



Hyderabad: Transition to Telangana's Exclusive Capital

Hyderabad, a city that has long stood at the intersection of history, culture, and modern development, recently marked a significant milestone in its political and administrative journey. As of June 2, 2024, Hyderabad has ceased to be the joint capital of both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. This transition follows the stipulations of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, which dictated that Hyderabad would serve as the shared capital for a decade following the bifurcation of the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh state.



[Source: unsplash]

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Historical Context and Bifurcation

The demand for a separate state of Telangana has roots that stretch back several decades, driven by perceived economic, social, and cultural disparities. The movement gained momentum in the early 2000s, culminating in the passage of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act by the Indian Parliament in February 2014. This act led to the formal creation of Telangana as the 29th state of India on June 2, 2014.



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Under the provisions of this act, Hyderabad was designated as the common capital for both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh for a period not exceeding ten years. This arrangement aimed to provide Andhra Pradesh with adequate time to establish its new capital while ensuring a smooth administrative transition for Telangana.

Legislative Provisions and the AP Reorganisation Act

The Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, laid out clear guidelines for the bifurcation process. Section 5(1) of the act specified that Hyderabad would serve as the shared capital for ten years from the appointed day. Section 5(2) mandated that following this period, Hyderabad would exclusively become the capital of Telangana, while Andhra Pradesh would need to establish a new capital.

This legislative framework was crucial in managing the division of assets, liabilities, and administrative responsibilities between the two new states. The act also provided for the creation of committees to oversee the division of public institutions, infrastructure and services.

Transition to Sole Capital Status





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[Source: unsplash]

In preparation for Hyderabad's transition to the sole capital of Telangana, Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy directed officials to reclaim several buildings in Hyderabad that were allotted to Andhra Pradesh. These included prominent structures like the Lake View guest house, the Hermitage complex, and the Crime Investigation Department building. While most of these buildings have been vacated, Andhra Pradesh has sought an extension to retain some of them for another year, offering to pay rent until permanent accommodations are secured.

The Telangana government's response to this request is pending, and final decisions are expected after the lifting of election-related restrictions on June 6, 2024.

Impact on Administrative and Political Landscape

The cessation of Hyderabad as the joint capital marks a significant shift in the administrative and political landscape of both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. For Telangana, this transition reinforces its autonomy and control over one of India's most prominent metropolitan cities. For Andhra Pradesh, it underscores the need to accelerate the development of its new capital region and address the logistical challenges that come with such a monumental task.

Andhra-Pradesh's Capital Conundrum

The process of establishing a new capital for Andhra Pradesh has been fraught with complexities and controversies. Initially, a committee headed by K.C. Sivaramakrishnan recommended Amaravati as the new capital. The Andhra Pradesh legislative assembly subsequently passed the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority Act (APCRDA), 2014, designating Amaravati as the capital.

However, political shifts brought new challenges. In 2019, the newly elected Jagan Mohan Reddy government repealed the APCRDA Act and introduced the AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Bill, 2020. This bill proposed a tri-capital model with Visakhapatnam as the executive capital, Amaravati as the legislative capital, and Kurnool as the judicial capital, aiming to promote balanced regional development.

Legal Challenges and Judicial Rulings



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[Source: unsplash]

The decentralization bill faced legal challenges, leading to a pivotal judgment by the Andhra Pradesh High Court in 2022. The court ruled that the bill was unconstitutional as the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act provided for only one capital. The High Court ordered the government to develop Amaravati as the sole capital within six months.

The Andhra Pradesh government appealed this ruling to the Supreme Court, where the matter remains pending. This ongoing legal battle has added to the uncertainty and complexity of the state's capital development plans.

Economic and Infrastructural Implications

The bifurcation and subsequent capital establishment processes have significant economic and infrastructural implications for both states. Hyderabad, already a major IT and business hub, is poised for further growth as the exclusive capital of Telangana. The city's infrastructure, real estate, and investment climate are likely to benefit from this enhanced status, attracting more businesses and residents.

For Andhra Pradesh, the challenge lies in building a new capital from the ground up. This requires substantial investment in infrastructure, housing, and public services. The tri-capital model, if implemented, would necessitate extensive development in Visakhapatnam, Amaravati, and Kurnool, potentially straining the state's financial resources but also offering opportunities for balanced regional growth.



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Socio-Political Dynamics

The bifurcation and capital transition have also influenced the socio-political dynamics in both states. In Telangana, the sense of statehood and autonomy has been bolstered, with Hyderabad serving as a symbol of their distinct identity. The Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) government has leveraged this sentiment to consolidate political support and drive development initiatives.

In Andhra Pradesh, the debate over the capital has been a contentious issue, influencing political alignments and public opinion. The decision to decentralize capital functions reflects an attempt to address regional disparities and promote inclusive development. However, it has also led to political friction and public protests, highlighting the challenges of balancing regional aspirations with practical governance.

Future Prospects and Challenges

As Hyderabad embarks on its journey as the sole capital of Telangana, the city faces both opportunities and challenges. The enhanced capital status is expected to attract more investments, boost economic growth, and spur infrastructural development. However, managing urbanization, ensuring sustainable development, and addressing socio-economic disparities within the city remain critical challenges.

For Andhra Pradesh, the immediate priority is to resolve the capital issue and commence the development of its new administrative centers. The outcome of the Supreme Court case will be a decisive factor in shaping the state's future capital plans. Ensuring financial sustainability, attracting investments, and providing adequate public services in the new capital regions are key challenges that the state must address.

The cessation of Hyderabad as the joint capital marks a significant chapter in the post-bifurcation era of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. While Hyderabad's transition to the exclusive capital of Telangana symbolizes the culmination of a long-standing demand for statehood, the journey for Andhra Pradesh to establish its new capital continues to unfold amidst legal, political, and economic complexities.

This development underscores the broader challenges and opportunities that come with state bifurcation and capital relocation. As both states navigate their respective paths, the focus on balanced development, sustainable growth, and inclusive governance will be crucial in shaping their future trajectories. The experiences of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh offer valuable lessons for other regions grappling with similar issues of statehood, autonomy, and administrative reorganization.