# The Telegraph

## Blocks to log on to IT world
## - Information technology assistants to help officers

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**Patna, Jan. 20:** The use of computers in government departments, particularly in state headquarters and districts, is no longer a new thing in Bihar. Now, there is a move that would allow government officials and ordinary people to enjoy the benefits of computerisation at the block-level.

To make this happen, the state has decided to rope in the services of information technology (IT) assistants for all the 534 blocks in the state.

Those having a BCA or an equivalent degree would be deputed for the job. The job would be contractual in nature and to begin with the IT assistants would be given a contract of a year that may be extended.

The initiative of the mission has been taken by Bihar Prashasnik Sudhar Mission (BPSM), launched by the state government with the aim of transforming the governance in the state.

The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) is financing the administration of BPSM. It is also providing resources to help the government to implement the administrative reforms, modernise administrative processes, strengthen human resource management and increase accountability under the Bihar governance and administrative reforms programme. DFID has said it would provide its assistance to BPSM till 2014.

Sharing details of the mission, a BPSM official said: "These personnel would be entrusted with the work of making computerised entries of all the schemes being implemented at the block-level and to keep records updated so that they could be procured immediately if required."

He said the IT assistants would help the block-level officials in sending online reports to district and state headquarters. They will also send SMS-based reports where the block officials have to send text messages to their bosses about the daily progress of different schemes.

"The assistants would be used in generating certificates using computers that have been given by the block offices," the BPSM official added.

Welcoming the BPSM move, rural development minister Nitish Mishra said: "Though we have computers and generators in all the blocks, the block-level officials have not been able to make full use of the machines as they are overloaded with other routine work. Services of IT assistants will ensure complete utilisation of computers in the blocks."

It is not that government offices in Bihar would get the services of IT experts for the first time. A beginning on this front was made by the BPSM about nine months ago when services of IT managers were provided to all the districts and over a dozen government departments to carry out computer-related work.

The services of these IT managers have proved to be beneficial, says the feedback provided by the districts and departments.

As far as districts are concerned, the IT managers, apart from doing their routine job, are also providing email training to government officers these days. They also impart training on SMS-based and online reporting. Their services also proved handy during last year's Assembly elections, as they played a major role in webcasting of election process from the selected booths.

Even in the case of the government departments, the IT managers have been of a big help. Besides their routine job, they help keep the departments' website updated.

A senior government official, who has been closely associated with the drafting of right to service bill, said that availability of IT assistants at block-level would be of great help for block officials as efficient use of computers would help them in meeting

the challenge of delivering services to people within the stipulated time.

He said with 480 blocks already connected through Bihar State Wide Area Network and the remaining blocks to be connected sooner than later, the block officials would have to learn the art of living in the era where every office of the state would be online and there would be no excuses for not submitting reports to the state headquarters on time.

"With IT assistants at their disposal, the block officials would be able to live up to the expectations of the state government," he added.

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