

N1. Indian Government Launches Aarogya Setu COVID-19 Tracker App on Android, iOS

NDTV-02 April 2020

*Aarogya Setu claims to notify users even if they have been unknowingly in contact with anyone who was later diagnosed with COVID-19. The app has been developed by the **National Informatics Centre** that comes under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. According to the app's ..*

Indian government has officially launched its COVID-19 tracking app, Aarogya Setu, for Android and iOS users. The app has been developed by the National Informatics Centre that comes under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. According to the app's description, it is aimed at "augmenting" efforts to "proactively" inform the citizens about the "best practices and relevant advisories pertaining to the containment of COVID-19." Both union and state governments have launched a host of coronavirus-related apps over the last few weeks to curb the spread of the pandemic in the country.

Aarogya Setu (which translates from Sanskrit to 'A bridge of health') app essentially helps users in identifying whether they are at risk of coronavirus infection, by checking if they have been in contact with a COVID-19 infected individual, even unknowingly.

According to The Next Web, which first [spotted](#) the app, Aarogya Setu is using government database of infected people to function. There is, however, no clarity from the government around this.

The COVID-19 tracker app currently supports 11 languages, including Hindi and English and requires Bluetooth and Location access to function. To use the Aarogya Setu app, users would first need to register with their mobile number. After completing the first step, the app asks users for their credentials which is optional. For those concerned about the Privacy Policy of the app, the government claims that the stored data is "encrypted" and it will not be shared with any third party vendors.

Privacy Policy present on Aarogya Setu app

After reaching the home screen of the app, based on the users' location it tells them whether they are in a safe location or not. Android users of the app, however, can also see live tweets from the Ministry of Health. Overall, both the [Android](#) and [Apple](#) version of the app offers the same features, including access to best practices and advisories around coronavirus in India.

Last week, it was [reported](#) that the NITI Aayog is also working on a coronavirus-tracker app which was named as CoWin-20. The Next Web claims that Aarogya Setu is the final version of CoWin-20. Meanwhile, several state governments have also [launched](#) their respective coronavirus tracking apps to combat the spread of the pandemic across the country.

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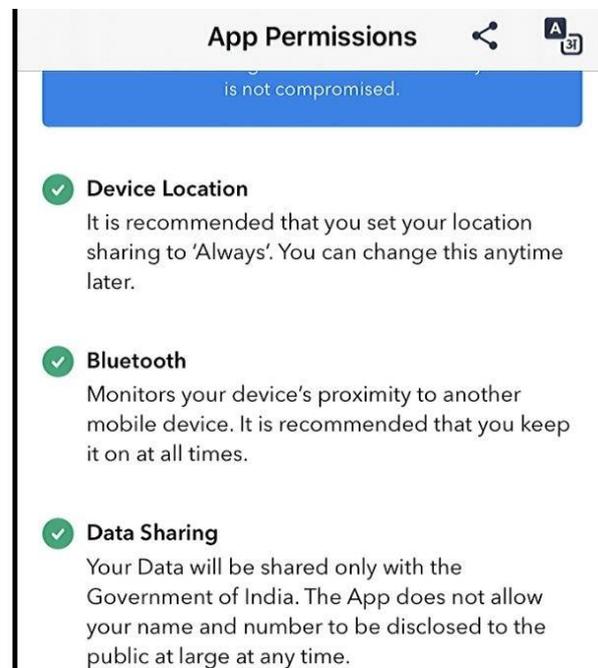
5. DATA SECURITY

The App is equipped with standard security features to protect the confidentiality and security of your information. Data is encrypted in transit as well as at rest. Personal information provided at the time of registration is encrypted before being uploaded to the cloud where it is stored in a secure encrypted server. Personal information that is stored in the Apps of other registered users that you come in contact with is securely encrypted and are incapable of being accessed by such user.

6. DISCLOSURES AND TRANSFER

Save as otherwise set out in Clause 2(a) in order to carry out necessary medical and administrative interventions, no personal information collected by the App will disclosed or transferred to any third party.

7. GRIEVANCES



News Source: <https://gadgets.ndtv.com/apps/news/aarogya-setu-covid-19-tracker-app-coronavirus-launch-indian-government-android-ios-2204804>

N2. How Lifeline Udan flights are supporting India's war against the novel Coronavirus

Financial Express- 02 April 2020

To enable seamless coordination between various agencies, the National Informatics Centre and Ministry of Civil Aviation had developed a website for Lifeline .

According to the Ministry of Civil Aviation, as many as 62 Lifeline Udan flights have been operated under this initiative during the five day period from 26 March 2020 to 30 March 2020, transporting more than 15.4 tons of essential medical supplies.

Lifeline Udan: As part of India's war against the novel Coronavirus pandemic, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has launched "Lifeline Udan". Under this initiative, flights are being operated for the movement of essential and medical supplies across the nation. According to the Ministry of Civil Aviation, as many as 62 Lifeline Udan flights have been operated under this initiative during the five day period from 26 March 2020 to 30 March 2020, transporting more than 15.4 tons of essential medical supplies. Out of the 62 flights, as many as 45 flights have been operated by Air India and Alliance Air. Take a look at some of the major steps taken by the ministry under the Lifeline Udan initiative:

- The flights, under Lifeline Udan, are being coordinated by a control room set up under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Civil Aviation leadership.
- The cargo of Lifeline Udan includes COVID-19 related medical equipment, reagents, enzymes, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), testing kits, masks, gloves as well as other accessories required by Corona Warriors.
- The carriers involved in this initiative include Alliance Air, Air India, Indian Air Force (IAF) and Pawan Hans. Also, Airports Authority of India (AAI), AAICLAS, AIASL, PPP airports as well as private ground handling entities are providing excellent support. Moreover, flights on a commercial basis, private carriers such as [Spicejet](#), IndiGo and Blue Dart are operating medical cargo.
- The flights under Lifeline Udan are planned using a hub and spoke model. Cargo hubs have been set up at Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Bangalore. The flights connect these hubs and therefrom to different parts of India.
- The North East Region, island territories and the hill states are being given special focus. Lifeline Udan connects North East Region through regional hubs in Kolkata, Guwahati and Bagdogra. These, in turn, are linked to cities such as Shillong, Aizawl, Imphal, Agartala, Dibrugarh and Dimapur using helicopters and turboprops.
- To enable seamless coordination between various agencies, the National Informatics Centre and Ministry of Civil Aviation had developed a website for Lifeline Udan flights in a record span of three days. The newly launched website enables state governments as well as airlines to upload the details of their consignment and flight services respectively, in advance. The control room of the ministry then assigns the cargo consignments to different flights and till the consignment reaches its destination, coordinates with multiple stakeholders. No service fee is levied on the website.
- On the international front of this initiative, Air India has established a cargo air-bridge between China and India. From 3 April 2020 onwards, regular cargo flights are likely to be operated by Air India for transporting critical medical equipment and supplies between the two countries. To support India's war against COVID-19, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and all aviation stakeholders will be transporting essential medical supplies by air in the most efficient, seamless as well as cost-effective manner.

News Source: <https://www.financialexpress.com/infrastructure/airlines-aviation/how-lifeline-udan-flights-are-supporting-indias-war-against-the-novel-coronavirus-top-points/1916926/>

N3. Rajasthan jail department video call facility for prisoners' kin

Times of India- 02 April 2020

*The families can book the appointments on **National Informatics Centre (NIC)** website which provides software and technical support to the prisons. According to ...*



software and technical support to the prisons.

JAIPUR: Rajasthan Jail Department on Wednesday launched the initiative of E-Mulaqat by which the inmates' families can book an appointment online for physical visitation as well as for video calls.

Initially, it has been launched as a pilot project in Jaipur Central Jail. In view of the lockdown, the online appointments for video calls will be operational in the beginning. The families can book the appointments on National Informatics Centre (NIC) website which provides

According to the new system, for fixing an appointment for video conferencing, a person has to fill a form on NIC site following which a time slot will be fixed by officials, an email will be sent to the appointment seeker with a link, time of call as well as a pin. On the set time when the person goes on the link and fills in the pin, the call will start.

R K Reddy, DG, Jail, said, "Initially the facility for video calls has been introduced in Jaipur to see how effective it is as well as to check the pros and cons before introducing it in the remaining eight central jails. This project was in the pipeline for quite some time and after the lockdown, we found that the inmates were getting desperate to see their families so we decided to make this operational. Online bookings for physical visits will be introduced at a later date. We have also handed out pamphlets to the prisoners to make them aware of the facility."

The inmates will be given a duration of five minutes to see and speak to their families on video calls. A database of approximately two lakh visitors has also been prepared. Once the online booking for physical visits is operational, it will reduce the queues outside the prisons and give the administration a fair idea of the crowd that is to be expected on any given day, claimed officials.

News Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jaipur/jail-department-video-call-facility-for-prisoners-kin/articleshow/74939547.cms>

N4. Centre OK's limited registration of BS-IV vehicles all over country

Daily Pioneer- 02 April 2020

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has advised National Informatics Centre (NIC) to facilitate the States /UTs in limited registration of BS-IV ...

Given the corona lockdown crisis, the Centre on Wednesday allowed limited registration of BS IV norms vehicles all over the country, except Delhi/NCR, viz conditional sale and registration of not more than 10 per cent pending BS-4 stock with vehicle dealers within 10 days of lifting of the lockdown in the country.

The Supreme Court which has mandated for BSVI norms vehicle to be registered in the country beginning April 1, 2020, last week allowed limited and conditional sale and of some stock of BSIV.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has advised National Informatics Centre (NIC) to facilitate the States /UTs in limited registration of BS-IV vehicles all over India except Delhi/NCR in compliance with Supreme Court directions contained in its order dated March 27, 2020.

News Source: <https://www.dailypioneer.com/2020/india/centre-ok---s-limited-registration--of-bs-iv-vehicles-all-over-country.html>

N5. How NIC is creating better experiences for citizens via AI

Express Computer. 01 April 2020

*NIC Director General Neeta Verma said, “Organisations and businesses today are realising only a fraction of their true AI potential. **National Informatics Centre (NIC)** is betting big on Artificial Intelligence (AI) for smooth implementation of several e-governance projects of the Centre and .*



National Informatics Centre (NIC) is betting big on Artificial Intelligence (AI) for smooth implementation of several e-governance projects of the Centre and thorough transparency in execution of welfare schemes.

AI is one of the emerging technologies which is benefitting not only the government agencies but also the citizens. AI is helping in re-imagining the way various services such as financial services fraud detection, online customer support interactions and retail purchase predictions, etc., are being carried out.

NIC's Centre of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence (COE-AI@NIC), unveiled by Minister of Electronics & IT, Law & Justice, Ravi Shankar Prasad last year, is equipped with an ultra modern lab with supercomputing facility, which has facilitated AI Development Platform as a Service to twelve NIC State Units and three NIC Central Project teams.

NIC has prepared a handbook to build in-house expertise in augmenting intelligence in design, development and usage of AI technologies to improve citizen services delivery.

The Centre of Excellence in AI of NIC has been facilitating model development in computer vision like image and video analytics, text analytics and cognitive search, conversational AI in the form of chatbots and voice bots, machine learning and trend forecasting.

NIC also helps citizens get the benefits from the scheme, reducing the time required in government workflow processes, by enhancing transparency in the process cycle through intelligence augmentation in process steps.

In SBM Urban, the citizens apply for these schemes online directly through the platform or at Citizen Service Centres and submit documents like identity credentials, bank account details, applicant photo which helps in validating their identity and establish their eligibility. The beneficiaries upload photos of progress of work to get installments from these portals through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). For

establishing right utilisation of funds under these schemes, physical verification checks are conducted by officials before transfer of funds to the beneficiary's bank account.

In SBM (Urban) which facilitates people from the lower strata of the society to build toilets under Indian Household Latrine (IHHL) scheme, beneficiaries upload their photo at application time and later upload photo with the constructed toilet for receiving the final installment in DBT to their bank account. In SBM Urban, there were over a crore applicants and more than half a crore approved beneficiaries who uploaded geo-tagged constructed toilet photos through online platforms. Earlier, there used to be a delay in fund transfer to beneficiaries account. This was mainly because the photo may get rejected by the verifier and the beneficiary had to again upload the photo and wait for the final nod. Helpdesk used to receive huge number of complaints pertaining to this issue.

NIC started using AI to address these challenges of SBM. AI was used to bring down the workflow cycle for completion of the procedure. If the system can detect there is no beneficiary in the image, or toilet seat is not visible then the beneficiary can check the status with a mobile app or be alerted by SMS to reload correct photo without wasting time and the citizen does not have to wait for the photo to be rejected before reloading the correct photo and waiting in queue for approval.

Another such example where the benefits of AI has been explored by NIC is the facial recognition based group attendance for trainees for Skill Development Program, under the Department of Technical Education, Training & Skill Development, Government of West Bengal. Under Utkarsh Bangla program, every year six lakh trainees are trained in skill development programs. The time for imparting training is being calculated through the biometric attendance system for the trainers and trainees. Payments of training partners are calculated based on the total number of training hours and count of trainees who have attended the classes. Every year, the government spends around Rs 200 crore for organising these training programs.

Existing fingerprint based biometric attendance system is computation intensive and could be circumvented through various means including use of prosthetic fingerprints. Also, using same fingerprint sensor by hundreds of trainees daily may cause health hazard and a challenge to maintain personal hygiene. Using facial recognition techniques, with the help of a mobile based app, the face of trainees in a particular batch for a skill centre are registered as a one-time activity and then used in detecting the attendance on a daily basis. Multi factor authentication like geo-fencing of the Training Centre in the image, timestamping are built into the system and while marking attendance, the system prompts a particular trainee to be placed in Left or Right of the image, to make sure that there is no video replay attack of the group photo.

NIC Director General Neeta Verma said, "Organisations and businesses today are realising only a fraction of their true AI potential. Leaders, be it from the government or the private sector, have explored the benefits of plugging AI and other tech tools into existing workflows, focusing on automation and execution to improve existing services." But simply focusing on using AI to make their existing activities run faster and economic might limit its impact. With emerging technologies taking the center stage, leaders need to leverage the potential of AI systems to transform not just how organisations perform, but also what they actually do. AI is certainly becoming an agent of change across the organisation, she said.

Besides, AI is also being used in the power sector where it plays a key role in analysing reports, graphs, statistics for generation, transmission and distribution. NIC has developed National Power Portal (NPP), a centralised platform for collation and dissemination of Indian power sector information. NPP was integrated with associated systems of Central Electricity Authority (CEA), Power Finance Corporation (PFC), Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) and other major utilities to serve as a single authentic source of power sector information to apex bodies. It facilitates online data capture, input (daily, monthly, annually) from generation, transmission and distribution utilities in country. It also disseminates Power Sector Information (operational, capacity, demand, supply,

consumption) through various analysed reports, graphs, statistics for generation, transmission and distribution at central, state and private sector level. The dashboard has been designed and developed to disseminate information about the sector through GIS-enabled navigation and visualisation chart windows on capacity, generation, transmission, distribution at national, state, DIS-COM, town, feeder level and scheme-based funding to states.

With the increasing decentralisation and digitalisation of the power grid, it is becoming challenging to manage the large number of grid participants and keep the grid in balance. AI can help in detecting anomalies in generation, consumption, or transmission in near real time, and then develop suitable solutions. As a first prototype, deep learning is being attempted to see the power outage trends and make predictions for the next subsequent months from the attributes captured. An accurate prediction of duration of power failures for the upcoming months can help the authorities to minimise the possible risks which may cause such outages.

News Source: <https://www.expresscomputer.in/egov-watch/how-nic-is-creating-better-experiences-for-citizens-via-ai/51994/>

N6. CB to track down people who came in contact with Pothencode native

The New Indian Express- 01 April 2020

A Crime Branch probe has been ordered to track down the people who had interacted with Pothencodu native Abdul Azeez who died due to Covid-19 infection on Tuesday. Top police sources said Google has been helping the officials of the Health Department and National Informatics Centre to prepare the flow chart by providing ...

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: A Crime Branch probe has been ordered to track down the people who had interacted with Pothencodu native Abdul Azeez who died due to Covid-19 infection on Tuesday.

The decision was taken after it was assessed that he had interacted with a lot of people, but their identities were not clear.

The authorities has also appealed to the public to turn up before the health department officials in case they had come across the person, but the response has been poor. Police sources said it is because of this, a Crime Branch probe has been ordered. The probe, the police sources said, will initially focus on finding the places he had visited other than what have been confirmed so far.

Once the places have been identified, the next step will be to locate the people, who were present in the vicinity of the person. The police sources said a time-line will be sought from Google to find out the places he had travelled. However, the police said they cannot expect much result by locating the mobile phone tower location of the deceased man as it won't throw up any details of those who had been in close contact with him.

Google's help to prepare flow chart
Top police sources said Google has been helping the officials of the Health Department and National Informatics Centre to prepare the flow chart by providing the time-line of the infected persons. However, this service is restricted to the Covid-19-infected only due to privacy issues and it cannot be sought in case of primary and secondary contacts.

News Source: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2020/apr/01/cb-to-track-down-people-who-came-in-contact-with-pothencode-native-2124087.html>

M1. MEITY extends National Open Digital Ecosystems Consultation to 31 May

MediaNama.com-01-Apr-2020

The Ministry of *Electronics and Information Technology* (MEITY) has extended its call for comments for its consultation whitepaper on National Open Digital ...

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) has extended its [call for comments](#) for its [consultation whitepaper](#) on National Open Digital Ecosystems (NODEs) by two months to May 31, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. NODEs are a set of protocols and digital systems that MEITY hopes can be used by government departments and private companies to offer services. The paper cited Aadhaar and IndiaStack as successful examples of this approach. However, the paper said that the first principle is to “use and/ or build open standards, licenses, databases, APIs, etc. and promote inter-operability.”

News Source: <https://www.medianama.com/2020/04/223-meity-extends-national-open-digital-ecosystems-node-may-31/>

M2. Corona Kavach: This app tells if you have crossed COVID-19 positive person

Business Today- 02 April 2020

The contact tracking app is a joint effort of the Union Ministry of *Electronics and Information Technology* and the Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

Coronavirus update: The Corona Kavach user's location is mapped through GPS on the app to assess whether they are at a high-risk geographical zone or not.

Following the footsteps of Singapore and South Korea, India has launched its own contact tracking app, called Corona Kavach. The app tracks the data of the user every hour to alert them whether they have crossed paths with any person who tested positive for coronavirus. While this might be beneficial for the user, privacy activists flag concerns.

The contact tracking app is a joint effort of the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and the Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. The user's location is mapped through GPS on the app to assess whether they are at a high-risk geographical zone or not. Data experts believe that this could be beneficial for a country like India that has a large number of cellphone users.

News Source: <https://www.businesstoday.in/latest/trends/corona-kavach-this-app-tells-if-you-have-crossed-covid-19-positive-person/story/399930.html>

M3. Ensure Surveillance During COVID-19 Is Temporary: Citizens ...

The Quint- 01 April 2020

The letter was also sent to Minister of Health and Family Welfare Harsh Vardhan; Minister of *Electronics and Information Technology* Ravi Shankar Prasad; ...

A coalition of citizens, on Tuesday, 31 March, wrote to Union Home Minister Amit Shah as well as other central ministers, urging the government to ensure that principles of privacy are followed in the collection and processing of personal data of individuals during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

It states that the processing personal data and monitoring individuals should only be conducted as per the law laid down through various judgments of the Supreme Court of India, norms and principles.

The letter was also sent to Minister of Health and Family Welfare Harsh Vardhan; Minister of Electronics and Information Technology Ravi Shankar Prasad; Minister for Civil Aviation Hardeep Singh Puri, as well as chief ministers of all the state governments.

The appeal to central and state governments comes soon after reports emerged of personal data of quarantined citizens being circulated on WhatsApp.

While Karnataka government also announced it would seek hourly selfies, Andhra Pradesh government has decided to track mobile signals of those who are in home- quarantine. Moreover, volunteer drone operators working with state administrations have also undertaken the aerial surveillance of public spaces in Gujarat.

The letter, written by the Software Freedom Law Centre India (SFLC.In) was signed by digital rights organisations including Internet Freedom Foundation, civil society groups, lawyers, public policy professionals, social activists, entrepreneurs, and individual citizens involved.

“Although this is an extraordinary situation, care should be taken to ensure that the personal information of individuals are handled securely and with due care respecting their privacy rights,” said Prasanth Sugathan, Voluntary Legal Director, SFLC.in

“Any measure adopted for public health purpose should be the least intrusive and should not violate the privacy rights of individuals. Publishing of route maps and contact-tracing should be done without publishing the personal details of patients,” Sugathan added

News Source: <https://www.thequint.com/news/india/citizens-write-home-minister-amit-shah-urge-privacy-surveillance-temporary>

M4. Electronics manufacturing: Govt notifies three incentive schemes; likely to create lakhs of jobs

Financial Express- 02 April 2020

The Ministry of *Electronics and Information Technology* has notified the three schemes to grow electronics manufacturing in the country. The schemes that ...

Under [Make in India](#) and Assemble in India campaigns, the ballooning electronics manufacturing sector has received an additional boost from the government. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has notified the three schemes to grow electronics manufacturing in the country. The schemes that altogether offer incentives of nearly Rs 48,000 crore, were cleared by the cabinet last month. These include the promotion of manufacturing of electronic components and semiconductors, Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC 2.0) Scheme, and Production Linked Incentive Scheme for large scale electronics manufacturing. The government's notification states that the incentives for these schemes will be rolled out from 1st August and will initially be open for four months.

The largest portion of the incentives, Rs 40,000 crore, will be allocated to the production-linked incentive scheme. "The PLI scheme shall extend an incentive of 4% to 6% on incremental sales (over the base year) of goods manufactured in India and covered under target segments, to eligible companies, for a period of five years subsequent to the base year as defined," the cabinet had said. This scheme will be initially rolled out for mobile phones and specified electronic components.

News Source: <https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/electronics-manufacturing-govt-notifies-three-incentive-schemes-likely-to-create-lakhs-of-jobs/1916751/>