Forest clearances for projects to go online

Special Correspondent

BANGALORE: Starting July 1, all forest clearances for industry and infrastructure projects will go online, to be followed by online environmental approvals from September 1, Anil Swarup, Additional Secretary, Union Cabinet Secretariat, said here on Tuesday.

Inaugurating the Karnataka Government's e-portal to track public and private sector projects above Rs. 100 crore that have got delayed, Mr. Swarup, who heads the Project Monitoring Group (PMG) of the Cabinet Committee on Investment under the Prime Minister, said various Ministries were being gradually brought into a transparent, digitised system of fast-tracking large projects of over Rs. 1,000 crore.

About Karnataka's new ePMS (electronic Project Management System), he said this was planned to be

Anil Swarup

the first State-level portal but five States had already adopted it. He urged industries, "If you have a problem go to the portal and upload the issue. We are there to look into it."

Chief Secretary Kaushik Mukherjee launched the portal at an event hosted by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry. "We now have a tool to measure our own efficiency," he said.

Mr. Swarup said, "We are now digitising the entire process of project clearances. We are making one Ministry after the other to understand the process. From July 1, forest clearances will be moved on the web. On September 1, environment clearances will go live on the web."

"We believe it will improve the process and ensure transparency," he added.

Mr. Swarup added that the progress of the portal would be monitored and the system would be fine-tuned.

"All States must soon follow the pattern which enables industry to track projects in real time and in an open way," he said. Mr. Swarup said, describing it as a "huge, revolutionary exercise."

At the Central level, where the PMG handles projects exceeding investments of Rs. 1,000 crore, he said, "Till date, issues related to about 150 project proposals worth investments of Rs. 5.5 lakh crore have been resolved."

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