

Water portal launched

BANGALORE, DHNS: With a click of the mouse, you can obtain plenty of information on any topic, from the internet. Knowing the English language is necessary in most cases - but not so in the case of this portal - www.indiawaterportal.org/kannada.

The water portal, which is co-ordinated by Arghyam, a non profit trust headed by Rohini Nilekani, supplies information - in Kannada - on various aspects of water. It was formally launched by K Jairaj, Principal Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department, here on Friday. Arghyam launched the portal in January this year, and intends to launch more vernacular portals.

The Kannada portal, which is totally funded by the trust to the tune of Rs one crore, is also a forum for citizens to air their views, concerns and suggestions on water-related issues. The content has been developed by involving practitioners and experts in the field. The government, which has data on water and its related projects, should upload its information on the new website, suggested Ms Nilekani.

Interactive forum

Trust CEO Sunita Nadhamuni said the website will serve as an interactive forum where discussions, debate and exchange can happen. Citizens can post questions related to water issues, which will be answered by water professionals. Jairaj said that Karnataka has to do a lot of work on accessibility of water, its quality and sustainability. Various projects to improve water supply to villages have been taken up and the government would welcome social audit of the same.



Rural Development & Panchayat Raj Department Principal Secretary K Jairaj inaugurating water portal in Bangalore on Friday. Arghyam Chairperson Rohini Nilekani, India Water Portal Product Manager Vijay Krishna and CEO Sunitha Nadhamuni look on.

Villagers too pay for water

BANGALORE, DHNS: It is now time for villagers to pay minimum tariff for water. The Karnataka Rural Water Supply & Sanitation Agency is awaiting the approval of executive committee, headed by the Governor, to give consent to introduce the user charge system at gram panchayat (GP) level.

A draft paper regarding the policy will be placed before the executive committee soon. The Sanitation Agency, an arm of the Rural Development & Pan-

chayat Raj Department, is implementing the Jal Nirmal Project which is improving drinking water supply, sanitation and roads in select 10 districts of North Karnataka. The work under Rs 1,035-crore World Bank funded seven-year JNP is almost complete. Rural Development & Panchayat Raj Department Principal Secretary K Jairaj, at a programme here on Friday, said the operation and maintenance policy to be followed by GPs regarding

the water supply would be in place by April. The Sanitation Agency Director S D Meena said those who are collecting water from public taps and borewells in villages too should pay user charge of minimum Rs 10 to 15 per month.

"It will be volumetric assessment for those who have piped water supply. The government has trained villagers and elected members in O&M of water tanks and supply system," he added.