

# All that White Space for Rural India

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella highlights the role company's tech can play in connecting heartlands

## Our Bureau

**Hyderabad:** After Facebook, it's Microsoft's turn to pitch for Digital India. During his visit to Hyderabad on Monday, Microsoft Chief Executive Officer Satya Nadella highlighted the role the White Spaces project by Microsoft could play in connecting rural India.

"One of the things I feel that is most important is connectivity. So, there needs to be a market-based solution and also a local entrepreneur that goes out and creates that last-mile connectivity that offers affordable solutions," said Nadella during his address at T-Hub, the Telangana state government-backed technology incubator.

Infosys CEO and MD Vishal Sikka and Keerti Melkote, founder of Aruba Networks, which was acquired by HP earlier this year, were also present at T-Hub.

"We are collaborating to work on the White Spaces technology that Microsoft has been pioneering. We want to bridge the last-mile connectivity problem, but Satya Nadella wants local entrepreneurs to come forward and partner with Microsoft for this technology," said KT

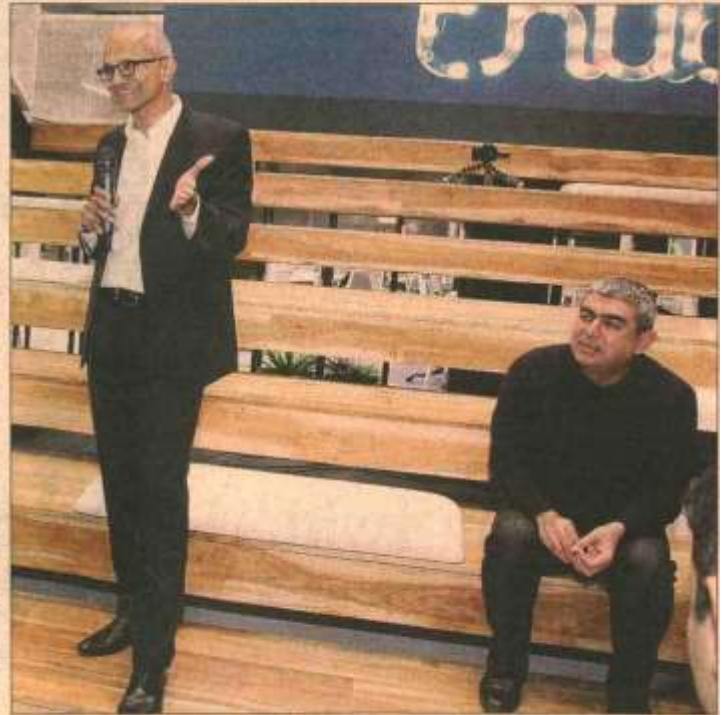
Rama Rao, minister for information technology and Panchayati Raj for Telangana.

The pilot for White Spaces project, which utilises the unused spectrum from television to carry low cost internet connectivity, has been active in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh.

Discussions are on between the AP State government and the Central government to scale it up as part of the ₹333-crore AP Fibre Grid project for rural broadband connectivity.

During the course of a breakfast meeting with the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh N Chandrababu Naidu, the state government requested the Microsoft CEO to help set up a Centre of Excellence in Vishakhapatnam.

For utilisation of ICT in citizen services and drive digital inclusion, the AP government signed a memorandum of understanding with Microsoft India to harness Microsoft Cloud technology. According to the MoU, Microsoft India will apply 'Microsoft Azure Machine Learning and Advanced Visualization to predict and address specific problems in the fields of education, agriculture and eCitizen services.



CEO of Microsoft Satya Nadella speaks as Infosys CEO and MD Vishal Sikka looks on during a visit to the Catalyst, at T-Hub building, in Hyderabad. — PTI