

# Insider to refresh Microsoft for mobile age

WASHINGTON, USA: Microsoft's mission to find new glory in the mobile Internet age is now in the hands of long-time company insider Satya Nadella.



Cloud, mobile and integration may be the focus for Microsoft under Satya Nadella's leadership. Image: Wikimedia Commons

The Indian-born cricket lover on Tuesday (4 February) became the third chief executive to run the company and he faces the challenge of revitalising Microsoft in a world shifting from desktop computers to smartphones, tablets and software in the Internet "cloud."

The 46-year-old will have as an adviser Microsoft's first chief, company co-founder Bill Gates, who shed his title of chairman for a more hands-on role.

"There is only one thing they can do, and that is lead," analyst Merv Adrian said of Microsoft. "There is an impression they have fallen behind," Gartner's research vice president added. "Nadella's challenge is to reverse that in perception and in action."

Gates was an early advocate of tablet computers and smartphones, but Microsoft failed to effectively execute on his vision. Nadella has proven prowess at execution, based on his successes during his 22 years with Microsoft.

Nadella was most recently executive vice president of its "Cloud and Enterprise group."

He marked his promotion by reaching out to employees, partners and customers with a vow to put the company's software at the heart of changing Internet lifestyles.

## Emphasis may be on Cloud

"We are living in a cloud-first, mobile-first world," Nadella said in a webcast. "That is the world we are building for, and all of this is going to be mediated by software."

His plan includes luring users to Microsoft's Surface tablets, Xbox videogame consoles, and Windows-powered mobile phones from Nokia. Microsoft's acquisition of Nokia is expected to be finalised in the coming months.

Nadella said that as people increasingly use the same smartphones or tablets at work and at home, Microsoft must bridge the two worlds with software that gives companies security they crave.

The changes at Microsoft have drawn a positive responses from some industry insiders. "I think this is a terrific development for the company," said Greg Sterling at Opus Research. "Nadella is a more humble and understated figure than Ballmer, which bodes well for Microsoft's image. He has a strong mix of business and technology expertise," Sterling added.

Frank Gillett at Forrester Research was encouraged by Nadella's apparent willingness to shake things up. "By using Gates as a key adviser, Nadella is tapping into the Microsoft co-founders' experiences while signalling a new era by keeping him in an informal role," he said.

Deutsche Bank's Karl Keirstead called Nadella a good choice. "Although Microsoft is a big ship to turn, in our view Nadella will push to make Microsoft more innovative and agile, more like Apple and less like IBM," Keirstead wrote in a research note.

Matthew Hedberg at RBC Capital Markets deemed Nadella "a safe choice" and said his background could mean a bigger emphasis on cloud and enterprise than Microsoft has had in the past.

Nadella heads the team that runs the public, private and service provider clouds for Microsoft. Previously, he was president of Microsoft's US\$19bn server and tools business.

A document filed with US stock market regulators said Nadella's base salary would be US\$1.2m, plus cash incentives worth up to three times his salary depending on company performance. He will also get a stock award worth US\$13.2m for the 2015 fiscal year, plus additional stock as a one-time grant.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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