## Now, go online to book bus ticket

HT Correspondent Shimla, June 15

PRESS CLICK on the Internet and you can now book a seat in any bus run by the state. Taking a cue from its counterpart in Karnataka, the Himachal Pradesh Road Transport Corporation (HRTC) as become the second public road transport body in India to book tickets online, with Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh pressing the first click here today.

Information related to bus routes would also be available on dialling helpline number 12666.

The HRTC has also become the first transport body in the country to offer 3-d Secure online booking and cancellation.

The 3-d Secure interface reduces the possibility of creditcard frauds. The Society for IT and e-Governance in the state Department of IT has developed this e-commerce portal.

Passengers can choose their seats in a user-friendly and secure online environment with dual passwords and transaction IDs in the HRTC data and payment gateway by logging on to www.sugamhimachal.org/hrtctic kets without paying any extra money.

This software incorporates the best features of leading travel websites worldwide and will be installed on machines at Himachal Pradesh Road Transport Corporation ticket counters and distributed among selected travel agents, for non-credit-card travellers.

Inaugurating the service, the CM said the Congress government in the state was committed to making public transport more

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affordable and comfortable.

"We intend to bring it to every village connected with road," he said, adding that in spite of the increase in the prices of diesel and petrol, his government had not allowed the bus fare to go up further after April 9, 2003.

Commending the efforts of the HRTC in acquiring computerised daily information system, electronic ticketing machines and etendering know-how, Virbhadra said it was nice to see it keeping pace with advancements in technology.

The corporation using 18 software titles had emerged as a hitech agency. The HRTC portal allowed customers heading for long journey to use online facility to reserve seats on Volvo and deluxe buses and save time, Virbhadra said.

Efforts were afoot to computerise all government departments for greater transparency and responsiveness.

Minister for Transport and Tourism G. S. Bali said online booking would be initially available for Volvo buses alone and extended to other services in a phased manner.