Chief minister Ashok Gehlot (third from right) launches the Jan Soochna Portal in Jaipur on Friday. Deputy CM Sachin Pilot (third from left) is also seen at the launch.

Gehlot launches Jan Soochna portal; says govt accountable, transparent

HT Correspondent

JAIPUR: The Rajasthan government on Friday launched the Jan Soochna Portal, with Congress president Sonia Gandhi slamming the Union government for weakening the RTI Act.

Under the Jan Soochana Portal, information of 23 government schemes related to 13 departments will be available on a web-based platform. Chief minister Ashok Gehlot and deputy CM Sachin Pilot inaugurated the portal.

In a recorded video message at the launch, Gandhi said information was power and the common man should be empowered with information.

"This portal will bring more transparency and ensure accountability of the government. I have faith that Rajasthan will make precedent for other states," said Gandhi. She appreciated state government's budget announcement of bringing Rajasthan accountability law, which will take public welfare system a step ahead.

Addressing the gathering, Gehlot said that attempts are being made to weaken the RTI Act. Expressing concerns on such attempts, he said that this would weaken the will of transparency and accountability in governance. "But, our government will not allow this to happen," he said. Jan Soochna Portal was the expression of this resolve of this government, he added. He also said he regretted that social media was being used as a tool to create a negative image of prominent leaders.

Pilot said, "This public information portal is dedicated to the people of the state. To start any portal, three things are required - technology, legal framework and will power. Rajasthan is the first state in the country in which a public information portal has been launched."

Pilot said, "We are living in the era of Digital India and for this, over 80% of the works were executed during the premiership of Dr Manmohan Singh. Today, every village got connected with the internet.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) spokesperson Mukesh Pareek said the BJP government has lived up to its slogan of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas".

"There is no corruption allegation on this government and whoever levelled charges has been responded to by the people in elections. The development is visible on the ground with electricity, a gas connection and toilets in every house," Pareek said, responding to the allegations.

Social activist Aruna Roy said that this is a portal of the public and would prove to be a strong tool to bring in transparency in governance.

Former chief justice of Delhi HC Justice AP Shah called it a historic moment.