

N1. JK Pay Sys implementation | Employee forums fear delay in release of salaries

Greater Kashmir. 23 April 2020

... an Electronic Payment Framework has been developed by the Finance Department in consultation with the National Informatics Centre in 2019. ‘Slow internet speed hurdle in updating employees’ data’

Various government employee bodies have welcomed the government decision to implement ‘JK Pays Sys’, an electronic framework for submission of bills in treasuries. The employees’ bodies, however, fear salaries of most of the employees could be withheld due to non-completion of uploading process of employees’ data.

JK Pay Sys was the long pending demand of the employees of J&K for a smooth, hassle-free, and time saving mechanism for the payment of bills in online mode.

“We welcome the initiative and in fact it was our long pending demand. However, we fear that salaries of lakhs of employees would be delayed or withheld as their required information is yet to be uploaded by concerned Drawing and Disbursing Officers (DDOs) in a prescribed form,” said Khurshid Ahmad Bhat, General Secretary Employees Joint Action Committee (EJAC).

He said the DDOs were unable to upload the data of employees falling within their domain due to low internet speed.

“One of the DDOs was telling me that it takes 20 to 25 minutes for uploading data of an employee on 2G speed and sometimes more when speed decreases further,” he said.

He said ministerial staff in offices which otherwise would have been pressed to upload data, were also not coming to offices amid COVID19 lockdown.

“Thus, we fear, lakhs of employees would not get salaries in coming months due to incomplete data upload by DDOs in a prescribed form,” he said, adding, “EJAC demands temporary suspension of order issued by Finance Department till completion of data uploading process.”

To reform government delivery mechanism by re-engineering the existing process of payment for simpler and faster transactions and to ensure better interface with the beneficiaries, besides de-duplication of payments and reduction in incorrect classification of expenditure, an Electronic Payment Framework has been developed by the Finance Department in consultation with the National Informatics Centre in 2019.

Directing implementation of this system, the finance department issued an order on 1 April 2020, asking authorities that payment through treasuries from now onwards shall be made through JK Pay Sys with effect from 15 April 2020.

All the Treasury Officers have also been asked to not entertain manual bills for processing of payment.

Sajad Parray, President J&K Casual and Daily Wagers Forum said that daily rated workers would be also worst hit by immediate implementation of this order.

“DDOs are yet to receive required some of the documents from us and further they are not able to process the updation of data in prescribed form on low internet speed,” he said.

Fearing that most of them would not get monthly salaries on time amid COVID19 crises, the employee forums appealed government to suspend the order for some time till updation of data is completed in J&K by concerned authorities.

News Source: <https://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/srinagar/jk-pay-sys-implementation-employee-forums-fear-delay-in-release-of-salaries/>

N2. SC mulls inhouse app for videoconferencing

Economic Times. 22 April 2020

*The **National Informatics Centre (NIC)** may be roped in to explore the viability of creating such a web application, sources added. SC currently holds virtual courts using 'Vidyo', a web application. The government's warning came after India's nodal cyber security agency — Computer Emergency Response Team of India — warned of the app's vulnerability.*

New Delhi: The [Supreme Court](#) is contemplating the feasibility of developing an inhouse web application, which can be owned and controlled internally, to ensure seamless functioning of virtual courts through [videoconferencing](#).

This follows concerns being flagged over ownership and security issues of web applications after the Supreme Court started weighing plans to conduct more virtual courts during the [lockdown](#), said people with direct knowledge of the matter.

The [National Informatics Centre \(NIC\)](#) may be roped in to explore the viability of creating such a web application, sources added. SC currently holds virtual courts using '[Vidyo](#)', a web application.

“It has been brought to our notice that the ownership of the said application has changed hands. It is being actively considered whether the Supreme Court should make a web application of its own to avoid any probable difficulties in future,” said a senior official.

Another web application, which was considered by SC for holding virtual courts, was [Zoom](#). This has been dropped due to security concerns. The MHA earlier this week warned that the app was not safe for use.

The government's warning came after India's nodal cyber security agency — Computer Emergency Response Team of India — warned of the app's vulnerability.

However, sources said even if NIC comes up with an inhouse application, it's functioning will depend upon and be subject to signal strength/bandwidth available to the end users.

“The chief advantages of building an internal web application are ownership, control and security. Connectivity will obviously be contingent on the available bandwidth,” said the official quoted above. ET had on April 20 reported that SC is working towards making virtual litigation a reality by augmenting the number of virtual courts.

News Source: <https://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/sc-mulls-inhouse-app-for-videoconferencing/75311372>

N3. After success in TN, govt to roll out telesurvey to identify Covid ...

Hindustan Times- 23 April 2020

The telesurvey, announced late Tuesday, will be carried out by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), and is intended to aid the government detect the hotspots ...

[COVID-19: Govt to conduct tele-survey through '1921'. Tribune-21-Apr-2020](#)

A senior official of the IT ministry said that the telesurvey shall reach out to 850 million feature phone users across the country. Officials said that of the 1.2 billion mobile phone users in India, only 35 million have feature phones.

After a successful pilot in Tamil Nadu, the government has started a pan-India telesurvey to reach out to people without smartphones to conduct a Covid-related search. Calls will be placed from the phone number '1921' asking people questions about symptoms of the disease.

The telesurvey, announced late Tuesday, will be carried out by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), and is intended to aid the government detect the hotspots of coronavirus. An interactive voice response system (IVRS), backed by an NIC team, will be rolled out. The analysis of call data will be done by other appropriate wings of the government, said officials.

A senior official of the IT ministry said that the telesurvey shall reach out to 850 million feature phone users across the country. Officials said that of the 1.2 billion mobile phone users in India, only 35 million have feature phones. "Just as the Aarogya Setu is reaching out to smart phone users, the tele-survey will collect details from feature phone users," the official said.

The call leads to successive prompts for SMSes on the user's feature phones, asking for answers to a set menu of questions. The systems are being readied and will be rolled out by the weekend, officials said. The service will be vernacular, and will be available in languages like Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Hindi, etc.

The telesurvey was initially piloted in Tamil Nadu a fortnight ago with the help of Indian Institute of Technology Madras, simultaneously when the IT ministry was rolling out the Aarogya Setu. Another ministry official, on condition of anonymity, told HT that the pilot was successful and helped authorities find the next area of spread. "It helped us find the next red zone or containment zone," said the official.

During the pilot, 15,000 people were screened through the telesurvey, which helped authorities finalise a list of suspected Covid-19 patients. "State authorities would then reach out to them for necessary action," said the official.

The number '1921' was selected as the '1922' number is a toll-free service for people to listen to the prime minister's popular radio programme, Mann ki Baat, the first official quoted above said.

In a release, the government said that the calls placed to mobile phones, will "enable proper feedback of the prevalence and distribution of Covid symptoms". "Please be aware of any other calls by pranksters or or calls from any other number in the guise of such similar survey," the release said.

News Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/after-success-in-tamil-nadu-government-to-roll-out-telesurvey-to-identify-covid-19-hotspots/story-BPcqjuxBhebLYHPrdRw8jN.html>

M1. Incubators waive, cut rents of startups due to lockdown

Telangana Today- 23 April 2020

Software Technology Parks of India, Hyderabad, offers rent-free premises to startups for four months from March to June. For instance, STPI, which is under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), has decided to waive the rents at its incubator ...

Hyderabad: With lockdown on, select incubators have either waived the rentals or have reduced them for their incubatees as part of the efforts to deal with the current situation.

For instance, STPI, which is under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), has decided to waive the rents at its incubator for four months across the nation. In Telangana, it has two centres, one at Hyderabad and one at Warangal.

According to CVD Ramprasad, STPI Hyderabad Director, the decision to waive rents has been taken to support the startup community.

“We are offering rent-free premises for four months from March to June,” Ramprasad. This is applicable to both Hyderabad and Warangal centres. In Hyderabad, it was about 270 seats and in Warangal about 40 seats. The rents in the State capital is around Rs 5,000 to 6,000 per seat per month and about Rs 2,500 in Warangal, which is a tier II location.

Typically, those in the early stages take one or two desks while those in a growth phase take six to eight desks. The rentals are always on a per desk basis, he said.

The incubator concept has emerged as an essential infrastructure for the growth of high-technology businesses like information technology and software development. STPI has launched incubation or serviced office space facility in many of its centres for small and medium entrepreneurs (SMEs).

STPI incubation centres have work stations, cubicles, manager cabins, discussion rooms and conference halls. They offer internet, air-conditioned space, uninterrupted power supply system, standby DG power system, security system and access control and fire alarm system, he said. These incubators also aid in creation of 3X indirect jobs.

IIT-H, which has an incubator with about 100 seats, has decided to cut the rent by 50 per cent for two months- April and May. The rentals per desk varies from Rs 4,500-6,500 in the normal times, according to Ramesh Loganathan, faculty, IIT-H.

T-Hub, the Telangana State Government initiative and the biggest incubator in the country now, has also reportedly cut the rentals, according to a person in the know. When contacted a senior official of T-Hub on this, he said he does not want comment on this.

News Source: <https://telanganatoday.com/incubators-waive-cut-rents-of-startups-due-to-lockdown>

M2. Kerala launches FOSS based video conference solution: Report

MediaNama.com- 22 April 2020

Singapore and New York City have also suspended the use of Zoom for online classes given its security mishaps. The Ministry of Electronics and Information ...

Kerala's General Education Department has rolled out a video conferencing solution which can be used for e-learning and conducting online classes amid the COVID-19 lockdown, the Hindu [reported](#). The video conference solution is based on [BigBlueButton](#), which is a free and open-source software (FOSS) for video conferencing. The solution was reportedly launched before the central government [advised](#) against using popular video conference platform Zoom (more on that below).

The video conference platform, which has been customised by the Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE), also allows for screen sharing, multi-user whiteboard, public chat and shared note facilities per the report. The solution has reportedly been integrated with KITE's Open Online Learning' management system. We have reached out to KITE for more details.

This development comes after the Union Home Ministry, on April 12, [issued an advisory](#) stating that Zoom was "not a safe platform", and said that those in the government shouldn't use the app in the first place. For private users, the Ministry said that they should follow precautions before using it, such as locking the call to new entrants, and having a passcode to enter the call. Singapore and New York City have also [suspended](#) the use of Zoom for online classes given its security mishaps.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, meanwhile, has called on Indian companies and startups to [develop](#) an encrypted video-conferencing solution for use by the central and state governments. The solution should be able to work on any device, should be able to host multiple concurrent conferences having multiple participants in each conference, and should be low on usage of power/processor, among other requirements.

News Source: <https://www.medianama.com/2020/04/223-kerala-video-conference-solution/>

M3. Working from home to be the new norm in Covid-19 aftermath: Ravi Shankar Prasad

Hindustan Times. 22 April 2020

Ravi Shankar Prasad held review meetings with officials in both ministries to work out a plan to make work-from-home a permanent fixture in a wide range of “other service provider” establishments, officials said..

Work-from-home will be the new norm in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, minister of communications, and electronics and information technology Ravi Shankar Prasad said on Tuesday, and asked the departments under his charge to work on putting in place a platform to facilitate the emerging trend.

Prasad held review meetings with officials in both ministries to work out a plan to make work-from-home a permanent fixture in a wide range of “other service provider” establishments, officials said..

The first step towards the policy formulation, the officials said on condition of anonymity, will be a meeting with industry associations in the coming days.

For such a policy to work, a senior IT ministry official said, infrastructural bottlenecks will need to be removed “We will have to ensure that the relaxations we have announced for these services become more permanent and the system will need to use the least amount of bandwidth,” the official said.

Other service providers, or OSPs, include IT and IT-enabled services such as international call centres and business process outsourcing and knowledge process outsourcing centres, e-learning sites, billing centres and medical transcription companies..

The department of telecommunications (DoT) said on March 13 that OSP employees can work from home without going through an authorised PPVPN (provider provisioned virtual private network) as required by the rules. Later, DoT waived a mandatory Rs 1 crore deposit needed to let employees work from home; the OSP will only have to inform DoT of the addresses of its remote workers, it said.

DoT said OSPs will have to maintain a register of call logs and calls detail records for a whole year which must be provided to the department when it calls for the records. A penalty fee of Rs 5 lakh, the DoT said, will be levied if the OSP violates these terms, and its license will also be liable to be cancelled.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) had in October 2019 recommended that DoT ease the norms needed to be followed by OSPs .

Sanjay Singh, vice president of the OSP Association of India, said removing the regulations may be a good move in the long run.

“The government should be able to improve the proactive monitoring system; if they can implement those controls, then the liberalised guidelines will be effective,” said Singh.

News Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/working-from-home-to-be-the-new-norm-ravi-shankar-prasad/story-vQFKsJANKZeAjUyfmUPIFI.html>

O1. Govt launches digital platform COVID India Seva for real time grievance redressal

Economic Times. 22 April 2020

The Union government on Tuesday launched the [COVID India Seva](#), a new digital platform that provides an interactive platform to establish a direct channel of communication with millions of Indians amid the pandemic. This initiative looks to bring transparency in Centre's e-governance initiatives especially in crisis situations like the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic

O2. Karnataka launches digital helpline and mobile app 'Apthamitra' to take on Covid-19

Economic Times. 23 April 2020

The mobile app will provide online medical consultation to people seeking assistance from coronavirus. An expert team of doctors will also tell about the medication to be picked

O3. Digital Learning: Uttarakhand government using 'Sampark Didi' app to impart virtual classes

Economic Times. 22 April 2020

Inside this application, there is a platform called 'Sampark Baithak' which contains all the course material as per the syllabus of the state education department in a PDF format.

O4. Pune municipal corporation develops 'Saiyam' app to track home-quarantine

Economic Times. 22 April 2020

The mobile application has GPS tracking so that whenever quarantined citizens leave their homes, city administration gets alerted and the local ward or the local police station gets informed, who then visit the family.

O5. Robot powering Bulandshahr collectorate for social distancing and sanitisation

Economic Times. 23 April 2020

The robot is used for giving sanitisers to employees and visitors, thereby avoiding human involvement in the job

O6. Smart City Mission's Tech-Experience should be extended to bigger cities: MoHUA Secretary DS Mishra

Economic Times. 23 April 2020

In the current crisis of covid-19 pandemic, out of 100, as many as 47 Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs), which are operational now, have been used "24x7 war rooms" for various purposes, including awareness, surveillance, tracking, telemedicine and supply of essential commodities. At least, 17 ICCCs are getting ready for launch. The remaining will be ready soon.

O7. Kerala govt appoints committee to probe 'data transfer'

Economic Times. 22 April 2020

After being caught napping by the Congress-led opposition over the handling of coronavirus suspects' data by Sprinklr - a US based PR and marketing company - the Kerala government has decided to appoint a two-member committee of former top bureaucrats to submit a report on it.

O8. Net Neutrality laws likely to be tested in clearance for FB-Reliance Jio deal

Economic Times. 23 April 2020

While India has strong Net neutrality laws, they might be tested in a major way given the magnitude of the deal.

O9. Here's what social media apps are doing to fight Covid-19

Hindu BusinessLine. 23 April 2020

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has led to stringent lockdown in place. The adherence to social distancing has resulted in increased activities and participation on social media platforms. Social media apps too have come of age and emerged as an effective medium to aid the efforts put in place by mankind. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has led to stringent lockdown in place. The adherence to social distancing has resulted in increased activities and participation on social media platforms. Social media apps too have come of age and emerged as an effective medium to aid the efforts put in place by mankind.

O10. Govt of India is making a video conferencing platform but Namaste is not it

Financial Express. April 21, 2020

Namaste is real, but it has got nothing to do with the Government of India. Contrary to ongoing reports, the Government of India hasn't launched any indigenous video conferencing tool in the country, just yet, though it is working on one.