

BangaloreIT.Com '98 proves to be a 'hit'

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU

Bangalore, Nov 5: The conclusion of the five-day international exhibition 'BangaloreIT.Com' proves just two points. First, the State is capable of hosting events of international standard and expectation. Second, the need for a permanent exhibition centre like the Pragati Maidan, going by the evidence of the growing numbers of visitors to such fairs.

On Thursday, State Government officials were riding high as BangaloreIT.Com turned out to be a mega hit and the response from participants, the general public and school children was phenomenal. Moreover, the United Sta-

tes has also evinced interest to join hands with the Karnataka Government for next year's event.

In fact, the State Government officials had to issue a public notice asking the general public and schools not to bring the children to the venue as the participants were finding it difficult to explain their products in simple terms. The highlight of the event was the official website recording more than 40,000 hits in the first two days and the number of visitors crossed the one-lakh mark on Wednesday, which even led to a lathi-charge. This also spoke volumes of the effects of the hype created by the media. The number of visitors on the last

day fell to less than 50,000.

Like any other consumer exhibition, the general public thronged the exhibition venue, unmindful of the distance (about 22 km from the city) and which made the show appear successful. However, the net business transacted or enquired during these days will be announced officially on Friday by the organisers.

There was a long, serpentine queue right from the morning and it took nearly an hour for the first visitor to enter the first stall.

Said one organiser, "we had exciting visitors (who wanted to do business) in the morning



and curious onlookers, in the evening. When compared to other international meets around the world, this meets international standards. While we get trade enquiries in other parts of the world, here we get business enquiries from the end-user. There has been good response, so far."

Karnataka IT Secretary Sanjoy Dasgupta told *The Indian Express* this shows what kind of human resources we have. "We have already created an awareness and look at the number of school children visiting the stalls. They have come to stalls even though we had asked them not to do so.

We are not going to extend it." Even the participants felt that five days was too long a period for such exhibitions.

After going round, some visitors said "it looks like we are being shown the ITPL property, which is lying vacant for the last few months. It would be better if the fair is held somewhere else in the city."

A majority of the participants felt that the event attracted too many general visitors. "People flocked the exhibition for five days like any other mela. The business visitor was really affected due to the overcrowding," a participant said. "Perhaps the mad rush is due to the fact that the event is being organised for the first time. The rush will subside in

subsequent years as it will be an annual feature. Only an interested visitor will come next year," another participant hoped.

A Calcutta-based software company which had set up a stall in IT.Com '98 felt "cheated". "I participated in the event only to showcase by ERP package to international participants. There were hardly any international participants," the company official said.

An official of a Bangalore-based software training company said "There were lots of visitors especially from Southern States to the exhibition. The company gained a lot of mileage following its participation."