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## Shireen in Hyderabad

The Andhra Pradesh State Wide Area Network became operational today.

This is an essential component in Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's programme for installing an electronic government.

The Rs 220 million project creates a statewide information infrastructure in the form of a multi-service wide-area network.

APSWAN will allow application of information technology tools for the economic development of the state. It will also support IT solutions for government.

This will be the backbone network for data, voice and video communications too.

In the first phase, the state secretariat is being linked to all the 23 district headquarters through 2 MB optical fibre cables installed by the central government's Department of Telecommunications.

Later, the network will be enhanced to include all mandal offices. This will enable speedy interaction between the state capital and districts and easy inter-district communication.

The WAN will thus act as a closed network spread over the entire state.

Operationally, the network will provide data linkage by connecting the local-area network of the district headquarters to the local-area network at the secretariat.

Voice linkages would be made by interconnecting the PABX exchange at Hyderabad to the exchanges at the district headquarters through a linked numbering system.

The WAN will also allow videoconferencing from the state capital with any of the district-level officers on a one-to-one basis as well as in a broadcast mode, a one-to-many basis.

Under the build-own-operate model, the expenditure on infrastructure, maintenance and operation, including staff, will be the responsibility of United Telecoms Limited, which has signed an agreement with AP Technology Services Limited, a government owned corporation.



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As a consideration for provision of services, the state government and APTS will pay Rs 11 million per quarter to UTL over five years.

Naidu announced yesterday that the APSWAN would be commissioned at 10 locations in Hyderabad, Warangal, Adilabad, Khammam, Nalgonda, Visakhapatnam, Machilipatnam, Vijayawada, Chittoor and Tirupathi by June 20 and extended to the remaining 14 centres of Nizamabad, Sangareddy, Mahbubnagar, Karimnagar, Cuddapah, Kurnool, Anantapur, Nellore, Ongole, Guntur, Eluru, Kakinada, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam by July 15.

Besides, the government departments and other state agencies such as the electricity board, transport department and health institutions, universities would also be linked to APSWAN.

Further, virtual private networks within the user groups of the government will be created.

Some services that will become available include hotline, voice-conferencing and broadcasting for various tiers of the government.

On the data front, there will be email, bulletin board services, data broadcasts, broadcast of various government orders to various government offices, online transactions, processing etc.

Internet gateway access will be provided at Hyderabad to make this facility available to all officers of the government and thus pave the way for community Internet services across the state.

The 2 MB optical fibre dedicated line will connect the conference hall in the 'C' Block of the Andhra Pradesh Secretariat where the chief minister's office is located, with collectorates and cities of Tirupati and Vijayawada.

The line will be available throughout the day and it can be used to like a hotline. Secretaries and other heads of departments can book time and space to interact with the collectors or other subordinates at the district level on matters relating to their departments.

The Department of Telecommunications has agreed to provide the 2 MB bandwidth free of cost for the first two years.

Naidu hopes that with the implementation of APSWAN, it would become possible to provide useful information to the public, apart from improving the efficiency within the government.

It is also proposed to provide Internet access via APSWAN to the 'rythu bazaars', or season markets. This will allow monitoring officials at the state level to ascertain the prices of vegetables in different rythu bazaars.

The network has the potential of revolutionising the interface between citizens and the government and contributing to better accountability and responsiveness of the government.

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