

N1. Crime Branch probe ordered in Kerala to trace contacts of COVID-19 victim from Pothencode

New Indian Express. 31 March 2020

The authorities had appealed to the public to turn up before health department officials in case they had come in contact with him but the response has been poor. Google has been helping officials of the Health Department and National Informatics Centre to prepare a flowchart by providing the timeline of the infected persons.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: A Crime Branch probe has been ordered to find out the contacts of Pothencode native Abdul Azeez who died due to COVID-19 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 had appealed to the public to turn up before health department officials in case they had come in contact with him but the response has been poor. Police sources said it was because of this that a Crime Branch probe has been ordered. The probe, the police sources said, will initially focus on finding out where else he had gone other than what has been confirmed so far.

Police sources said a timeline will be sought from Google to identify the places he had visited. However, the police said they cannot expect much by locating the mobile phone tower near where the deceased man travelled as it won't throw up any details of those who had been in close contact with him.

Top police sources, meanwhile, said Google has been helping officials of the Health Department and National Informatics Centre to prepare a flowchart by providing the timeline of the infected persons. However, this service is restricted to the COVID-19 infected only due to privacy issues and cannot be sought in case of primary and secondary contacts.

Meanwhile, the funeral of Azeez, 68, the second COVID 19 victim in the state, was held here by the health department and district administration on Tuesday afternoon.

The funeral was held following all the protocols set by the WHO at the Kallur Juma Masjid burial ground. No one other than health workers were allowed into the premises of the burial ground.

The body was wrapped in a triple layer body bag and buried in a 10-foot deep pit with five officials and two mosque representatives in attendance.

The patient, a retired police officer, had been on ventilator for the past five days at the Government Medical College in Thiruvananthapuram before he passed away late in the night on Monday.

Meanwhile, Pothencode, Manikkal, Mangalapuram and Vembayam Panchayats are now under complete quarantine for the coming few weeks. Ayirottukonam region under the city corporation will also be under strict quarantine.

News Source: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2020/mar/31/crime-branch-probe-ordered-in-kerala-to-trace-contacts-of-covid-19-victim-from-pothencode-2123903.html>

N2. Modi Govt Banks On Microsoft, Cisco Remote Working Tools

Inc42 Media-31 March 2020

*... the committee has advised the government to rely on technologies developed by the state-owned **National Informatics Centre (NIC)**. This committee is a part of ...*

The government is using third-party platforms for sharing non-critical information. Both tech giants are offering these tool free of charge. Indian start ups are also offering their services to the government

Tech major Microsoft and Cisco are now helping the Narendra Modi government manage its operations with a remote working force thanks to collaboration tools. The technology and data management committee of the central government has decided to use tools provided by these companies for sharing of non-critical information.

A government official said that these companies have provided some helpful tools free of cost to help the Modi government effectively manage the various departments at a very critical time. However, given the sensitive nature of some government work, the tools are only being used for non-critical communication.

According to an [ET](#) report, the tools are helping government departments and employees to share files and information from remote locations. As of now, many government agencies, working with frontline workers tackling the coronavirus, are now using tools from Microsoft and Cisco. Most teams using these tools are working from some of the most remote parts of the country and are educating people on how they can curb the spread of the coronavirus.

For the transfer of critical information, the committee has advised the government to rely on technologies developed by the state-owned **National Informatics Centre (NIC)**. This committee is a part of 11 empowered groups which are appointed by the government to plan and implement Covid-19 response activities. **IT secretary Ajay Sawhney** is currently heading the team. Telecom secretary Anshu Prakash, additional director general of ICMR GS Toteja, and joint secretary of cabinet secretariat Bharat Khera are also part of the team.

The committee has also been given with the responsibility to get inputs from startups, tech players, healthcare providers, diagnostic companies and other stakeholders who can help the government with testing kits or other resources. A government official said that startups and large corporates are giving innovative ideas on tackling this emergency. The official gave the example of C-DAC Pune which is now offering supercomputing for gene sequencing of the virus. The committee has passed on the suggestion of the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR).

The team is also streamlining coronavirus data which helps the government to quickly track the spread of this deadly virus across the country on a real-time basis. The committee is aiming to act as an information filter to prevent the spread of misinformation among communities.

The committee is ensuring that all data of positive tested individuals, quarantined people, among others from across the country is systematically collected and with the help of ICMR and National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). The information is going to be the basis for the [Covid-19 application](#).

News Source: <https://inc42.com/buzz/modi-govt-banks-on-microsoft-cisco-remote-working-tools-in-lockdown/>

N3. NIC, Assam State Centre develops software to issue passes for essential services

The Sentinel Assam- 31 March 2020

STAFF REPORTER. GUWAHATI: The *NIC (National Informatics Centre)* Assam State Centre has developed software called 'e-Pass for Essential Service' for ...

GUWAHATI: The NIC (National Informatics Centre) Assam State Centre has developed software called 'e-Pass for Essential Service' for issuing passes for Essential Services during the lockdown period. The software that has been hosted in the Cloud environment is a generic one and can be implemented by any district/sub-division. Accordingly, the Kamrup Metro District Administration has implemented the same with the support of the NIC Kamrup Metro District Unit. The software has features of applying for vehicle pass from anywhere, approving by the designated authority authorized by the Deputy Commissioner, giving SMS alerts to the applicant, downloading of the pass by the applicant, signing, etc.

News Source <https://www.sentinelassam.com/guwahati-city/nic-assam-state-centre-develops-software-to-issue-passes-for-essential-services/>

N4. IT, data panel to work with Microsoft, Cisco for info flow to tackle Covid

Economic Times. 31 March 2020

The technology and data management committee is set to work with US technology majors Microsoft and Cisco, among private corporates, to efficiently manage flow of information critical to tackling the Covid-19 outbreak, but critical government communication would continue to be through the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

NEW DELHI: The technology and data management committee is set to work with US technology majors Microsoft and Cisco, among private corporates, to efficiently manage flow of information critical to tackling the [Covid-19](#) outbreak, but critical government communication would continue to be through the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

“Start-ups and large corporates are also giving ideas on tackling this emergency. C-DAC Pune has offered supercomputing for gene sequencing of the virus, this we have passed on to ICMR (Indian Council for Medical Research),” a senior government official told ET, adding that the next step was working on the data.

Among large tech companies, the official said that Microsoft and Cisco had offered help to the government in terms of providing tools so that people could share files and information from remote locations.

The government has accepted the offer but only for non-critical communication. “These companies have provided some helpful tools free of cost to tide and we will be making use of these but only for non-critical communication,” the officer said.

Thus, critical government communication would continue to be through NIC while the tools offered by tech giants would be utilized in communicating with frontline workers in various districts and villages in educating them on how to tackle the spread of virus.

The technology and data management committee is part of the 11 empowered groups headed by top bureaucrats in the country for planning and ensuring implementation of Covid-19 response activities. The technology and data management panel is headed by IT secretary Ajay Sawhney, and comprises of telecom secretary Anshu Prakash, GS Toteja, additional director general, ICMR and Bharat Khera, joint secretary (Cabinet secretariat), among its members.

The panel is tasked with collating information from various start-ups, tech companies, molecular diagnostic companies, companies involved in devising test-kits and other stakeholders. This is part of an effort to streamline the data to be able to quickly track the spread of Covid-19 virus, including in districts, villages and individuals who are infected with the virus, on a real-time basis.

“This committee is going to essentially act as a filter since there is so much deluge of information flowing in from all directions. Instead of burdening everything on health, different committees will look at certain different areas, so that health can focus on their work,” the official said.

“The entire data of which individual is tested positive, who is getting quarantined, if any hotspots are developing, spread of Covid-19 across districts. All this data will be systematically collected through close cooperation with ICMR and National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and will in fact form the basis for the Covid-19 app as well,” the official said.

News Source: <https://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/it-data-panel-to-work-with-microsoft-cisco-for-info-flow-to-tackle-covid/74904653>