



Hyderabad Metro

Once completed, it will be the world's largest metro rail project in PPP mode

TOTAL LENGTH: **72 km**

PROJECT COST: **₹14,132 crore**

FUNDING: **₹1,458 crore** (10%) by Central government as viability gap funding, rest (90%) by concessionaire (L&T)

REAL ESTATE COMPONENT: **₹2,243 crore** (being fully funded by L&T)

TOTAL DEBT: **₹11,478 crore** from an SBI-led **10-bank consortium**

DEADLINE: **June 2017**
(8-km-long Meettuguda to Nagole stretch is ready, but L&T is opposed to opening that portion alone, as it will be commercially unviable)

New Life in a Metro

A year after Telangana was born, innovation and investment are the buzzwords in the state's capital of Hyderabad

PHOTO: SHANTANU NANDAN SHARMA

TIME OVERRUN: Uncertainties in the run-up to the separation, **land acquisition, delays in getting clearances** from defence ministry and railways may **delay the project**

THE FUTURE: The state government is keen to **add 80 km more**, but no plan has been firmed up yet



"Hyderabad Metro will be a game changer for Telangana. The state's future depends on Hyderabad and the city's future largely depends on this metro rail"

NVS Reddy, managing director, Hyderabad Metro Rail

:: Shantanu Nandan Sharma

Lalu Prasad's mother tongue is Telugu. The 32-year-old auto driver in Hyderabad is unsure when his forefathers, originally from Begusarai in Bihar, landed up in the city of Nizams. He speaks broken Hindi, calls himself a true Hyderabadi and is dead chuffed to belong to Telangana, and not Andhra Pradesh. Then he goes on to explain how rich the city of Hyderabad is, in stark contrast to the poverty on the other side of the one-year-old border.

Prasad may be glad he's in a new state, and its illustrious, funds-flushed capital, but he's also quick to add: "The new status [of statehood for Telangana] will be more meaningful if my son gets admission in a good school. I want him to speak English when he grows up."

Prasad reflects the mood of the common people taking part in the grand celebration of Telangana completing its first year. People are jubilant, but once the celebrations ebb they'll also go home wondering what the state's robust finances will mean for their own well-being.

For the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS)-led state government, which in the month of March presented a budget for fiscal year 2015-16 with a ₹531 crore surplus (against a ₹7,300-crore deficit in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh), the state's finances are its key strength. Money is not a constraint in doling out subsidies and creating new jobs. On the first anniversary of the formation of Telangana earlier this week, chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao (popularly

called KCR) announced the creation of as many as 25,000 new government jobs and building 50,000 two-bedroom houses for the poor, among other welfare measures.

Realising that the poor employability of people from Telangana may haunt the new state in the years to come, the one-year-young government has laid down a policy to dramatically change the education system of the state. "We are planning all educational institutions in Telangana to be residential with English as the medium of instruction," says chief minister KCR (see interview on the next page).

KCR concedes his government can't give jobs to every individual. But according to his simple arithmetic, Hyderabad will continue to woo big-ticket investors and the state's economic vibrancy and private sector job market will only grow in the years to come.

Untangling Telangana

JD Seelam, a Congress leader from Andhra Pradesh and former Union minister of state for finance, claims KCR government's philosophy is more to do with randomly giving away goodies rather than articulating any vision statement. "Hyderabad will be a city as usual. The real investments will now shift to Andhra. It's not a new Telangana. The fact is it is Andhra that is new," declares Seelam.

For his part, KCR challenges his detractors who foresee a possible downfall of Hyderabad as an investors' para-

SLOGANS DURING THE TELANGANA AGITATION

ACTION ON SLOGANS POST STATEHOOD

Neellu (water)

Still a problem; state government **plans to restore 46,531 minor irrigation sources** (tanks) in five years

Nidhulu (funds)

Thanks to cash-rich Hyderabad in it, Telangana **does not have fund crunch**

Niyamakalu (jobs)

Unwritten rules ensure public employment is doled out only to people of Telangana

THE SLOGAN NOW

Innovate in Telangana, Invest in Telangana

The state government claims to have a **"single window without grills"**

Claims it will have power surplus by **2018** when **production capacity is expected to reach 24,000 MW**

dise because of law and order problems, an unforgiving climate (an unprecedented temperature of 45 degrees this summer, although it hasn't been too different in Andhra) and an uncertain labour policy of the new government. "I can challenge anyone on the fact that no city in India has the advantages as Hyderabad has. It's in the Deccan Plateau and not in a seismic zone. All top IT companies of the world have placed their back-up facilities in Hyderabad," says the CM.

A senior state government official, who is not authorised to speak to the media, adds: "Rumours are being spread about growing law and order situation and investor fatigue in Hyderabad. The reality is that huge investments are in the pipeline."

Big Promises

KCR has been at pains to point out that the competition for investments is with Maharashtra and Gujarat, and not big brother Andhra Pradesh. Which is why he is promising investors all permissions (for land, water, electricity et al) in 15 days, and corruption-free procedures.

This writer was present when a group of mobile manufacturers had a one-hour-long interaction with the CM earlier this week at his office-cum-residence in Begumpet. The investors wanted assurances on labour issues, pitched for tax exemptions and asked for about 500 acres of land to set up their manufacturing facilities. As an example of proactivity, one of them pointed out how the Chinese authorities converted a village into today's Shenzhen, a paradise for investors.

When it was KCR's turn, he first showed the potential investors a documentary on the roadmap for Telangana, before asking them to come back with a concrete plan with their demands and concerns. He assured them that a meeting with trade union leaders would be arranged in the CM's office itself and they would be able to sort out labour issues in a transparent manner. He stressed that land acquisition wouldn't be an issue, as the state has a land bank of 1.6 lakh acres.

Tongue firmly in cheek, KCR said he had no problems welcoming "suit-boot" industrialists – in the context of Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi's dig at the Modi-led government's propensity for businessmen – so long as they were willing to pay minimum wages to the workers and give them all the basic amenities as prescribed by law.

Urdu poet and lyricist Shadab Bedhadak,

who wrote poems praising the one year of statehood, says Hyderabad will turn into a *Sone ki Chidiya* (a golden bird) in Telangana. "Like a Bollywood movie, we are expecting Hyderabad to be a superhit," he says.

For every Telanganite who was part of the six-decade-long struggle for statehood, such expectations and excitement are only natural. When the Telugu-speaking Telangana region of the erstwhile state of Hyderabad state was merged with Andhra state in 1956, there were weak protests that only escalated over the years, to finally force the UPA-II government in 2014 to concede a bifurcation of the state. People from Andhra Pradesh vehemently protested a bifurcation, and did not agree to give away the jewel of Hyderabad, which was the principal bread-earner for the undivided state. But Telanganites finally won the battle and Hyderabad was declared a joint capital only for 10 years, and the revenue that it earns during this period will belong to Telangana alone.

A year after the separation, the acrimony between the two sides is showing little signs of receding. It took eight months to segregate the All India Services officers – IAS, IPS and Indian Forest Service. The finalisation of the division of the state bureaucracy and 59 state public sector undertakings is not yet over. And there are uncertainties over water-sharing of the two rivers, Krishna and Godavari.

Mud-slinging Continues

Seelam of the Congress argues that the common issues of discord could have been sorted out had both the chief ministers – KCR and Chandrababu Naidu – been on good terms. "When the CMs are openly criticising each other, the problems are only flaring up. Both are politicising every small issue," he says.

Only a week ago, A Revanth Reddy, a Telugu Desam Party (TDP) MLA, was held in a bribery case in Hyderabad when he went to allegedly "buy" a nominated MLA for the upcoming MLC poll with a ₹50 lakh advance in cash at the direction of his "boss". The Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) of Telangana video-graphed the entire episode and CDs were circulated to journalists reportedly by the CM's office.

Did KCR know about the trap laid by the ACB to pin down TDP supremo Naidu? Or did he himself engineer the trap to expose his Andhra counterpart and political rival?

A year after the two states were formed, the mud-slinging continues. The real victor, though, will be the side that gets the investments. Whether KCR can retain Hyderabad's lustre or whether Naidu can offer investors an attractive alternative is the multi-billion-dollar question. ■

The Other Mantras



Haritham, Shivam, Sundaram: Envisages increasing tree cover in the state from 24% to 33% by planting 230 crore seedlings in three years



Shaadi Mubarak: Special scheme of one-time grant for unmarried SC, ST and minority girls below the poverty line during marriage



KG to PG: Envisages establishing one model sarkari school in each assembly segment where medium of instruction will be English (with Telugu as a compulsory subject); children of ministers and officials will be encouraged to study in such schools



Swachh Hyderabad: Inspired by Swachh Bharat campaign, this cleanliness drive has its unique characteristics; for instance, the city of Hyderabad has been divided into 425 geographical units, with each unit placed under a mentor who could be an MLA, MP, IAS, IPS officer etc

Hyderabad Attracted Investors not because of Chandrababu Naidu

On the day India's youngest state Telangana turned one and there were celebrations all across the city of Hyderabad, chief minister **K Chandrashekar Rao** claimed that Hyderabad will remain the favourite destination of investors. In an exclusive interaction with **Shantanu Nandan Sharma** at his Begumpet camp office in the city, Rao said potential investors will be escorted from the airport as per a new scheme that will be launched later this month. Edited excerpts from the interview:

How has been your transition from being an activist fighting for Telangana to ruling the state now?

Our 60-year-old struggle for Telangana was based on the slogan: *Neellu* (water), *Nidhulu* (funds), *Niyamakalu* (job). We did not have any of those. That was our grouse, and we went for an agitation. Now, Telangana has been declared (by the 14th Finance Commission) a revenue-surplus state. Only two states in India are revenue-surplus, the other being Gujarat. Yes, there is no dearth of funds. When we took over, the main problem was power. It was a neglected sector. But with a great deal of effort, we could arrange the required funds. The present production capacity is just 4,320 MW. We have made plans to produce 24,000 MW by 2018.

Let's go beyond the first year. What's the vision for the medium to long term?

Any good leader must follow both yearly and five-yearly plans. Yes, we have to have a vision on the state's future. We fully understand that today's world is a truly global one. And no one can stop that. Tomorrow's generation will make a living by competing globally. The barriers have already been broken. So, we plan to make the young generation globally competitive.

How can you achieve that?

Let me explain. In the state of Telangana, we have a large number of hostels in our educational institutions. But having that infrastructure alone won't help. We have to change our education system altogether. Our scheme called KG to PG is aimed at that.

Once this programme is implemented, it will eclipse the present system. First, we want the entire educational system in Telangana to be residential. There will finally be no place for day-school setups. Secondly, all institutions will be of English medium, following the CBSE syllabus. Telugu will be a compulsory subject, but the medium of instruction will be English. The rich people's children go to nursery and kindergartens before joining regular schools, but what happens to those living in rural areas? They need to be prepared before bringing them to our residential schools. Another challenge is to train our teachers; most of them can't teach in English. So we have decided, as our teachers retire, we will recruit only those who can teach in English. So, in the years to come, this new system will eclipse the existing educational system. In a span of five to seven years, I hope the whole educational system will be in English medium.

Isn't there some apprehension that Hyderabad may lose its earlier sheen, and the rich and mighty may gradually move towards Andhra Pradesh?

I can challenge anyone on the fact that no city in India has the advantages as Hyderabad has. It's in the Deccan Plateau and not in a seismic zone. All top IT companies of the world have placed their back-up facilities in Hyderabad. For Microsoft, Hyderabad houses the second-largest facility after the one in Silicon Valley. Recently, my son [KT Rama Rao] who is our IT minister went to the US to sign an agreement with Google. Google's presence here will be second only to that in the US.

"Many states have single-window system. But ours is a single window without grills"

