

'Mini capitals' mooted for Seemandhra to spur growth

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HYDERABAD: The Union government has put in place an action plan to develop major Tier II and III cities/towns in Seemandhra region as 'specialised mini-capitals'. The new capital of residuary Andhra Pradesh may be merely the administrative and political headquarters.

In a bid to contain people's antipathy towards the Congress in the wake of the bifurcation, the Centre is said to be toying with the idea of decentralised development instead of investing heavily on new capital. The new mantra would be to develop at least eight to ten cities/towns in the region, depending on their importance.

Blue-print

Highly placed sources told *The Hindu* on Thursday that a blue-print presented to the Centre after the division of the State has strongly pitched for developing a new capital that would function merely as the administrative and political headquarters. "Apart from the construction of the State Secretariat, Legislature and buildings to house government departments, the Centre wants to give a fillip to other places for all round development," sources said.

The action plan submitted to the Group of Ministers and Centre recommends developing Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Ongole, Tirupati, Chittoor, Kakinada and Anantapur as specialised hubs or mini-capitals. According to information, Visakhapatnam may turn into the fisheries and sea-food hub.

To give teeth to its plan, it has been suggested that the headquarters of the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) should be shifted to the port city of Vi-

sakhapatnam to attract more investments to develop fisheries and sea-food based industries.

Kakinada will become the focal point in the development of petrochemical industries. Plans are said to be afoot to set up a corporation exclusively to meet the needs of industries dependent on gas; a corporation on the lines of one run in Gujarat Gas Company Limited. Request has already been made to Centre to revive the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) plant, the foundation for which was laid in Nellore district. Keeping in view the automobile and transport industries' concentration in and around Vijayawada, it is likely to become the transport hub. Ongole is said to be in the race to become the engineering hub. Tirupati or Chittoor are in the reckoning to turn into agro-

based and food-processing hubs in the near future while Anantapur is being tipped as the hardware electronics hub.

Connectivity

Sources said the Centre was looking at a city that has the necessary infrastructure, road and air connectivity besides much needed assured water resources. Visakhapatnam and Rajahmundry are said to be one of the options before the government because of their location and accessibility to communication network.

Although no final decision has been taken in identifying the new capital, the Centre appears to be serious about ensuring decentralised development and refrain from repeating its mistake of making Hyderabad a global destination at the cost of neglect of other cities and towns in Andhra Pradesh.

INCLUSIVE AGENDA

VISAKHAPATNAM, VIJAYAWADA, ONGOLE, TIRUPATI, CHITTOOR, KAKINADA AND ANANTAPUR TO BE DEVELOPED AS SPECIALISED HUBS OR MINI-CAPITALS

VISAKHAPATNAM

may be developed into fisheries and sea-food hub. Shifting of National Fisheries Development Board mooted to attract more investments to develop fisheries and sea-food based industries.



ONGOLE

Ongole is said to be in the race to become the engineering hub while Anantapur tipped as the hardware electronics hub.

Tirupati or Chittoor are in the reckoning to turn into agro-based and food-processing hubs in the near future

Kakinada will become the focal point in the development of petrochemical industries and plans are said to be afoot to set up a corporation on the lines of Gujarat Gas Company Limited