. Some of it were factored before the Budget. Some of it we have now. And with alternate sources... without cut in expenditure, we will be able to meet the fiscal deficit," he said.

In the Union Budget for 2018-19, the government had revised the fiscal deficit target for 2017-18 to 3.5 per cent from the earlier estimate of 3.2 per cent. Data released last month showed that the fiscal deficit for the previous financial year stood at 3.53 per cent of the GDP, broadly in line with the government's revised estimates.



Finance Minister Piyush Goyal in New Delhi, Monday. PTI

When asked about inclusion of petroleum products under Goods and Services Tax (GST), Goyal said though the decision would be taken by the GST Council, it is likely to be discussed in the next meeting of the Council. "That's really a decision that the GST council has to take because end of the day the government is not alone on that and we have maintained the dignity

of the GST council to have unanimous decisions and the good part is that the federal structure, even though it has different political ideologies in different states, they have all worked together to ensure the success of GST and maybe in the next meeting there could be a discussion on this," he said.

He further added, "I believe in the past they had discussed

Goyal to meet heads of 13 PSBs

New Delhi: Finance Minister Piyush Goyal will meet heads of 13 public sectors banks (PSBs) Tuesday to resolve various issues concerning them. According to sources, the meeting is being organised by State Bank of India (SBI) and will be chaired by Goyal here.

In all heads of 13 PSBs will participate in the meeting to discuss the way forward for the Indian Banking system, they said. PTI

this issue since the consensus didn't come through, it hasn't yet come under the GST."

Goyal said, the government will maintain stability in the economy and meet all economic parameters. "You have a government today which is willing to say we will meet the aspirations of the people of India. We will meet our objectives of good governance. We

will meet our objective for society to reach benefits of growth to poorest of the poor but we will also strengthen the Indian economy," he said.

On Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), he said that 481 centrally sponsored schemes have come under this scheme, and Rs 3.65 lakh crore has been directly transferred to bank accounts of beneficiaries.

Jaitley in his blog also dismissed the suggestion of his predecessor P Chidambaram (without naming him) to cut tax on petrol and diesel by Rs 25/litre as a "trap suggestion". "It is intended to push India into an unmanageable debt — something which the UPA Government left as its legacy. We must remember that the economy and the markets reward structural reforms, fiscal prudence, and macro-economic stability. They punish fiscal indiscipline and irresponsibility," he said.

Jaitley said that the country had two "challenging quarters" with structural reforms like demonetisation, GST and the enforcement of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, yet "those who predicted a 2 per cent decline in GDP growth have been conclusively proved wrong."