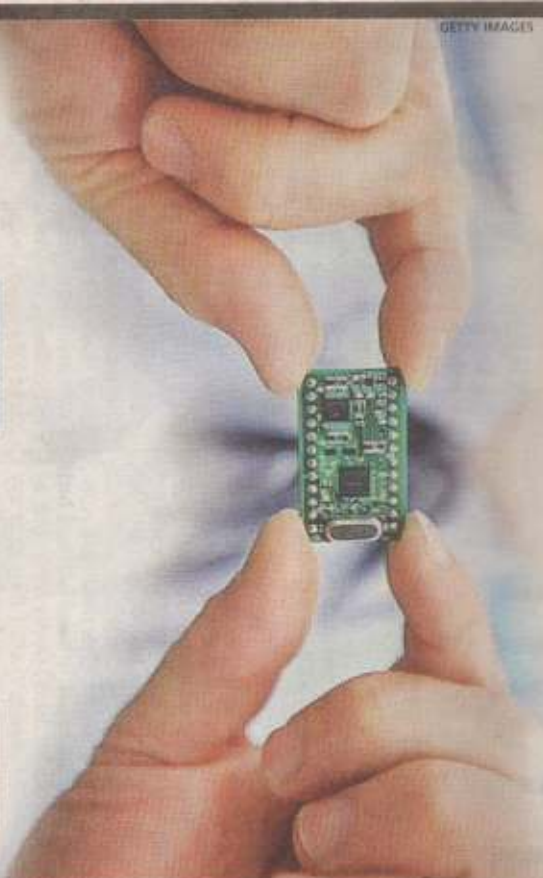


The chips are up!

Pune is fast emerging as a hub for computer chips, currently attracting an almost \$1 bn investment



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NIRIN BRAHME

After creating a strong position for itself in the software industry, Pune is now emerging as a 'Network and Storage' hub — and ultimately the new 'chip city' of the India. Pune has made its mark internationally on various fronts, ranging from education, culture, sports and auto to IT as well. Now, it is poised to acquire another identity — this time specialised in the field of Information Technology.

US product companies (in storage, networking and high performance computing) have been setting up their design centres in the city. Companies like Qlogic, Invidia, LSI, VMware, Applied Micro (AMCC), Marvel, Tensilica, Quantics have already set up their plants here. Many of these companies have come forward to partner with academia and conduct specialised courses for electronics and telecommunication engineering students, currently in association with the College Of Engineering, Pune (COEP) and the Pune Institute of Computer Technology (PICT), basically to develop a workforce for future needs.

Parag Mehta, managing director and general manager of Qlogic (India) Private Limited and the vice-president of the Software Ex-

porter's Association of Pune (SEAP), said that one of the major reasons for Pune to have emerged as a preferred destination for many engineers returning after long stints away, is the strong emerging eco-system, excellent educational institutes, and exceptional weather. Also, its proximity to Mumbai and the presence of several reputed engineering institutions in the city helps.

Said Mehta, "Qlogic has invested over \$40 million for its design centre and research lab here. They are committed to investing an additional \$50 million over the next five years in their Pune centre."

He added, "Forums like the Indian Semiconductor Association (ISA) and PuneChips, help create a stronger eco-system by bringing together companies to help disseminate technical information."

Abhijit Athavale, convener of PuneChips, told *Mirror* that their organisation is an on-line community for semiconductor and embedded systems professionals in and around the city. PuneChips' goal is to provide networking and learning opportunities for systems design and software professionals. He said, "For Pune, it is difficult to get exact numbers for the investments made but it is estimated that LSI has invested about \$100mn in their facility,

while Symantec has invested around \$500mn. If you consider all other players, my educated guess is that we are now touching about \$1 billion in Pune itself. I do not believe that anyone can really contest this number. Bangalore attracts investments of 5-10 times this amount."

Recently, PuneChips, ISA and Qlogic also organised a seminar on 'Storage and Networking Convergence' to help drive innovation for Data Center Bridging, Storage Virtualisation, Cloud Computing and Multi-Protocol Data Migration.

Pradip Dharne, the India head and managing director of Applied Micro (AMCC), told *Mirror* that they have an investment of \$200 mn and will increase it. While they already have a customer base abroad, they are now planning to increase the number of Indian customers and step up their marketing. They are in the process of drafting a university program to encourage students by exposing them to high end microprocessor-based research and design.

He added, "Pune is now emerging as chip city and has an investment of more than \$700 million coming in." He said that Bobby Mitra, chairman, ISA, has said that the association will soon start a regional chapter in the city.



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GM, Qlogic (India)