



All political parties fought for separate Telangana. But the TRS came to power due to the wrong policies of the Congress. We will not keep quiet till the TRS government fulfills all its promises — **ERRABALLI DAYAKAR RAO**, TDP LEADER



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A Smart City Is More Than Just A Grand Vision Guided By Technology

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Vizag is all set to become smart and the timing couldn't be better. It is happening at

a time when the world has reached a consensus on the definition of a 'smart city' and smart technologies have matured considerably. With financial and technological support from the United States (US), the city is all set to fly. But shaping a smart city is not just about a grand vision but is also about its granularity. Here's a glimpse.



Smart Prioritization

Robotic walls for homes, gigabit per second internet speed, persuasive electric vehicles for the disabled, wearable technology for patients...the possibilities are endless, but the question is, are they relevant for Vizag? Will they become relevant in the future as the city evolves into a global, economically vibrant innovation hub? These are perhaps the most important questions at the moment.

In the recently-concluded, biggest-ever bilateral technology summit between India and the US, a US official recalled that during hurricane Katrina, climatic information was made available in advance but it took almost 48 hours for evacuation to begin. By then New Orleans was devastated! This highlights the fact that smart information dissemination has to be ably supported by

robust back-end operations!

For Vizag, the priorities can be a combination of disaster management, maritime security, coastal surveillance, smart water supply, waste management and even managing the stray dog menace, but it is important to ensure a robust back-end, which is more about people than smart technologies.

Smart Decisions

As a smart industrial hub, Vizag will soon experience traffic gridlocks. Metro rail is being explored as an option but global experience shows that capital and maintenance costs are very high for metro rail infrastructure.

Perhaps Vizag should explore a light rail public transportation system on the lines of the London Light Rail, a 182-mile track connecting business hubs like Heathrow and Paddington, among others. It has seen a

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40% increase in ridership and remains ever popular. Connecting existing business and emerging residential hubs like Jagadamba Center, Dwaraka Nagar, Poorna Market, Gajuwaka and Madhurwada by a light rail system will be a 'smart decision'. Comprehensive mobility studies should be taken up to design pedestrian walkways, two-wheeler lanes and the like.

Smart is about People

The smart city concept goes beyond just intercon-

nections and interactions facilitated by the use of ICT and geomatics. Vizag should become smart by engaging its citizens creatively. Armed with smart phones, citizens can double up as sensors and actuators – citizens can take pictures of garbage on the roads, leaking pipes and failing infrastructure using a custom-built mobile app that populates a 'City Portal', which in turn pulls information from social media for real time 'City Sentiment Analysis'.

Citizens will then become 'sensing tools' that monitor the performance of critical infrastructure and this will be the first step towards creating smart governance, anchored by educated and enlightened citizens. An 'open data' policy will empower them further. By giving access to public data for building mobile

apps, the city can achieve seamless traffic flows and better quality life. Cities like Taichung and Toronto entered the league of smart cities by creating intelligent communities.

The 'Startup Village' in Vizag should be shaped on the lines of MaRs Discovery District in Toronto, which is one of the largest urban innovation hubs in the world with business leaders, young entrepreneurs and subject matter experts collaborating to make the city a hotbed of innovation – an interdisciplinary and cross industry collaborative model that Vizag can emulate.

Smart Vision

Contrary to popular belief, smart growth is less about technology and more about sustainability. Walkable neighbourhoods, public transportation, affordable housing, eco conservation, stakeholder collaboration are, in fact, the very DNA of a smart city!

While technology and funding may be from the US, the city can get knowledge and best practices from anywhere in the world. The concept of Barcelona's City Protocol and Rio de Janeiro's Control and Command Center should be borrowed. There is something to learn from not only big global cities like New York, Singapore, Amsterdam and London but also smaller ones like Taichung, Waterloo and Arlington. This 'science of city' and the 'art of smart decision making' will surely catapult the City of Destiny into a new orbit of glory.

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