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ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: Deccan Herald ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE: 5/6/20

# Cost-conscious govt looks to cut bureaucratic, ministerial flab

## Merger of depts may axe 900 posts, save Rs 100 cr a yr

5/6/20

BENGALURU, DHNS

The government's move to merge departments and "redundant" posts has gathered steam with Tourism Minister C T Ravi proposing the merger of tourism, sports, Kannada & Culture and Information & Public Relations.

This is expected to do away with more than 900 positions and save the government over Rs 100 crore annually.

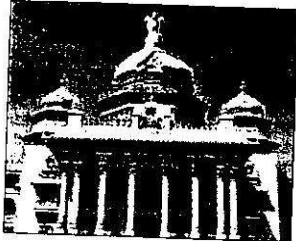
Ravi has submitted this proposal to a Cabinet sub-committee headed by Revenue Minister R Ashoka.

"Subjects under literature, art, culture, tourism, youth

empowerment & sports and information & publicity departments are directly or indirectly similar. Also, the nature of programmes and their implementation are alike," Ravi said in his proposal.

At the secretariat level, the four departments are managed by an IAS officer each, burdening the government with the salaries of four ministers and other personnel, Ravi pointed out.

Under these four departments, there are seven wings that include directorates and commissionerates. "The administrative costs come up



to Rs 113.47 crore. Besides, of the total 1,768 sanctioned posts across the seven wings, only 865 are filled up. There are 903 posts - 60% - vacant.

Merging the four departments at the secretariat level will require only 40 posts as against the current sanctioned strength of 116. Bringing all the seven wings under one roof will need 821 posts against 1,768, Ravi has explained in his proposal.

Further, Ravi pitched that the Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation and Jungle Lodges and Resorts can be clubbed into one

body, which will save more costs.

"Earlier, the departments of Tourism, Kannada & Culture and Information & Public Relations functioned as one unit at the secretariat level. For various reasons, they were separated," Ravi said.

According to sources, there are plans to merge agriculture, horticulture and sericulture into a single department. The government may also consider moving the medical education department under Health & Family Welfare.

The Cabinet sub-committee was constituted in February because of rising costs towards salaries and other committed expenditures. In 2019-20 fiscal, the government incurred Rs 33,611 crore towards paying salaries. In all, the government's committed expenditure is almost 90% of its revenue receipts, leaving little fiscal room to take up new schemes.