



## 'AP SHOULD GUN FOR DEFENCE, AEROSPACE MANUFACTURING'

**With AP now looking for major investments, how is the investor confidence?**

■ Everybody knows that as compared to other chief ministers, Chandrababu Naidu has proved his leadership in the way he transformed Hyderabad. But now, the challenges are different. Today, infrastructure and manufacturing are two sectors AP has to focus on or lose out. But in order to create infrastructure, huge investments and government spending is needed. Also, acquiring land and building infrastructure takes time. But we are extremely confident that though things are looking difficult now and may take some time, AP will definitely emerge as one of the top three states in the country.

**Are the 'Make in India' and 'Make in AP' campaigns on the right track?**

■ The chief minister recently launched Xiaomi's first 'Made in India, Made in AP' handset and the Prime Minister has done a phenomenal job in creating a lot of interest in the international community about India in just one year. I was at the Hannover Fair at the 'Make in India' show, which was the first government programme that I would say was beyond our imagination. So far the PM has done a good job, now it all depends on how chief ministers can convert this excitement into investments. Manufacturing is the only way for us to create employment for a population of 1 billion. Software will continue to grow but we won't see the kind of growth that it witnessed earlier. Manufacturing and agriculture are two sectors that have huge employment generation potential and are extremely critical for India's growth.

**We have been hearing a lot about infrastructure regions and corridors such as Petroleum, Chemical, Petrochemical Infrastructure Region and Vizag-Chennai Industrial Corridor. But is anything happening on the ground?**

■ During our recent regional council CII meeting, the same



CII Vizag Zone chairman Neeraj Sarma

*This second generation entrepreneur graduated in industrial engineering from Nagpur University and went on to do his MBA with specialisation in finance and marketing from the University of Pittsburgh. He returned to India in 2005 to join the family business. Today as director of Sarda Metals and Alloys Limited, Neeraj Sarma not only handles the Sarda Group's first green-field project in Andhra Pradesh with a total outlay of Rs 2,000 crore, but at the young age of 35 helms the Vizag zone of the Confederation of Indian Industry. In a chat with Manish of TOI, the CII Vizag Zone chairman speaks about what the future holds for Andhra Pradesh and Vizag in particular and the role CII intends to play in it.*

issue was raised. As far as the ground reality is concerned, the Vizag-Chennai corridor is in the most advanced stages of seeing the light of day as Asian Development Bank (ADB) has agreed to sanction funds for infrastructure development, which is the most essential factor. Corridors can't be developed overnight and our expectations are very unrealistic. The important factor is Rs 500 crore has been sanctioned for this infrastructure project and once spending starts, investments will begin. Nobody wants to come to a place that doesn't have infrastructure. As per our expectations, the corridor will see the light of day in 5-7 years as first five years are needed for infrastructure development.

**AP has been denied special status as well as special tax incentives. Is this hurting investment inflow into the state?**

■ 100%. First of all, after bifurcation AP got dealt a very bad hand. The Centre has thrown a googly at on special status and tax sops. A lot of investments

planned for AP were held back as investors wanted to know which districts will be considered for this. After this confusion they probably won't come. For our state, special status is critical and something has to be done urgently to get special status as it will give a tremendous boost to industrial development.

**Power was a major issue for industries about two years ago. What is the big burning issue now?**

■ As you said, power is a non-issue now because we have surplus power and for the foreseeable future we won't have any problems with electricity. Today if you look, we don't have any industrial cluster other than a couple in Vizag. People are looking for developed infrastructure and what is the infrastructure that we offer? That is a big challenge. Overall, the market sentiment is not very positive at this point of time due to global factors, including the slowdown in China. Capital investments may not happen

in a lot of sectors, but automotive and pharma sectors have enormous potential and may see investments. However, the commodities sector is stressed out.

**What are the potential sectors for north coastal AP?**

■ Food processing and seafood industry are potential sectors on which emphasis is needed. Going forward, the automotive will keep growing. It is a sustainable industry and if the state government can somehow provide infrastructure and sops, it can grow here. We have still not made any strong progress on defence manufacturing despite having defence facilities in the state. Defence and aerospace are the sunrise sectors. State government should try and attract investments in these two sectors as a lot of foreign direct investment will come.

**Are we doing enough to promote tourism in AP?**

■ AP is blessed with a beautiful coast and the Eastern Ghats. But somehow tourism has not been one of the focus sectors

in AP. At CII, we have taken a strong initiative with the tourism department to develop tourism hubs. We have identified three cities, the first one being Vizag and other two being Tirupati and Vijayawada. We are planning on signing a MoU to work together to make tourism a flourishing industry. We have plans, but we have to see how to implement them as implementation is the key. Tourism has to be recognised as an industry so that we can tap the potential and develop it with PPP projects. The tourism department shouldn't be involved in building hotels, instead it should be a facilitator and let entrepreneurs come. That will attract funds and foreign exchange.

**What is CII doing to promote Vizag?**

■ As such CII is not into promoting any specific destination, but we want to promote the whole state as it has a lot of opportunities. CII is focussing on manufacturing and going forward we need to be in line with international parameters of efficiency.

### MONDAY INTERVIEW

## Menlo Park offers to create better ecosystem for Vizag

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, FEB. 13

Mayor of the Menlo Park city, Catherine Carlton, extended help to create a better ecosystem in Vizag for its all-round development.

The mayor was on a day-long visit to Vizag on Friday and held a series of meetings with the heads of various wings of district administration and representatives of trade to explore opportunities for a twin city agreement between Vizag and Menlo Park. The US city, which has headquarters of tech giants like Facebook, has similar plans of sister agreement for mutual cooperation with Kochi in Kerala.

Speaking at the CII's public session organised as part of the trade body's annual conference, Ms Carlton said, "I am impressed with the beaches here. We are ready to help Vizag develop ecotourism. I have also interacted with women tribal dancers and their culture is interesting. We can also have a cultural exchange."

Ms Carlton also offered to help digitising the city's education and impart training to teachers. She added that their government is offering a minimum 25 per cent tax incentives to those willing to set up businesses in Menlo Park.

Earlier in the day, district collector, N. Yuvaraj made a power point presentation on dynamics of Vizag city.



Chairman of CII Visakhapatnam Neeraj Sardha has a word with mayor of Menlo Park, USA, Ms Catherine Carlton during the CII Vizag zone annual day at a hotel in Visakhapatnam on Friday.

### CITY IN THE MAKING

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CATHERINE CARLTON  
Mayor, Menlo Park City

## Neeraj Sardha is new CII-Vizag chief

Visakhapatnam: At the annual meeting of the CII Vizag zone held on Friday, director of Sarda Metals & Alloys Ltd, Neeraj Sardha, was elected as the chairman of the CII Vizag zone. Neeraj Sardha was the vice-chairman of CII Vizag zone in 2014-2015. Mr Sardha has done his industrial engineering from Nagpur University, Maharashtra and completed his MBA in finance and marketing from University of Pittsburg. Managing director of Mahatma Gandhi Cancer Hospital & Research Institute, Dr V. Murali Krishna, was elected the vice-chairman of the CII Vizag zone.

## Andhra Jyothi – 14.02.15

**సీబిఎఫ్ సూతన కార్యక్రమం**

విశాఖపట్నం, ఫిబ్రవరి 13  
సీబిఎఫ్ సూతన కార్యక్రమం సందర్భంగా విశాఖపట్నం లోని సీబిఎఫ్ కార్యాలయంలో సీబిఎఫ్ సూతన కార్యక్రమం నిర్వహించారు. ఈ కార్యక్రమంలో సీబిఎఫ్ సూతన కార్యక్రమం నిర్వహించారు.

## Enadu – 14.02.15

**సి.ఐ.ఐ. విశాఖజోన్ చైర్మన్ గా నీరజ్ శారద**

విశాఖపట్నం, ఫిబ్రవరి 13: సీ.ఐ.ఐ. విశాఖజోన్ శారద మెటల్స్ అండ్ అలాయిస్ ప్రైవేట్ లిమిటెడ్ డైరెక్టర్ నీరజ్ శారద, ఉపాధ్యక్షుడిగా మహాత్మాగాంధీ కేన్సర్ హాస్పిటల్స్ రిసెర్చ్ ఇన్స్టిట్యూట్ ఎంఓ డాక్టర్ మురళీకృష్ణలు ఎంపికయ్యారు. శుక్రవారం నగరంలోని ఓ హోటల్లో జరిగిన సి.ఐ.ఐ. వార్షిక సమావేశంలో సూతన కార్యక్రమాన్ని ఎప్పుడున్నాయి.