

TTDC to go Internet

By Our Staff Reporter

NAGERCOIL, Oct. 14.

In a move intended to make timely arrangements to meet the requirements of the domestic and foreign tourists and also to facilitate quicker transactions, the Tamil Nadu Tourism Department is getting ready to make available on the Internet, the particulars needed to undertake a trip across the State. This facility will be launched on October 20, according to Mr. N. Suresh Rajan, Minister of Tourism.

Inaugurating the pleasure boat service, being introduced for the first time by the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC) at Parakkaikulam in Suchindram near here on Friday, Mr. Suresh Rajan said information such as the scenic locales, potential tourist spots in the State, hotels and restaurants, mode of transportation and accommodation available and the tariff charged could be obtained through the Internet.

According to Mr. T. Rajendran, Director of Tourism and Managing Director of TTDC, the Government has remitted about Rs. 75,000 and got the decks cleared by the National Informatics Centre and Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd. to utilise the Internet. About 90 per cent of the work has been completed and all formalities would be completed once the web site is chosen. Totally, 25 mega bytes could be stored. Phone numbers of TTDC hotels and the booking facility would also be made available.

There has been a steady increase in the number of tourists visiting the State, Mr. Suresh Rajan said. Though only 142 lakh domestic and 4.35 lakh foreign tourists visited Tamil Nadu in 1993, their number rose sharply to 182 lakhs (domestic) and 6.14 lakhs (foreigners) respectively during 1996. The department has notched up a profit of Rs. 192.44 lakhs in 1996-1997 and up to May this year, a profit of Rs. 82.26 lakhs was earned.

He said two hotels belonging to the TTDC being built at Tirunelveli at an outlay of Rs. 47.51 lakhs and another at Courtallam at a cost of Rs. 49.3 lakhs would be inaugurated this year. Taking into consideration the needs of the tourists, the Government has undertaken improvement work at the TTDC's hotels in Udhamandalam and Kodaikanal at a cost of Rs. 20 lakhs each and also at Mahabalipuram spending Rs. 30 lakhs.

The boat service, the Minister said, could turn out to be an ideal sport as it was the first of its

kind in the district. About two or three km area in the Parakhe pond would be utilised for the purpose. About six boats comprising one two seater and five four-seater boats, will be introduced initially, the Minister said.

A segment of the Thiruvananthapuram-Kanyakumari National highway from Kottaram to Kanyakumari was being broadened at an outlay of Rs. 1.23 crores and drainage laying work to the tune of Rs. 35 lakhs has been undertaken from the Vivekananda Kendra to the Gandhi Mandapam. The Minister said, the work on laying the West Coast road between Kanyakumari and Neerodi at a cost of Rs. 35 crores would be completed within two years.

Mr. Viswanath Shegaonkar, Collector, who presided over the function, said Kanyakumari had vast potential to be further developed into a major tourist spot. He hoped the boat service would become a favourite sport with the tourists soon.

Mr. S. Gopalakrishnan, Managing Director of Government Transport Corporation, Division III, said nearly 300 buses of the corporation's total fleet strength of 670 needed to be replaced as they were worn out. However, due to the prompt steps initiated by the Government, about 107 buses were replaced last year and within the first six months 25 new bus routes were introduced.

In addition to this, 117 new buses have been sanctioned recently. Of this, 18 were being built at Ranithottam Depot in Nagercoil, Madurai and Dindigul. While another batch of 50 would be inducted by this month end, the remaining buses will be obtained by November-end this year. Earlier, 15 new buses were introduced in the presence of the Minister.

Mr. C. Velayuthan, the Padmanabhapuram MLA, suggested holding of photo exhibitions at Kanyakumari, highlighting the potential tourist spots available in the district. A similar exhibition could also be conducted on a larger scale to provide information on the important pilgrim centres in the nation. Mr. Barnard, the Colachel MLA, Mrs. Swarnathai, Parakhe Panchayat Union president, Mrs. Premalatha, Agasteeswararam Panchayat Union president and Mrs. Bhagyaselvam, District Panchayat Council member and Mr. K. Stephen, Kanyakumari Town Panchayat president, spoke. Mr. Christopher, Assistant General Manager, TTDC, proposed a vote of thanks.

Economic Intelligence Council fails to take off

Navneet Sharma

WITH leading economic enforcement agencies shying away from sharing information with each other, the finance ministry's ambitious plan to set-up a data bank—Central Information Bank to help the high-profile Economic Intelligence Council (EIC) analyse economic frauds and undertake coordinated multi-pronged investigations seems set to run aground. While the entire paraphernalia is in place, the Central Economic Intelligence Bureau (CEIB)—which was assigned the job is faced with the problem of lack of information.

Under the plan, five economic enforcement agencies—the Directorate General of Anti-Evasion (DGAE), Directorate of Enforcement (DoE), Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Income Tax (Investigation wing) and Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) were to supply information on

economic frauds, offenders and the modus operandi. Initially, the CEIB was to collate information on nearly 10,000 frauds—both ongoing and old cases under FERA, Customs Act, NDPS and Income Tax Act, detected by these agencies since 1991-92.

Of this, data on nearly half the cases was to be supplied by 1997-end. While the enforcement agencies were told to start sending information after the National Informatics Centre provided the software package for the bank last November, CEIB has so far received investigation reports for around about 300 cases—most of these relate to old cases of currency seizures and misdeclaration. In fact, repeated reminders from the bureau have proved futile. Say CEIB officials "The way they are going it will take us a few decades to set-up the data bank".

Miffed with the delay, CEIB reported the matter to the revenue secretary, who discussed it with

the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), Narcotics Control Bureau and the Central Board of Customs and Excise (CBEC). However, it has had no impact on the inflow of information. Though the agencies have attributed the delay in supply of data on old cases to the lack of personnel, they are reluctant to part with information on the ongoing/new cases—lack of trust being the obvious reason.

As per the instructions issued by CEIB, the enforcement agencies are required to send detailed information about the offence, offender, seizure and action taken/required in two formats within 48 hours of the search/registering a case; and within 48 hours of chargesheet/assessment report. "The idea was to see if the investigating agency required any help from other enforcement arms of the government," they added. For instance: If the DRI is investigating any firm for under-invoicing of imports (which normally

involves FERA violations), it can only charge the offender under the Customs Act. While in such instances, the investigating agency are expected to share information with the other agencies, this is not done in most cases.

The delay in the setting-up the information bank is expected to affect the functioning of the revamped EIC, which is now headed by the Finance Minister P Chidambaram. The decision to create the information bank was taken at a meeting of the EIC in February 1996 at the initiative of the then revenue secretary M R Sivaraman. The council was constituted in 1990 to formulate a coordinated action plan against tax evaders/black money operators; improve inter-agency coordination; discuss modus operandi adopted for violation of forex laws and suggest measures to deal effectively; advised the government on amendment of laws and procedures for plugging loopholes; and act as a forum. ♦

Marketing museums via Internet

MYSORE (UNI)

Museums are coming of age in India with high-tech plans to hook on to the information superhighway with 'museum marketing' on the internet.

Museologists and cybernetics technocrats are now gearing up to prepare the requisite software and hardware for net surfing which would cater to the needs of art-lovers and promote a shop culture to meet internal demands.

The three-day conference on 'museum marketing' attended by technocrats from across the country, suggested immediate steps for collection of comprehensive data on artefacts and museum products so that they could be effectively marketed to customers at reasonable prices through CD-ROMs,

catalogues, books and brochures.

Manufacturing replicas of art and archaeology exhibits, organising special exhibitions, opening museum shops, video/audio cassettes and photographs of specimens on a no-profit-no-loss basis, and inviting the corporate sector for collaborative ventures to promote the museum culture and movement in the country were some of the other suggestions made at the conference.

The conference expressed serious concern about the lack of conservation efforts by around 500 big museums of the country which ought to play a pivotal role in preserving India's heritage.

The experts suggested for initiating steps for immediate constitution of a 'museums authority

of India" on the lines of the "Zoos Authority of India" bringing all the museums under the authority.

This would enable the authority to inform the museums of the facilities like the "Ninet" before surfing the internet through websites. This would in turn force the museumologists to become "real-time" professionals in effectively marketing the museum products besides popularising the concept of museums.

"We can come across with at least 300 inquiries on the internet from abroad at any time on the museums and other objects. Unfortunately, the Indian museums with rich objects were not in a position to meet the demand as their software and hardware were not

services" through suitable marketing plans, tools and techniques as the demand was high.

Dr G. N. Pant of the National Museum Institute, New Delhi and president of Museums Association of India which organised the conference said museum was not a 'commodity' marketing for profit and its 'customers' were not 'shoppers'. Its main aim was to cater to the needs of the people.

tuned to push through to the global market," Prof Mithleshwar Jha of the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, said.

Prof. Jha urged the museumologists to adopt a concerted strategy for "museum marketing" through the Ten 'P' formula which consisted of decisions involving "product, place, price, promotion, public relations, process, politics, people and pace apart from being proactive in approach." At the same time he cautioned them not to create a separate marketing department for pushing products. It should remain a team venture in a museum, he said.

Dr Abdurraheem of the Aligarh Muslim University advocated evolution of "information search

E-commerce is big opportunity: Nasscom

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI, Oct. 24

ELECTRONIC commerce will present a Rs. 500-crore market opportunity for the domestic information technology industry by the turn of the century, according to the National Association of Software and Service Companies (Nasscom).

"The Indian market for electronic commerce (EC) solutions ranging from systems integration, software and hardware would be more than Rs. 500 crores annually by the turn of the century. Export revenues would be extra," the Executive Director of Nasscom, Mr. Dewang Mehta, told PTL.

Electronic commerce is the automation of transactions between buyers and sellers by way of electronic data interchange (EDI). Typically, Internet facilitates electronic commerce.

"The co-ordinated EDI implementation in most of the government regulatory agencies and other institutions has come as a shot in the arm for cyber commerce in the country," Mr. Mehta said, while calling for expeditious review and revision of extant laws hindering EC.

"The legal framework for supporting EC transactions should be consistent and predictable. Parties should be able to enter into 'legitimate' agreements to buy and sell products and services across the Internet, with minimal gov-

ernment intervention," Mr. Mehta emphasised. Making a case for declaring the Internet as a "tariff-free zone" whenever it is used for delivering products and services, Mr. Mehta said all nations would benefit from barrier-free trade across this medium.

"Imposing new and unnecessary regulations, bureaucratic procedures or new taxes and tariffs on commercial activities taking place via the Internet will only harm the growth of EC," Mr. Mehta stressed.

Speaking on the domestic initiatives in EC, he said the Indian Banks Association (IBA) had already embarked on a pilot project to implement financial EDI for banks in the country.

Five nationalised banks, namely State Bank of India, Punjab National Bank (PNB), Bank of India, Corporation Bank and Union Bank of India, had been selected for implementing financial EDI, Mr. Mehta said. The Indian Customs EDI System (ICES), which is integrated with other agencies like the Directorate-General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), International Airport Authority of India (IAAI), Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) and PNB, is another successful example of cyber commerce in the country, he added.

Many information technology majors like CMC, Infosys, Global Telecom, Mahindra Network Services, Satyam Infoway and National Informatics Centre are in the fray of electronic commerce to gain an early foothold.

Information booths planned at 12 places in Chennai

By Our Special Correspondent

CHENNAI, Oct. 6.

In a bid to bring the administration closer to the people, the Government has embarked upon a programme of free dissemination of general information by utilising the network of the National Informatics Centre.

While in district headquarters, people can have access to the network in the collectorates, the Government plans to open general information service terminals (GISTNIC) in a dozen places in Chennai.

The first such information booth was inaugurated at the Government office complex at Ezhilagam in Chepauk today. The public can have access to this booth between 10.30 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. on all Government working days.

The terminals will make available important national and international information, infrastructural and recreational facilities and other static and near static information. As many as 16 subjects like economy, industry, education and rural technologies will be covered. The needs of farmers, tourists, students, research

scholars, Government officials and foreigners will receive special attention. The information centres will also provide database information on the IMF also.

The Government is planning to extend the facility to cover information on how to avail the benefits of its various welfare schemes as also the services offered by the State and Central Governments and by the local bodies, according to Mr. A. K. Venkatasubramanian, Development Commissioner. They include information on procedures, eligibility norms, application methods, formats etc. on various Governmental schemes.

Barring census figures as obtained for District Profiles, the information made available at these terminals will be updated once in two months.

Though the information network is available in district collectorates and at three centres in Chennai, their utility has largely been confined to Government officials alone.

The potential the network provides is immense and at a later stage linkage to personal computers too is proposed. The Government is also trying to provide information on its services

in Tamil language itself. This may come around in the second phase of the programme.

As of now information on the following 16 heads can be accessed: monthly review of India, an economy, industrial statistics, market and market shares, energy statistics, social sector statistics, agricultural statistics, PCA: population census — 1991, village amenities data — 1991, IMF: database, tourist guide of India, education guide, rural technologies, traditional sciences of India, district profiles (1991 census basic statistics — all India (1994) and basic statistics — State level (1994)

According to Mr. C.S.R. Prabhu, senior technical director, NIC, video conferencing between Delhi and State capitals to facilitate consultations at the ministerial and bureaucratic level has now been established. At a later stage, such conferencing at district level will be taken up. The NIC, which has completed computerisation of the finance department data, will next take up the commercial taxes department for a similar exercise. The GISTNIC facility can be made available at the premises of clubs, associations and even tourist centres, he said.

Govt. of India
National Informatics Centre
Planning Commission
A-Block, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi

AUCTION NOTICE
FOR DISPOSAL OF CONDEMNED VEHICLES

Sealed tenders are invited upto 2.00 P.M. on 7-11-97 to be opened at 3.30 P.M. the same day "as is where is basis" for sale of following 7 condemned vehicles in a lot in the prescribed tender form which can be obtained alongwith other terms and conditons from Dy. Director (General Administration), National Informatics Centre, A-Block, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi upto 4.30 P.M. on 4-11-97. Inspection of Vehicle from 27-10-97 to 4-11-97 at 2.30 P.M. to 4.30 P.M. on working days only.

1.	DBC	4897 (Amb)	1985
2.	DBC	6093 (Amb)	1986
3.	DBC	6094 (Amb)	1986
4.	DBC	6095 (Amb)	1986
5.	DAC	8522 (M.V.)	1988
6.	DAD	24 (Amb)	1988
7.	DNJ	1229 (Gypsy)	1989
8.	DBD	4522 (Amb)	1986

davp 3497(12)97

(32077)