

# Will Bangalore still be India's Silicon Valley?

*Or will the emergence of Seemandhra threaten its iconic IT status? Ankita Shreeram explores*

**N** Chandrababu Naidu is a name that is spoken with much reverence in the corridors of IT firms. He is after all, the man who turned Hyderabad into a worthy contender for the position of India's Silicon Valley. But Bangalore managed to uphold its haloed status. Now with Naidu being re-elected at the helm of Seemandhra after a decade, Bangalore might be on the verge of yet another challenge. Will the city emerge victorious once again or will it cede its position as India's software haven?

Ranjan Manish, head (South India), business unit, Koenig Solutions Ltd doesn't feel that Seemandhra would pose a threat to Bangalore any time soon. "Seemandhra, being a new state, has many other challenges at hand, which need to be taken care of in the near future. It is still at a very nascent stage to be able to give competition to Bangalore in terms of IT and development," he says. "India has the capacity to accommodate many Silicon Valleys," avers Gaurav Vohra, CEO, Jigsaw Academy.

Nevertheless, if the garden city is to continue attracting entrepreneurs and MNCs, it has to offer an unrivalled combination of infrastructural amenities and a lavish lifestyle. But one complaint that frequently threatens this expectation is the mind-numbing traffic. What are some of the other areas that the city's development custodians should focus on? "The

infrastructure for transport and water is deteriorating rapidly affecting the quality of life. The public transport system should definitely leap-frog. We also need to protect our lakes and plant more trees. One of the key advantages of Bangalore has been the weather! This has taken a beating because of uncontrolled and unmonitored growth. For Bangalore to starve off these new challenges, these two areas need to be addressed as a priority. We need to enhance the quality of life to continue to attract new talent and retain our

position," says Naganand Doraswamy, president, TiE - Bangalore Chapter. "Another area to watch out for is any tax breaks that other state governments may offer for start-ups. Karnataka should keep a watch on that and be aggressive in providing the necessary support for start-ups," he adds.

Ramanujam Sridhar, founder and CEO of Brand-comm suggests, "Bangalore needs a champion; someone who will behave, act and deliver like the CEO of a company. In western countries, you have a mayor who is vested with authority to do things for the city and its people. The city and state have suffered from a lack of leadership and vision." "The government can develop a plan for the creation of a New Bangalore - which may combine the best of Dubai, Singapore and Switzerland. The city can be stretched beyond its current periphery," suggests Manish.

Thus, while Seemandhra may pose no threat to Bangalore any time soon, it definitely poses an opportunity for the city to pull up its socks and reinvent itself as a prime destination for IT professionals and entrepreneurs.

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**The indomitable language barrier created by Bangaloreans tends to make people feel like outsiders and discourages them from making whole-hearted contributions. Bangalore should look beyond such trivial issues"**

● **RANJAN MANISH,**  
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