

Think-tank to reform governance

SANJEEV KUMAR VERMA

Patna, Aug. 30: Bihar would soon have a think-tank that would set out the blueprint for governance reform.

Experts from the fields of rural development, urban planning, finance, human resource development and e-governance would be part of the institution, christened Centre for Good Governance.

The centre would start its formal functioning from Saturday with the first meeting of its managing council.

To be headed by a director-general, the managing council would have various resource groups, each headed by an officer of the rank of deputy director.

The managing council would be responsible for day-to-day functioning. Chief secretary Navin Kumar, who is due to retire on August 31, would be its first director-general. The offices of the centre would be located on the third and fourth floors of Lalit Bhavan on Bailey Road.

Experts, both from the government and the private sector, would be eligible to join the resource groups. To ensure that well-qualified people are hired, the centre would offer salaries in the range of Rs 70,000 to Rs 80,000 to deputy directors and between Rs 55,000 and Rs 65,000 to technical experts.

“Very soon, advertisements would be published for hiring these experts and our target is to have their services within three months,” the centre’s managing council director (administration), Ajay Kumar Chaudhary, told **The Telegraph** today. “Bihar has become the fourth state after Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat to have set up such a body,” he added.

The centre’s policy would be driven by a governing council, which will be chaired by the chief minister and will have as members, among others, the deputy CM, chief secretary and the development commissioner.

Among the centre's goals are simplifying governance, ushering in transparency in financial management, suggest ways for human resource management and to improve the performance of public functionaries and organisations, managing council director Chaudhary said.

Former bureaucrats are divided on the initiative. Retired IAS officer Abhimanyu Singh said: "It appears to be a good beginning but it would really be interesting to see the kind of output it provides and how much of its advice is implemented by the government."

Former chief secretary V.S. Dubey was, however, sceptical. "The move is nothing but a kind of showpiece. Had the government been serious, it would have given statutory powers to the centre and would not have made it an advisory body," Dubey said.