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Article

### Govt. mulls videoconferencing for interacting with public

In a bid to make various central ministries more citizen friendly, the government has opted for videoconferencing facility. The facility, launched recently is being offered over NICNET (National Informatics Centre network), and hopes to make the inter ministry as well as public interaction efficient and faster.

The VIDCON studios are to be set up in the secretariats in all 32 state capitals and Union Territories, over and above all major offices of the central government in Delhi within the next six months. NICNET sources contended that within an year, traveling of government officials, would be drastically reduced thereby saving time and cost to the exchequer.

Currently, NIC has set up the facility in 11 departments of the central government, five state government secretariats and studies in information technology promotion units of NIC in seven other state capitals.

According to the NIC director general, Dr N Seshagiri, the indigenous system developed by NIC had enabled the reduction of charges to as low as Rs 3,000 per hour between any two points on the VIDCON network irrespective of the distance with several cities coming simultaneously on a single screen in the conference. Such conferences are estimated to save the government Rs 100,000 per conference with about 10 people of different cities participating in it. The director maintained that NIC would not subsidise its service costs to the government as it would be charged cost-plus price. ♦

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### NICNET kicks off Videoconferencing

Videoconferencing (VIDCON) facility is now available over NICNET, the computer communication network of the National Informatics Center (NIC). The facility was recently inaugurated by Cabinet Secretary TSR Subramanian. NIC has set up VIDCON in 11 departments of the Central Government, five State Government Secretariats, and studios in IT promotional units in NIC in seven other State capitals. Dr N Seshagiri, Director General, NIC, said that the entire facility was developed indigenously. This kept charges to Rs 3,000 per hour.